Black Men's Perception of Their Father-Son Relationship

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BLACK MEN’S PERCEPTION OF THEIR FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP

by

Shaakira E. Jones

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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June 2021

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BLACK MEN’S PERCEPTION OF THEIR FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP

Shaakira E. Jones, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2021

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions that Black men have of their relationships with their fathers, specifically, adult sons’ retrospective perceptions of their fathers’/father figures’ involvement and nurturance during childhood, and their current emotional availability. The aim is also to explore whether perceptions of their fathers predict Black men’s current psychological well-being. The following measures are used: (a) a demographic questionnaire, (b) the Nurturant Fathering Scale (NFS, Finley & Schwartz, 2004; Williams & Finley, 1997), (c) the Father Involvement Scale (FIS, Finley & Schwartz, 2004), (d) the Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale (LEAP; Lum & Phares, 2005), and (e), the Flourishing Scale (FS, Diener et al., 2010). The sample is 177 men who primarily identify as Black American/African American, and they range in age from 18 to 82 years. More than half of the participants report being married and having at least a bachelor’s degree.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses are used to investigate the hypotheses posed. It has been found that Black men who perceive their fathers as more nurturing and involved during their childhood also report their fathers as being more emotionally available during their adulthood. The results also reveal that Black men who experience their fathers as more emotionally available during adulthood have better current psychological well-being. Furthermore, age is linked to psychological well-being: as Black men’s age increase, so do their
report of an increased level of psychological well-being. This study provides implications for counseling Black men about the father-son relationship. Counseling psychologists might use psychotherapy to help Black men explore the perceptions of their fathers’ involvement during childhood and adulthood, and to process the impact that paternal involvement has on their views of themselves, fathers, and current/future sons. Furthermore, this study provides implications for developing psychoeducational counseling interventions and Black fatherhood enrichment programs to inform Black fathers about ways to enhance the father-son relationship (Bocknek et al., 2017; Roy & Dyson, 2010).
DEDICATION

In Loving Memory of my Godmother, Rae LaBoo, and my Mentor, Dr. Lonnie E. Duncan.

Thank you both for believing in me, encouraging me, and inspiring me.
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To my protector, my provider, my redeemer, my way-maker—All the glory and all the honor belongs to you, my God, and I thank you for blessing me with this opportunity and this responsibility. To Mommy and Daddy, I am so grateful that you both instilled in me the value of education and going after my aspirations… thank you both for the support and encouragement throughout this journey. I have always wanted to make you both proud… your baby girl is now a doctor! Qadira, you inspire me to be the best example for you and my nieces… always follow your dreams my dear little sister, you are destined for greatness. Lucille, I truly appreciate all the pep talks, prayers, and for helping me to finish this final hurdle. To my grandparents, I am proud to be your legacy—thank you for encouraging and inspiring me throughout this process.

To Ms. Sylvia, thank you for treating me like a daughter over the last 17 years… for checking on me, praying for me, and for continuing to cheer me on toward the finish line. Dashaun, thank you for being one of my biggest cheerleaders, for accountability, tough love, and for even being my guinea pig throughout the training process. To Chadd, for providing a shoulder and for believing in me, I appreciate you. To Theresa, Kate, Shealyn, and Dawnielle, for matriculating through this journey with me, allowing me to vent, pointing out my strengths when I did not always feel them, and especially for those dinner dates to take a break from the madness! To Walter, Ricky, Vanessa, Erin, Justin, and our study crew, without y’all, I do not know how I would have made it through those classes, exams, and the dissertation process. I am in awe of who you all have become, and I am proud to be connected to such a phenomenal group of Black doctors… we are just getting started!
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Shaakira E. Jones
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A mother, father, and children have traditionally comprised the U.S. nuclear family; however, many families no longer fit this mold. Two-parent Black families have steadily declined by over 20% more than White and Latino families have during the last 50 years (Pew Research Center, 2015). Since 1960, female-headed homes have grown from 20% to 50% for Blacks, from 6% to 19% for Whites, and from 20% to 27% for Latinos (Livingston & Parker, 2011). The disparity in fathers living with their children has been linked to race, ethnicity, and SES, as measured by educational attainment. Forty-four percent of Black fathers are non-residential, compared to 21% of White fathers and 35% of Latino fathers (Livingston & Parker, 2011). Declining marriage rates, increasing birth out-of-wedlock, and multi-partner fertility have also increased the likelihood that fathers live apart from their children. Black fathers who are both non-residential and uninvolved are a problem within the Black community (C. Adams, 2005; K. Adams, 2001). Their absence has been linked to delinquent behaviors and criminal activity, (Cobb-Clark & Tekin, 2014), depressive symptoms (Hunt et al., 2015), and risky sexual behaviors (Hussen et al., 2014) among Black children. However, residential status is not an indication of Black father involvement in that there are non-residential fathers who remain present. Many Black fathers are involved in various areas of their children’s lives and they play a critical role in their well-being (Ransaw, 2014).

Overview of the Relevant Literature

Black father involvement has been found to have a major impact on the development of children’s educational aspirations (Gordon et al., 2012) and psychological well-being (Hofferth, 2003). Black fathers have been found to be more involved in the daily activities of their children
than White and Latino fathers, despite being most likely to live apart from them (Livingston & Parker, 2011). Furthermore, Black fathers are equally or more likely to help their children with homework than White fathers (Gray & Anderson, 2010; Ransaw, 2014). Black fathers have also been found to provide funding for tutoring and college prep courses; take their children to libraries and museums; assist with school projects, assign readings, and have their children complete (unassigned) schoolwork throughout the summer (Ransaw, 2014). Regardless of residential status, Black father involvement has been found to be critical to the development of Black children by teaching them about social, relational, and race-related issues that will be encountered throughout life (Allen, 2016). For Black boys, specifically, fathers have been found to be instrumental in modeling and teaching their sons about race and racism, masculine gender roles, and manhood (Ide et al., 2018).

One aspect of involvement is nurturance, which has become the focus of recent research. Nurturant fathers are defined primarily by emotional connections with their children (Thomas et al., 2008). Nurturant fathering emphasizes love and involvement over discipline and authority (Griswold, 1993). Higher perceived paternal nurturance has been found to be associated with better psychosocial functioning among college students (Schwartz & Finley, 2006). Specifically, Black college students who interact with their fathers frequently, and over longer periods, have been found to perceive higher levels of father nurturance (Doyle et al., 2015). The traditional view of a father serving primarily as the financial provider shifted during the 1970s, placing more emphasis on the nurturing role (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). Nevertheless, research on nurturant fathers remains limited, and there are even fewer studies that evaluate perceived nurturance of Black fathers, particularly from the lens of adult children.
Related to nurturance is the emotional availability of parents, specifically fathers. According to Lum and Phares (2005), emotional availability entails parental responsiveness, sensitivity, and involvement, regardless of a child’s emotional state. The importance of parental emotional availability has been established, particularly as it relates to parent-child attachment. It has been found that regardless of which parent is the primary caregiver, the presence or absence of parental emotional availability is a factor in an individual’s well-being (Biringen et al., 2000). Fathers have been included in the literature on emotional availability; however, the mother-child relationship has remained the primary focus (Lum & Phares, 2005; Phares & Renk, 2008). Moreover, there are no known studies that have directly evaluated the emotional availability of Black fathers. Exploration of perceived emotional availability of Black fathers from the lens of adult sons is important because it provides insight about paternal emotional availability in older age ranges (versus reports from children and adolescents), and it provides perspective that may be specific to the Black father-son relationship.

Research on Black father-son relationships underscores the general importance of this relationship. Healthy father-son relationships have been found to reduce the likelihood that adolescent, Black males engage in risky behaviors (e.g., violence, substance abuse, and sexual activity; Caldwell et al., 2004). Positive Black father-son relationships have been associated with decreased depressive symptoms among adolescent sons, including those who have become fathers themselves (Hunt et al., 2015). The significance of the father-son relationship on gay Black men has also been studied (Hussen et al., 2014), supporting the premise that Black fathers contributed to the psychosocial development of their sons, such as exacerbating or reducing sexually risky behaviors. Although several studies reflect the positive impact of Black father involvement, it has also been found that some Black sons did well when their fathers were not as
present in their lives (Gordon et al., 2012; Ide et al., 2018; Peart et al., 2006). For example, among less involved Black fathers, sons have been found to perceive the distance as promoting “self-reliant masculinity that is especially useful given racism” (Ide et al., 2018, p. 19). The nature of Black father-son relationships remains unclear in some regards, particularly from the lens of the son. Black father involvement appears to be critical to the development and well-being of Black boys, but how do Black sons perceive their fathers? What do they think about their fathers’ involvement in their lives? To some extent, Black parent-child relationships have been evaluated from the perspectives of parents; however, Black adult-son’s perceptions of their fathers have rarely been explored from any perspective (Greco & Morris, 2002).

The viewpoint that sons have about the father-son relationship is an understudied area that is important for several reasons. First, same-sex parents are considered to play a critical role in children’s development, serving as a model for gender construction (Ide et al., 2018). Fathers typically provide the first example of manhood; thus, sons may learn about masculinity and how to be men from their fathers. Second, children’s perceptions of their fathers affect personal adjustment in various areas of life, including interpersonal relationships, behavioral expression, and psychological functioning (Rohner et al., 2012). Some of the behaviors and values that sons develop may reflect what they were taught by their fathers. For example, exposure to emotional abuse or domestic violence by fathers could lead to self-esteem issues, violent behaviors, and interpersonal problems for the sons (Bocknek et al., 2017; Wood & Lambin, 2013). Experiences specific to different racial groups also impact the way sons perceive their fathers (Ide et al., 2018).

The intersection of race and gender is a major component of manhood among Black men (Allen, 2016). Black fathers may use their own experiences to model socially acceptable
behaviors and to teach their sons about race, racial socialization, and the meaning of being a Black man in the U.S. They might teach their sons about hardships related to structural barriers (e.g., unequal educational access, high unemployment, income discrepancy, and unfair judiciary treatment). Black fathers may also model the importance of hard work, self-regulation, and adaptation to the dominant culture, when appropriate, while also upholding culture-specific values related to their Blackness (Allen, 2016). Other components of being a Black man that fathers may introduce to their sons involve being responsible, independent, a provider, and a spiritual leader for their families. Some Black sons have acknowledged that their fathers’ involvement has resulted in their own self-determination and racial resilience—crediting their fathers for teaching them how to defy stereotypes about Black men and to create their own success (Allen, 2016). The complexities of Black manhood add another dimension to the father-son relationship. Black fathers are confronted with the challenge of teaching their sons how to respond to racial barriers in their communities, learning institutions, and in the workplace. They must prepare them for racial profiling, interacting with law enforcement, and responding appropriately to other racially-motivated incidences (Allen, 2016; Thomas & Blackmon, 2015). It is important for social science research to continue examining Black father-son relationships and exploring how sons perceive paternal involvement.

One component of father involvement is the impact on the psychological well-being of the child. Father involvement has been found to have a profound impact on the well-being of children beginning at birth and spanning throughout adulthood (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006). Individuals with quality father-child relationships have been found to be more self-accepting, mentally healthy, and successful in their careers, and they are more likely to adjust well socially (Allen & Daly, 2002). Furthermore, father involvement has been linked to social engagement,
empathic concern, moral maturity, self-direction, and self-control in adult children (Allen & Daly, 2002). Even within non-intact families, father involvement has been related to fewer emotional and behavioral problems in adolescence and better mental health outcomes in adulthood (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). Although there have been some studies about father involvement and adult psychological well-being (Allgood et al., 2012; Amato & Afifi, 2006), few have examined the perceptions of adult Black sons. It is important to examine perceived father involvement to understand its impact on the mental health functioning of Black sons.

**Problem Statement and Importance of Current Study**

A brief summary of the research on Black father-child relationships has highlighted the importance of this relationship, especially for Black boys. Studies have supported the significance of the Black father-son relationship on future development, both emotionally and educationally (Gordon et al., 2012). However, the issue remains that many Black fathers are portrayed as absent, deadbeat, or uninvolved. The image of Black mothers caring for their children has fared better than the image of Black fathers. In the absence of a Black father, Black males have been described as in crisis for several reasons. First, regarding interpersonal interactions, Black males with absent fathers have been found to have unhealthy attitudes toward deviance (i.e., inflicting harm onto others), fewer expressions of warmth, and restricted emotional connectedness (Doyle et al., 2015). Second, behavioral problems have been considered problematic among fatherless Black males, with increased levels in depression, conduct disorders, and externalizing behaviors (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). Finally, academic underachievement has been linked to paternal absence (Gordon et al., 2012).

It has been found that fatherless Black men are less likely to be involved in their own children’s lives than those whose fathers were present (Brown et al., 2018). On the other hand,
research has indicated that among those with involved fathers and father-figures, Black boys have been faring well in various areas of their lives, including academic achievement (Gordon et al., 2012), interpersonal relationships (Doyle et al., 2015), and self-esteem (Schwartz & Finley, 2006). However, the perceptions of Black sons are unclear. How do adult Black males perceive their relationships with their fathers? How do perceptions of fathers impact the psychological functioning of Black men?

The aim of this research was to examine the perceptions that Black sons have of their fathers’ involvement, nurturance, and emotional availability, and to assess whether feelings toward father involvement were related to how Black sons perceived their current psychological well-being. Evaluating the perceptions sons have of their fathers may inform how Black men develop their identities, including racial and masculine, and sense of self (Dick & Bronson, 2005). Exploring these relationships may also inform counseling psychologists on ways to facilitate dialogue between Black fathers and sons to enhance their relationships, or to encourage understanding, reconciliation, and forgiveness for Black fathers who may not have been as involved in their son’s lives.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions that Black men have of their fathers’ involvement, nurturance, and emotional availability, and to assess whether those perceptions were related to how Black men perceived their current psychological well-being. In this chapter, the theoretical and social science literature on fatherhood is reviewed. The primary ways that fathers have been defined is presented, followed by a brief overview of theories used in fatherhood research. Each of these reviews is grounded in the applicability of the theories to research on Black fathers. Studies on Black youths’ perceptions of their fathers are also reviewed, including a summary of the research on the experiences of Black sons. The final section of this chapter describes the purpose of the study, including the research questions and the hypotheses.

What is Fatherhood?

The most obvious definition of a father is the male parent who biologically contributes to the creation of a child (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). However, the concept of fatherhood goes beyond the biological contribution. Fatherhood involves the quality and quantity of fathers’ emotional, behavioral, and social involvement with their children (Marks & Palkovitz, 2004). A review of the social science literature reveals two approaches in conceptualizing fatherhood: (a) a typological view and (b) a theoretical one.

Types of Fathers

Various descriptors have been used to define fatherhood based on the extent to which fathers are believed to fulfill paternal responsibilities. Several common types tied to fathers are
described, but the list is not exhaustive. The types of fathers described are deadbeat dads, nurturant fathers, responsible fathers, and social fathers.

**Deadbeat Dads**

The term *deadbeat dad* has been used to describe men who have failed to live up to their parental responsibilities (C. Adams, 2005; K. Adams, 2001; Connor & White, 2006). Failure to provide financial support is the most significant feature of a deadbeat dad. According to Grall (2013), 37% of custodial mothers did not receive child support payments from fathers in 2011. In 2010, among noncustodial fathers providing support to children under the age of 21, 59% were White, 18% were Black, and 20% were Latino (Grall, 2013). Besides defaulting on child support payments, these fathers are considered to spend less time with their children (Myers, 2013). Furthermore, deadbeat dads may include those who are physically present, but socially and emotionally absent (Marks & Palkovitz, 2004).

**Nurturant Fathers**

Nurturant fathers are defined as those who focus on love and involvement rather than discipline and authority (Griswold, 1993). These fathers also emphasize personal growth and emotionality. Nurturant fathering involves being attuned to and listening to children’s needs, offering expressions of affection (e.g., hugs and kisses), reading bedtime stories, and demonstrating patience (Connor & White, 2006). According to Griswold (1993), nurturant fathering is considered ideal. These fathers are considered to foster personal growth and companionship with their children; such behavior has been found to enhance children's psychological well-being, self-confidence, maturity, and judgment. The benefits of nurturant fathering apply not only to children, but to fathers as well. According to Griswold (1993), nurturant fathers enjoy developing emotional bonds and having heart-to-heart conversations with
their children. These relationships contribute to fathers’ maturity, development (i.e., how they define and construct the fathering role), and physical health, as well as their caregiving and role modeling (Cabrera, 2003).

**Responsible Fathers**

Responsible fathers are those who provide financial support, emotional support, and care, and pursue legal paternity (Levine & Pitt, 1995). According to Doherty et al. (1998), establishing legal paternity provides children with benefits, including health care, child support or social security, and it may protect fathers' rights as well. Providing care and emotional support requires consistent involvement in children's lives, including warmth, discipline, role modeling, playfulness, and independence training (Doherty et al., 1998). According to Coley and Hernandez (2006), some low-income, unmarried, and racial/ethnic minority fathers fall short of being responsible fathers due to unstable employment experiences. Thus, in some respects, responsible fathers may be perceived as the opposite of deadbeat dads. Financial support is considered an essential component of fathering, and without sufficient monetary care, quality emotional and social support may be discounted (Marks & Palkovitz, 2004).

**Social Fathers**

Several scholars (Bzostek, 2008; Coles & Green, 2010; Connor & White, 2006) use the term *social father* to identify men of all races, whether biological fathers or not, who assume some or all the roles that fathers are expected to perform in the lives of children. According to Coles and Green (2010), “Little research has been conducted on social fathers, but it is known that they come in a wide variety: relatives…friends, romantic partners… of the mother, cohabitating or not; and community figures” (p. 8). They further contend that it is impossible to clearly capture the proportion of men who serve as social fathers, and few studies have focused
solely on this group of dads. It has been estimated that approximately 40% of children will spend
time living with a social father by age 12. Several changes in the family structure may provide a
plausible explanation for the emergence of social fathers. First, marriage remains a declining
institution in the U.S. (Parker & Stepler, 2017); up to 39% of U.S. fathers do not live with their
biological children, resulting in an increased number of single-mother families (Astone et al.,
2016). Second, 40% of U.S. children are born to unwed mothers who are involved with romantic
partners besides the biological father (Bzostek, 2008). In both situations, social fathers may step
in and serve a paternal role to non-biological children.

Theories of Fatherhood

The types of fathers reviewed above provides a glimpse at how fathers may be
categorized, but theories of fatherhood provide a basis for understanding how fathers function in
their children’s lives, especially the influence of paternal roles and responsibilities. Several
theories (e.g., social exchange, ecological systems, and family systems) have been used to
conceptualize fatherhood (Palkovitz & Trask, 2014). Most theories have been developed based
on White, middle-class fathers. As a result, these theories may or may not be appropriate when
conceptualizing Black fathers. The three theories reviewed below, attachment theory, identity
theory, and parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory), were selected because they
appear to address some of the complexities of family dynamics, paternal expectations, and
societal contributions—concepts that likely influence the identities of fathers from various racial
and economic backgrounds.

Attachment Theory

John Bowlby (1969) described attachment as an intense emotional bond stemming from
an infant’s innate ability to seek proximity with caregivers to ensure survival. The four
attachment patterns developed to describe infant-caregiver relationships are secure, avoidant, ambivalent, and disorganized. The secure attachment style involves the child comfortably exploring surroundings while maintaining a secure base with the primary caregiver. The avoidant attachment style involves the child showing no distress when the caregiver departs and returns. In ambivalent attachment, the child is saddened by the caregiver's departure but warms to strangers, and then shows some reluctance to warming up to the caregiver upon return. Lastly, disorganized attachment is characterized by fright, withdrawal, and other negative behaviors in the child when separated from the caregiver. Childhood attachment changes over time based on social interactions with caregivers and other familiar people; those interactions shape expectations about relationships and behaviors from and toward others, into and throughout adulthood (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Although there is some overlap with child attachment, a set of adult attachment styles was developed to highlight patterns within adult relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). There are four styles of adult attachment: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant. Securely attached individuals have positive views of themselves and others. Anxious-preoccupied individuals tend to have less of a positive view of themselves and high partner mistrust. Individuals with dismissive-avoidant attachment styles tend to deny the need for close relationships, hide their feelings, and distance themselves from sources of rejection. Those with fearful-avoidant attachment styles feel uncomfortable with emotional closeness, although they may long to experience such relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Initially, attachment research focused on whether fathers could serve as attachment figures. Then, the research examined fathers’ positions in an attachment hierarchy, hypothesizing that mothers were the primary attachment figure and fathers provided supplementary support to
the primary relationship (Bretherton, 2010). Over the last 40 years, research on father attachment has included studies related to attachment patterns, childcare, co-parenting, emotion regulation, familial support, and cultural/community context, among other topics (Palm, 2014).

**Identity Theory**

Derived from structural symbolic interactionism, identity theory was developed by Stryker and Serpe (1982) to explain how social structures affect self and the self’s effect on social behaviors. Specifically, the basis of identity theory is that the self emerges from the social positions that individuals have in society, the expectations attached to those positions, and the meanings ascribed to them (Stryker, 1980/2002). According to Stryker and Burke (2000), individuals have as many identities as distinct networks of relationships in which they play roles. Identities in the self are organized within a salience hierarchy that orders the roles according to societal (one’s network of social relationships) importance. Thus, the higher the salience of an identity, the greater the likelihood of engaging in behaviors associated with that identity. Commitment is another important component of identity theory and refers to the extent to which individuals’ relationships with their network depend on possessing a particular identity and role. So, the salience of an identity reflects commitment to the role requiring that identity. All in all, the salience of an identity reflects commitment to a role, and commitment shapes identity salience, which shapes role choice behavior (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Fatherhood is a role that has been evaluated using identity theory since the early 1990s (Pasley et al., 2014). The key concepts of identity theory (i.e., identity, salience, and commitment) have remained central within fatherhood research. Pasley et al. (2014) indicated that identity is considered to provide motivation for behaviors and is embedded in roles. Roles are embedded in social statuses. Collectively, the three concepts construct the self. For example,
a father (status) may consider himself a caregiver (position) who must be available (role) and provide resources (role) to his children.

The salience of the fatherhood identity is contingent on the level of commitment to being a father. Commitment is related to the efforts to confirm an identity; so, a father may try to display his paternal role and parenting behaviors to his support system/network. If a father's identity as a caregiver is most salient, he will likely allocate more time to providing childcare rather than engaging in less salient identities (e.g., career identity and forgoing longer work hours; Pasley et al., 2014).

**Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory)**

PARTheory (Rohner, 2004; Rohner et al., 2012) is an evidence-based theory of socialization and lifespan development that attempts to explain the relationship between parental acceptance and rejection. The theory is comprised of three sub-theories: personality, coping, and sociocultural systems. According to Khaleque and Rohner (2002), humans have an emotional need for positive responses (e.g., affection, care, comfort, support, nurturance, and love) from loved ones. The need for positive responses becomes more complex into adulthood and includes a (conscious and unconscious) yearning for positive regard from those with whom a bond is shared. On the other hand, rejected individuals appear to become less dependent. When positive responses are unmet by loved ones, humans develop socioemotional and cognitive dispositions specified within the personality sub-theory. Several of these dispositions include the following: hostility, defensive independence, impaired self-esteem, emotional unresponsiveness, and a negative worldview. The coping sub-theory postulates that some individuals cope emotionally with rejection better than others (Rohner, 2004). PARTheory's sociocultural systems sub-theory is used to explain the causes of parental acceptance-rejection as it relates to societal norms and
cultural beliefs (e.g., religion, family structure, political affiliation, and economic organization; Rohner et al., 2012). Numerous studies have incorporated PARTTheory as a theoretical framework to evaluate parental acceptance-rejection and its connection to behavioral problems, depression, substance abuse, father love, and various other issues (Rohner et al., 2012).

**Conclusion**

The theories reviewed in this section provide a glimpse at the multifaceted ways fatherhood has been researched. By continuing to incorporate different theories and perspectives into fatherhood research, there may be added clarity about how men identify with the fathering role, what influences their commitment to parenting, and what is the nature of the quality of father-child relationships. Although various theoretical frameworks have been used to assess fatherhood, the application of theories specifically related to research on Black fathers remains scarce and inconsistent (Roy, 2014). It is vital that more research is conducted to assess whether current theories are practical for studies about Black fathers, and to develop new theories that are tailored specifically for Black father research.

As the fatherhood literature continues to expand, it is imperative that in the context of theory, the experiences of Black fathers are explored to understand the unique dynamics of Black fathering and their function within Black families. Furthermore, it is important to identify and examine the factors that permit or impede them from successfully carrying out their paternal responsibilities. The following section provides a glimpse at how Black fathers are viewed based on the perceptions of youth, and more specifically, Black sons.

**Youths’ Perceptions of Fathers**

Research examining parent-child relationships has tended to focus on parent reports, but what about youths’ views of parents, specifically fathers? According to Ishii-Kuntz (1994),
youths’ perceptions of their fathers are shaped by the quality of paternal involvement. Research has indicated that young children have reported positive assessments of their fathers who were highly engaged (e.g., eating meals, playing sports, talking, and helping with homework) with them (Livingston & Parker, 2011; Ransaw, 2014). Adolescents and young adults have tended to hold fathers in high regard when viewing them as financially stable, loving, hardworking, and protective (Troilo, 2013). Furthermore, according to Troilo and Coleman (2008), the perceptions that young adults have had of their fathers were also influenced by paternal marital status, parental status (i.e., residency, adoption), and sexual orientation. Although research is growing, the father-child relationship is typically examined from the lens of fathers rather than their children. Furthermore, most studies on fatherhood have examined perceptions about parents collectively, with few focusing solely on youths’ perceptions of fathers. Topics studied include, but are not limited to, mental health issues (Mason, 2016), incarcerated fathers (Roettger & Swisher, 2011), tension in parent-child relationships (Birditt et al., 2009), and career development (Ginevra et al., 2015). In this section, the three studies reviewed were selected because they focused on the affective nature (e.g., emotional availability) of the father-child relationship from youths’ perspectives.

Lum and Phares (2005) assessed 713 children and adolescents' perceptions of parental emotional availability. Emotional availability was defined as the level of parental responsiveness, sensitivity, and involvement, regardless of children's emotional states. The Lum Emotional Availability of Parents (LEAP; Lum & Phares, 2005), a 15-item scale, was used to assess the perceptions of participants, ages 9 to 17, who resided in a large, southeastern, metropolitan city. Fifty-five percent of the participants were girls, 54% were Caucasian, 27% were African American, and 14% were Latino. Most ratings were of the biological parents
(89%), and there was variation in the parents' marital statuses (i.e., 40% married to each other, 24% divorced with at least one parent remarried, 23% divorced and not remarried, 10% single and never married, 3% widowed).

Among both children and adolescents, higher rates of maternal emotional availability were associated with lower rates of self-reported emotional/behavioral problems. However, the relationship between father's emotional availability and child and adolescent functioning was not as strong. Lum and Phares (2005) suggested that such differences between mothers’ and fathers' influences over their children’s functioning may have been due to mothers likely being the primary parent and typically more involved than fathers.

Regarding its limitations, there were no details provided about whether racial differences in responses occurred, so the extent to which the LEAP can be used with racial minorities is unknown. Also, recruitment of participants with non-biological fathers may have yielded more generalizable results. Future research focusing solely on father-child relationships might highlight the characteristics of involved fathers, and their effects of emotional availability on their children as youth and adults, which have possible implications on how to improve fathers’ emotional availability. Furthermore, continued use and psychometric study of the LEAP scale are warranted to ensure that the measure generates valid and reliable scores for diverse populations.

Phares et al. (2009) evaluated adolescent gender differences and similarities in feelings toward their parents. The authors also explored parents’ perceptions toward their adolescent child. Participants were 224 adolescents, ages of 12 to 19, with male and female participants equally represented. Both biological mothers and fathers of the adolescents also participated in the study. Most of the adolescents and parents were White (75.4%), with the rest of the
participants Black (12.1%), and Latino (11.6%). Eighty-five percent of the adolescents' parents were married to each other and living together, and most families were lower-middle to middle class. Both adolescents and parents completed the Perceptions of Parents (POP; Phares & Renk, 1998) measure, reporting their feelings about the other, adolescents’ view of parents and vice versa. The POP consists of two scales measuring positive affect (i.e., love, respect, appreciation toward parents) and negative affect (i.e., upset, disappointed, let down by parents).

Phares et al. (2009) found that regardless of gender, adolescents reported higher levels of positive affect and lower levels of negative affect toward their mothers in comparison to their fathers. However, male adolescents reported significantly greater positive affect toward their fathers than did girls. Regarding age, there were no significant relationships among male participants. However, females' age and negative affect toward their mothers were weak but significantly correlated, indicating that older girls were more likely to report higher negative affect toward their mothers than were younger girls.

Mothers reported significantly greater positive affect toward sons than did fathers, although mothers did not differ from fathers in reports of negative affect toward sons. Mothers and fathers did not differ significantly on reports of positive or negative affect for their daughters. Higher father positive affect was related to higher adolescent positive affect, for both sons and daughters. Negative affect was correlated significantly for fathers and their sons, but not with their daughters. So, higher father negative affect was related to higher male adolescent negative affect. For mothers and fathers, positive and negative affect were significantly inversely related to male and female adolescents affect. For example, among adolescent females with higher reported negative affect toward their fathers, their fathers reported lower positive affect toward their daughters.
This study adds to the psychological literature because it examined the nuances of parent-child relationships from the lens of both adolescents and their parents. Phares et al. (2009) demonstrated consistencies between the adolescents’ perceptions and their parents’ responses (e.g., both reported high or low negative affective toward each other), indicating that adolescents and their parents may view the quality of their relationships similarly. On the other hand, there were some limitations to this study. Most of the families assessed were married and included both biological parents; by including non-traditional families (e.g., blended, stepfamilies) the results may have been more representative of the general population. There was also no discussion about racial differences or similarities. Nevertheless, the study included information about father-adolescent relationships, which remains understudied. Future studies might focus primarily on father-adolescent relationships and investigate specific components of the affective nature (e.g., emotional connectedness, support, warmth, and closeness) of such relationships.

Babore et al. (2016) recruited 594 Italian adolescents (50% female) between the ages of 10 and 13 and analyzed the connection of depressive symptoms to self-esteem and perceived parental emotional availability. Participants completed the Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1992), Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), and the maternal and paternal forms of the Lum Emotional Availability of Parents Scale (LEAP; Lum & Phares, 2005) at their schools, located throughout central Italy. Nearly 88% of the participants came from middle-class, intact families, 83% of their parents had at least a high school education, and most of the parents were in their early to mid-40s.

Correlational analyses revealed that depressive symptoms were significantly and negatively related to self-esteem and parental emotional availability. Depression was significantly related to age, but among female participants only (i.e., depressive symptoms
increased with age). Males and females differed significantly on self-esteem and maternal emotional availability (with females scoring higher on both measures), but not paternal emotional availability. Both self-esteem and parental emotional availability significantly predicted depression; higher levels of self-esteem and parental emotional availability predicted lower levels of depression, although gender and age were not significant predictors. The results demonstrate the importance of quality parent-child relationship, with maternal emotional availability being slightly more important than paternal emotional availability for both girls and boys.

One strength of this study was the evaluation of parental emotional availability among Italian students, an ethnic group that has been understudied in relation to this topic, but there were a few limitations. The age range of the participants was restricted, limiting the generalizability of the study. Furthermore, the reliability of the participants’ self-reported self-esteem and depressive symptoms, specifically among adolescents, is unclear. Future studies might include parent reports of the adolescents’ symptoms (in addition to self-reports) to assess for accuracy/consistency. Despite its limitations, Babore et al. (2016) demonstrated how evaluation of paternal emotional availability via the LEAP is useful cross-culturally.

Few studies (Ginevra et al., 2015, Phares et al., 2009) have provided general conclusions about youths’ perceptions of their fathers; most of the research has consisted primarily of White participants (McGue et al., 2005, McKinney et al., 2008). It is imperative that Black youths’ perceptions are explored given that the relationship dynamics with their fathers may look different than that of the dominant culture. The following section focuses primarily on the perceptions that Black youth have of their fathers.
Black Youths’ Perceptions of Fathers

A university database search solely on Black youth perceptions of Black fathers indicated the common topics in this area to be on father absence (Hunter et al., 2006), marital status (Bulanda, 2010), and idealized views of biological fathers (Peart et al., 2006). For this review, studies on younger children or non-Black participants were omitted, and only those that provided youth/adult child perceptions of their fathers were examined. Three studies about Black youth perceptions of fathers are reviewed below involving adolescent perceptions about the nature of the relationship, young adults’ idealized and actual perceptions of the relationship, and adult children’s retrospective perceptions of the father-child relationship.

Bulanda (2010) analyzed data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth 1997 (NLSY97; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002) to examine 320 Black adolescents’ perceptions about their fathers, who were all married to their mothers and remained married over the course of the entire study (other demographic data were not provided). The NLSY97 is a national survey of 9,000 youth who have been interviewed annually. Youth were between 12 and 16 years old during the initial interviews in 1997. Bulanda (2010) found that more than 75% of the adolescents expressed respect, admiration, and pleasure about spending time with their fathers. Nearly 70% of the adolescent boys claimed that they wanted to be like their fathers, while less than 50% of the girls endorsed the same statement. Bulanda (2010) suggested that the gendered nature of role modeling might have accounted for the gender differences. In other words, daughters may have been less likely to want to be like their fathers because they did not share the same gender.

There were several limitations to this study. It is difficult to generalize the conclusions because no information about socioeconomic status, geographical location, or other demographic
variables was provided. Incorporating youth who had cohabitating, non-residential, or divorced fathers would have been more inclusive, and it may have provided insight about differences between the perceptions of children with married versus unmarried fathers. Nevertheless, the findings from this study demonstrate that Black adolescents may have positive perceptions of their married fathers, especially male adolescents, who seemed to perceive their fathers as good role models. Bulanda (2010) reported that the favorable attitudes that participants had toward their fathers remained true regardless of SES. This finding is an indication that Black adolescents may view their fathers with respect and affection regardless of their ability to provide sufficient monetary support. The findings from this study are valuable, but additional research is needed that does not involve the use of dated longitudinal data, and the perceptions of more Black youth from a wider age range, including those in later adolescence and adulthood, and varying family dynamics (i.e., blended families, single or non-biological parent homes).

Peart et al. (2006) conducted a qualitative study examining sixty-four 21-year-old Black adult children’s (27 males and 37 females) idealized and actual current perceptions of their biological fathers. Thirty percent of the participants' fathers were involved, 60% were uninvolved, 5% were unknown, and 5% were deceased. The interviewees’ responses revealed three key expectations of fathers: (a) fathers were to be present, (b) they were to supply basic financial needs, and (c) they were expected to provide guidance, encouragement, and control over their children (Peart et al., 2006). Participants praised fathers who were involved, and they were critical of those who were absent or only seemed to be present for special occasions. They suggested that material gifts were symbolic of their fathers' ability to provide for them.

Several participants expressed sorrow or resentment toward fathers they knew but with whom they had no relationship. They attributed some of their personal problems to not having
their fathers' influence, and several blamed themselves for their fathers' absence during childhood. Some participants had compassion for their fathers' "difficult circumstances" (Peart et al., 2006, p. 77), which included poor relationships with the participants’ mothers, lack of transportation, incarceration, or substance abuse. Less than 30% of the participants reported that their fathers were actively involved throughout their childhood (e.g., attending activities, being available, providing financial support, and consistently communicating with them) whether they lived together or not. Among those whose fathers had been present throughout their entire childhood, participants described their fathers in terms reflecting love, appreciation, and respect (Peart et al., 2006). The participants wanted fathers who cared and who did their best to maintain relationships with them. This study demonstrates the importance of fostering father-child relationships, regardless of residency status. Positive father-child relationships are especially important for Black fathers who do not reside with their children. Participants' perceptions of social (non-biological) fathers were not considered; however, they are important given the role that social fathers have in the lives of many Black children (Connor & White, 2006).

Thomas et al. (2008) examined the psychological presence of fathers based on adult children's retrospective perceptions of closeness and frequency of father visitation during their childhood. Thomas et al. (2008) analyzed the perspectives of 196 Black and 454 White adult children, who averaged 35 years of age, and half of which were women. Participants described the extent to which their fathers were present or absent throughout their childhood. Thomas et al. (2008) also examined the relationship across race, family structure, income, and father presence. Adult children's perceptions of maternal support for father-child relationships and perceptions of the father-mother relationships were analyzed as well.
Significant racial differences were found; nearly 24% more White adult children lived with both biological parents, and 21% more Black adult children lived only with their biological mother. Although 12% more Black fathers than White fathers visited their children regularly, 20% more Black fathers rarely/never visited their children. Among participants from mother-stepfather families, Black adult children reported feeling significantly closer to their biological fathers than did White adult children. Mothers’ support of father-child relationships was perceived more positively among Black adult children than White adult children. Black adult children were also found to have more positive perceptions of their biological parents’ relationships with each other than did White adult children, regardless of family structure. However, those who lived only with their biological mothers throughout childhood had the most negative perceptions of the father-mother relationship, across races. Thomas et al. (2008) confirmed that Black adult children experienced feelings of closeness to their non-residential fathers, particularly when their fathers made efforts to maintain frequent visitation.

Thomas et al. (2008) concluded that regardless of race, adult children reported when they lived with both biological parents while growing up, they tended to feel closest to their fathers. However, many adult children reported feeling close while growing up with fathers who did not reside with them. The authors also found that non-residential Black fathers play a significant role in their children's lives, and they are more involved with their children than are fathers from other racial backgrounds. A limitation of this study was the imbalance in the number of White versus Black participants. Nevertheless, this study provides insight about Black adult children’s feelings toward their fathers; regardless of their physical relationships (i.e., visitation, residence, physical presence), many Black fathers remained involved with their children, and their adult children maintained positive perceptions of their fathers.
The studies reviewed in this section about the perceptions that Black youth have of their fathers indicated that regardless of children’s age, and paternal residency status, Black fathers who are involved in their children’s lives are perceived with love, respect, and admiration (Bulanda, 2010; Peart et al., 2006). Black boys aspire to be like their fathers, and sons and daughters value the time spent with their Black fathers (Bulanda, 2010). However, Black youth have mixed perceptions of fathers who are absent or rarely involved (Peart et al., 2006). Some are critical of their fathers for not being present, while others are compassionate toward their fathers’ circumstances (Peart et al., 2006). Regardless of the quality of their childhood experiences, it seemed that Black fathers leave lasting impressions on their children from childhood and into adulthood (Thomas et al., 2008). There appear to be some differences in the experiences that sons and daughters have of their fathers (Bulanda, 2010). The impact that Black fathers have on their sons is examined further in the following section.

**Black Sons and their Fathers**

Research on Black father-son relationships is expanding, particularly in the areas of masculinity and racial socialization (e.g., Allen, 2016; Ide et al., 2018), adolescent health behaviors (e.g., Caldwell et al., 2004; Hunt et al., 2015), education (e.g., Gordon et al., 2012; Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013), and adult mental health outcomes (e.g., Mason, 2016; Watkins et al., 2011). However, research continues to primarily examine the Black father-son relationship from the lens of the parent, with few studies exploring the perceptions that Black sons have of their fathers. Studies that have focused primarily on the father-son relationship, with only Black, male participants, have been reviewed below. The studies selected provide a foundation on how young, Black males have perceived their fathers, including paternal absence, relationship quality, parenting styles, and issues of sexuality.
Hunter et al. (2006) explored the experiences of 20 Black males, between the ages of 15 and 22, who were transitioning into manhood without a father present. Their biological mothers raised them all, 91% grew up without a biological or stepfather, and extended family members raised 38% of the males. Participants were recruited at a recreation center that provided social services to an urban, income-based community. The young men reflected on missing lessons that only a father could teach, including how to (a) talk to women, (b) approach a man on a job, (c) play basketball, and (d) be a Black man. Despite expressing disappointment about their fathers' absence, the participants celebrated surviving while fatherless. The young males vowed to be better men than their fathers were, and they expressed gratitude for their mothers' support (Hunter et al., 2006).

There were several limitations and strengths to this study. The small sample size and use of participants from one neighborhood limits the generalizability of its results. It is also possible that the participants provided socially desirable responses because they were all from the same community and may have known each other personally. While focusing on a low-income group of participants may have provided insight about experiences based on a specific social class, it might have also been beneficial to explore the experiences of middle-class and older Black men who also grew up without their fathers. On the other hand, this study provides details about how young Black men adjusted to life without a father, and many of them remained optimistic about themselves and their futures, regardless of their fathers’ absence.

Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013) explored the relationship between perceived parenting style and academic achievement with 153 Black males who were in the 11th and 12th grade. Predictors of high school achievement included family structure and parental monitoring. The measures used were the Parenting Style Index (Steinberg et al., 1994), and the Academic
and Family Supplemental Questionnaire, which the first author created and validated, to measure perceptions of parents, parental supervision, and community, family, and educational background information. The researchers found that parenting style (e.g., authoritative, authoritarian, and neglectful) was not significantly related to academic achievement (i.e., enrollment in honors or advanced placement classes, GPA); however, fathers' expectations and level of education, and family structure (i.e., two-parent vs. one-parent households) were associated with Black male academic achievement. There was a negative relationship between fathers’ expectations and participants’ GPA that Hines and Holcomb-McCoy (2013) were unable to explain. They indicated that negative perceptions of fathers’ expectations might reflect another aspect of Black father-son relationships that requires future research. Nonetheless, the results indicate that family and paternal involvement is pertinent to the academic success of Black male adolescents.

Hussen et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative analysis of gay, HIV-positive, Black men’s relationships with their fathers. The authors contended that father-son relationships are relevant to understanding risky sexual behaviors among youth, and that differences may exist based on race and sexuality. Some of the participants acknowledged that they engaged in risky sexual behaviors due to having limited/no father involvement, poor emotional quality within the father-son relationship, and lack of communication about sex and masculinity norms. Hussen et al. (2014) noted that several of the gay youth disclosed their sexuality to mothers instead of fathers, and fathers more often had negative reactions to their sons’ same-sex attraction. A phenomenological approach was used to interview 20 participants, between ages 17 and 24, about their relationships with fathers/father-figures, and paternal influence on the participants’ psychological and situational risk for HIV. Seventeen participants had some degree of contact
with their fathers at some point in their lives (six had fathers who were incarcerated). Three participants had never met their fathers; despite being unable to compensate for an absent biological father, they identified other father-figures (i.e., older brothers, uncles, grandfathers, teachers) who served as male role models.

Some participants reported having a positive regard for their fathers, including the six participants whose fathers were in and out of jail. They endorsed positive relationships because their fathers were involved whenever they were not incarcerated. Other participants expressed resentment toward fathers whose presence was inconsistent (90% reported some degree of paternal absence during childhood), were financially unstable, or made empty promises throughout their childhood to spend time with their sons. Several participants expressed mixed emotions about fathers who were previously absent but currently re-engaging in their lives. Regarding conversations about sex and sexuality, only one participant recalled discussing sex with his father at the age of 10, while a few others had relatives who talked to them about it. Most of the participants reported minimal communication with their fathers that led them toward risky sexual behaviors. A few of the participants’ fathers were reportedly accepting of their sons’ sexuality. All of those who reported having positive feelings toward their fathers also indicated that their fathers were supportive, regardless of their sexual identities and HIV statuses.

Hussen et al. (2014) noted that most participants desired more involvement from their fathers during childhood to teach them how to become men. Participants who had positive feelings toward their fathers described them as being consistently present and accepting of their sexuality. Several participants reported poor father-son relationships as traumatic, and they endorsed symptoms related to low self-esteem, depression, anger, and delinquency. Those with symptoms also engaged in risky sexual behaviors. Participants with fathers who were not
accepting of their sexuality reported resorting to impulsively engaging in sex without protection; most participants who had poor communication with their fathers were uninformed about sexual health and risks. Several participants with absent fathers reported seeking older men as romantic partners to gain financial stability, and for the love and support that they did not receive from their fathers.

A limitation of this study is that it did not analyze perceptions of participants whose fathers were present and involved in their lives. Including participants whose fathers were more involved may have provided more well-rounded information about the experiences of gay Black men. Future research might include HIV-negative participants, as well as the perceptions of participants with father-figures when biological fathers are absent. It may also have been beneficial to include details from sons and fathers about their experiences and perceptions of one another, rather than just the sons’ perceptions. Nonetheless, this study demonstrates the importance of Black father-son relationships and highlights the perceptions that gay Black men have of their fathers, which may be related to their sexual behaviors and romantic relationship choices.

Hunt et al. (2015) conducted a study examining the relationship between economic stress, father-son relationship quality, and depressive symptoms among 65 adolescent, Black males. Participants were between ages 14 and 19, and on the verge of becoming first-time fathers. Nearly 80% had not completed high school (40% remained full-time students) and 32% of the participants were employed. All participants had maintained a relationship with their fathers, although only 14% shared the same household. A depressive symptomatology scale was utilized to assess the frequency of depressive symptoms among the adolescents within a one-week period. One item was used to assess the adolescents’ perceived family-of-origin financial
status/level of economic stress. A paternal emotional support scale was used to assess how participants perceived the support received from their fathers. The scale was also used to measure feelings of closeness to, reciprocity of feelings from, and level of openness in discussing personal problems with their fathers. Relationship satisfaction and paternal conflict were also assessed.

Forty-nine percent of the participants reported that their families had just enough to get by financially, 35% said they had more than enough, and 15% indicated that they barely had enough money to sustain themselves financially. Sixty percent of the participants identified their mothers as the primary providers. There was not a significant interaction between economic stress and paternal relationship satisfaction, and there was not a significant difference in depressive symptoms of adolescents with greater economic stress when comparing higher or lower levels of paternal conflict. However, participants with low economic stress and high father-son conflict had the highest risk for depression.

On average, participants reported moderately-high emotional support and relationship satisfaction, as well as moderately-low conflict with their fathers. Hunt et al. (2015) found that participants who reported high paternal conflict and relationship dissatisfaction also reported more depressive symptoms. There was a strong correlation between paternal relationship satisfaction and emotional support ($r = .80$), though depressive symptoms were not significantly correlated with emotional support ($r = -.14$). However, depressive symptoms had a moderately-low correlation with conflict ($r = .29$) and relationship satisfaction ($r = -.29$).

The results of this study showed an association between the psychological well-being of adolescent males and their relationships with their fathers. However, the impact of the participants’ feelings about becoming first-time fathers on their perceptions of economic stress,
depressive symptoms, and paternal support were not evaluated. It is possible that concerns about becoming fathers and providing for their own children may have affected their perceptions; the perceptions of adolescent Black males who were not preparing for fatherhood may have been different. Future research might also examine the nature of support (i.e., extent of involvement and monetary support) and conflict that may exist within Black father-son relationships.

Consideration of other factors (e.g., quality of maternal relationship, maternal support of father-son relationship, and paternal residency) may also have provided a more thorough representation of the perceptions that Black males have of their fathers.

Each of the studies reviewed in this section have provided enriching details about Black father-son relationship dynamics. The studies have demonstrated how Black father presence is valuable to the well-being of Black sons regarding mental health (Hunt et al., 2015), masculinity (Hunter et al., 2006), sexual behaviors (Hussen et al., 2014), academic achievement (Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013), and attitudes toward their own current/future experiences as fathers (Hunt et al., 2015). Many Black fathers serve as the primary models of manhood, work ethic, behavioral conduct, support, encouragement, and community connectedness for Black boys (Gordon et al., 2012). Given the significance of a paternal presence in the lives of Black men, more research focusing on Black sons’ perceptions of their fathers is needed. Examining sons’ perceptions would not only tap into an understudied area of research (Ide et al., 2018), but it would also provide a clearer understanding of Black sons’ experiences and perceptions of their fathers. Giving Black sons a voice might also provide information about their perceived levels of emotional closeness to their fathers, the quality of paternal involvement, and the potential impact that Black fathers have on the psychological well-being of their sons.
Adult Child Psychological Well-Being

There is no consensus in the scholarly literature on how to define psychological well-being. According to Ryff (1995), key dimensions of psychological well-being include the following: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. There has been some overlap between clinical and counseling psychology research, alluding to self-actualization, individuation, and maturity as defining components of psychological well-being (Ryff, 1995). According to Magyar-Moe et al. (2015), psychological well-being is not simply the absence of malfunction, but the presence of assets, strengths, and other positive attributes. The authors suggest that psychological well-being encompasses positive functioning experienced when individuals realize their human potential (e.g., autonomy and personal growth). They conceptualize psychological well-being as a primarily private experience focused on the challenges encountered in one's personal life (Magyar-Moe et al., 2015).

Studies published between 2000 and 2020 about adult psychological well-being and father involvement have included topics such as adult-daughter psychological well-being (Allgood et al., 2012), the impact of the maternal relationship (Allen & Daly, 2002), and the effects of parental divorce on adult psychological well-being (Amato & Afifi, 2006). Investigating adult psychological well-being and father involvement is important because individuals with quality father-child relationships have been found to be more self-accepting, mentally healthy, and successful in their careers, and more likely to adjust well socially (Allen & Daly, 2002). Six studies were found that alluded to, or loosely explored, adult well-being and father involvement; the three studies reviewed below were selected because they primarily examined the father-child relationship without focusing on younger children. The studies
involved examinations of longitudinal data, various racial and ethnic groups, and the association between adult-child perceptions of their fathers and the adult-child’s psychological well-being.

Flouri and Buchanan (2003) used longitudinal data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS; Brown & Goodman, 2014) to analyze the role of father involvement in mental health outcomes in adolescence (age 16) and adult life (age 33). The relationship was also explored between father involvement at age 7 and emotional and behavioral problems at age 16. The relationship was also examined between paternal involvement at age 16 and psychological distress at age 33, while controlling for mother involvement. The sample consisted of 8,441 individuals born in England, Scotland, and Wales in 1958 who participated in six follow-ups over the course of 42 years. Forty-nine percent were male and 51% were female participants. By age 16, 88% of participants had involved biological fathers and 95% had involved biological mothers.

Participants’ emotional well-being was examined using the Rutter ‘A’ Health and Behavior Checklist (Rutter et al., 1970), which was completed by caregivers when the participants were 7 and 16 years of age. To assess psychological distress, the Malaise Inventory (Rutter et al., 1970) was completed by participants when they were 33 years of age. When participants were 7 and 16 years old, teacher reports were collected to examine mother and father involvement using the same items for each parent. Participants’ general ability, academic motivation, and educational attainment were assessed at ages 11, 16, and 20, respectively (Brown & Goodman, 2014).

The results of the study showed family structure and parental SES as unrelated to children’s later mental health. General ability and academic motivation at age 7 were negatively related to emotional and behavioral problems in adolescence, while emotional and behavioral
problems at age 7 were positively related to problems in adolescence. Neither mother nor father involvement at age 7 was found to be related to emotional well-being at age 16. Furthermore, parental involvement at age 16 was not found to be associated with psychological distress at age 33. However, psychological distress in adulthood was found to be associated with emotional/behavioral problems in adolescence, particularly for women. Mother involvement at age 7 was found to have no bearing on father involvement at age 7 and mental health outcomes at age 16. So, the level of mother involvement was not found to predict the level of father involvement. However, higher levels of early father involvement were found to be related to lower levels of emotional/behavioral problems in non-biological father involvement, even in non-intact families. Associations between parental involvement at age 16 and psychological distress at 33 were found to be stronger for daughters, although father involvement at age 7 and psychological distress at 33 was found to be stronger for sons than for daughters. The relationship between father involvement at age 16 and psychological distress at 33 was also found to be stronger when mother involvement at age 16 was lower. Likewise, the relationship between father involvement at age 7 and psychological distress at age 33 was found to be stronger when mother involvement at age 7 was low (instead of high involvement).

One of the limitations of this study was that the mothers/mother-figures were the primary informants on behalf of the children, for 90 to 98% of the cases, while fathers served as informants for up to 6% of the cases. This difference may have resulted in biased reports with fathers providing less input regarding their children and their own levels of involvement. As with any longitudinal study, attrition, which varied across the six follow-ups from birth to age 42, may have been a limitation, particularly for participants who may not have been traced to respond, reducing the representative nature of the study. Despite such limitations, this study provided rich
details about the long-term effects of father involvement and their impact on mental health outcomes into adulthood.

Watkins et al. (2011) evaluated the presence of father-figures in their sons’ lives until the age of 16 and assessed variations in depressive symptoms and psychological distress, within the context of socio-demographic differences of the sons as adults. The sample involved 999 African American, 506 Caribbean Black, and 193 non-Hispanic White men, who completed the National Survey of American Life (NSAL; Jackson et al., 2004). Adult sons were 18-59 years of age, and most of them were married and employed. White sons had the most education and African American sons had the lowest household income. The following information was used: (a) demographic data (e.g., age, marital status, employment status, education, and income) (b) identification of father-figure (biological father, grandfather, uncle, etc.), (c) experiences of discrimination (over the last year—overt, chronic, or routine), (d) self-esteem, (e) personal mastery, (f) depression, and (g) psychological distress.

Regarding whom raised them until age 16, most adult sons identified a biological or stepfather being present: 85% among White men, 70% among Caribbean Black men, and 63% among African American men. Fifteen percent of African American, 13% of Caribbean Black, and 8% of White men reported having no father in the home during adolescence. Regarding discrimination, White men reported experiencing it the least, and Caribbean Black men endorsed it the most. There were no differences across racial/ethnic groups regarding self-esteem or personal mastery, and although White men reported experiencing the most depressive and psychological distress symptoms, there were no significant differences in symptoms across racial/ethnic groups.
Among African American men, having a father-figure present was not associated with depression, and having no father-figure was associated with decreased psychological distress. Having had more discriminatory experiences was associated with slightly higher depression, although higher self-esteem and greater mastery (i.e., perceived control over one’s environment and the things that happen in one’s life) were associated with lower depression. Having a grandfather as a father-figure was associated with higher depression among African American men. Among Caribbean Black men, divorce/separation and unemployment was associated with increased depression. Furthermore, having a grandfather as a father-figure was associated with higher psychological distress. Among White men, those who were partnered, employed, and had higher income reported the lowest level of depression, while those who were never married, unemployed, and younger (<60 years of age) reported experiencing the most psychological distress.

Limitations of this study included the lack of details about father involvement during adolescence, apart from identifying whether a father-figure was present. Such details may have provided clarity on why (or why not) father-figures predicted the participants’ well-being in adulthood. Furthermore, there were no results pertaining to the White male participants’ experiences of their fathers and the extent to which they affected their mental health outcomes in adulthood. Despite its limitations, this study adds to psychological research by clarifying how Black fathers affected two Black ethnic groups. The research showed similarities and differences in symptoms of depression and psychological distress across racial/ethnic groups, and it demonstrated how participants experienced their fathers’ presence differently.

Sebokova (2018) explored the relationship between father involvement, from the perspective of the father and the child, and positive indicators of well-being. The study consisted
of 130 university students from Slovakia and their fathers. Participants averaged 19 years of age, and 70% were girls. The following scales were used: Father Involvement Scale (Finley & Schwartz, 2004), Scale of Psychological Well-being (Ryff, 1995), and the Father Presence Questionnaire (Krampe & Newton, 2006). Information about the fathers’ daily business hours and level of education was also collected.

Sebokova (2018) found no significant difference in father involvement (as perceived both by participants and their fathers) when considering fathers’ education and average daily business hours. Father involvement was found to be predictive of dimensions of well-being in male participants. Specifically, father involvement was found to be associated with personal growth and purpose in life for sons. Father involvement (as perceived by participants) was found to be positively associated with participants' positive relationships with others and purpose in life. Indicators of well-being were found to be associated with participants' reports, but not fathers' reports of paternal involvement. This differential pattern suggested that participants' perceptions of their fathers more accurately reflected paternal involvement than actual father reports of involvement. Father involvement seemed to predict participants’ well-being; however, those with both involved parents seemed to benefit more than those with only one involved parent.

Limitations to this study included use of a sample with a narrow age range, as well as the sample primarily being female. It is possible that reports of psychological well-being may have yielded different outcomes based on age and gender. Furthermore, only residential, biological fathers were included in this study. Examining the experiences of participants with non-residential, non-biological fathers may have provided different results as well. Nonetheless, this study included Slovakian participants, adding a diversity component to father involvement research. Sebokova (2018) confirmed that psychological well-being outcomes were based on
participants’ perceptions of their fathers, rather than actual father reports. This finding demonstrates the value of researching children’s perceptions to clarify the impact that fathers have on their offspring from the lens of the child rather than the parent.

Children and their parents seemed to remain closely connected across the life span, and the quality of intergenerational relationships appeared to be central to the health and well-being of both generations (Thomas et al., 2017). Among Blacks specifically, it has been found that family relationships influence personal happiness and life satisfaction (Ellison, 1990). Affective bonds with fathers have been found to be related to personal happiness, less depression, self-esteem, and life satisfaction among adolescent Black males (Zimmerman et al., 1995). However, there is limited research on how Black father involvement affects the psychological well-being of adult Black males.

**Purpose of the Current Study**

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the perceptions that Black men have of their fathers’/father-figures’ current emotional availability, and the perceptions of their fathers’ involvement and nurturance during childhood. The aim was also to explore Black men’s current psychological well-being based on their perceptions of their fathers. Prior studies have primarily explored the father-son relationship from the father’s perspective, but additional research is needed with more racially diverse samples. There are no known studies that have examined both retrospective Black father involvement in childhood and current paternal emotional availability in adulthood. The retrospective perspectives of Black sons have been explored primarily with young adult college students (Doyle et al., 2015; Schwartz & Finley, 2006), but few studies have examined the experiences of older Black males as well as those from various levels of education. Furthermore, there are no known studies that have evaluated the
perceived emotional availability of Black fathers, so the current study fills a gap in the literature specific to the Black father-son relationship. There have been some studies that have examined how Black fathers influence their children’s well-being (Hofferth, 2003; Jones & Mosher, 2013), but few have focused solely on Black sons, particularly in adulthood.

Exploring how Black sons perceive their fathers and the nature of their interactions might shed light on the significance of the positive aspects of this bond (i.e., the focus on emotional availability, nurturance, and psychological well-being). Additional insights may emerge about the dynamics of the father-son relationship based on how these Black sons recall as a child their fathers in relation to how these adult sons currently viewed their fathers. This study is important because Black fathers have been found to influence the development and well-being of their sons from early childhood through adulthood (Gordon et al., 2012; Ide et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the quality of Black father-son relationships remains understudied, and few studies have examined Black fathers from the lenses of Black sons. Exploring the perspectives of adult Black sons may provide a more comprehensive view of Black fathers, such as how they engage each other, and how Black sons may rear their own Black boys.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What was the nature of the relationship between Black men’s retrospective and current perceptions of their fathers/father-figures regarding involvement, nurturance, and emotional availability?

2. Did past and current perceptions of their fathers/father-figures predict the psychological well-being of Black men?
Hypotheses

The current study tested the following hypotheses:

1. Black men who reported more positive retrospective impressions of their fathers’ nurturance during childhood were expected to report higher levels of father emotional availability in adulthood.

2. Black men who reported more positive retrospective perceptions of their fathers’ involvement during childhood were expected to report higher levels of father emotional availability in adulthood.

3. Black men who reported more positive retrospective impressions of their fathers’ nurturance during childhood, and higher levels of current father emotional availability in adulthood, were expected to report better current psychological well-being.

4. Black men who reported more positive retrospective perceptions of their fathers’ involvement during childhood, and higher levels of current father emotional availability in adulthood, were expected to report better current psychological well-being.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The initial number of participants was 407 Black men, but the actual sample was reduced to 177 men based on a priori criteria of the study (230 cases removed). These criteria were as follows: (a) racial identification; (b) gender (n = 1; female to male transgender\(^1\)); (c) citizenship (n = 4; not U.S. citizens\(^2\)), (d) academic status (n = 2; less than high school/GED), (e) incomplete measures (n = 52), (f) the time of completion (n = 27; less than 10 minutes or greater than 45 minutes), (g) attention checks (n = 8), (h) father or father-figure presence (n = 99; absent in adulthood\(^3\)) and (i) potential response style (n = 37). Regarding potential response styles, this matter is addressed in the results section.

The demographic information on the final sample is reported in Table 1. All participants reported being of African-descent: Black American/African American (86%), Black African/African (8%), Black-Caribbean/Afro-Caribbean (2%), Biracial (3%), and Black-Latino/Afro-Latino (1%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 82 years (\(M = 41.2, SD = 12.57\)). Regarding marital status, participants endorsed the following: 51% were married, 41% single, 6% divorced, 1% endorsed other (e.g., engaged, domestic partnership), and 1% widowed. Participants’ highest level of education were the following: 10% completed high school, 18% completed some college, 12% completed technical or associate degrees, 6% were current undergraduate and graduate students, 32% attained a bachelor’s degree, and 22% completed a graduate/professional

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\(^1\) Research has shown a difference in parenting styles according to the gender of the parent and the child (Phares et al., 2009).

\(^2\) Cultural differences have been found in parenting styles (Watkins et al., 2011).

\(^3\) Having a father for at least some time during adulthood was integral to addressing the research questions.
### Table 1

**Summary of Participant Demographic Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Reported Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>152</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-Latino</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Races</td>
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<td>Age Range</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
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<td>Income Range</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 177. Participants were on average 41.2 years old (SD = 12.57).*
degree. Income level was reported to be below $20,000 for 7% of participants, between $20,000 and $44,999 for 16%, between $45,000 and $139,999 for 63%, and $140,000+ for 14% of participants. Sixty-two percent of the participants reported having children of their own \((n = 110)\), and 38% reported having no children \((n = 67)\).

**Measures**

Several measures were used: (a) a demographic questionnaire, (b) the Nurturant Fathering Scale \((NFS, \text{Finley} \& \text{Schwartz}, 2004; \text{Williams} \& \text{Finley}, 1997)\), (c) the Father Involvement Scale \((FIS, \text{Finley} \& \text{Schwartz}, 2004)\), (d) the Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale \((LEAP; \text{Lum} \& \text{Phares}, 2005)\), and (e), the Flourishing Scale \((FS, \text{Diener} \text{et al.}, 2010)\).

**Demographic Questionnaire**

The demographic questionnaire was composed of items pertaining to race/ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, marital status, highest level of education, type of father or father-figure, family make-up (e.g., biological, adopted, or deceased parents; biological and non-biological children), and occupation. The demographic questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

**The Nurturant Fathering Scale**

The Nurturant Fathering Scale \((NFS, \text{Finley} \& \text{Schwartz}, 2004; \text{Williams} \& \text{Finley}, 1997)\) was used to assess the relationships that participants reported having had with their fathers/father-figures while growing up. The NFS was selected because it is the only known instrument designed to examine adults’ retrospective perceptions of their childhood experiences of their fathers. The NFS consists of nine items, each rated on a 5-point scale, with different labels attached to the ratings scale (e.g., \(1 = \text{Not at all} \) to \(5 = \text{A great deal} \); \(1 = \text{Not close at all} \) to \(5 = \text{Extremely close} \)) based on item content. No items are reverse scored. The ratings are summed
across the nine items, the total ranging from 9 (most negative view of fathering) to 45 (most positive view of fathering). Higher scores on the NFS reflect greater perceived nurturance in the father-son relationship during childhood. Appendix B contains the full version of the NFS. A sample item from this scale is, “How emotionally close were you to your father?” (Finley & Schwartz, 2004, p. 161).

In prior research, based primarily on Hispanic, White, and Black college students (Finley, 1998; Finley & Schwartz, 2004) or African, East Indian, and Mixed high school students (Williams & Finley, 1997), Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the NFS scores yielded reliability estimates ranging from .88 to .94. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the scale items produced a single factor based on a sample of primarily Hispanic (55%), White (23%), and Black (11%) college students (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using the same sample of college students, also supported a one-factor model, comparative fit index (CFI) was .99, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was .11 (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). However, the RMSEA, an indication of misfit, was higher than recommended (Steiger, 1990). Because the same sample was used for both factor analyses, the strength of the evidence provided is limited.

Doyle et al. (2011) conducted a CFA on the NFS scores with a sample of 212 Black college students (ages 18-25). The authors reported that an 8-item, 1-factor model yielded the best fit (CFI = .982; RMSEA = .084). Item 9, which was designed to tap perceived psychological presence, was dropped because of its ambiguity. Doyle et al. (2011) contend that the item may not tap nurturance, but measure the extent of impact that fathers have on their children. As a result, the authors recommended that an 8-item modified model of the NFS was most applicable to Black participants in tapping the perceptions of the quality of relationship with Black fathers.
Doyle et al. (2011) reported a reliability estimate of .947 for the 8-item NFS scores. They also provided evidence of concurrent validity between the 8-item modified version of the NFS and the Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005; \( r = .88, p < .01 \)), with lower scores on scales indicative of poor fathering. Evidence of discriminant validity for the NFS scores is discussed in relation to the Father Involvement Scale below.

The NFS has been used to assess the experiences of Hispanic, African American, and Caribbean college students (Doyle et al., 2015; Reid, 2011; Reid & Finley, 2010); however, there has been little focus solely on the experiences of Black men. The NFS has also been used to assess perceptions within various father-figures (i.e., stepfathers, social fathers, non-residential fathers; Schwartz & Finley, 2006). Furthermore, nurturance has been linked to psychosocial outcomes (Schwartz & Finley, 2006), so one aim was to assess whether the nurturant fathering measure could be specifically associated with components of psychological well-being among Black men. Moreover, the NFS was created to examine adult perceptions of their childhood experiences of their fathers, which distinguishes it from other measures that typically focus on children’s current experiences of their fathers. For the purposes of this study, the 9-item version was used, but the reliability and validity of the scale scores was tested to ensure its psychometric soundness for use with the Black participants. The complete scale, including item 9, is contained in Appendix B.

**The Father Involvement Scale**

The Father Involvement Scale (FIS, Finley & Schwartz, 2004), a self-administered scale, is used to measure the degree of reported involvement (how involved fathers *actually* are) that participants have with their fathers/father-figures during childhood. This instrument is designed to measure adolescent and adult children’s retrospective perceptions of their fathers’
involvement in 20 domains reflected in its 20 items. The FIS is comprised of three subscales: Expressive Involvement, Instrumental Involvement, and Mentoring/Advising Involvement. The Expressive Involvement subscale (8 items) was designed to tap caregiving, leisure, companionship, the sharing of activities, and emotional, spiritual, physical, and social development. The Instrumental Involvement subscale (8 items) was designed to measure protection and discipline, the development of responsibility and independence, moral/ethical development, career development, the providing of income, and the monitoring of schoolwork. The Mentoring/Advising Involvement subscale (4 items) was designed to measure mentoring/teaching, advising, intellectual development and the development of competence; this subscale is comprised of domains that are associated with both instrumental and expressive involvement (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). The Expressive and Instrumental Involvement subscales measure reported and desired involvement; however, the Mentoring/Advising Involvement subscale measures reported involvement only.

Participants are asked to rate the FIS items using a five-point Likert scale on two areas of involvement: (a) reported (1 = not at all involved) to (5 = very involved) for all three subscales and (b) desired (1 = much less involved) to (5 = much more involved) for the Instrumental and Expressive Involvement subscales only. No items are reverse scored. Except for the Mentoring/Advising Involvement subscale, ratings are summed across all items for the other subscales to obtain two total scores, one for reported and one for desired, with each total ranging from 20 to 100. Higher scores on the FIS reflect greater perceived involvement in the father-son relationship during childhood. For the purposes of this study, only the reported involvement was assessed for all three of the subscales because the focus was on the actual relationship, not the
desired. A sample item from this scale is, “How involved was your father in your intellectual development” (Finley & Schwartz, 2004, p. 162).

Based on a sample of primarily Hispanic (55%), White (23%), and Black (11%) college students, Cronbach's alphas for scores of the reported involvement subscales and scale total were as follows: Reported Expressive Involvement = .93, Reported Instrumental Involvement = .91, Reported Mentoring/Advising Involvement = .90 and total reported involvement = .97 (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). Utilizing the same sample, an EFA of the reported father involvement items produced two factors (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). Factor I was labeled Reported Expressive Involvement and Factor II was labeled Reported Instrumental Involvement. Items reflecting four domains (i.e., intellectual, competence, mentoring, and advising) loaded onto both factors. The same sample of college students was also used to perform CFAs of reported involvement, which supported a three-factor model—Expressive, Instrumental, and Mentoring/Advising Involvement (CFI = .98, RMSEA = .09). Double-loaded items were treated as Factor III (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). Support for its factor structure is limited due to using the same sample twice instead of independent samples.

Finley and Schwartz (2004) found that all the Father Involvement Scale (FIS) subscales and total scores were highly correlated (.83 to .89) with the Nurturant Fathering Scale (NFS) based on a sample of Hispanic, White, and Black college students. Finley and Schwartz (2004) considered these findings evidence of convergent validity between the FIS and NFS scales. Correlations also showed that Desired Father Involvement subscale scores (from the FIS) were modestly and negatively related to the overall NFS (-.27 to -.36) and to Reported Father Involvement subscale scores (-.24 to -.35), providing evidence of discriminant validity. Beyond
its relationship with the NFS, no other studies have demonstrated evidence of convergent or discriminant validity.

The FIS has been used to assess the experiences of Black and Hispanic college students (Doyle et al., 2015; Reid, 2011; Reid & Finley, 2010); however, research solely on the experiences of Black men is needed. This measure was selected for the current study because it involves exploring the quality of the father-child relationship, rather than assessing it based on the amount of time spent together. Furthermore, the FIS is more contemporary, emphasizing coparenting instead of parenting as a more traditional “feminine” task (Finley and Schwartz, 2004). This measure is also more relevant to older, adult children who have more complex perceptions, whereas most other father involvement measures are designed for younger children. The FIS has also been used to assess perceptions of non-biological fathers, which has been beneficial in evaluating different types of fathers (e.g., stepfathers, social fathers, non-residential fathers; Schwartz & Finley, 2006). Lastly, the measure was also selected because it explores how adult children perceive their fathers when they were growing up. This retrospective examination of the relationship is unlike other measures of the current relationship, which were also explored for the purposes of this study. Appendix C contains the reported involvement version of the FIS.

The Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale

The Lum Emotional Availability of Parent Scale (LEAP; Lum & Phares, 2005), a self-administered scale, is used to assess parental emotional availability. For the development of the LEAP, the concepts of parental responsiveness and parental behavior are used to define parental emotional availability. The LEAP consists of 15 items that are used to rate mothers and fathers' behaviors. For the purposes of this study, only fathers' behaviors were measured. The responses on the LEAP are rated on a 6-point scale (e.g., 1 = Never to 6 = Always). No items are reverse
scored. Total scores can range from 15 to 90, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of parental emotional availability. Scale items are contained in Appendix D, which has only the father statements. A sample item from this scale is, "My father is emotionally available to me" (Lum & Phares, 2005, p. 224).

The reliability estimates and factor analysis on the LEAP scores were conducted using mostly White (65%), female (76%) college students. Cronbach's alpha for the overall LEAP scores was .97, and the scores on the father form of the scale yielded a reliability estimate of .98. The test re-test reliability correlation coefficient was .85 for the father form, time span ranging between four and 16 days ($M = 7$ days; Lum & Phares, 2005). All 15 items were used in an EFA, producing one factor for both the mother and father forms of the LEAP (Lum & Phares, 2005). The percentage of variance for the 15-item father form of the LEAP was 94%.

The sample of primarily White, female college students was also used to assess the validity of the LEAP. The Children’s Report of Parental Behavior Inventory—Revised (CRPBI; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1970), Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI; Parker et al., 1979), and the My Memories of Upbringing (EMBU; Winefield et al., 1990) measures were used to assess the construct validity of the LEAP (Lum & Phares, 2005). To control for a high number of statistical analyses, a Bonferroni correction was used, providing a corrected $p$-value of $p < .002$. Evidence for convergent validity of the LEAP was based on several high intercorrelations with similar measures. The father form of the LEAP was positively associated with the Acceptance (.76) and Positive Involvement (.77) scales of the CRPBI. It was also positively associated with the Care (.73) scale of the PBI, as well as the Emotional Warmth (.83) scale of the EMBU. As evidence of discriminant validity, the father form of the LEAP was not examined in relation to
the Overprotection (-.06) scale of the PBI and the Withdrawal of Affection (-.14) scale of the CRPBI.

The LEAP has been used to evaluate the experiences of racial minorities, including Blacks and Latinos, and even international samples, such as Italians and Turks (Babore et al, 2016; Gokce & Yilmaz, 2018; Lum & Phares, 2005); however, racial/ethnic minorities remain underrepresented in research utilizing the LEAP. Furthermore, the LEAP was initially piloted with children, adolescents, and college students (Lum & Phares, 2005); most studies thereafter have primarily involved child and adolescent participants, with minimal use of the LEAP with adult samples. So, the current study provides additional psychometric data on the LEAP regarding its use across father types, in addition to evaluating the reliability of the scores with Black, male participants who are 18 or older. For the current study, the LEAP was used to examine how emotionally available fathers are perceived to be by their adult sons. This measure is also appealing because it has been used to explore emotional availability among both biological and non-biological fathers.

The Flourishing Scale

The Flourishing Scale (FS) is a brief measure of psychological well-being created to complement other more extensive measures of subjective well-being. The FS (Diener et al., 2010) is a self-administered assessment used to measure several aspects of their own psychological functioning from the viewpoints of Black males. Components of psychological well-being measured by the FS are having meaning and purpose, maintaining supportive and rewarding relationships, being engaged and interested, contributing to the well-being of others, demonstrating competency, showing self-acceptance, having optimism, and being respected (Diener et al., 2010). The FS consists of 8 items rated on a 7-point scale (e.g., 1 = Strongly
Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree). Total scores range from 8 to 56, with higher scores reflecting an individual with many psychological resources and strengths. No items require reverse scoring. Scale items are contained in Appendix E. A sample item from this scale is, “I am optimistic about my future” (Diener et al., 2010).

Using a sample of primarily women (68%) college students (racial make-up of sample not provided), Cronbach’s alpha for the FS scores was .87 (Diener et al., 2010). The test re-test reliability correlation coefficient was .71, with re-test occurring after one month. Utilizing the same sample of college students, an EFA of the 8 items produced one factor. The percentage of variance for the FS was 53%. Convergent validity was also supported with the sample of college students using several measures: The Satisfaction with Life Scale (r = .62; Diener et al., 1985), the Scale of Psychological Well-being (r = .64; Ryff et al., 2007), and the Basic Needs Satisfaction Scale (r = .62; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Evidence of discriminant validity was supported as the FS was negatively correlated with the Centre for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (r = -.60; Radloff, 1977) and the UCLA Loneliness Scale (r = -.28; Russell, 1996). The FS has primarily been used to explore the well-being of White college students in the U.S., and other students from various European countries (Hone et al., 2014; Huppert & So, 2013).

Attention Check

The integrity of participant responses was examined using dummy questions randomly included in both the hardcopy and online versions of the research packet (Vaerenbergh & Thomas, 2013). There were four multiple choice questions: (a) Please select the letter “B,” (b) Please select the word Mandarin, (c) Please select the letter “D,” and (d) Please select Father.
questions incorrectly, their full responses were removed from the data set. One exception was the
*Father Research* item; within this item, one of the four multiple-choice options was *Father-Son
Research*—this response was also accepted for this item only.

**Procedures**

The university's institutional review board (IRB) approved all procedures and measures. Participants were recruited by using numerous solicitation methods, including distribution of fliers and announcements via student electronic mailing lists, telephone, social media, email, and face-to-face interaction (see Appendix F for flyer and announcement). All solicitation methods included the purpose of the study, inclusion criteria, contact information, and incentives for participating.

Most participants (94%) completed the research packet online. They were given a link to the study via social media, email from the researcher, or text message. To retrieve the research packet, participants first accessed an informed consent document (see Appendix G for informed consent) and could only proceed after clicking a button indicating voluntary consent and agreement to participate in the study. A hard copy version of the survey was also available as an alternative method of completion. The researcher distributed the research packets containing the consent form and self-report measures to participants after the study was introduced, informed consent was described, and all questions were answered. The researcher collected the research packets a week later at the same location of distribution. Participants were told that they could keep the consent document from the research packet. The instructions provided in the hard copy packets matched those given in the online packets. Completion of the packet was also considered indication of consent. In both the online and paper research packets, the scales were randomly ordered to limit the effect of sequence on the responses. As an incentive, participants were given
the opportunity to enter to win one of four $50 Amazon gift cards for completing the entire
survey. At the conclusion of the data collection process, a random number generator was used to
select four participants, who were contacted and mailed an Amazon gift card by the researcher.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

The data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26.0) software. The final sample size was 177. In the method section a summary was provided on the removal of 193 of the 230 cases; however, 37 cases were removed due to the presence of a potential response style after examining the descriptive statistics of the major variables on a reduced dataset of 214. A summary of the initial descriptive statistics for this sample is presented in Table 2 (means, standard deviations, ranges, skew, and kurtosis) for the Father Involvement Scale (FIS), the Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale (LEAP), the Nurturant Fathering Scale (NFS), and the Flourishing Scale (FS). Initial evaluation of the skew and kurtosis for the FIS, LEAP, and NFS scores fell within the normal range (skew: -0.60 to -0.61; kurtosis: -0.77 to -0.88). However, the FS scores were negatively skewed (-3.09) and extremely leptokurtic (11.22).

A closer examination of the FS scores showed that the average FS score (49.26) was almost at the maximum score (56) of the scale. Numerous participants endorsed either all the lowest or all the highest response ratings, resulting in a negatively skewed and extremely peaked distribution of scores, a marked departure from a normal distribution. Based on the assumption of a normal distribution, it would be reasonable to expect a small percentage of cases would rate all the items low or high. However, the distribution of the FS scores, depicted in Table 3, was counter to a normal distribution. Thus, an evaluation of the distribution of scores on the FS showed a potential response style. Response styles are the tendency to respond differently to a range of items from what the items were designed to measure (Vaerenbergh & Thomas, 2013).
Table 2

*Initial Descriptive Statistics of FIS, LEAP, NFS, and FS Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>FIS</th>
<th>LEAP</th>
<th>NFS</th>
<th>FS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>67.89</td>
<td>62.40</td>
<td>31.43</td>
<td>49.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>25.37</td>
<td>22.50</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>8.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>48.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>56.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
<td>-3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>11.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N = 214. FIS = Father Involvement Scale; LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale; NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; FS = Flourishing Scale.*

Given the level of skew and kurtosis of the FS scores, 37 cases were identified and removed for those with perfect low or high scores. Removing extreme scores may constrict the ranges of scores as well as distort the true reality of the FS scores for this sample (Zijlstra et al., 2011). As a result, this issue is a potential limitation of this study and is addressed in the discussion. Table 3 also includes the frequencies after the perfect scores were removed. Once the perfect scores were removed, the skew and kurtosis for the NFS, FIS, and LEAP remained within the normal range (skew: -0.56 to -0.59; kurtosis: -0.76 to -0.83). Although elevated and still not normally distributed, the skew and kurtosis for the FS scores were reduced substantially (skew: -1.84; kurtosis: 4.47). Most participants still rated themselves closer to the maximum FS score (*Mdn* = 51; Max score = 55).

The Mahalanobis distance test (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) was conducted on the primary variables and three cases were identified as outliers (*p* < .001). However, the chi-square values of these cases were just beyond the critical chi-square values. As a result, these cases were not removed and included in all analyses. The final sample used for statistical analyses was 177.
Means, standard deviations, reliability estimates, and correlations for the FIS, LEAP, NFS, and FS scores were re-calculated after removing all perfect low and high FS scores and are presented in Table 4. Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the scales’ scores ranged from .84 to .98. For this study, the level of statistical significance was set at .05 for rejecting the null hypotheses, with a minimum effect size set at 10% ($r$ or $R^2$; Cohen, 1992).

---

Table 3

*Frequency Distributions of the Flourishing Scale (FS) Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Range</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before Removal of Perfect Scores (^a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-47</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-55</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>85.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| After Removal of Perfect Scores \(^b\) |           |            |                       |
| 8-15        | 0         | 0.0        | 0.0                   |
| 16-23       | 0         | 0.0        | 0.0                   |
| 24-31       | 2         | 1.1        | 1.1                   |
| 32-39       | 8         | 4.5        | 5.6                   |
| 40-47       | 31        | 17.5       | 23.2                  |
| 48-55       | 136       | 76.8       | 100.0                 |
| 56          | 0         | 0.0        | 100.0                 |

\(^a\) $N = 214$

\(^b\) $N = 177$
Table 4

Final Summary of Descriptive Statistics of FIS, LEAP, NFS, and FS Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>FIS</th>
<th>LEAP</th>
<th>NFS</th>
<th>FS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIS</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.82*</td>
<td>.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td>.18**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFS</td>
<td>.82*</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>73.00</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>34.00</td>
<td>51.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>67.99</td>
<td>61.31</td>
<td>31.04</td>
<td>49.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>24.60</td>
<td>21.90</td>
<td>10.76</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>55.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s α</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
<td>-1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>-0.76</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 177. FIS = Father Involvement Scale; LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale; NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; FS = Flourishing Scale.

*p ≤ .01, **p ≤ .05

Five of the six correlations were statistically significant and meaningful. Moderately positive correlations were found between the FIS and the LEAP ($r = .58$), and between the NFS and the LEAP ($r = .62$). Black men who rated their fathers higher on perceived nurturance and involvement in childhood also rated their fathers higher on emotional availability in adulthood. A strong positive correlation was found between the FIS and the NFS ($r = .82$), indicating that Black men who rated their fathers higher on perceived involvement in childhood also rated their fathers higher on nurturance in childhood. The NFS and the FS were not significantly related ($r = .12$); however, the FIS ($r = .15$) and the LEAP ($r = .18$) had weak, but statistically significant
relationships with the FS measure. These correlations did not meet the effect size threshold for interpreting the findings.

**Exploratory Factor Analysis**

An EFA, using the principal axis extraction method, was conducted to assess the factor structure of the Nurturant Fathering Scale (NFS) with a sample of Black male participants. Scores for the nine NFS items met the assumptions for an EFA, including normality, linearity, and the absence of multicollinearity. None of the items exhibited severe skew or kurtosis, and linearity was supported through visual inspection of scatterplots, and the presence of moderate correlations. The absence of multicollinearity was confirmed through the correlation matrix. The correlation matrix was factorable: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic (KMO; Kaiser, 1974) = .941, and Bartlett’s test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1950), \( \chi^2 = 1718.844, \text{df} = 36, p < .001 \).

The NFS scores produced a single factor accounting for 77% of the variance. The factor coefficients for the nine items ranged from .76 to .92. The results of the EFA indicated that all the items reflected a single construct. A parallel analysis and a scree plot also suggested that one factor should be retained. These findings were consistent with those reported by the authors of the scale (Finley & Schwartz, 2004), supporting its use with a Black male sample. Table 5 summarizes the EFA of the NFS scale items, including the factor pattern coefficients, KMO, eigenvalue, and the percent of variance.
Table 5
Summary of Principal Axis Factor Extraction of the Nurturant Fathering Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Items</th>
<th>Factor Pattern Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How much do you think your father enjoyed being a father?</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When you needed your father’s support, was he there for you?</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did your father have enough energy to meet your needs?</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Did you feel that you could confide in your father?</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Was your father available to spend time with you in activities?</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How emotionally close were you to your father?</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When you were an adolescent, how well did you get along with your father?</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Overall, how would you rate your father?</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. As you go through your day, how much of a psychological presence does your father have in your daily thoughts and feelings?</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.

Demographics and Major Variables

To understand the potential effects of demographic variables on the primary variables in the study, descriptive statistics and some inferential statistics were conducted. Four demographics were examined: Level of education, income, marital status, and children. A series of inferential statistics were conducted to assess whether a relationship existed between the key variables and demographics. Tables of the descriptive statistics and analyses are in Appendix I. Twelve one-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effects of education, income, and marital status on each of the four outcome variables: father nurturance, involvement, and emotional availability, and participants’ psychological well-being. The assumption of
Homogeneity of variance (HOV) was tested and satisfied based on Levene's F test for most of the ANOVAs, apart from education on nurturance and emotional availability, and income on emotional availability.

**Education**

Education was coded into three levels to increase adequate sample sizes for each cell. The first level consisted of high school diplomas, GED, technical, and vocational degrees; the second level contained some college, current undergraduate, associates and bachelor’s degrees; and the third level consisted of current and completed graduate degrees, as well as professional degrees. The two ANOVAs that satisfied the HOV assumption, father involvement \(F(2, 174) = .331, p = .718\) and participant psychological well-being \(F(2,174) = .836, p = .435\), were not statistically significant across the key variables. Welch’s tests, instead of the regular ANOVA, were performed on the two variables that violated HOV. There was no statistical significance on nurturance \(F(2, 52.39) = 1.170, p = .318\) or on emotional availability \(F(2, 51.04) = .364, p = .697\). Overall, education had no statistically significant effect on father nurturance, involvement, emotional availability, and on participants’ psychological well-being.

**Income**

Income was coded into four ranges to maintain adequate cell sizes: <$20,000, $20,000-$44,999, $45,000-$139,999, and $140,000+. Three ANOVAs satisfied the HOV assumption: nurturance\(F(3,173) = .637, p = .592\), involvement \(F(3, 173) = 1.179, p = .319\), and psychological well-being \(F(3,173) = .626, p = .599\). Of the three ANOVAs, only psychological well-being was found to statistically significant \(F(3,173) = 3.865, p = .010, \eta^2 = .063\). Statistically significant post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that participants at the <$20,000 level (M = 45.50, SD = 6.05) reported lower levels of psychological
well-being compared to participants at the $45,000-$139,999 level (M = 50.18, SD = 4.87).

Regarding the effect of income on emotional availability, the HOV assumption was violated, so Welch’s test was performed and there was statistical significance [$F(3, 34.38) = 3.641, p = .022$]. Given the unequal variances and sample sizes, Games-Howell test was deemed most appropriate for the post hoc comparisons; however, there were no statistically significant differences between the levels of income. This discrepancy is not uncommon and may be indicative of the difference in focus and power—omnibus versus individual test as well as the control of Type I error by using the Game-Howell test (Hsu, 1996). The post-hoc tests are focused on two-way comparisons, not any combinations of contrast that may have been the result of the omnibus significance (Hsu, 1996).

**Marital Status**

Marital status was recoded to maintain adequate cell sizes: single, married, and other, which included divorced and widowed participants. All four of the ANOVAs met HOV:

- Nurturance [$F(2,174) = .258, p = .773$], involvement [$F(2,174) = .066, p = .936$], emotional availability [$F(2,174) = .699, p = .498$], and psychological well-being [$F(2,174) = 2.895, p = .058$]. Overall, marital status had no statistically significant effect on father nurturance, involvement, emotional availability, and participants’ psychological well-being.

**Children**

Four independent samples t-test were conducted to examine the mean differences on four outcome variables, paternal nurturance, involvement, and emotional availability, and participants’ psychological well-being, based on children versus no children conditions. None of the t-tests were statistically significant. There were no mean differences between participants who had children versus those who did not on the scores for the measures listed above.
Primary Analyses

Nurturant Fathering, Father Involvement, and Emotional Availability

For the first hypothesis, it was expected that Black men with a more positive impression of their fathers’ nurturance during childhood would have a more positive view of their fathers’ emotional availability in adulthood. To test the first hypothesis, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to examine whether nurturance (NFS) predicted the level of emotional availability (LEAP) in Black men’s perceptions of their fathers, after controlling for the effects of three demographic variables: (a) highest level of education, (b) age, and (c) children. Level of education was treated as an ordinal value, with the following coding: 0 = high school graduate (included GED), 1 = some college (included current undergraduate, associates, and technical degrees), 2 = bachelor’s degree, and 3 = started/completed graduate degree. The variable of children was coded 0 = no children and 1 = at least one child.

Demographic variables were entered in the first step of the model, and the nurturance scores were entered in the second step. A summary of the hierarchical multiple regression findings for hypothesis one is provided in Table 6, including unstandardized coefficients, beta weights, squared semi-partialss ($sr^2$), the variance accounted for by the model ($R^2$), and change in variance ($\Delta R^2$).

For hypothesis one, at the first step of the hierarchical regression, the three demographic predictors, children, education, and age, in the model were not statistically significant $F(3, 173) = .793, p = .499$. At step two, entry of the NFS resulted in a statistically significant model $F(4, 172) = 27.00, p < .001; \Delta R^2 = .372$. Specifically, nurturance had a unique contribution ($\beta = .61, p < .001$). In general, Black men who had a more positive nurturing view of their father during childhood also reported their father as being more emotionally available in adulthood.
Table 6

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Emotional Availability from Nurturance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>sr²</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>∆R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-12</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-2.99</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>-07</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.37*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>&lt; -01</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-2.45</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>-05</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFS</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>.61*</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 177. NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE B = standard error; β = beta/standardized regression coefficient; sr² = semi-squared partial/part correlation; R² = coefficient of determination; and ∆R² = R-square change.

*p < .001.

For the second hypothesis, it was expected that Black men’s more positive impressions of their fathers’ involvement during childhood would have a more positive view of their father emotional availability in adulthood. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to test whether childhood involvement (FIS) predicted the level of current emotional availability (LEAP) in Black men’s perceptions of their fathers, after controlling for the effects of education, age, and children. Demographic variables were entered in the first step of the model, and involvement scores were entered in the second step. A summary of this regression is presented in Table 7, including unstandardized coefficients, beta weights, squared semi-partials (sr²), the variance accounted for by the model (R²), and change in variance (∆R²).
Table 7

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Emotional Availability from Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>sr²</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>∆R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-2.99</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-3.57</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 177. FIS = Father Involvement Scale; B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE B = standard error; β = beta/standardized regression coefficient; sr² = semi-squared partial/part correlation; R² = coefficient of determination; and ∆R² = R-square change.

*p < .001

At the first step of the hierarchical regression, the omnibus test for the three demographic variables was not statistically significant F(3, 173) = .793, p = .499. Entry of the FIS into step two resulted in a statistically significant model, F(4, 172) = 21.94, p < .001; ∆R² = .324. Involvement had a unique effect (β = .58, p < .001). Black men who reported a higher level of involvement with their fathers during childhood also reported their fathers were more emotionally available in adulthood, after controlling for education, age, and children.

Emotional Availability and Psychological Well-Being

For hypothesis three, it was expected that Black men who had more positive impressions of their fathers’ nurturance during childhood, and higher levels of father emotional availability in adulthood, would have a more positive effect on their current psychological well-being. To test
the third hypothesis, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to examine whether
depending on the determinants of paternal nurturance (NFS) and emotional availability (LEAP) would predict Black men’s well-being (FS), after controlling for the effects of the three demographic variables (i.e., education, age, children). A summary of the hierarchical regression findings for hypothesis three is provided in Table 8, including unstandardized coefficients, beta weights, squared semi-partial correlations, the variance accounted for by the model ($R^2$), and change in variance ($\Delta R^2$).

**Table 8**

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Well-Being from Emotional Availability and Nurturance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE_B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$sr^2$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
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<td>0.43</td>
<td>.07</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>&lt; -.01</td>
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*Note. $N = 177$. LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale; NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; $B =$ unstandardized regression coefficient; $SE_B =$ standard error; $\beta =$ beta/standardized regression coefficient; $sr^2 =$ semi-squared partial/part correlation; $R^2 =$ coefficient of determination; and $\Delta R^2 =$ R-square change.*

*p < .05.*
At the first step of the hierarchical multiple regression for hypothesis three, the demographic predictors entered into the model were not statistically significant \( F(3, 173) = 1.882, p = .134 \). At step 2, entry of the NFS and the LEAP resulted in a statistically significant model \( F(5, 171) = 2.503, p = .032, \Delta R^2 = .037 \). NFS was not statistically significant \( (\beta = -.004, p = .968, sr^2 < .001) \). The age variable had a significant unique effect \( (\beta = .22, p = .018, sr^2 = .03) \) at step two, indicating that with increases in age, Black men reported an increase in current psychological well-being. The emotional availability predictor also had a significant effect \( (\beta = .20, p = .04, sr^2 = .02) \). After controlling for the demographic variables, Black men who reported their father as being more emotionally available in adulthood also reported having better current psychological well-being.

For hypothesis four, it was expected that Black men who had more positive impressions of their fathers’ involvement during childhood, and higher levels of father emotional availability in adulthood, would have a more positive effect on their current psychological well-being. Hierarchical regression was used to examine whether paternal involvement (FIS) and emotional availability (LEAP) would predict Black men’s well-being (FS), after controlling for the effects of the demographic variables. The variables were entered in the following order: the demographic variables entered in the first step of the model and the FIS and LEAP were entered in the second step. A summary of the hierarchical regression findings for hypothesis four is provided in Table 9, including unstandardized coefficients, beta weights, squared semi-partialials \( (sr^2) \), the variance accounted for by the model \( (R^2) \), and change in variance \( (\Delta R^2) \).

For the hierarchical multiple regression for the fourth hypothesis, the omnibus test for the three demographic variables was not statistically significant \( F(3, 173) = 1.882, p = .134 \). Entry of the FIS and the LEAP into step two resulted in a statistically significant model, \( F(5, 171) = \).
2.634, \( p = .025; \Delta R^2 = .04 \). At the individual level, neither the LEAP (\( \beta = .152, p = .095, sr^2 = .015 \)) nor the FIS (\( \beta = .071, p = .435, sr^2 = .003 \)) were statistically significant. However, the age variable had a significant unique effect (\( \beta = .22, p = .017, sr^2 = .032 \)) at step two, indicating that with increases in age, Black men reported an increase in current psychological well-being.

**Table 9**

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Well-Being from Emotional Availability and Involvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( SE B )</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( sr^2 )</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( \Delta R^2 )</th>
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<td>.20*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

*Note. N = 177. LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale; FIS = Father Involvement Scale; \( B \) = unstandardized regression coefficient; \( SE B \) = standard error; \( \beta \) = beta/standardized regression coefficient; \( sr^2 \) = semi-squared partial/part correlation; \( R^2 \) = coefficient of determination; and \( \Delta R^2 \) = R-square change.*

*\( p < .05. \)
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions Black men have of their relationships with their fathers, specifically, adult sons’ retrospective perceptions of their fathers’/father figures’ involvement and nurturance during childhood, and their current emotional availability. The aim was also to explore whether perceptions of their fathers predicted Black men’s current psychological well-being. Four hypotheses were tested; partial support was found for three of them. Three demographic variables (i.e., age, children of their own, and highest level of completed education) were also included to account for their impact on emotional availability and psychological well-being, prior to testing the main effects. In this chapter the findings are discussed in the context of prior research in this area, then limitations of the study, and implications for practice, concluding with directions for future research.

Childhood Nurturance and Adulthood Emotional Availability

For the first hypothesis, it was expected that Black men who reported more positive retrospective impressions of their fathers’ nurturance during childhood would report higher levels of father emotional availability in adulthood. This hypothesis was supported. After controlling for age, children, and education, perceived nurturance in childhood was found to be a predictor of emotional availability in adulthood. Black men who perceived their fathers as more nurturing during their childhood also reported their fathers as being more emotionally available during their adulthood. This finding extends the research on Black fathers’ relationships with their Black sons, especially sons’ perceptions of their fathers. There is no known research that has examined Black adult sons’ perceptions of Black father nurturance during childhood in relation to perceived Black father emotional availability in adulthood. Father nurturance is a
relatively new concept, as past research (Ishii-Kuntz, 1994; Lamb, 2000; Yeung et al., 2001) has focused on the amount of time fathers have spent with their children rather than the quality of their interactions. The nurturance construct operationalized with the NFS used in this study was developed based on PARTheory (Rohner, 2004) and the notion of parental acceptance and father love (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). The few studies on father nurturance have focused solely on the perceptions of college students (Doyle et al., 2011, 2015; Reid & Finley, 2010; Schwartz & Finley, 2006), so the current study fills a gap in this literature by focusing on Black men from various age groups and educational backgrounds. Furthermore, emotional availability has primarily been studied regarding the parent-adolescent (Babore et al., 2016; Bosco et al., 2003) and mother-child relationships (Biringen et al., 2000; Ziv et al., 2000). The current study focused solely on paternal emotional availability, providing insight about Black father-son dynamics from the retrospective lens of the sons, who were primarily of middle-class background, based on educational and income level.

Although no previous studies have substantiated the current findings from the lens of adult Black sons from a primarily middle-class background, the results are plausible given that Finley and Schwartz (2004) conceptualized nurturant fathering to represent the extent to which adult children perceive their fathers as having been emotionally available, loving, and caring during their childhood. Because there may be some overlap between what is measured by the nurturance and emotional availability scales, it is understandable that Black sons’ perceptions remained consistent from childhood to adulthood, and the relationship between nurturance and emotional availability may have continued over time. However, this suggestion has not been confirmed by any previous research related to parents, in general, or fathers.
Childhood Involvement and Adulthood Emotional Availability

For hypothesis two, it was expected that Black men who reported more positive perceptions of their fathers’ involvement during childhood would report higher levels of father emotional availability in adulthood. This hypothesis was supported: perceived involvement in childhood was found to be a predictor of emotional availability in adulthood for primarily middle-class Black men. This study is considered the first to examine childhood involvement of Black fathers in relation to emotional availability in adulthood, so there is no research that corroborates this finding. This finding might be considered expected. The Nurturant Fathering Scale and Father Involvement Scale have been found to be interrelated (Schwartz & Finley, 2004). Thus, it is not unexpected that those who would score their father high on nurturance would also score their fathers high on involvement. This pattern, which was the first hypothesis, was supported. As a result, it was foreseeable that the second hypothesis would be supported—a relationship between involvement and emotional availability. According to Cabrera et al. (2007), the effects of father involvement may be specific to certain periods of a child's development, or the effects may be cumulative, accounting for changes in the fathering role over time. Support for hypothesis two may reflect a more cumulative impact of father involvement, indicating that experiences during and beyond childhood may influence perceptions of emotional availability in adulthood (Cabrera et al., 2007; Palm, 2014). However, this pattern needs to be examined through longitudinal research to confirm this explanation.

Nurturance, Emotional Availability, and Current Psychological Well-Being

For the third hypothesis, it was expected that Black men who reported more positive retrospective impressions of their fathers’ nurturance during childhood, and higher levels of current father emotional availability in adulthood, would report better current psychological
well-being. This hypothesis was partially supported. Nurturance was not found to be a predictor of psychological well-being. Some previous studies have found a positive association between nurturance and psychological well-being, including with Black participants (Schwartz & Finley, 2006; Veneziano, 2000; Veneziano & Rohner, 1998). However, there was one study (Doyle et al., 2015) in which Black father nurturance was not predictive of psychological well-being among a group of traditionally-aged Black college students. The authors suggested a difference in their findings may have been due to use of the Nurturant Fathering Scale, rather than another measure related to nurturance, or because a third of their Black participants reported on the nurturing behaviors of a non-biological father-figure. Similar explanations are plausible for the current study, in addition to differences in age—the current study had considerably older ($M = 41.2$) participants and the sample was primarily middle class. Also, the current study included the Flourishing Scale, which was not normed on a racially diverse sample; it is possible that the previous studies included more culturally appropriate psychological well-being measures for their participants.

Regarding the relationship between emotional availability and psychological well-being, this aspect of the hypothesis was supported, and the finding is consistent with previous research (Dick & Bronson, 2005; Gokce & Yilmaz, 2018). According to Gokce and Yilmaz (2018), parents who were emotionally available in childhood and adulthood served as a secure base for their adult children, contributing to a better sense of security, emotional regulation, and problem solving skills. Furthermore, adult men have been found to have higher self-esteem and better well-being when they perceived their fathers as being more accessible, responsible, emotionally responsive, and engaged in their lives from childhood and adolescence (Dick & Bronson, 2005). The current research provides some insight about the psychological well-being of Black sons of
primarily a middle-class background and fills a gap about sons’ perceptions of the emotional availability of their Black fathers.

Involvement, Emotional Availability, and Current Psychological Well-Being

For hypothesis four, it was expected that Black men who reported more positive retrospective perceptions of their fathers’ involvement during childhood, and higher father emotional availability in adulthood, would report better current psychological well-being. Neither aspect of this hypothesis was supported. Neither perceived childhood involvement, nor current emotional availability was found to predict current psychological well-being among Black men of a primarily middle-class background. This finding was unexpected given that hypothesis three was partially supported with emotional availability being a predictor of psychological well-being, but the same was not true in hypothesis four. There was no evidence indicating that one predictor suppressed the other, and neither nurturance nor involvement, strongly intercorrelated variables, were significant predictors, yet their inclusion in the models were enough to change the outcomes from hypothesis three to four. There is no other known study that has tested these relationships; thus, it is unknown whether the lack of a relationship is more plausible than the hypothesis. A possible explanation for the lack of association among the constructs may be the result of distribution of scores on the Flourishing Scale, which measured psychological well-being. As mentioned in the results section, the percent of scores that were perfect at the high end (14%) was unrealistically high and possibly problematic at the low end (3%). The scores on the Flourishing Scale were not normally distributed, even after the perfect high and low scores were removed. The pattern of the scores seemed to reflect a potential response style. Some of the participants may have been compelled to respond in a particular manner, such as social desirability, agreeable, or disagreeable to complete the survey as quickly
as possible. The pattern was not random. However, this pattern did not emerge on the other scales in the research packet. It may be beneficial to examine the language used on the Flourishing Scale to evaluate its usefulness across racially diverse groups.

A noteworthy finding from hypotheses three and four was the statistical significance of the age variable, indicating that with increases in age, Black men reported an increase in current psychological well-being. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that older Black adults tended to report greater happiness and life satisfaction than younger Blacks (Ellison, 1990). Family connectedness, marital status, and other social support have been found to play a significant role in this finding (Ellison, 1990; Thomas et al., 2017).

**Additional Considerations**

Other considerations are examined in light of the findings. One consideration is the linkage between this study and the portrayal of Black fathers highlighted on pages 8 to 11. Furthermore, this study is linked back to the theoretical frameworks described earlier (see pp. 11-15). Several demographic variables are explored with the aim of providing additional insight about the perceptions that Black men have of their fathers.

**Types of Fathers**

Various descriptors have been used to describe Black fathers, some portraying them negatively, and others highlighting their strengths. Four common father types are examined in relation to the current study: deadbeat dads, nurturant fathers, responsible fathers, and social fathers. Black men are often labeled deadbeat dads due to financial instability or lack of involvement with their children. The current study focused solely on Black men who had a father or father-figure present for at least a portion of their life. Although financial provision was not assessed, many of the participants reported residing with their fathers throughout their childhood.
Most of them also reported their fathers as having been involved and nurturing, which counters the deadbeat dad narrative for Black fathers. Thus, the fathers evaluated in this study did not appear to fit this label.

Across races, fathers have described responsible fathering as spending time on non-caregiving tasks (e.g., playful activities, moral guidance, sex-role modeling, teaching, and discipline), not harming their children by being absent, acknowledging legal paternity, protecting their children from danger, and meeting their children's financial needs before their own (Myers, 2013). Responsible fathering, solely among Black fathers, has rarely been examined; however, studies (Coles & Green, 2010; Myers, 2013; Thomas et al., 2008) that have included Black fathers have focused on barriers (i.e., financial instability and non-residential status) to responsible parenting. The notion of responsible Black fathering may be implicitly found in the current study by participants’ responses regarding perceived paternal nurturance, involvement, and emotional availability. Most participants rated their Black fathers with high scores on each of the variables, suggesting that they perceived their fathers as being supportive, emotionally close, trustworthy, accessible, protective, and involved in their development—characteristics that are consistent with that of a responsible father. However, the current study did not include the level of financial responsibility that Black sons perceived from their fathers, so this component of responsible fathering was not examined.

Regarding the nurturant father, Black fathers have been found to be warm and loving with their children, yet strict (Connor & White, 2006). Limited research has been on parental nurturance of Black fathers. The current study was designed to provide additional insight on paternal nurturance from the lens of adult Black sons, as opposed to adolescents and young adults, whose viewpoints are more commonly included in fathering research (Doyle et al., 2015).
The participants in this study reported high levels of perceived nurturance, indicating that they viewed their fathers as enjoying the fathering role, providing companionship, being emotionally close, and serving as a confidant during their childhood.

And finally, a social father serves as a father-figure toward a non-biological child (Connor & White, 2006) and have been found to contribute to the well-being of children regardless of the level of involvement of residential and non-residential biological fathers (Bzostek, 2008). Black children are among the most likely American children to have non-residential biological fathers, and many of them have social fathers who play a significant role in their lives (Connor & White, 2006). Though the impact of Black social fathers was not the focus of the current study, some of the participants identified a non-biological, or social father, as their father-figure, who was present in their lives. Additional research is needed to examine the perceptions that Black men have of their social fathers.

Theoretical Frameworks

Limited research exists on the application of theories to fathers, more specifically, to Black fathers. The primary theories considered applicable to this study were attachment theory, identity theory, and parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory). Race and culture have been understudied in attachment theory research; thus, it is important to expand the research to diverse populations. Moreover, most attachment research has focused on father-child relationships during early childhood (Palm, 2014) with few studies examining the relationship between fathers and adult-children. Exploring the experiences of adult children would provide insight about the long-term effects of father attachment. In the current study, participants’ perceptions of Black fathers as involved and nurturing during childhood was connected to their fathers’ emotional availability in adulthood and loosely relates to attachment theory and the
importance of father attachment over time. Future attachment research regarding father-son relationships would aid in clarifying the impact that fathers have on the long-term well-being of their sons.

Identity theory suggests that a father’s identity is embedded in the fatherhood role, which provides motivation for engaging in fathering behaviors (Pasley et al., 2014). Benefits of fatherhood that Black fathers have identified include serving as role models, becoming better individuals due to being fathers, sharing their love, teaching their children right from wrong, and being able to care for another life. Various factors may shape the paternal identity that requires consideration. Demographic differences (e.g., SES, education, marital status) among fathers have been found to affect the degree to which they are involved with their children (Carlson & Magnuson, 2011). For instance, fathers with limited education and job prospects have been found to retreat from their fathering responsibilities. Although the current study includes the perceptions of primarily middle-class, educated Black men, very little demographic information about their fathers was collected, so the extent to which SES and other demographic factors may have impacted involvement is unknown. However, participants indicated that their fathers were highly involved throughout their childhood, and emotionally available during adulthood, which reflects higher salience and commitment to the father role. Further evaluation of cultural and racial differences among fathers using identity theory may be useful in drawing conclusions related to race, social status, salience of fatherhood, and the nature of father-child relationships. Future research might further clarify why some fathers are more engaged with their children than others, and it may help Black fathers to understand what shapes their paternal role fulfillment.

PARTheory attempts to explain the relationship between parental acceptance and rejection, solely from the lens of the child (Rohner et al., 2012). According to Khaleque and
Rohner (2012), child and adult perceptions of parental acceptance are related to psychological adjustment, and adults' remembrances of parental acceptance or rejection in childhood are related to current psychological adjustment. Few studies have focused primarily on Black father acceptance and rejection. One study evaluated the relationship between perceived paternal nurturance and involvement and psychosocial development among Black college students, based on PARTheory (Reid & Finley, 2010). Ethnic differences were explored in relation to the effects of perceived father involvement and nurturance on psychosocial functioning (i.e., life satisfaction and future expectations). Reid and Finley (2010) found that psychosocial outcomes were correlated with father involvement, and African American fathers were perceived as more involved than were Jamaican or Haitian fathers. Similarly, the current study evaluated perceptions of Black fathers’ nurturance and involvement, filling a gap in the literature by focusing solely on the viewpoints of Black men. However, the current findings are inconsistent with the previous study because although Black sons reported high paternal nurturance, involvement, and emotional availability, perceptions of their fathers were not related to their own psychological well-being, as suggested by PARTheory. Future research might examine gender and age differences (i.e., college-aged vs. early middle-aged) in perceptions of Black fathers for insight about potential differences in psychological well-being.

**Retrospective Versus Current Perceptions of Black Fathers**

Research that emphasizes a child-centered approach to perceptions of father involvement focuses on what is important to the child and how thoughts and feelings toward a father may impact current and future behaviors. According to Finley and Schwartz (2004), long-term feelings, based on past and present experiences, encapsulate an adult-child’s retrospective perception of their father. For example, if an adult son perceives his father as highly involved
during his childhood, then the father’s impact on his son as an adult is a consequence of the perception of high involvement. Perceptions of parents have been linked to child development and adjustment cross-culturally (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002); however, there remains limited research on retrospective perceptions among adults, and more specifically, the perceptions that Black men have of their fathers.

Examining retrospective perceptions in addition to current perceptions of Black fathers is meaningful in providing a well-rounded understanding of Black father-son relationships. The meaning that Black sons give to childhood experiences of their fathers appears to shape how they perceive their fathers today. The current study adds to the literature on retrospective and current perceptions of Black fathers from the lenses of their adult sons. Although the study includes perceptions of Black fathers from both childhood and adulthood, the findings are cross-sectional and not longitudinal in nature. Additional research on retrospective and current perceptions of Black fathers is needed to further examine the Black father-son relationship over time.

**Demographic Variables**

The current research provides a unique sample of middle-class, highly educated Black men that is rarely studied in fatherhood literature. While the homogeneity of the group limits the generalizability of the research to other populations of Black men, further examination of these participants may provide meaningful implications for future research. To explore the nuances of this distinctive group of Black men, the demographics variables of education, income level, marital status, and children were closely examined. The aim was to assess whether those demographic variables impacted Black sons’ perceptions of their fathers or their own psychological well-being. No relationships were found between the demographic variables (i.e., education, marital status, income, and children) and the primary variables (i.e., paternal
nurturance, involvement, and emotional availability, and participant psychological well-being).

The sample sizes across levels of the demographic variables were a problem; thus, these findings should be interpreted with caution. Had the cell sample sizes been equal, it is possible that the findings could have been different. Regardless, having a more representative sample of Black men should be considered in future research.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to this study. First, convenience sampling was used for data collection, which included face-to-face, telephone, social media, and email recruitment. Snowball sampling was used to target the Black male population and expand the recruitment pool. However, this non-probability sampling technique limits the generalizability of the results (Baker et al., 2013). Sampling bias may have occurred due to non-random sampling (Nielsen et al., 2017) and it is probable that the participants shared similar characteristics that may not reflect the larger population of Black men. A distinguishing characteristic of the sample is related to SES—most of the Black men were highly educated and middle-class, so the findings cannot be extended to low-income Black men who did not obtain a college education. Furthermore, the limited information collected about income restricted analysis of the data for potential income-related differences. Generally, class bias has not been addressed or controlled for in Black father research. Most research has focused on working-class Black fathers, or the experiences of Black men in college; middle-class Black men and Black fathers have rarely been studied. Additional research is needed to examine perceptions of fathers with Black men from varying education and income levels.

Second, self-report measures were utilized for this study. Relying on participants’ own perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes yields valuable information about their subjective experiences.
Although anonymous and private self-report surveys were used, it is still difficult to know if participants responded truthfully because of biases toward personal experiences, as well as conscious or unconscious social desirability. Third, although some completed a paper-pencil version, most of the participants completed the online version of the survey. Use of an online survey was convenient for quick access, rapid data collection, and dissemination to a large group of people. However, it was difficult to monitor and ensure that all individuals met the participation criteria. Furthermore, some people were less cooperative about completing the entire survey—the sample was limited to individuals with internet/email access, and the researcher was not present to resolve potential questions during survey administration.

Fourth, nearly 25% of the data was removed for participants who reported losing their father prior to adulthood or having no father or father-figure present during their childhood. The experiences of these individuals were not explored; specifically, how having no father present at any point throughout their life influenced their psychological well-being—their experiences warrant investigation. Fifth, there had been no investigation of the psychometric properties of the Lum Emotional Availability of Parent Scale (LEAP) with non-college students, or the Flourishing Scale (FS) with samples of Black men. Further exploration of the FS is particularly important given the potential response styles reported in the current study.

Finally, there was no exploration of potential interaction effects, particularly related to the third and fourth hypotheses that both contained the same outcome variable (i.e., psychological well-being), the same predictor variable (i.e., emotional availability), and either paternal nurturance or involvement, predictors that were strongly intercorrelated. By failing to examine the presence of potential mediator or moderator effects and interactions between the predictor variables, the findings may be limited, omitting potential explanations for why
hypothesis three was partially supported yet hypothesis four was not supported at all. Future research should include examination of the fathering variables for potential mediation, moderation, and interaction effects.

**Implications for Counseling**

The findings of this study have implications for practice. For one, Black adult sons’ perceptions that childhood paternal nurturance impact adulthood paternal emotionally available may be useful in training adult sons about the importance of nurturance in their own parenting behaviors. Counseling might provide a space for Black men to process their experiences of the nurturance (or lack thereof) they received from their fathers, and its importance in their relationships with their own Black sons, current or future. The same implication also applies to the findings for the other supported hypotheses. For hypothesis two, Black adult sons’ perceptions of involved fathers in childhood were linked to fathers’ emotional availability in adulthood. This finding can be used in training and counseling to assist adult sons to develop strong fathering skills—being positively involved with their sons in childhood can also benefit the psychological health of their sons as adults. This focus is also the case for hypothesis three regarding the Black adult sons’ perceptions of their fathers’ emotional availability and its impact on the adult sons’ psychological well-being.

In the current study, Black men who perceived their fathers as more involved and nurturing during their childhood also viewed them as more emotionally available during their adulthood. This finding indicates that paternal nurturance has a positive affect starting in childhood and into adulthood. Counseling might provide an opportunity to further educate Black fathers about the impact of their presence and to encourage increased quality nurturance, involvement, and emotional availability for their sons. Discussion of the long-term impact of
nurturance and involvement might also occur in counseling, to assist Black fathers in understanding their effect on the various developmental stages of their son’s lives. Counseling psychologists might inquire about Black fathers’ level of involvement, including their level of emotional and social engagement, involvement in discipline and moral development, and ways of mentoring and teaching their children (Finley & Schwartz, 2004). This level of inquiry may help Black fathers to recognize their strengths and growth areas in engaging their children and the potential impact. To further encourage improvements in involvement, psychoeducational counseling interventions and Black fatherhood enrichment programs could be utilized to inform Black fathers about ways to enhance father-son relationships (Bocknek et al., 2017; Roy & Dyson, 2010). Focusing on constructive parenting practices promotes positive Black father-son relationships that can be beneficial during the formative years and into adulthood (Roy & Dyson, 2010).

**Directions for Future Research**

There are several recommendations for future studies pertaining to Black men and father-son relationships. First, the experiences of Black men who were raised by non-biological fathers should be examined. It is common within Black communities for children to be raised by social fathers, community mentors, or extended family members (Connor & White, 2006). Future research should examine the impact of social fathers on the well-being of Black sons.

Second, more culturally-inclusive measures related to well-being and fathering are needed. Given that the psychological well-being measure used in the current study has been validated on White college students, it is unclear if the measure captured an accurate depiction of the well-being of Black men. According to Yoo et al. (2018), race contributes to the experiences and predictors of psychological well-being, and African Americans have tended to report better
overall well-being than Whites. There is no consensus about why there are racial differences on self-report measures of well-being, in part because there is no unanimity on how well-being is defined. Measures of well-being that capture culture-specific values that may not ascribe to Eurocentric ideals (e.g., individualism, materialism) are necessary to understand how racial minorities define well-being. Regarding measures on fathering, although the Nurturant Fathering and Father Involvement Scales were validated, including African American, Caribbean, and Hispanic participants, prior research (Doyle et al., 2015; Schwartz et al., 2009; Schwartz & Finley, 2006) using the measures has been on adolescents and college students. These and future fathering measures should be validated using racially diverse participants of various age groups. Additional measures on fathering are also needed to measure the perceptions of adult children, including both current and retrospective experiences.

Fourth, research on the impact of parent emotional availability on adult child psychological well-being remains scarce (Gokce & Yilmaz, 2018; Lum & Phares, 2005). There are even fewer studies about the impact of fathers on adult child psychological well-being. Those found focused on father-daughter relationships (Allgood et al., 2012), overall parental involvement (Flouri, 2004), adjustment to caregiving for aging parents (Merz et al., 2009), and adjustment to parental divorce (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001). Most of the studies have not focused solely on the paternal impact on adult well-being, and they were not racially inclusive. Nonetheless, previous studies have demonstrated a link between father involvement and childhood well-being (Wood & Lambin, 2013); self-acceptance, social adjustment, and success in later careers (Allen & Daly, 2002); and good overall mental health (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). However, additional research is needed that examines the fathering relationship with adult children, and more specifically, Black sons.
Finally, future studies could investigate how Black men’s perceptions of their fathers impact their own parenting behaviors. Regardless of the types of experiences they had, the meaning that Black men give to their relationships with their fathers may inform how these Black men rear their own children (Brown et al., 2018; Cooper, 2015; Hunter et al., 2006). Finally, it is difficult to account for all unique father-child experiences, but future studies might examine the experiences of Black men whose fathers are deceased. In the current study, data for participants who lost their fathers prior to adulthood were not included because they did not meet the criteria for the research questions posed. However, their experiences should not be overlooked—it would be beneficial to evaluate the impact that perceptions of the father-son relationship, prior to their fathers’ passing, have had on adult sons. All the provided suggestions for future research would enrich what counseling psychologists know about Black families, Black men, and Black father-son relationships.
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Appendix A

Demographic Sheet
Demographic Sheet

Instructions: Please respond to the following statements as accurately as possible.

1. Gender: _____ Male _____ Female _____ Other (please specify): ______________________

2. Age: _____

3. Race:
   _____ Black American or African American
   _____ Black Caribbean or Afro-Caribbean
   _____ Black Latino or Afro-Latino
   _____ Mixed Races or Biracial (please explain): _______________________________________
   _____ Other (please specify): ________________________________________________________

   _____ Other (Please specify): ______________________________________________________

5. Marital Status:
   _____ Single _____ Married _____ Divorced
   _____ Widowed _____ Other (please specify): __________________________________________

6. Highest Level of Education:
   _____ Less than High School
   _____ Completed High School/GED
   _____ Completed Associate’s Degree
   _____ Completed Bachelor’s Degree
   _____ Current Graduate Student
   _____ Completed Graduate/Professional Degree
   _____ Did not finish High School
   _____ Some College/Training- no degree
   _____ Completed Technical/Vocational Degree
   _____ Current Undergraduate Student
   _____ Other (please explain): _______________________________________________________

7. If applicable, what type of post-secondary school have you attend?
   _____ Not applicable; I did not attend a post-secondary institution
   _____ Predominantly White Institution (PWI)
   _____ Historically Black College/University (HBCU)
   _____ Both a PWI and a HBCU
   _____ Unsure (please specify your school’s name): ______________________________________

8. What is your current occupation? __________________________________________________
9. What social organization(s) and/or men's group(s) are you affiliated with? (please check all that apply)

_____ Greek Fraternity  _____ Freemasonry
_____ Religious group    _____ Support group
_____ Other (please specify): _____________________________

_____ I am not affiliated with any group/organization

10. How do you describe your socioeconomic status?

_____ Lower Class  _____ Working Class  _____ Lower-Middle Class
_____ Middle Class  _____ Upper-Middle Class  _____ Upper Class

11. Estimate of your income level:

_____ < $20,000  _____ $20,000 - $44,999  _____ $45,000 - 139,999
_____ $140,000 - 149,999  _____ $150,000 - 199,999  _____ $200,000 +

12. How many children do you have? (including both biological and non-biological children):

_____ Number of daughters   ________ Age(s) of daughter(s)
_____ Number of sons   ________ Age(s) of son(s)
_____ I have no children

13. Who do you identify as your father or father-figure?

_____ Biological father  _____ Brother
_____ Stepfather  _____ Uncle
_____ Grandfather    _____ Godfather/Kin/Family Friend
_____ Adoptive/Foster father  _____ Mentor
_____ None (please explain): ____________________________________________

_____ Other (please explain): ____________________________________________

14. What is your current relationship with your biological father or father-figure? If your father is deceased, please comment on the status of the relationship prior to his passing.

_____ Very close  _____ Close
_____ Somewhat close  _____ Some interaction
_____ Distant  _____ Poor relationship
_____ Never had a relationship

15. Biological Father or Father-figure’s marital status:

_____ Single  _____ Married to another person
_____ Not married, living with your mother  _____ Divorced
_____ Not married, living with another person  _____ Widowed
_____ Married to your mother  _____ Other
16. **Throughout your childhood,** how long did you and your biological father or father figure live in the same home?

- ____ Never
- ____ On weekends/holidays/summers
- ____ On and off over the years
- ____ Consistently throughout childhood
- ____ Other

17. What is your biological father’s/father-figure’s highest level of completed education?

- ____ Did not finish high school
- ____ High school graduate/GED
- ____ Some college, no degree
- ____ Trade/Technical/Vocational training
- ____ Associate’s degree
- ____ Bachelor’s degree
- ____ Graduate/Professional degree

18. Who do you identify as your mother/mother-figure?

- ____ Biological mother
- ____ Sister
- ____ Stepmother
- ____ Godmother/Kin/Family friend
- ____ Grandmother
- ____ Adoptive/Foster mother
- ____ Aunt
- ____ Mentor
- ____ None (please explain): ________________________________
- ____ Other (Please explain): _____________________________________________

19. What is your current relationship with your biological mother or mother figure? If your mother is deceased, please comment on the status of the relationship prior to her passing.

- ____ Very close
- ____ Close
- ____ Somewhat close
- ____ Some interaction
- ____ Distant
- ____ Poor relationship
- ____ Never had a relationship

20. Biological Mother or Mother-Figure’s marital status:

- ____ Single
- ____ Married to another person
- ____ Not married, living with your father
- ____ Divorced
- ____ Not married, living with another person
- ____ Widowed
- ____ Married to your father
- ____ Other

21. What is your biological mother’s/mother-figures’ highest level of completed education?

- ____ Did not finish high school
- ____ High school graduate/GED
- ____ Some college, no degree
- ____ Trade/Technical/Vocational training
- ____ Associate’s degree
- ____ Bachelor’s degree
- ____ Graduate/Professional degree
22. How did you hear about this study?

   ____ Social Media  ____ Word of Mouth
   ____ The Researcher  ____ School/Class
   ____ Other (please specify): ____________________________________

23. Please check the letter ‘B’

   ____ A  ____ B
   ____ C  ____ D
Appendix B

Nurturant Fathering Scale (NFS)

(Finley & Schwartz, 2004; Williams & Finley, 1997)
DIRECTIONS: For each question, mark the statement that most closely indicates how you perceived your father during your childhood. If you did not interact with your biological father, please rate the behavior of whomever you consider your father (e.g., adoptive father, stepfather, uncle, mentor, etc.). Please endorse one statement for each question.

1. How much do you think your father enjoyed being a father?
   _____A great deal
   _____Very much
   _____Somewhat
   _____A little
   _____Not at all

2. When you needed your father for support, was he there for you?
   _____Always there for me
   _____Often there for me
   _____Sometimes there for me
   _____Rarely there for me
   _____Never there for me

3. Did your father have enough energy to meet your needs?
   _____Always
   _____Often
   _____Sometimes
   _____Rarely
   _____Never

4. Did you feel that you could confide in (talk about important personal things with) your father?
   _____Always
   _____Often
   _____Sometimes
   _____Rarely
   _____Never

5. Was your father available to spend time with you in activities?
   _____Always
   _____Often
   _____Sometimes
   _____Rarely
   _____Never
6. How emotionally close were you to your father?

_____ Extremely close
_____ Very close
_____ Somewhat close
_____ A little close
_____ Not close at all

7. When you were an adolescent (teenager), how well did you get along with your father?

_____ Very Well
_____ Well
_____ Okay
_____ Poorly
_____ Very Poorly

8. Overall, how would you rate your father?

_____ Outstanding
_____ Very good
_____ Good
_____ Fair
_____ Poor

9. As you go through the day, how much of a psychological presence does your father have in your daily thoughts and feelings?

_____ Always there
_____ Often there
_____ Sometimes there
_____ Rarely there
_____ Never there
Appendix C

Father Involvement Scale (FIS)

(Finley & Schwartz, 2004)
DIRECTIONS: How involved was your father in the following aspects of your life and development? Please circle the number corresponding to your opinion of your father during your childhood. If you did not interact with your biological father, please rate the behavior of whomever you consider your father (e.g., adoptive father, stepfather, uncle, mentor, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always involved</th>
<th>Often involved</th>
<th>Sometimes involved</th>
<th>Rarely involved</th>
<th>Never involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Intellectual development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Emotional development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ethical/moral development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Spiritual development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Physical development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Career development</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Developing responsibility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Developing independence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Developing competence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Leisure, fun, play</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Providing income</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Sharing activities/interests</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Mentoring/teaching</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Care giving</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Being protective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Advising</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Discipline</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. School/homework</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Companionship</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Lum Emotional Availability of Parenting Scale (LEAP)

(Lum & Phares, 2005)
INSTRUCTIONS: In this questionnaire, you will read statements about your father. Rate your father’s behavior. For all questions, please answer the statement as to how your father generally acts in your current relationship. If you do not interact with your biological father, please rate the behavior of whomever you consider your father (e.g., adoptive father, stepfather, uncle, mentor, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MY FATHER:**

1. Supports me.                                                                 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Consoles me when I am upset.                                                1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Shows he cares about me.                                                    1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Shows a genuine interest in me.                                             1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Remembers things that are important to me.                                  1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Is available to talk with me at any time.                                   1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Asks questions in a caring manner.                                           1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Spends extra time with me just because he wants to.                         1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Is willing to talk about my troubles.                                       1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Pursues talking with me about my interests.                                 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Values my input.                                                           1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Is emotionally available to me.                                            1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Makes me feel wanted.                                                      1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Praises me.                                                                1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Is understanding.                                                          1 2 3 4 5 6
Appendix E

Flourishing Scale (FS)

(Diener et al., 2010)
DIRECTIONS: Below are eight statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by indicating that response for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Mixed/Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

6. I am a good person and live a good life.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

7. I am optimistic about my future.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7

8. People respect me.
   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
Appendix F

Recruitment Flyer and Announcement
Black/African American Men Needed!!

❖ Are you 18 years of age or older?
❖ Do you identify as a Black or African American male?

If so, we would like to invite you to participate in the following study:

**Purpose:** We are conducting a research study on father-son relationships

**Who:** To be a participant in this study you must:
- Identify as African-American or Black
- Identify as male
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have completed high school education or GED

**What:** Participants may take a survey with a 20-30-minute completion time

**Incentive:** Participants may enter to win one of four $50 Amazon gift cards

**How:** If you are interested in learning more, please go to this link:

https://wmich.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0oXCDflFvGofnCZ

For more information, please contact Shaakira Jones, Student Investigator:
901-609-8644 or shaakira.e.jones@wmich.edu

Principal Investigator: Dr. Beverly J. Vandiver
Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, #5226
3521 Sangren Hall
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5226
269-387-5100

Please share this page with other Black Men. Thank you!
Hello,

My name is Shaakira Jones, and I am a doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology at Western Michigan University. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project about father-son relationships.

You will be asked to complete a few questions in a survey format. There are no right or wrong answers. The survey will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. You may enter for a chance to win one of four $50 Amazon gift cards for participating in the research study.

It is my hope that this information will add to the research about father-son relationships. There are no identified risks for participating in this research. The surveys are confidential, and participants will be kept anonymous. Participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate without consequence.

If you are interested, please go to this link to get started:

https://wmich.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0oXCDfIvGofnCZ

Thank you for your consideration,

Shaakira E. Jones, MA
Doctoral Candidate in Counseling Psychology
Appendix G

Informed Consent
Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology

Principal Investigator: Beverly J. Vandiver
Student Investigator: Shaakira E. Jones
Title of Study: Black Men's Perception of their Father-Son Relationship

STUDY SUMMARY: This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of the research is to understand Black father-son relationships. It will serve as Shaakira Jones's dissertation for the requirements of the doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology. If you take part in the research, you will be asked to complete a demographic form and a survey about your experiences of your father/father-figure. It will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete the survey. Possible risks and costs to you for taking part in the study may be discomfort from answering sensitive questions and the time it will take to complete the survey. There are no direct individual benefits associated with your participation. Your alternative to taking part in the research study is not to take part in it.

You are invited to participate in this research project titled "Black Men's Perceptions of their Father-Son Relationship" and the following information in this consent form will provide more detail about the research study. Please ask any questions if you need more clarification and to assist you in deciding if you wish to participate in the research study. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this research. After all of your questions have been answered and the consent document reviewed, you may proceed with participating in this study.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of this study is to investigate Black father-son relationships.

Who can participate in this study?
Participants must identify as Black or African American males who are at least 18 years of age and who have completed their high school education or GED.

Where will this study take place?
An online version of the study will be accessible via web link and social media, and hard copies will also be available for paper-pencil completion. Multiple convenient settings will be used to administer the survey either individually or in groups.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
Participants may take up to 30 minutes to complete the survey.
What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
You will be asked to complete a series of demographic and survey questions either online or in paper-pencil form, based on personal preference.

What information is being measured during the study?
Self-report survey measures will be utilized to explore the father-son relationship.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
The likelihood of risks is low; however, some participants may experience mild discomfort in responding to the questions. You have the right to discontinue participation at any time.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
Findings from this study may explain dynamics of Black father-son relationships.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
Participants may enter a drawing for a chance to win one of four $50 Amazon gift cards. Participation in the drawing requires full completion of the survey.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
Only the primary and student investigators will have access to the information.

What will happen to my information or biospecimens collected for this research after the study is over?
All identifying information will be destroyed once the research process is complete. De-identified information collected for this research may be used by or distributed to investigators for other research without obtaining additional informed consent from participants.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Dr. Beverly Vandiver at 269-387-5100 or beverly.vandiver@wmich.edu, or the student investigator, Shaakira E. Jones at 901-609-8644 or shaakira.e.jones@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.
This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (WMU IRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

Participation in this survey indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply.
Appendix H

HSIRB Approval Letter
Date: January 15, 2020

To: Beverly Vandiver, Principal Investigator
    Shaikira Jones, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 19-12-39

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “Black Men's Preceptions of their Father-Son Relationship” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., add an investigator, increase number of subjects beyond the number stated in your application, etc.). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation.

In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

A status report is required on or prior to (no more than 30 days) January 14, 2021 and each year thereafter until closing of the study. The IRB will send a request.

When this study closes, submit the required Final Report found at https://wmich.edu/research/forms.

Note: All research data must be kept in a secure location on the WMU campus for at least three (3) years after the study closes.
Appendix I

Tables of Descriptive Statistics and Analyses
Table II

Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables based on Demographic Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>NFS</th>
<th>FIS</th>
<th>LEAP</th>
<th>FS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>13.27</td>
<td>63.09</td>
<td>25.66</td>
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<td>9.50</td>
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<td>&lt; $20,000</td>
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<td>30.58</td>
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*Note. N = 177.*
Table I2

ANOVA - Education

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<th>Mean Square</th>
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<th>Sig.</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>188.555</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>174</td>
<td>115.021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20390.723</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>411.205</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>212.061</td>
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<td>176</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
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<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>174</td>
<td>29.808</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5246.181</td>
<td>176</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 177. NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; FIS = Father Involvement Scale; LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parents; FS = Flourishing Scale.

*p < .05. **p < .01.
Table I3

ANOVA- Income

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<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>η²</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>73.392</td>
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<td>.597</td>
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<td>116.593</td>
<td>.597</td>
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<td>.597</td>
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<tr>
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<td>605.477</td>
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<td>106537.977</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>.401</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Between Groups</td>
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<td>1918.082</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Within Groups</td>
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<td>173</td>
<td>454.551</td>
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<td>.063</td>
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<td>176</td>
<td>4.220</td>
<td>.007*</td>
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<td>109.852</td>
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<td>4916.624</td>
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<td>28.420</td>
<td>.010*</td>
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<td>5246.181</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>3.865</td>
<td>.010*</td>
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</table>

Note. N = 177. NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; FIS = Father Involvement Scale; LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parents; FS = Flourishing Scale. Eta² not provided for LEAP due to violation of Homogeneity of Variance

*p < .05. **p < .01.
# Table I4

**ANOVA - Marital Status**

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<th></th>
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<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>106.384</td>
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<td>172</td>
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<td>FIS</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
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Note. N = 177. NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; FIS = Father Involvement Scale; LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parents; FS = Flourishing Scale.

*p < .05. **p < .01.*
### Table 15

Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for Key Variables and Children Demographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>FS</th>
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<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>t(175)</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
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<td>11.02</td>
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<td>.893</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Children</td>
<td>31.18</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>70.87</td>
<td>22.91</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Note. N = 177. Has children (n = 110). No children (n = 67). NFS = Nurturant Fathering Scale; FIS = Father Involvement Scale; LEAP = Lum Emotional Availability of Parents; FS = Flourishing Scale.*

*p < .05. **p < .01.