2021

Maternal Educational Experiences and Academic Expectations for Adolescent Daughters

Brandie Tanille Lee
Walden University

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Brandie Tanille Lee

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Georita Frierson, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty
Dr. JoAnn McAllister, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
Dr. Rhonda Bohs, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Maternal Educational Experiences and Academic Expectations for Adolescent Daughters

by

Brandie Tanille Lee

Ms.Ed, Old Dominion University, 2010

BS, Hampton University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Social Psychology

Walden University

May 2021

Abstract

The National Center for Education Statistics indicated that the number of African American females who have enrolled in undergraduate and postbaccalaureate programs since 2000 has increased significantly. Enrollment numbers do not provide a deeper understanding of what factors inform females' academic aspirations or their desire to attend college. Through the use of a generic qualitative approach and the application of the role theory conceptual framework, this study was conducted to explore the beliefs and attitudes of African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding their educational experiences, the formation and communication of the academic expectations for their adolescent daughters, and the external resources mothers use to support the goals they have for their daughters. Data were collected from semistructured interviews with five African American mothers. Findings from reflexive thematic analysis indicated four themes (challenging experiences, high expectations, academic conversations, and it takes a village) and two subthemes (like mother, like daughter…but better, and goals for my daughter). Findings may be used to create interventions aimed at helping mothers communicate higher educational expectations for their daughters, and to inform mothers of possible connections between their experiences and their daughters' experiences for the purpose of developing strategies and routines to communicate positive academic expectations.

Maternal Educational Experiences and Academic Expectations for Adolescent Daughters

by

Brandie Tanille Lee

Ms.Ed, Old Dominion University, 2010

BS, Hampton University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Social Psychology

Walden University

May 2021

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my grandmother, Beverly D. Wyatt. It was from our many talks during my childhood that I learned the importance of being independent, being compassionate, and having perseverance. She was always my biggest fan, instilling in me at an early age that I could do all things through Christ who strengthens me. My grandmother never attended college, but much like the mothers in this study, she found the resources necessary to make the achievement of all of my dreams a reality. I owe so much of who I have become as a woman and a mother to the teachings she imparted in me, and the life lessons I learned from talking with her and watching how she governed herself. I know that I am truly my ancestor's wildest dreams. This accomplishment is my tribute to her, for all that she was never able to accomplish, yet always believed that I could. Ma, I love you, and I miss you!

This study is also dedicated to my children, as you all are my number one reason why! Being your mother continues to be my finest work! You each make me proud on an ongoing basis, and I hope that I have done the same for you. Life has not always been a crystal stair for us, but we have persevered, we have loved, and we have succeeded. Thank you for always having my back, for stepping up to making sure our team was successful, and for helping mom out on days when you just wanted to be kids. This degree is for you too, as much like the mothers in this study, my accomplishments are because of you and for you. I hope that what you've seen in me inspires you to reach for those things that make your heart happy too! I love you all!

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Georita Frierson and Dr. JoAnn McAllister for their expertise and their guidance along this long and arduous journey. Thank you for helping me craft a product that I could be proud of!

I would also like to acknowledge my student success advisor, Dr. LaToya Johnson. You literally talked me through my tears, all the while pointing me in the direction of a university resource that could help answer so many of the additional questions I had. I am forever grateful for your support.

I would also like to acknowledge my husband, Mudumango Lee, for his ongoing support, and for being a Bra-natic. Thanks for standing in that gap for me so that I could pour my time and energy into completing this degree. I could not have completed this degree without your support. I love you!

Lastly, and certainly not least, I want to acknowledge the mothers who participated in this study. I am eternally and humbly grateful to be able to share your experiences and perceptions with the world. Thank you so much for sharing them with me. Thank you for sharing your passion about your daughter's futures with me. I hope that this works makes you proud, inspires other women, and most importantly serves as another inspiration for your own daughter, as each of you already are!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

College enrollment trends since 2000 have indicated that the number of African

American females who have enrolled in undergraduate and postbaccalaureate programs

has increased significantly (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). In some

cases, enrollment numbers for females have superseded those for males (National Center

for Education Statistics, 2019). Although the data surrounding this trend could be

associated with an increase in access to educational opportunities beyond high school, the

enrollment numbers do not provide a deeper understanding of what factors inform

females' academic aspirations or their desire to attend college.

Although there is considerable research on the academic achievement of children,

there is limited literature on the academic experiences and perceptions of African

American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding their educational experiences and how they

formulate and communicate their educational aspirations for their adolescent daughters.

Findings from this study may be used to create interventions aimed at helping mothers

communicate higher educational expectations to their daughters, and to inform mothers

of possible connections between their experiences and their daughters' experiences so

mothers are able to develop strategies and routines that communicate positive academic

expectations.

Chapter 1 provides background information on the current research to describe

the gap in the literature that addresses African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding

formulating and communicating their educational aspirations to their adolescent

daughters. Chapter 1 also provides an overview of the methodology that was used for

conducting the study and the framework that was used for understanding the cultural transmission of expectations. Additionally, the significance of the research for mothers and daughters and the social implications are discussed.

Background

Several researchers have examined the relationship between mothers and daughters to learn about patterns in educational experiences. Al-deen and Windle (2017) examined the relationship between migrant mothers' socioeconomic status, their educational experiences and confidence, and their ability to invest emotionally in their child's education. The authors asserted that children of mothers who had high levels of academic confidence experienced better results than the children of mothers who were frustrated by the communication of academic expectations. Dubow et al. (2009) examined the association between parent education and parent interaction with the educational and occupational outcomes of their children and found that during middle childhood, parents' educational level had a positive relation to the educational aspirations and achievements of children as determined when the children became adults. Mireles-Rios and Roma (2014), conducting research in the Hispanic community, provided a concrete example of the influence of maternal aspirations on the educational aspirations of girls and the postponement of goals that might interfere with the attainment of the aspired education.

Gender role transfer has also been a focal point of research. Green et al. (2013) explored the relationship between a mother's entrepreneurial roles and her daughters' entrepreneurial propensity. The authors found that the mothers' views, social roles, and

social expectations informed the choices that the girls made. Gandara et al. (2013) addressed the culture of the Hispanic community and offered an example of how the educational attitudes of mothers, which occurred as a result of intervention programming, influenced girls to develop educational aspirations of their own.

Researchers have also considered maternal absenteeism, low maternal academic goals, and the presence of role models. Beamon et al. (2012) discussed the relationship between female role models and the educational aspirations of girls citing the presence of such figures as influential in increasing educational goals. Strand and Winston (2008) offered possible solutions for what could be done to raise the educational aspirations of girls in the event the mother was not present or was not effective in doing so. Similarly, Hannum et al. (2009) offered insight into factors that might lead to educational achievement in girls when their mothers have low educational goals for their daughters. The authors found that in China, mothers have greater belief in their sons' ability, but daughters perform better than sons.

Parent involvement as an indicator of student achievement has also been extensively researched. Vukovic et al. (2013) conducted a study in which they sought to determine how parent involvement, which they defined as "motivated parental attitudes and behaviors intended to influence student achievement" (p.451), influences student achievement. Rogers et al. (2009) examined the relationship between parental involvement and a child's academic performance, defining parental involvement as homework help, emotional support, and encouragement of learning and active management of the learning environment.

What is consistent about the research that has been conducted is that it has focused heavily on both parents, on White middle class families, on Hispanic and Asian cultures, or on early childhood. There has been little research on African American mothers and their adolescent daughters. The data gathered during the current study may be helpful for understanding the beliefs and attitudes of African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding their educational experiences and the formation and communication of their academic expectations to their adolescent daughters. This study also extended the body of literature on the mother/daughter educational relationship by focusing on African American mothers.

Problem Statement

Researchers have analyzed parental involvement (Vukovic et al., 2013), the relationship between culture and the development of children's academic performance (Buzdar & Ali, 2011), and the educational experiences of preadolescent children (Rogers et al., 2009). However, limited qualitative research addressed African American mothers' beliefs and attitudes regarding their educational experiences and the formation and communication of their academic expectations for their adolescent daughters. Additionally, there was limited qualitative research that addressed African American mothers' experiences with using additional resources, such as mentoring or academic support organizations, to aid in shaping their adolescent daughters' academic aspirations. For example, in studying education and the Hispanic culture, Mireles-Rios and Roma (2014) found that factors such as educational communication between mother and daughters were associated with increased educational aspirations for the daughters.

Vukovic et al (2013) examined how parent involvement, which they defined as "motivated parental attitudes and behaviors intended to influence student achievement" (p. 451), is associated with student achievement. The findings were that student achievement increased when parent anxiety regarding the subject matter decreased. In conducting quantitative research on parental involvement with participants from White middle class families, Rogers et al. (2009) identified actions such as helping with homework, providing emotional support, the encouragement of learning, and active management of the learning environment as parental involvement. The authors determined that future researchers need to test the associations in this study across diverse populations.

Additional research regarding parent involvement has presented conflicting views. Shifting the focus away from positive parental involvement, other researchers have focused on negative parental academic experiences and perceptions, low parental academic confidence, socioeconomic level, and on how time and attention help to shape parents' emotional association with education. Al-deen and Windle (2017) stated that when these factors are not countered by some other measure, the opportunity to invest in educational achievement is diminished. Dubow et al. (2009) examined parent education and the educational and occupational outcomes of children. The authors found that during middle childhood, parents' educational level significantly predicted the educational achievements of children 40 years later. What was unaddressed by previous research was the exploration of the academic experiences and perceptions of African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding formulating and communicating their educational

aspirations to their adolescent daughters. The data gathered during the current study may be helpful for understanding the beliefs and attitudes of African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding their educational experiences and the formation and communication of their academic expectations to their adolescent daughters. This study also extended the body of literature on the mother/daughter educational relationship by focusing on African American adolescent girls.

Purpose of the Study

Researchers have found that children learn to sex-categorize what activities and behaviors are male and/or female at an early age (Ridgeway, 2011). Green et al. (2013), in exploring the influence of mothers on their daughters' entrepreneurial propensity, suggested that social roles, social expectations, and mothers' views are factors that inform choices that girls make. In examining the impact of female role models in India, Beamon et al. (2012) suggested that additional research needs to be conducted to examine the influence that positive female role models have on the academic goals of girls. Because gender is an important framework for understanding women's experiences and behaviors in the various roles they play, the purpose of the current study was to extend current research by describing the academic experiences and perceptions of African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding how they communicate their educational expectations to their adolescent daughters. Additionally, this study addressed these mothers' attitudes and beliefs regarding external resources such as mentoring or academic support organizations that may be used to help shape educational expectations. Findings may provide a deeper understanding of the mothers' experiences and current

educational trends in education such as increased college attendance of African American females.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old describe their educational experiences?

Research Question 2: What academic expectations do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old have for their daughters?

Research Question 3: How do those mothers formulate and communicate those expectations to their adolescent daughter?

Research Question 4: What external resources do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old use to help shape their adolescent daughter's educational aspirations?

Framework

Because gender role transmission and sex categorization can inform behavior, the theoretical framework that was used for this study was role theory as described by McLeod (2008). One assumption of this theory is that roles are transmitted and that individuals will act within the context of the expectations that others have for them McLeod (2008). McLeod explained that each social situation has a set of expectations that impact behavior in that particular setting. This theory was used as a framework for understanding how cultural expectations transmitted in the home, such as those created by a mother's educational experiences, could be transmitted to her adolescent daughter.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because qualitative research approaches are exploratory in nature, whereas quantitative research involves using numerical data and statistical analysis to answer questions (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Because the purpose of the current study was exploratory, a qualitative method allowed me to generate new knowledge from the experiences and perceptions of the African American mothers who participated in the study. A generic qualitative design was used because it allowed for reports of the experiences and perceptions of participants (see Percy et al., 2015). This design was also selected to learn more about external resources mothers may rely on to help them communicate positive academic expectations to their daughters. Findings may be used to improve the way in which alternative mentoring programs fill in the gaps for girls whose mothers may not have expressed educational expectations for their daughters, or in the case the mother is not present.

The participants for this study were recruited from the local community and through social media. I used semistructured interviews to collect data from participants. The data collected from these interviews were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. This approach was selected because it can be used to search across the data sets to organize and find meanings and themes in the data based on participant experience and perceptions, allowing for the description of those experiences and perceptions in rich detail (see Braun et al., 2019).

Definitions

For this study, *educational expectations* were defined as the value placed on educational achievement and the setting of educational goals as demonstrated by educational support such as engaging in academic conversation, support of school work/projects, interactions with teachers, and the discussion and planning of postsecondary educational goals. Educational aspirations were defined as the daughter's desire to attend college, and adolescents referred to children age 13 to 17 years.

Assumptions, Scope and Delimitations, and Limitations

Through the use of a generic qualitative approach, this study focused on African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding the formation and communication of their educational aspirations for their adolescent daughters. There were assumption associated with the research that could not be proven or that would have taken a considerable amount of time to prove (see Simon & Goes, 2011). These assumptions were critical to conducting the study (see Simon & Goes, 2011). The assumptions associated with this study were that all of the participants would answer each of the interview questions honestly and would give thoughtful insight regarding their experiences and perceptions of their academic experiences.

The scope of this study was African American mothers age 30 to 40 who had adolescent daughters. Participants were selected from the local community. The selection process excluded mothers outside of the selected age range, fathers, and mothers with daughters who were not adolescents. Delimitations are the result of choices that the researcher makes related to method, participant selection, theoretical framework, research

questions, and other decisions (Simon & Goes, 2011). The decision-making process results in boundaries being set that define the research (Simon & Goes, 2011). For the current study, the focus was chosen because there was a limited amount of literature that addressed the academic experiences and perceptions of this population. I did not explore the experiences and perceptions of fathers or both parents collaboratively. Also, I did not include mothers outside of the selected age range, mothers who were not African American, or other topics beyond how mothers formulate and communicate their academic expectations to their daughters or how mothers use external resources to help shape their adolescent daughters' aspirations. These boundaries are important for considering transferability. Because this was not a quantitative study, the findings were based on description and interpretation rather than quantitative analysis. My personal connection to the research could have impacted the study. Therefore, it was important that I bracket my beliefs, feelings, and experiences to manage those biases.

Significance

This study was significant because it extended the research on the academic achievement of African American girls by exploring their mothers' academic experiences and perceptions and by gaining knowledge about how mothers formulate and communicate their educational expectations for their adolescent daughters. This study was also beneficial for describing African American mothers' beliefs regarding external resources, such as mentoring and academic support organizations, that may be depended on to help fill gaps in their educational experiences. Knowledge gained from this study may be used to create interventions aimed at helping mothers communicate high

educational expectations to their daughters, and to inform mothers of possible connections between their experiences and their daughters' experiences so that mothers are able to develop strategies and routines that communicate positive academic expectations.

Summary

Although data indicated that the number of females pursuing a college education has increased, the data did not address the factors that inform females' academic aspirations or their desire to attend college. Studies that have been conducted to learn about females' educational experiences have focused on Asian, African, and Indian cultures. There was a limited amount of qualitative research on African American mothers' beliefs and attitudes regarding their educational experiences or the formation and communication of their academic expectations to their adolescent daughters. Additionally, there was a limited amount of qualitative research that addressed African American mothers' experiences with using additional resources, such as mentoring or academic support organizations, to aid in shaping their adolescent daughters' academic aspirations. I used role theory to conduct a generic qualitative study to describe the academic experiences and perceptions of African American mothers age 30 to 40 regarding how they communicate their educational expectations to their adolescent daughters. Additionally, I explored these mothers' attitudes and beliefs regarding external resources such as mentoring or academic support organizations that may be used to help shape their daughters' educational expectations. Findings may provide a deeper

understanding of the mothers' experiences related to current educational trends in

education such as increased college attendance of African American females.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Previous research addressed parent involvement (Vukovic et al., 2013), mother–daughter relationships (Mireles-Rios & Roma, 2014), and culture (Buzdar & Ali, 2011) in an effort to learn more about academic performance and goals. What was absent from the current literature was a discussion of these topics that included African American mothers, their goals for their adolescent daughters, or the resources that may be used by mothers to aid them in shaping academic expectations for their daughters. This gap was significant because current data showed that college enrollment for African American females has increased significantly (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019), yet there was a scarce amount of research that provided a deeper understanding of what factors inform adolescent African American females' academic aspirations, especially their desire to attend college. The purpose of this study was to add to the current discussions regarding the experiences and perceptions of African American mothers.

Synopsis of the Literature

Although research showed that mothers play an important role in the academic success of their children (Harding et al., 2015), there was scant current research describing educational experiences and perceptions of mothers, or describing how those experiences shape the way mothers formulate and communicate educational aspirations to their daughters. Further, there was limited current research that addressed the role mothers play in shaping their daughters' postsecondary academic plans. This gap was noteworthy for two reasons: (a) data showed the enrollment of African American female students in college has increased significantly in the last 10 years (National Center for

Educational Statistics, 2019) and (b) role theory suggests that roles are transmitted and that individuals will act within the context of the expectations that others have for them (McLeod, 2008). Therefore, it was important to consider the role mothers, through their experiences and the transmission of their expectations, may play in informing their daughters' aspirations.

Major Sections of the Chapter

Because mothers may once have been students, it was important to consider the duality of their experiences and to acknowledge how their academic self-concept, educational stereotypes, gender role transmission, social class, and communication habits combine to shape the educational expectations of their adolescent daughters. This literature review is organized in alignment with several of these themes because they may be important to learning more about the educational experiences and perceptions of mothers and their expectations for their daughters. This review also includes information on the iterative search process and the application of the selected theory to past and current research.

<div align="center">

Literature Search Strategy

</div>

To conduct a search of the literature, I accessed library databases such as PsycINFO and Google Scholar. Key search terms for this search included *maternal educational experience, mothers' educational goals for adolescent daughters, mothers' educational experiences, the relationship between maternal education and children's academic outcomes, mother daughter communication and post-secondary education, mothers' adolescent daughters, post-secondary*

education, and *mothers' academic experiences*. When an initial search proved

unsuccessful, I used alternate words, such as *academic* rather than *educational*,

to identify germane scholarship. Although I employed multiple search strategies,

most of my findings centered on how mothers could increase their adolescent

daughters' physical activity, incarcerated mothers and their daughters' antisocial

behavior, cervical cancer prevention, and sexual risk behaviors. Only one of the

literature searches resulted in the identification of a phenomenological research

study that focused on mothers' perspectives.

Theoretical Foundation

Because gender role transmission and sex categorization can inform behavior, the

theoretical framework I used for this research was McLeod's (2008) role theory. One

assumption of this theory is that roles are transmitted and that individuals will act within

the context of the expectations that others have for them. McLeod explained that each

social situation has a set of expectations that impact behavior in that particular setting. I

selected this theory because it provided a framework for understanding how cultural

expectations, such as those created by a mother's educational experiences, could be

transmitted to her adolescent daughter. This research may build on this theory through the

exploration of how mothers' expectations impact their daughters' behavior.

Researchers have used role theory to bring meaning to workplace experiences

(Sluss & Dick, 2011) and to explore how gender stereotypes influence girls in their

academic course selection (Ollson & Martiny, 2018). Researchers have also used role

theory to understand how families influence the choices children may make in pursuing

educational opportunities, or how the choices that children make may align with more traditional family and cultural values (Nada, 2009). The latter use of role theory aligned with how the theory was used in the current study because I explored how African American mothers' experiences and perceptions shape how they formulate and communicate academic expectations to their adolescent daughters. For this literature review, scholarly articles were reviewed and organized into three main categories: the value of maternal academic support, gender role transmission and educational experiences, and mothers' use of external resources.

Value of Maternal Academic Support

Several researchers addressed the value of maternal academic support. Carter and Wojtkiewicz (2000) explored (a) whether maternal academic support of adolescent daughters is important, (b) what behaviors constitute support, and (c) what underlying factors impact maternal academic support and educational expectations of their daughters. In collecting data on the academic support of eighth-grade boys and girls, the authors found that parents were more involved with their sons' education than with their daughters'. Parental involvement was defined as going to school events, checking homework, and limiting extra activities. As a result of the differences in maternal involvement with daughters, mothers had higher levels of educational expectations, and their daughters experienced higher levels of academic achievement. What the authors were unable to conclude, however, is why gendered differences in expectations for adolescent females occur. Although the authors suggested that mothers' sensitivity to social conditions may be one reason for the difference, it was also noted that this

difference could also be the result of gender socialization. As a result, the authors

suggested that additional in-depth research to learn more about the differential

involvement and expectations for daughters be conducted. In response to this call, I

sought to learn more about how mothers' educational experiences may inform their

expectations for their adolescent daughters.

Harding et al. (2015) also addressed the value of maternal academic support. The

authors suggested that the importance of a mother to the educational outcomes of her

daughter goes beyond the realm of the mother's direct involvement with the daughter.

Using the theories of social, human, and cultural capital alongside the developmental

niche theory and bio-ecological theory, the authors created a framework for

understanding the role of maternal education that suggested that mothers operate at

multiple levels within their children's environment. The authors suggested that there is a

more advanced level of interacting systems that come together in a way that renders

mothers a major component in their children's educational outcomes. Although the

authors' findings were consistent with other existing literature that supported the

importance of maternal education, the authors argued that a mother's social network,

exposure of her children to cultural activities, her ability to negotiate educational benefits

for her children, and use of neighborhood activities to shape the educational outcomes of

her children are part of a more complex structure connected to the educational

experiences of the mother. Although this research expanded the research of Carter and

Wojtkiewicz (2000), Harding et al. concluded by sharing that their work did not take into

consideration situations in which mothers and their children do not have a close relationship.

Consideration has also been given to the connection between the maternal academic support and the mother's economic status. Foster et al. (2016) explored the role that mothers and fathers play in the academic outcomes of their preschoolers. The authors found that the home learning environment played a major role in the outcomes of children, and that in many cases mothers were the prime contributors to their children's academic development. Further, the authors found that in households in which mothers held a bachelor's degree or higher, the role of the fathers was not a significant factor in the academic outcomes of their children. What seems to be less certain is the role that socioeconomic status may play in the outcomes. Foster et al.'s study was conducted using a well-educated participant sample, and it is possible that the preschoolers experienced more advanced home learning environment practices. This study did not address adolescent populations or mothers who may experience lower socioeconomic status and/or lower educational status.

Zadeh et al. (2010) also explored maternal education and children's achievement, finding that gender difference played a mediating role in girl's academic achievement. Similar to Foster et al. (2016), Zadeh et al. asserted that when mothers serve as the primary caregiver, they become the primary conduits for the promotion of positive academic experiences. Zadeh et al.'s study was supported by the concept of academic socialization, which suggests that the academic achievement of young children is impacted by parental influence. Specifically, Zadeh et al. suggested that by modeling

certain emotions and skills, mothers also influence academic achievement. Findings from this study were also similar to the findings of Harding et al. (2015) in that both studies addressed the varying levels of maternal influence and the ways in which multiple interactions combine to influence academic achievement in children.

<center>**Gender Role Transmission and Educational Expectations**</center>

Previous research has also addressed the connection between gender role transmission and educational expectations. Yamamoto (2016) discussed the role that gender and social class play in a mother's beliefs and transmission of educational expectations for her daughter. Yamamoto concluded that "maternal roles that depend on social class context are likely to affect mothers' beliefs about gender roles for their daughters and sons" (p. 76). Participants in this study had varied educational expectations for their daughters based on the cultural norms valued within the context of their social class. Mothers in working class families considered college as a place to gain a skill that would allow daughters to be more productive workers and viewed college attendance as optional. Mothers in middle class families viewed college as a place of personal development, with their daughters' enrollment in college being almost automatically assumed. Although mothers in the study did not always strictly conform to social class norms, it was clear that for those mothers who did, their beliefs about education shaped their aspirations for their daughter and influenced their daughters' educational aspirations.

Gniewosz and Noack (2012) also found that gender played an important role in the formation and transmission of academic values. The authors suggested that

"depending on parental gender, the academic domain of concern, and a wide range of situational cues, students weigh information differently, and accept or reject the values held by their parents" (p.76). For the mothers who participated in this study, the impact of gender and the transmission of gender-influenced expectations was realized through the students' observation of the mothers' level of involvement. As students saw that mothers were involved, that involvement was equated with the importance of that subject, and in turn influenced the students' values. Although Gniewosz and Noack's research did not address social class norms and considered both male and female students, their findings were consistent with others, such as Yamamoto (2016), whose findings addressed the relationship between gender and beliefs of the parent and the subsequent importance placed on education by the child.

Toren (2013) also explored the role that parental influence has on the academic outcomes of adolescent girls. Giving consideration to factors such as how parental involvement may change as children enter middle and high school, changes in parental communication and monitoring, and gender socialization, Toren hypothesized that these factors, combined with a girl's self-evaluation, would impact her academic achievement. Toren found that during the adolescent period, a girl's self-evaluation is lower. Additionally, Toren found that in cases in which gender roles in the home were traditional, the relationship between parental involvement and girl's self-evaluation was stronger.

The relationship between mothers' attitudes and the adoption of either traditional or liberal gender roles by their adolescent daughters has also been studied. Using the

ambivalent sexism theory as a framework, Montañés et al. (2012) reported that when a mother subscribed to benevolent sexism, she transmitted traditional gender-related values to her daughter, such as those that support the concept of female dependence on the opposite sex. The transmission and acceptance of traditional roles led to the adolescent daughter being less likely to set goals related to obtaining an academic degree. When mothers rejected benevolent sexism, however, daughters were more likely to develop liberal goals that positively predicted their likelihood to pursue both current and long-term academic performance, including obtaining an academic degree.

Similar to the research conducted by Montañés et al (2012), Mireles-Rios and Roma (2014) also found that when Latina mothers reject nontraditional gender roles, "daughters experience a greater level of achievement orientation, measured by their expectations to attend college" (p. 1553). This finding, although culturally specific, showed many positive direct and indirect results of maternal expectations and daughters' aspirations. Daughters with higher educational expectations had mothers with higher expectations. In addition to the development of positive achievement goals, daughters rejected more traditional goals associated with motherhood, postponing the decision to become mothers until they were older. The findings also discredited stereotypes associated with the Latino community, which perpetuate education as being undervalued by this population.

The changes related to gender and education in Peru further demonstrate what happens when mothers reject traditional gender values. Much like the mothers and daughters described by Mireles-Rios and Roma (2014), Ames (2013) found that through

the construction of new gender identities, mothers in Peru transmitted educational values to their daughters that supported the development of educational aspirations that had multiple outcomes. Ames argued that "high educational aspirations…are not only related to the desire to overcome poverty and marginalization, but also to oppressive gender relations" (p. 267). Ames studied gender and education in Peru multiple times and found that whereas mothers initially had low aspirations for their daughters, a shift occurred when mothers began to realize the importance of their daughters' education as a means to prevent gender violence and to help support the family economically. Like findings from Mireles-Rios and Roma (2014), mothers began to reject traditional ethnic values supporting their daughters' education as an avenue for changing their life.

Mothers' Use of External Resources

The importance of a mother to the educational outcomes of her daughter goes beyond the realm of the mothers' direct involvement with the daughter. Harding et al. (2015) suggestion that a mother's ability to use her social capital, "such as knowing a school administrator or the organizer of neighborhood activities" (p. 68) is also important when trying to understand the role of the mother in her children's educational outcomes. In considering this layer of interaction, one must consider whether children are aware of the educational norms of the mother's social network, and whether the child has a relationship with the mother. Additional research was needed on what constitutes a mother's social network and how those networks are used to gain access to greater educational activities for their children.

Summary

The literature addressing mothers' lived educational experiences and their aspirations for their adolescent daughters was sparse. I was unable to find any research that gave insight into maternal academic self-concept or how mothers formulate their postsecondary educational goals for their daughters. Although there was a great deal or research on parental involvement in general, the dual role of the mother and the father, and preschool and early childhood educational experiences, research on the lived experiences of mothers was limited. Much of the research that I was able to find was either outdated or specific to a particular culture that was not African American. Much of what I sought to explore was unavailable. Therefore, through the use of a generic qualitative approach, I conducted research to extend current literature by describing the academic experiences and perceptions of African American mothers age 30 to 40 and how these mothers communicate their educational expectations to their adolescent daughters.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Rogers et al. (2009) suggested that more research regarding parent involvement needs to be conducted across populations that are more diverse. Harding et al. (2015) suggested that more research needs to be done that explores how mothers use networks to gain educational opportunities for their children. The purpose of the current generic qualitative study was to explore the educational experiences and perceptions of African American mothers age 30 to 40 to gain insight into how these mothers communicate their educational expectations to their adolescent daughters. Additionally, I explored mothers' experiences and perceptions regarding external resources such as mentoring or academic support organizations that may be used to help shape educational expectations. In this chapter, I present the research questions that guided the study and provide a rationale for the use of the generic qualitative research design. Information regarding the role of the researcher, participant selection, and instrumentation is also included in this chapter.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old describe their educational experiences?

Research Question 2: What academic expectations do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old have for their daughters?

Research Question 3: How do those mothers formulate and communicate those expectations to their adolescent daughter?

Research Question 4: What external resources do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old use to help shape their adolescent daughter's educational aspirations?

Research Design and Rationale

For research that is exploratory in nature and does not include numbers as a means to quantify results, qualitative research designs are used. Hammarberg et al. (2016) identified several different types of qualitative designs that can be used when conducting qualitative research. These design choices include case study, phenomenology, ethnography, generic, grounded theory, and narrative. Each approach requires different guidelines, some of which are more in-depth than others, and all of which are selected as a result of the research problem being explored (Kennedy, 2016). Although the narrative, case study, and phenomenological designs were considered for the current study, the generic design aligned best with the problem being explored and the purpose of this study, which was to explore the perceptions of mothers about their academic experiences and their academic communication practices. The narrative design was not selected because the goal of the current study was to learn about the experiences and perceptions of mothers through their responses to interview questions, whereas the narrative approach outlines stories and events, not experiences and perceptions (see Kennedy, 2016). Although the case study design can be used to learn about participant experiences, this design was not selected because it did not meet the criteria to proceed with this approach (see Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009), case study designs are appropriate when the researcher seeks to understand the how and why of a situation, to

highlight decisions that were made, to share how the decisions were implemented, and to detail the results. Because the goal of the current study did not with a case study approach, this method was not selected.

The phenomenological design is a rigorous process to explore the lived experiences of participants through rich detail related to a phenomenon (Finlay, 2014). After careful analysis, I determined that this design did not align with the goal of this research. The generic qualitative approach was selected because it allows for the exploration of experiences and perceptions of topics and subtopics based on prior research (see Percy et al., 2015). When the researcher has prior knowledge or a categorical set of preunderstandings, it would be appropriate to use a generic qualitative approach (Kennedy, 2016). In this current study, previous data showed that African American females have experienced increased enrollment in college, but how the academic experiences of their mothers is communicated and how the expectations for college attendance is communicated were not known. The generic qualitative method allowed me to generate more knowledge about maternal academic involvement and the use of external resources by exploring the experiences and perceptions of African American mothers regarding their educational expectations and the communication of those expectations to their adolescent daughters, which was intended to fill a gap in the literature related to this population.

Findings may be used to improve the ways in which alternative mentoring programs fill in the gaps for girls whose mothers may not have expressed educational expectations for their daughters or situation in which a mother is not present. For this

research, educational expectations were defined as the value placed on educational achievement and the setting of educational goals as demonstrated by educational support such as engaging in academic conversation, support of school work/projects, interactions with teachers, and the discussion and planning of postsecondary educational goals. Educational aspirations were defined as the daughter's desire to attend college, and adolescents referred to individuals ages 12 to 17 years.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher conducting a generic qualitative study, my role was that of an observer participant. I am a college-educated mother of adolescent daughters. I am also a daughter whose mother did not complete high school. I was raised by my grandmother who completed high school and unsuccessfully attempted to obtain her nursing certificate at the age of 60. Although my maternal influences did not attend college, I was exposed to resources outside of my home that would be instrumental in helping me develop college aspirations. My grandmother and mother utilized external resources to help fill the void that existed in their knowledge. Because of my deep connection to the current study, it was imperative that I bracket out my beliefs, feelings, and experiences to allow the thoughts and experiences of the participants to be captured in a way that brought greater understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the mothers who shared their stories with me. Because my role was exploratory in nature, it further required me to protect the information that the participants shared with me. As a human instrument of data collection, I bore the responsibility of managing any research biases that might exist.

Methodology

Using a qualitative approach, I asked African American mothers, who ranged from 30 to 40 years of age, about their academic experiences and perceptions. I sought to gain knowledge about how these mothers communicated their educational expectations to their adolescent daughters. Additionally, I explored the participants' attitudes and beliefs regarding external resources such as mentoring or academic support organizations that may be used to help shape educational expectations. I did so to provide a deeper understanding of mothers' experiences and how these experiences can influence current educational trends such as increased college attendance of African American females.

Participant Selection Logic

The participants were African American mothers with adolescent daughters. The mothers were required to be 30 to 40 years old, with at least one adolescent daughter age 13 to 17, to participate. Due to the work I was engaged in at the time of the study, I had a network that supported recruitment of individuals with these demographics. I used purposeful sampling to obtain a sample size of between five and eight mothers who met the selection criteria. Using purposeful sampling allowed me to gain information-rich data samples that were specific to the research I was conducting (see Creswell, 2017). If purposeful sampling had proven to be ineffective, I would have considered the use of snowball method, which allows participants to recommend potential participants who meet the research requirements. I opted to use a sample size of between five and eight mothers to ensure data saturation. Although there is no specific number required to meet

saturation in a reflexive thematic analysis (see Braun et al., 2019), I found that I was experiencing data saturation with the five interviews I conducted.

To prepare for data collection, I developed a promotional flyer that invited study participants (see Appendix B). I then posted the flyers in the community and advertised them on Facebook. The flyers contained a link to an online survey that helped me determine whether the potential participant met the criteria to participate in the study (see Appendix D). If the criteria were met, the potential participant was contacted and a preliminary interview was scheduled. Before the first interview, I explained the purpose of the research in greater detail. Further, I went through the process of gaining proper consent and answered any questions the participant may have had regarding their participation in the study. Once I obtained proper consent, I conducted the interview.

Instrumentation

The data for this generic qualitative study were gathered through the use of semistructured interview questions. I developed interview questions based on my knowledge of the current literature. I had a subject matter expert review my instrument to test for content validity and to make sure that the instrument had been designed in a manner that was sufficient to answer the research questions and was free from bias.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I utilized Zoom's audio recording feature and telephone to conduct confidential interviews over the period of 2 weeks. For participants who chose to use the Zoom feature, I used the Zoom transcription feature to transcribe participant responses. For participants who chose the telephone option, I used the voice memo feature on my tablet

to record participant responses. Interviews were scheduled in 1-hour increments with a 20-minute gap in between to allow for additional notes and to prepare for the next interview. Interviews were scheduled using an online scheduling tools to accommodate for COVID-19 concerns. COVID-19 is the term used to reference Coronavirus 2019, a viral stand of Coronavirus that causes respiratory illness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020). According to the CDC (2020), the virus can spread from person to person through close physical contact, causing social distancing to be encouraged. As a result of the need to practice social distancing, face-to-face interviews were not safe to conduct.

At the beginning of each interview, I reviewed all information related to the study and consent. To ensure the accuracy of participant responses, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. I carefully conducted the interview, being sure to complete each item on my interview checklist. Once the interview was complete, I debriefed the participant on what the next steps would be. I concluded the interview with a thank-you statement (see Creswell, 2017). If a participant had withdrawn from the study early or there had been too few recruits, another candidate would have been recruited using the same methods. All participants who completed the entire interview were given a copy of their recorded interview.

Data Analysis Plan

To analyze the data from the semistructured interviews, I used a reflexive thematic analysis approach (see Braun et al., 2019). I selected this approach to generate rich details about participant experiences based on themes that emerged from the data

(see Braun et al., 2019). I began the data analysis process by gathering all interview

materials and additional notes and reading over the data to get a general understanding of

what had been captured (see Braun et al., 2019). I transcribed the data using a manual

transcription process for phone interviews and the audio transcription feature for Zoom. I

reviewed the transcribed notes, making additional notes to generate initial codes. I then

reviewed the answers from the participants multiple times and reflected on my notes to

ensure that I had accurately captured what was shared about participant experiences and

perceptions. From this point I analyzed the data to identify themes that I saw developing

from the experiences of the participants. To help with theme generation, I used the

computer software program NVivo. I then reviewed the theme categories again to ensure

that there were enough data for the findings to be considered a theme (see Braun et al.,

2019). The final themes that were conceptualized from this analysis were used as the

basis of my findings. There were no discrepant data to include in the findings (see

Trochim, 2020).

Issues of Trustworthiness

In addition to reporting discrepant data, I further ensured the internal validity of

my research by engaging in transcript review of the transcribed data. I allowed

participants to review a copy of the transcripts to give them the opportunity to review

their comments and to add, delete, or correct any information. This allowed me to ensure

that there were no discrepancies in the data I gathered based on the participants'

satisfaction with the transcripts (see Creswell, 2017). I also had an expert review the

interview questions to ensure construct validity. I had an expert review the interview

questions to confirm that the questions I asked were aligned with the research questions I was seeking answers to. I also sought to clarify the bias that I brought to the study and offer a rich description of the information (see Creswell, 2017).

Even though I planned to engage in traditional methods of ensuring the validity and reliability of my research, I also took measures to ensure the confirmability, transferability, and dependability of my research. To ensure confirmability, I was diligent in using different strategies to check that the data represented participants' responses and was free from researcher bias (see Trochim, 2020). To ensure transferability, I described how my findings could be applicable in different contexts (see Trochim, 2020). To ensure dependability, I was aware of the need to record any changes in the study and any impact this change may have had on how I went about conducting the research (see Trochim, 2020).

Ethical Procedures

The ethical treatment of the participants and the data that were collected was critical to being able to successfully and accurately share the experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of the participants. I followed guidelines as outlined by the Walden University IRB to ensure that the documents that I used to gain access to research participants, the treatment of the participants, and any other needed permissions or requirements that were needed were gained and executed in an ethical manner. My IRB approval number is 09-29-20-0442853. The same diligence was used to protect the data. I took all measures necessary to protect the confidentiality of the participants, including offering participants the option to use a pseudonym during the interview process. I also made sure to clean the

data to remove any indicators of participant identity (see Trochim, 2020). Examples of identity removal to ensure confidentiality included removing the participant's name and assigning a participant number to each transcript. Any information that included personal identifiers was locked in a file cabinet, and it will be shredded when it is no longer essential to the completion of the research, or as outlined by IRB guidelines that require a 5-year period for keeping data. Interviews were saved to a USB drive and will be stored with any written notes for the 5-year period. I was the only person with access to the personal data of the participants and the data that were collected.

Summary

Using a generic qualitative approach, I conducted semistructured interviews to explore the academic experiences and perceptions of African American mothers age 30 to 40 and to gain knowledge about how these mothers communicate their educational expectations to their adolescent daughters. Additionally, I explored these mothers' attitudes and beliefs regarding external resources such as mentoring or academic support organizations that may be used to help shape educational expectations. Findings may provide a deeper understanding of the mothers' experiences and current educational trends in education such as increased college attendance of African American females. To protect the research participants and the information that was collected during the research process, I followed all ethical guidelines and best practices regarding the steps required to engage with participants, conduct interviews, gather and code data, secure data, and properly dispose of the data. I also followed all requirements to ensure validity, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of findings. Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to learn about the experiences and perceptions of African Americans mothers age 30 to 40. The research questions for this study were as follows: How do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old describe their educational experiences? What academic expectations do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old have for their daughters? How do those mothers formulate and communicate those expectations to their adolescent daughter? What external resources do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old use to help shape their adolescent daughter's educational aspirations? This chapter includes a review of the setting of the study, participant demographics, the data collection and analysis process, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results.

Research Setting

Because of CDC (2020) regulations regarding social distancing and other concerns related to the spread of COVID-19, I conducted semistructured interviews via Zoom and telephone. Prior to the interviews, I communicated with the participants via email. Each participant received an email regarding the nature of the study, consent forms, and a link to participate in the prestudy criteria survey. From that point, each participant also received an additional emailed consent form to participate in the actual study prior to the interview being scheduled.

Prior to starting the interview, I explained how the interview would be conducted and asked participants whether they had any questions for me. During the interview, I asked the questions as outlined in my interview protocol. I reframed questions as needed

to make sure participants understood the questions that were being asked and to ensure that I understood the answers being given. I used an interview guide (see Appendix D) to make sure I asked each participant each question, and I asked for examples any time I felt like I needed more information.

Demographics

Participant 1

Participant 1 is an African American mother between the ages of 30 and 40 with an adolescent daughter between the ages of 13 and 17. Participant 1 also has a younger son and an older son. Participant 1 completed college after 9 years. She is married, and she and her husband currently support their children with virtual school.

Participant 2

Participant 2 is an African American mother between the ages of 30 and 40 with two adolescent daughters between the ages of 13 and 17. Because one of her daughters was able to skip a grade, both of her daughters are currently seniors in high school. Participant 2 is currently pursuing her doctorate at another university.

Participant 3

Participant 3 is an African American mother between the ages of 30 and 40 with an adolescent daughter between the ages of 13 and 17. Participant 3 also has a younger son who has multiple health challenges. Participant 3 has completed college but has been unable to complete her master's degree due to the challenges of balancing work and the needs of her son. Her adolescent daughter lives with her father and attends school in a district that is different from the one her mother lives in.

Participant 4

Participant 4 is an African American mother between the ages of 30 and 40 with an adolescent daughter between the ages of 13 and 17. Participant 4 is the mother to a younger son and currently works in hospitality. Her educational experience has been heavily impacted by her needs as a special needs student and African American female. The same holds true for her adolescent daughter, who receives certain accommodations as part of her educational process.

Participant 5

Participant 5 is an African American mother between the ages of 30 and 40 with an adolescent daughter between the ages of 13 and 17. Participant 5 also has younger children. Participant 5 currently works in the STEM field. Her daughter is currently a sophomore in high school and is looking to pursue a career in art.

Summary of Participant Experiences

All mothers who were interviewed were pregnant and/or gave birth to their adolescent daughter while pursuing their undergraduate degree. Each mother was vocal in sharing her academic experiences, perceptions, and goals for her daughters. The mothers' academic experiences varied in terms of their likes and dislikes, successes and struggles, and pursuit of additional educational opportunities. In learning more about each mother's experiences and perceptions, I considered how maternal academic experiences and perceptions, the perceived academic ability and goals of the adolescent daughter, and the mother's beliefs about the use of external resources combined to shape the goals each mother had for her adolescent daughter and how those goals were communicated. These

factors, and perceived sense of urgency, also influenced whether mothers utilized external resources. What is also characteristic of each of the participant's experiences is that in many ways their daughter's journey is interwoven with their mother's experiences because many of the mothers were having academic experiences while also parenting their now adolescent daughters.

Each of the mothers interviewed has a goal for something beyond a high school education for their daughters. Although Participant 1 thought that a vocational education would be a good fit for her daughter, the other participants spoke to a more traditional college experience. For the mothers who have goals associated with a more traditional collegiate experiences, those mothers were most involved with their daughter's teachers, extracurricular activities, supporting with homework help, and advocating with school officials on behalf of their daughter. These parents go to parent–teacher conferences multiple times a year, email teachers, and serve in leadership positions with school booster organizations.

Each mother was also different in her approach to communicating her goals for her daughter. Although one mother had not begun having conversations about her daughter's academic future, another mother had made her goal, and the communication of that goal, the standard by which she engaged with her daughter since before she received a formal education. Other mothers take a more collaborative approach. After the goal of college attendance was communicated, some mothers left room for their daughters to have some autonomy in the decision-making and research process. The thought was to allow her adolescent daughter to achieve the academic experience that had

been modeled for her, while being intentional about making sure that their daughter has a better experience than the mother had. For example, one mother said that her mother never asked her what she wanted to do. She just did all the things her mother said and made many mistakes. To eliminate that from happening with her daughter, she asks questions to learn about her daughter's interests and provides guidance along the way.

Most of the mothers interviewed make active use of the villages that they are part of for the sake of supporting the goal of academic achievement that they have for their daughter. Whether that village includes immediate and extended family, teachers and family friends, or other more established clubs and organizations, all of the mothers see value in the use of external resources in supporting the goals they have for their daughters. Several of the mothers interviewed also spoke to the importance of having experiences beyond the traditional school experiences that are beneficial for a well-rounded educational experience that would further set her daughter up for academic achievement.

Data Collection

After gaining IRB approval to conduct between five and eight interviews, I began the process of collecting data using semistructured Zoom or telephone interviews. I conducted interviews with five participants (see Appendix D). Three interviews were conducted via Zoom and two interviews were conducted via phone. Braun et al. (2019) pointed out that four to five dense interviews is sufficient for a reflexive thematic analysis. Interviews were scheduled in 1-hour increments, with the duration of the interviews varying by length depending on participant experiences. None of the

interviews went over the allotted time. Each interview was recorded and transcribed after the interview was conducted. After reviewing and transcribing the data, I also hand-coded the data. The process of hand-coding allowed me to organize my data and see what themes were developing from the information that was shared by the participants.

At the beginning of each interview, I reviewed the information related to the study and consent. I then carefully conducted the interview, being sure to complete each item on my interview checklist. The interview protocol included four main questions that were asked of each participant. Once the interview was complete, I debriefed the participant on what the next steps would be. After answering any additional questions that the participants had, I concluded the interview with a thank-you statement (see Creswell, 2017). No participants withdrew from the study.

There were no discrepancies from the data collection process as described in Chapter 3. Given the impact of COVID-19, conducting Zoom interviews was not unusual. However, this process was quite different from a pre-COVID interview in that instead of meeting each participant face-to-face, we were screen to screen. Additionally, some mothers were conducting interviews with their children in the background, a common scene in navigating a COVID-19 impacted world.

Data Analysis

Utilizing a reflexive thematic analysis approach, I began the data analysis process by gathering all interview materials and additional notes and reading over the data to get a general understanding of what had been captured. I transcribed the data using a manual transcription process for phone interviews and the audio transcription feature for Zoom.

After reviewing the transcribed notes, I began the process of hand-coding the data for initial codes. I went through each participant's answer to each question, pulling out words and phrases that continued to appear or seemed to be at the heart of their response. Once I completed the hand-coding process, I uploaded my data to NVivo to explore my data through the use of queries and word clouds. Using the software allowed me to dive deeper into the data, helping me to see which words and concepts came up the most in participant responses. With this knowledge, I was able to determine with greater accuracy the themes that were being conceptualized by the data. I then defined the themes and began the process of writing up the findings (see Braun et al., 2019).

There were 25 codes that initially emerged from the data (see Figure 1). These codes focused on the participants' academic experiences and perceptions of school, the goals that the participants have for their adolescent daughter, how the participants communicate those expectations, and the external resources utilized by the participants to support the achievement of the goals they have for their daughter. Examples of the initial codes that emerged were about liking and disliking school, having challenging experiences, grades, and favorite subject areas. From the codes, I was able to categorize my findings into four major themes and two subthemes (see Table 1). In conducting the analysis, I also considered the research questions that were asked and the conceptual framework.

Table 1

Themes and Subthemes Conceptualized During Data Analysis

Themes	Subthemes
Challenging experiences	Like mother, like daughter…but better

High expectations	Goals for my daughters
Academic conversations	
It takes a village	

Figure 1

Codes and Categories From Data Analysis
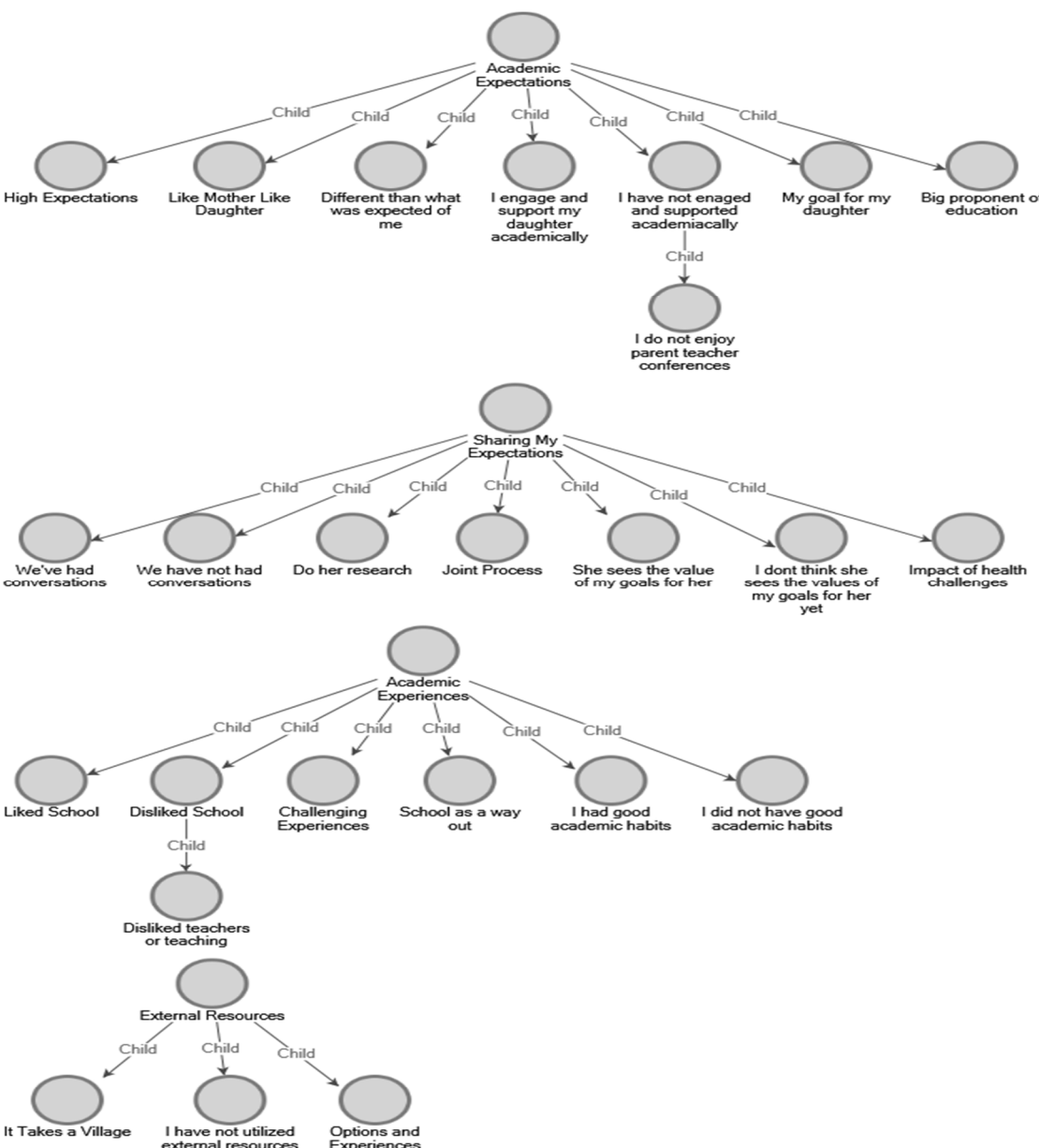
Note. This figure represents the initial codes and categories that emerged from participant

responses.

With the categories in place, I was able to move inductively to the identification of themes. After creating the categories, I reviewed the data again to find patterns in the data collection. In reviewing the data for patterns, I continued to refer back to the transcripts for an in-depth review. There were no discrepant data. With the relationships established between the codes, categories, and patterns, I was able to create themes that were reflective of the data. I was also able to analyze the data to determine the words that were most commonly used in participants' responses (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Most Common Words Used in Participant Responses

Note. This figure represents the words that were most commonly used by participants in their responses.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The participants of this study were five African American mothers between the ages of 30-40 who also had adolescent daughters. During the interview process, I confirmed that the time still worked for the participant and thanked each participant for agreeing to participate in the study. I also asked if the participant had questions prior to beginning the study and took time to explain the rest of the process. I made efforts to clearly communicate all of the interview questions, and I asked clarifying questions to ensure that I understood the participant's response. To further ensure credibility, I utilized transcript review, which included me providing participants with a copy of their interview transcripts after their interview session.

Transferability

To ensure transferability, it is necessary to describe how the research findings could be applicable under different contexts (see Trochim, 2020). The participant criteria was outlined for those who chose to participate, and participants were required to meet that criteria before being able to proceed with proceed with participation. I was aware of the limitations of the study due to the criteria for participation for participation, the fact that the participants were recruited utilizing social media, and because interviews were conducted via Zoom and telephone to ensure safety as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, I committed to recording to any changes in the research, and any impact those changes may have had on how I went about conducting the research (see Trochim, 2020). In addition to staying in contact with my committee, I also offered participants the opportunity to respond with any question, corrections, or additional thoughts they wants to address.

Confirmability

Utilizing different strategies to check that the data represents participant responses and is free from researcher bias is critical for ensuring confirmability (see Trochim, 2020). To ensure confirmability, I utilized the member checking strategy to ensure that my records of participant responses were free from bias. I also engaged in bracketing for the purpose of ensuring that my findings were free from biases associated with my personal experiences and assumptions (see Creswell, 2017).

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

The research questions for this study were as follows: How do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old describe their educational experiences? What academic expectations do African-American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old have for their daughters? How do those mothers formulate and communicate those expectations to their adolescent daughter? What external resources do African-American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old use to help shape their adolescent daughter's educational aspirations? The presentation of the data collected

during this study has been organized by research question, and the themes that were conceptualized from participant responses to each question.

Research Question 1: Challenging Experiences

Question one asked participants to describe their academic experiences. Most of the mothers shared that they liked school, enjoyed learning, or had a subject that they enjoyed.

Participant 1 shared: "Growing up I enjoyed reading, I had good grades, I did not have problems in school. I was always interested, I did well naturally."

Participant 3 stated: "I always liked school, especially up until high school." She added, "I was the smart one amongst my sisters, school came easy to me."

Not all of the participants had ongoing pleasant academic experiences, however. For those who did not, their dislike was associated with teachers or other larger issues that made school unpleasant. This was the case for participant 5. She shared that she "liked school, but disliked teachers and their one size fits all approach."

Participant 5 felt that teachers were unable to answer her questions, which often led to behavior issues. The same was the case for participant four. She stated that "she disliked school up until junior year. " She "had an IEP, which opened her up to social ridicule." Ultimately, her challenges culminated "in a physical altercation that resulted in criminal charges being brought against her."

As the mother's continued to share their experiences and perceptions, the theme that was conceptualized as it related to research question one was challenging experiences**.** With the exception of Participant 4 and Participant 5, the other participants

shared academic experiences that started out well (either because of their enjoyment of academics, academic success, or support of education) but later became characterized by challenge. For many, the challenges were centered on the pregnancy and birth of their now adolescent daughter, parenting young children while also being a student, raising additional children, continuing to experience a one-sized fits all approach to education, or from simply being ill equipped to make choices that would positively impact heir educational outcomes.

Participant 1 explained:

"I went to college, but did not graduate right away, I had children early, and dropped out after one year. I went back 9 years later and graduated."

Participant 2 shared:

It was hard in the beginning having small children. I had a rocky start. I started and stopped, started and stopped. I continued to pursue my goals because I was motivated. It took me longer than most, but not really.

Participant 3 added:

"I like structure, but that I also liked the freedom to break away from that structure. This is hard to do with school and work."

She went on to share a time when she had to repeat two courses in college. Overall, she did well, and went on to graduate. Prior to graduating, participant 3 became pregnant with her adolescent daughter. As a result of sickness during the pregnancy, which occurred during her second year, Participant 3 took medical leave for three semesters. She also shared that she started her Master's degree, but due to the challenges

of the demands of the workload, and the demands of raising a son who was very sick (asthma, acid-reflux, and autism), she stepped away from school to take care of her son and to work.
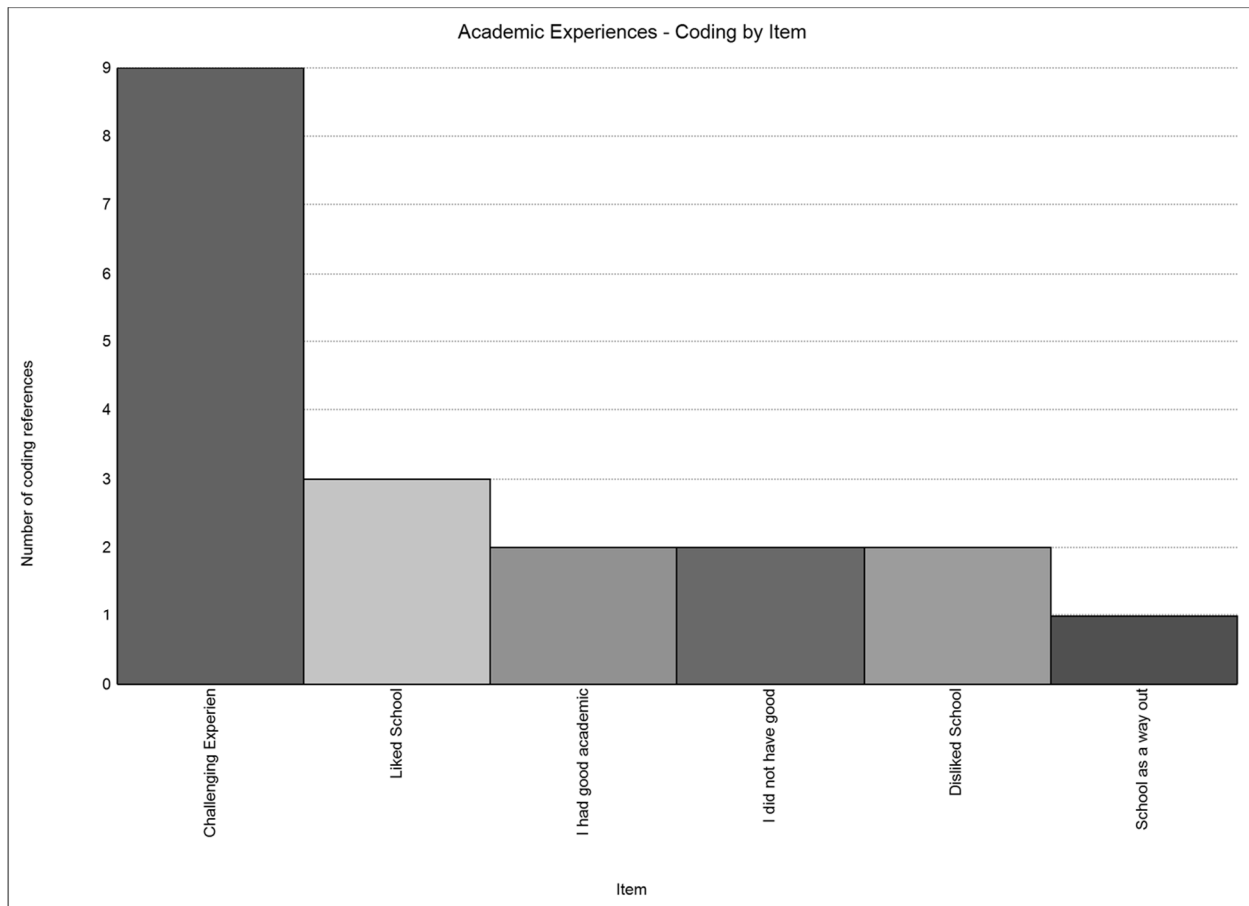
Participant 4 said:

Sophomore year I became pregnant. The dad was not in the country. Pregnancy was difficult, I had a great deal of pregnancy related health challenges, and eventually had to disclose that I was pregnant because they were trying to give care. I felt judged, like the thought was all I did was come up here and get pregnant. Not sure if that was just my perception, or how they felt. Dad came back from overseas, and was like just come home, we will figure it out, so I did, and I had my baby. I was trying to figure out what the closest to place to home that I could attend that had my major. It came down to two schools. One school asked about why I was on break, and rather than disclose my pregnancy/birth of my baby, I chose the other school.

Participant 5 shared:

I loved school, I loved learning, and in college it was pretty much the same. As an engineering student we were learning things that were two and three, even ten years behind where we needed to be (example given of coding in old programs). I hated the teaching, hated the lack of experiential learning (even though I didn't know that what it was at the time), I just didn't like the one size fits all model that everybody uses.

Figure 3

Academic Experiences

Note. This figure represents items coded from participant responses to Research Question 1.

Research Question 2: High Expectations

Question two asked about the academic expectations that mothers had for their daughters. The research showed that the four of the five mothers have fostered the development and communication of their academic expectations by being engaged in their daughter's current academic process (engaging with teachers, setting expectations

for grades and work completion), and by engaging their daughters in conversations regarding their post-high school plans.

Participant 1 said:

"I do not have my mothers' expectations. My expectations are lower for my daughter because we have had issues wither her getting zero's and not doing work. As such, I would be happy if she was a C student."

Participant 2 explained:

"I am such a strong advocate for academic excellence; it has always been a priority in my household. As such, I expect nothing but the best from them…excellence."

Participant 3 shared:

I have high expectations for my daughter. My expectations are high for what my daughter is being taught. As such, I began teaching my daughter before her she started elementary school. My daughter is currently a freshman in high school, and is doing well. She is going to school virtually. I support by looking at the emails that are sent, looking at what is due, and holding her accountable for getting those assignments done. At first, my daughter would say that some of the assignments that were not completed were incomplete because she was not receiving a grade for them. I encouraged her to get the assignments completed anyway.

Participant 5 expressed:

I expect my daughter to have the wherewithal, the confidence to go out and do what she wants when it comes to her education. That's a question that I don't

think we ask girls enough, and we lead them down a path that we think is feasible for them without knowing what they actually want. As far as education and such, when she has problems, she comes to us and we assist.

For Participant 5, this expectation was a direct result of her own academic experiences. She explained that when she was younger, she did what her mother wanted her to do, but that she was not asked what it was that she wanted to do. As such, she shared that she made tons of mistakes. Her goal is for her daughter to have her own plan for her educational journey that truly embodies what her daughter wants, with Participant 5 serving as guidance and support.

Figure 4

Academic Expectations
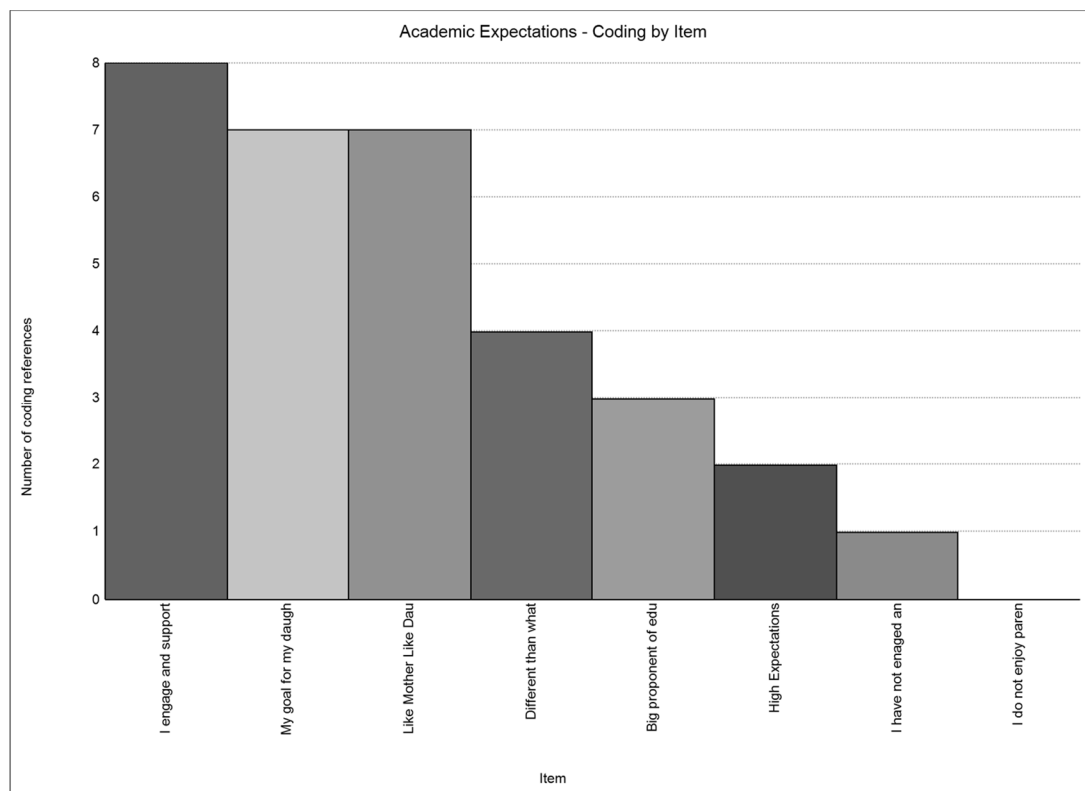
Note: This figure represents items coded from participant responses to Research Question 2.

When follow up questions were asked regarding what their engagement looked

like in terms of homework help, participation in teacher conferences, etc.., participants

had this to say:

Have You Ever Had to Help Them With Homework/Project Completion?

P2 shared:

Absolutely, in the very beginning, elementary, some middle school. They have

been able to model my independence. Towards the end of middle school, they

didn't need my help as much. They are self-starters. They might ask for supplies

or a signature, but they are very independent!

Have You Ever Participated in Parent Teacher Conferences?

Participant 1 explained:

I hate parent teacher conferences. If a teacher wants to conference, it's usually

not for a good reason. I have had to go to plenty because my daughter wasn't

doing well. Nothing against the teacher, but the conferences bring to light that

your child isn't up to par. I have shared with my daughters teachers that I don't

know what else to do.

Participant 2 said:

Absolutely. I always like to attend the conferences at least once or twice a

school year. I don't have kids that have behavior issues or issues with their

grades, so there isn't a lot to discuss. In the beginning I like to meet to learn

about the expectations, class syllabus. They attend early college, so I like to

meet with the professors to learn about expectations, and to see how challenging

it's going to be, and again at the end. I've found the conference to be very

helpful to set the expectations.

Participant 5 shared:

Definitely try to be as active with her school and her teachers as much as

possible. She's in the band and I'm the band booster's president. Definitely have

good relationships with her teachers, they know to call and email and all that.

She knows that if I get an email saying that her virtual work isn't done, that

she's going to be in class the next day with two masks on, because the work has

to get done.

Like Mother, Like Daughter…but Better!

A subtheme that was conceptualized from the data surrounding responses to

research to question two is that there is a "like mother like daughter" experience that was

embodied by a dyadic interaction for the mothers interviewed and their adolescent

daughter.

Participant 2 noted:

"They have been able to model my independence. Towards the end of middle

school, they didn't need my help as much. They are self-starters. They might ask for

supplies or a signature, but they are very independent!"

Participant 3 added:

Participant three shared that her daughter, much like herself, does well in English.

While her daughter mimics her preference and success in a particular subject area,

participant 3 also shared her goals to continue to be an example for her daughter stating

that she wants to be an example for her daughter. She wants to push determination, not

settling, respectfully speaking up for yourself, and advocating for her grades.

Participant 4 explained:

I got my degree when my daughter was four, so her whole perspective on

education was impacted by that experience. She initially saw college more as fun,

you get to sleep at your school and eat what you want. That's what she was

focused. Then it changed to I can be who I see on TV. The assumption was always that she was going to go somewhere.

She added further:

Additionally, she has always seen me in school, or involved in some type of academic endeavor. So, I think she thinks that life is life, but if I want to go to school, there's a way to do it. It might not be my number one choice, but it can happen.

She also noted, "I think that's one of the benefits of being a younger mom, she has been able to watch."

Goals for My Daughter

A second subtheme that was conceptualized from the data related to mothers goals for their daughters. While parts of the mother's educational experiences have been modeled and mimicked, all mothers spoke to their ongoing efforts to make sure that their daughters did not mimic some of the unpleasant aspects of their educational journeys. Their academic experiences and perceptions have led to the development of goals for their adolescent daughters. These goals are academic in nature, but for some, are the catalyst for sharing other life lessons and social skills lessons that will ultimately enhance their academic journey, while fostering the development of skills that will provide lifelong benefits. Further, several of the mothers interviewed shared have been intentional about preparing their daughters to deal with the double burden of being African-American and female.

When asked about their goals for their daughters, and whether or not their daughters saw value in those goals, the mothers said:

Participant 1 said: "What is my goal for my daughter? Community college, learning a trade, or getting a job."

Participant 2 stated:

"My goal is for them to continue to: Love God, put themselves first academically (complete their degree, build a legacy for themselves, marriage and family), and pursue their career."

Participant 3 explained:

As for her goals for her daughter, participant 3 wants her daughter to go to college. Her daughter desires to be an FBI profiler, so mom is super-excited (this aligned with this mother's journey of being a justice major/political science minor).

Participant 4 explained:

My goal for her is that she attend college, but that she attend college away from home. Where we live is like a bubble, so I would like for her to go college away from home. People in this area tend to think that it's like this everywhere. I want her to experience the difference while there is still some oversight.

Participant 5 shared:

My goal for her is to actually have a path by the time she graduates. Without that you just spend the first couple of years in your adulthood scrambling to figure things out, and you end up making a lot of mistakes. I did that. I went the path my mom thought I should, and I made a ton of mistakes. I want her to have it mapped

out (type of art, art school), whatever that looks like, I want her to have it mapped

out, because not having a plan is planning to fail.

Research Question 3: Academic Conversations

Question three asked how mothers formulated and communicated their academic

expectations for their daughters. All of the mothers shared that they had challenges

associated with the completion of their post high school education that their now

adolescent daughter was able to witness. Some mother's spoke of the impact of having

children and pursing their degree, dealing with failed relationships while pursuing their

degree, having children with severe health challenges while pursuing additional degrees,

and having to deal with life in general happening. As the daughters had witnessed, and in

many ways, been part of their mother's journeys, college became the standard that was at

the foundation of the academic expectations that mothers had for their adolescent

daughters. For most, the academic expectation of college attendance has always been the

standard, and has been the subject of ongoing conversations.

When sharing their expectations for their daughters, all of the mothers had a

different style in approaching these conversations. Each approach being influenced by

that mothers' academic experiences and perceptions, and by the realities of engaging with

adolescents and the complexities associated with raising a teenager. Because of their

academic experiences and perceptions, some of the mothers interviewed cultivated a joint

process experience when it comes to the sharing of their expectations. When asked about

how they communicate their expectations, and what that process looks, mothers said:

Participant 1 shared that she had not yet started to have those conversations with her daughter, but it was something that she realized that she needed to start doing .

Participant 2 shared:

We've always had conversations with the girls about going to college, furthering their education, what are your goals, what are your ambitions? I share with them that our ancestors paid a price for us to be here, so what are you going to do with your life? Making sure they always knew, it's not a question. You are going to further your education.

She stated further:

Because they are high school seniors, it's 50/50. They are saying "hey mom, I'm thinking about this school." I might say, "hey what do you think about this school?"

"We have just completed the Common App, so we just walked through that. In fact, we are about to do financial aid. We look at different schools that have the programs that they are interested in."

"I explain to them in detail how to choose your courses, how not to waste time not taking courses that won't apply to their programs. I just explain the different nuances of being a college student and what they can expect."

Participant 3 shared:

We have general conversations about college, but I understand that my daughter is going to do what she wants. I am confident in my daughters' decision making abilities. I know that I will be able to back her decisions. While I know that

other/negative influences might be an issue later down the road, I trusts her decision making for right now.

Participant 3's daughter started living with her dad in middle school, so it is part of their routine that she calls her daughter about school related issues/discussions. These conversations are also more common now that both mom and dad are receiving the same information. This is important, as Participant 3 feared that he would lose this educational connection once her daughter went to live with her dad.

Participant 4 shared:

We have not stopped talking about education. She went on her first college tour in middle school. We have conversations, but the conversations are more targeted then the ones that were had with me. My family believed that there were certain things that as part of the talented tenth, had to be done. My thought being, if I went in to debt doing those things, was that what I should have done? So when my daughter says to me that she wants to be a medical examiner this year, I say to her, ok, what kinds of classes do you need to take? What type of internships do you need? What type of externships do you need? What types of connections do you need? How do we make these connections now so that we can figure it out before you take out a loan? These conversations started in middle school.

We also talk about all of those soft skills that you don't normally think about with college. We talk about things like "what would you do if your roommate is a jerk? How will that be handled when you both have access to that room? As such, we talk to her about how to be safe when she is how, how to handle assault (varying types), what are

our expectations and next steps. All of those conversations started in middle school and were always connected to "In college," you're going to have to think about these things. The purpose of these conversations was to prepare her for the academic and social aspects of being a black girl in a world that doesn't really appreciate you.

Participant 5 explained:

Our conversations are typically random or start as a result of report cards coming out. We can be driving to the grocery store and I notice something and I point it out to her, or sometimes hanging around the house, if I see her watching something on her phone, I'll ask "is your art portfolio done?" That will start a conversation I stress to her the importance of having a log of her work.

The conversations kind of go from there, they typically end up with me doing most of the talking. I don't know if she sees value in the things that I'm saying, but I do see her starting to do some of the things that we talked about.

Figure 5

Sharing My Expectations
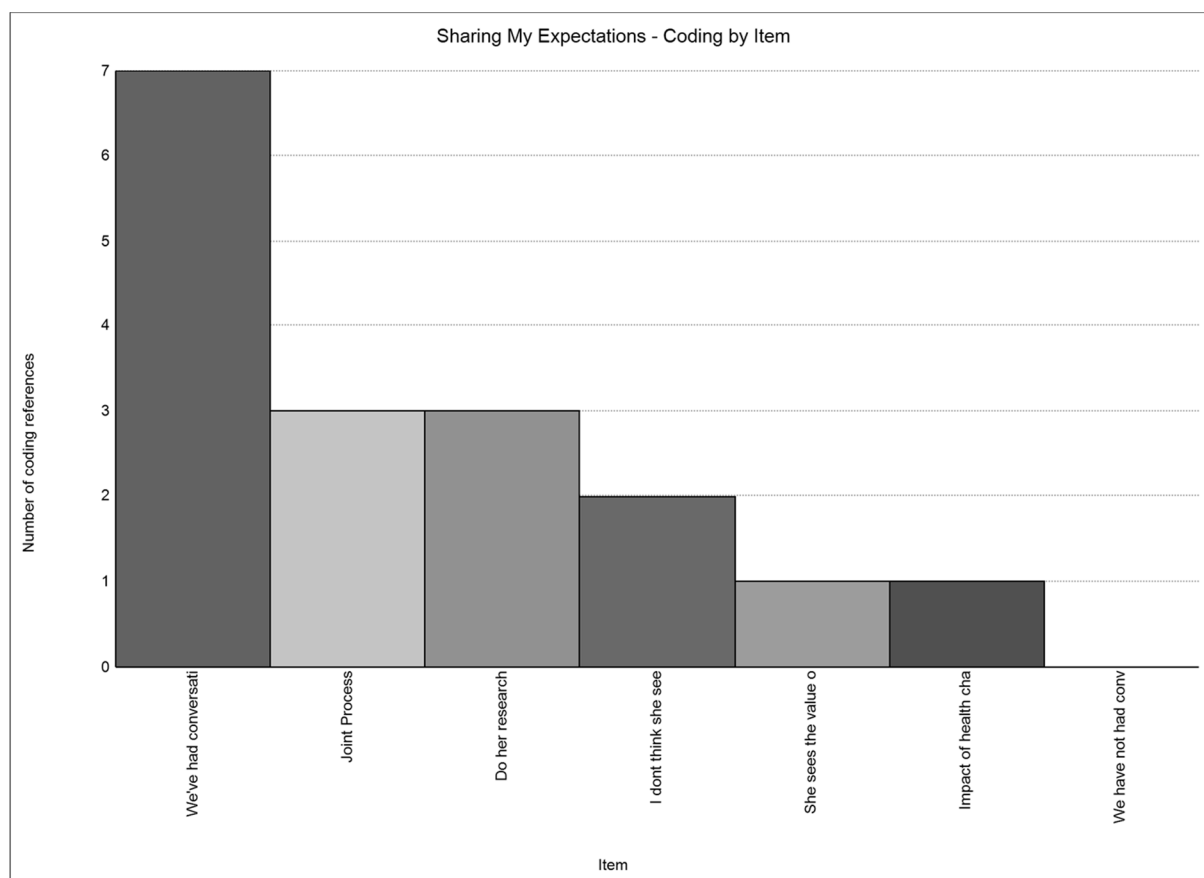
Sharing My Expectations - Coding by Item

Note. This figure represents items coded from participant responses to Research Question 3.

Research Question 4: It Takes a Village

Question 4 asked what external resources do African-American mothers use to help shape their adolescent daughter's educational aspirations? When asked this question mothers said:

Participant 1 shared:

We have programs in our area like the Salvation Army. I have not reached out to anyone. I could speak to her school counselor, the YMCA, or the Boys and Girls

Club. My daughter does speak to a therapist weekly. I know that those things are available to me, I just have not pursued them.

Participant 2 shared:

Their grandmother, their father, and their aunt all reinforce academic excellence. One is in Girls Scout, National Honors Society, and at a pre-college program. All of these things reinforce the importance of academic excellence and education for African-American women. Academic excellence is reinforced by their village.

Participant 3 shared:

In thinking about external resources, I think about the other people in my daughters' village. Dad and I have friends and acquaintances that have diverse experiences. Whenever my daughter shows that she has an interest, I encourage dialog between her and the person who may be able to help further that interest. For example, my boyfriend's brother-in-law works for the FBI. While he is super busy, my daughter looks forward to being able to pick his brain. I have also connected her with people like my best friend, who is a detective.

Participant 4 shared:

Because we always chose small charter schools, she benefited from having a lot more example of African-America women in leadership, and access to their personal networks. If she expressed an interest in something, it's easier when you have a population of 300 to connect her interest to your person. We also use her Godmother. We always use her as a resource. She's worked in a couple of different counties, both public and private. She saw her as she was completing her

degree, and publishing her book. She got to see the sacrifices she made, what type of follow up and follow through is required, and how much of it was intrinsic. Participant 5 added:

My little sister gives her a lot of resources, she's the baby, so my daughter relies on her as an older sister. She helps her with encouraging her to get out of your comfort zone, try some new things, and figure it out, because that's what she's going through at 21. I need to work towards bolstering her village and creativity. Her father and I are in STEM fields (I'm in software and graphic design), so I definitely have to reach outside of our own box as a family to get her that additional art support she needs, and to find groups that she can connect to. We're definitely working on that.

The theme that emerged in the review of the data collected from the responses to question four was that It Takes a Village. Whether that village consisted of grandparents, Godparents, Girl Scouts, therapists, or other family friends and relatives, all mothers noted that benefit of utilizing a variety of external resources, even if they were not currently utilizing that resources, or needed to do better in utilizing the external resources that were part of that village.

Figure 6

External Resources
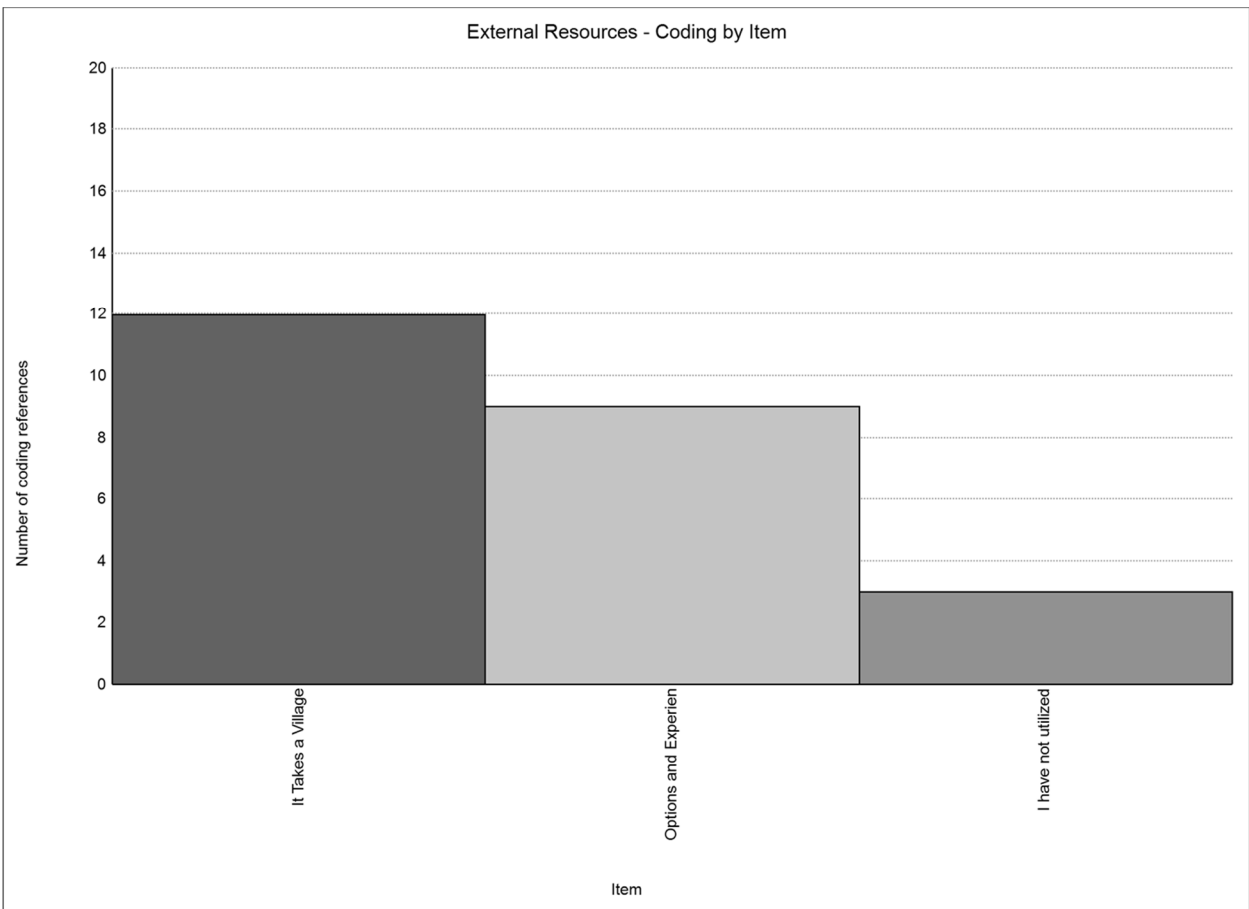
External Resources - Coding by Item

Note. This figure represents items coded from participant responses to Research Question 4.

Summary

Utilizing a generic qualitative approach, I conducted semistructured interviews to explore the academic experiences and perceptions of African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40, and to gain knowledge about how these mothers communicate their educational expectations to their adolescent daughter. Additionally, I explored these mothers' attitudes and beliefs regarding external resources such as mentoring or

academic support organizations that may be used to help shape educational expectations for the purpose of providing a deeper understanding of the mother's experiences, and current educational trends in education such as increased college attendance in African American females.

The research questions for this study were as follows: How do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old describe their educational experiences? What academic expectations do African-American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old have for their daughters? How do those mothers formulate and communicate those expectations to their adolescent daughter? What external resources do African-American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old use to help shape their adolescent daughter's educational aspirations? Through the sharing of their experiences, perceptions, and beliefs, participants' responses to the interview questions provided the answers to each research question. Patterns in participant responses led to the creation of categories that further led to the development of larger themes. The themes that were conceptualized were challenging experiences, like mother like daughter but better, goals for my daughter, sharing expectations, and it takes a village.

In summary, each of the participants were able to share their experiences, perceptions, and beliefs about their own academic journey, their aspirations for their daughters, how they shared those aspirations, and their utilization of external resources. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the finding of this study, the limitations of the study, and recommendations. Chapter 5 also includes a review of the social implications of this study and the conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to learn about the academic experiences and perceptions of African American mothers age 30-40 and how they formulate and communicate their aspirations to their adolescent daughters. Additionally, the beliefs these mothers have regarding the use of external resources for the purpose of supporting their aspirations for their daughters were also explored. The research questions were as follows: How do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old describe their educational experiences? What academic expectations do African American mothers who range from age 30 to 40 years old have for their daughters? How do those mothers formulate and communicate those expectations to their adolescent daughter? What external resources do African American mothers who range from ages 30 to 40 years old use to help shape their adolescent daughter's educational aspirations? This chapter includes an interpretation of this study's findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and conclusions.

The generic qualitative design included semistructured interview questions to obtain data regarding mothers' experiences, perceptions, and beliefs. I conducted interviews with five participants (see Appendix D). Braun et al. (2019) pointed out that four to five dense interviews is sufficient for a reflexive thematic analysis, which was the method of analysis used in this study. After analyzing participant responses, I concluded that the themes that were conceptualized from the data were that mothers had challenging academic experiences, mothers had clear goals for their daughters, and mothers used their experiences to formulate goals for their daughters that were similar to their own but

better. I also learned that mothers had varied approaches to how they communicate their expectations to their daughters and how they make use of external resources that come together to make up their child's village.

Interpretations of Findings

As detailed in Chapter 4, I was able to categorize the findings from the data into four major themes. The main themes that were conceptualized from the data were challenging experiences, high expectations, academic conversations, and it takes a village. The subthemes that were conceptualized were like mother, like daughter…but better, and goals for my daughter. In conducting data analysis, I also considered the research questions that were asked and the conceptual framework.

Challenging Experiences

Recent data have shown that college enrollment for African American females has increased significantly (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019), yet research that provides a deeper understanding of what factors inform adolescent African American females' academic aspirations, especially their desire to attend college, is scarce. Research has also shown that mothers play a critical role in the academic success of their children (Harding et al., 2015). However, research describing educational experiences of African American mothers age 30 to40, how their experiences shape the way these mothers formulate and communicate their educational aspirations to their daughters, and the role mothers play in supporting the aspirations they have for their daughter is scant.

The current study extended the literature by addressing the experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of African American mothers. This research, unlike prior

research, enabled African American mothers between the ages of 30 and 40 to share their experiences, perceptions, and beliefs about their academic experiences, how they communicate and formulate their aspirations for their daughters, and how they use external resources to help shape their daughter's aspirations. Mothers shared their experiences and perceptions of what it was like to be a student themselves. Findings indicated that most of the mothers initially liked school, enjoyed learning, and had specific subjects and routines that they enjoyed. Some shared that their mothers had high expectations for their academic performance when they were students. For those who disliked school or had behavioral issues in the early portion of their academic journey, those experiences were associated with teachers who seemed unable to differentiate their instruction, teachers who were unequipped to meet the needs of students with special needs, or other issues that made school unpleasant.

For all of the mothers who were interviewed, their initial perceptions about school became dwarfed by larger and more challenging experiences. For some, their already unpleasant experiences were compounded by additional negative experiences in their postsecondary academic experiences. These included being continuously exposed to outdated material and lack of experiential learning opportunities. For others, these challenging experiences included the culture shock of attending universities and becoming part of university communities that were a stark contrast from their previous academic communities.

There was also the challenge of being pregnant while also being a student and having to deal with, in multiple instances, severe health challenges brought on by that

pregnancy. The stigma of being a pregnant student was also discussed. Moseson et al. (2019) pointed out that many adolescent and young adult females experience stigma related to early and unintended pregnancies that impacts disclosure and support received. This stigma was described in the current study, as one mother reported she felt judged by her professors. She added that certain laws prevented her professors from penalizing her for bringing her child to class, but that her grades suffered. She felt that her desire to be a parent first and a student second was held against her. Other examples of the challenging experiences faced by these mothers included managing their disabilities, their child's disabilities, severe health challenges; following plans that were laid out for them but did not include their voice; failed relationships; and the addition of more children that continued to push back the achievement of their educational aspirations.

High Expectations

With the exception on one mother, all of the mothers shared that they had high expectations regarding current academic performance and future college attendance. In this way, the findings of this research extend the research conducted by Yamamoto (2016). In analyzing gender transmission, social class norms (specifically the value of college education), and academic expectations, Yamamoto found that mothers did not always strictly conform to social class norms, yet it was clear that for those mothers who did, their beliefs about education shaped their expectations for their daughter and, in turn, influenced their daughters' educational aspirations. Because the mothers in my study were college graduates, most had academic expectations for their daughters that aligned with their experiences and perceptions about the importance of college attendance.

Harding et al. (2015) suggested that there is an advanced level of interacting systems that come together in a way that renders mothers a major component in their children's educational outcomes. For mothers in the current study, their expectations for their daughters are the result of the interacting systems of experiences, perceptions, educational outcomes, understanding social norms, and the acknowledgment of historical oppression. For example, the expectations of these mothers reflect the expectations of excellence that they were subject to as students. For others, their expectations have been formulated by their cognizance of the sacrifices of their ancestors, while also being mindful that their daughters are double minorities. The determination to make sure that no glass ceiling serves a barrier for their daughters was also critical to shaping their expectations for their daughters.

The mothers interviewed also spoke to the role their individual daughters play in the shaping of her expectations for that child. For instance, one mother who did not currently have high expectations for her daughter associated this with her daughter's current academic performance. At this time, supporting her daughter in obtaining passing grades is a higher priority than discussing what she wants to do once she graduates. Another mother tailors her expectations for daughters in alignment with her own experiences. This mother also shared that no one asked her what she wanted to do, so she followed someone else's plan for her academic journey. To prevent this from happening with her daughter, she crafts her expectations from the combination of what it is her daughter wants to do. She continues to give guidance in suggesting skill sets and tools that would put her daughter in a position to achieve her goals, and by making sure her

daughter has a clear plan for what she wants to achieve. This mother pairs this with her expectations for good grades, good behavior, and extracurricular involvement. These examples support the research conducted by Toren (2013) who found that in cases where gender roles in the home are traditional, the relationship between parental involvement and girl's self-evaluation is stronger, which could play a role in the girls being able to formulate plans that reflect their personality as well.

Academic Conversations

Toren (2013) explored how factors such as how parental involvement may change as children enter middle and high school, changes in parental communication and monitoring, and gender socialization. Toren hypothesized that these factors, combined with a girl's self-evaluation, would impact her academic achievement. The authors found negative connections between home based parental involvement and girls academic achievement. This was not the case for the mothers in the current study. For the mothers who participated in the current study, it was important to be consistent in communication and monitoring for the purpose of consistently communicating expectations and offering support. In communicating their expectations, participants shared rich details about the nature of the conversations that fostered the sharing of their expectations and goals for their daughter. The expectations that these mothers have for their daughters has positively resulted in an intentionality surrounding the communication of academic expectations, including grades, behavior, and college attendance.

This communication is also delivered with the understanding that their daughters will be double minorities, so extra attention is given to make sure that the messages being

communicated help each girl understand, and be well equipped, to deal with the journey that lies ahead (see Yamamoto, 2016). Although the conversations are often initiated by the mothers, several mothers shared that they think that not asking for help is associated with being a teen, while other mothers felt that their daughters are modeling their independence (a concept aligned with role theory). The mothers also shared the importance of having whole-child conversations. These conversations serve to reiterate the expectation of college attendance for their adolescent daughters but are also used to communicate the importance of developing social skills, self-efficacy, self-advocacy, and good character.

In most cases, these academic conversations are initiated by the mother. In other cases, the understanding of their mother's expectations, and perhaps seeing value in those expectations, allows the conversations to be initiated in a joint manner. One mother pointed out that her adolescent daughter will often ask her opinion about postsecondary choices they are considering, and at times the mother is able to share guidance regarding the nuances of the postsecondary journey based on where they are in the planning and preparation process.

It Takes a Village

For some mothers, part of process of helping her daughter achieve the goals she has communicated for her daughter is further achieved by using external resources. The importance of a mother to the educational outcomes of her daughter goes beyond the realm of the mothers' direct involvement with the daughter. Harding et al. (2015) suggested that a mother's ability to use her social capital, "such as knowing a school

administrator or the organizer of neighborhood activities," (p. 68) is also important when trying to understand the role of the mother in her children's educational outcomes. The findings of the current study are also consistent with what some researchers have noted about the role the mother plays in the educational outcomes of her daughter. All of the mothers spoke to the importance that various members of the community, community organizations, and various clubs and programs play in helping to support the aspirations she has for her daughter (see Harding et al., 2015).

For some mothers, the use of social capital involves aligning their daughters with those in her network who are in a career field her daughter is interested in, or who have a skill set that reflects the ambition, sacrifice, and tenacity necessary for the achievement of goals (see Harding et al., 2015). For the mothers who were actively utilizing external resources, all of the members of their daughters' village shared the same expectations for their daughters as the mothers. These individuals signed the adolescents up for classes, internships, and other activities that aligned with their interests. The mothers interviewed also spoke to the importance of having experiences beyond the traditional school and club experiences that were beneficial for a well-rounded educational experience that would further set her daughter up for academic achievement. These experiences included being able to witness and participate in rallies and political parades happening in their area.

Role Theory

The findings of this study also confirm the assumptions of role theory. Researchers have used role theory to bring meaning to workplace experiences (Sluss &

Dick, 2011) and to explore how gender stereotypes influence girls in their academic course selection (Ollson & Martiny, 2018). Researchers have also used role theory to understand how families influence the choices children make in pursuing educational opportunities, or how the choices that children make may align with more traditional family and cultural values (Nada, 2009). The current study added to this theory through the exploration of how mothers' expectations influences their daughters' behavior.

One assumption of role theory is that roles are transmitted and that individuals will act within the context of the expectations that others have for them (McLeod, 2008). I found this to be the case with the participants of the current study. Because all of the mothers who participated in the study completed their education while raising their now adolescent daughters, those experiences and perceptions shaped the foundation for the goals that mothers have for their daughters, and for how those goals are communicated. Additionally, those experiences shaped how mothers utilize external resources to influence their daughters' academic aspirations.

McLeod (2008) explained that each social situation has a set of expectations that influence behavior in that particular setting. Role theory provides a framework for understanding how cultural expectations, such as those created by a mother's educational experiences and perceptions, are transmitted to her adolescent daughter (see Yamamoto, 2016). In the case of the mothers who participated in the current study, those experiences and perceptions caused each of the mothers to formulate and communicate the expectation of college or a vocational education as the standard for the postsecondary educational experience for her daughter. For these mothers, it was not a question of

whether their daughters would be continuing their education, but where. As a result of having witnessed their mothers' journeys, and perhaps having found value in the goals that their mothers communicated to them, some of the daughters (according to the mothers' perceptions) engage in the process of sorting out the details necessary to take the steps toward college attendance. This transmission of expectations, paired with lessons learned from the mothers' experiences, has resulted in a "like mother, like daughter…but better" dynamic for mothers and their adolescent daughters.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the current study is the recruitment process and the single interview as a source of data. As a result of COVID-19 and CDC guidelines regarding quarantine, the potential for a great number of people to see the flyers that were posted was greatly reduced (see Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). This required me to rely heavily on social media for recruitment. This process yielded fewer results than expected, producing only eight potential participants. Of the eight potentials, only five gave the consent necessary to participate in the study. Consent for the study was obtained electronically. After sending consent forms, three of the potential participants did not give consent to move forward with the data collection process. I was only able to recruit the minimum of five participants initially expressed in my methodology. According to Braun et al. (2019), there is no specific number for saturation; four to five dense interviews is acceptable for a reflexive thematic analysis. What's more important is that the research study is designed to answer the research questions (see Braun et al. 2019).

As safety protocols associated with the pandemic also required that interviews be conducted utilizing either Zoom or the telephone, there was a limitation as it relates to poor internet connections. Sometimes the connection froze and I was not being able to hear all of the participants' responses clearly. This caused me to have to ask participants to repeat themselves, possibly causing them to reword their initial response. Once the interview was over, I listened to the audio recordings multiple times to ensure the accuracy of transcription to the best of my ability. The format for this study was a single interview format. There was no opportunity to reach out to participants to ask more questions, only the option to have them review their transcripts. All transcripts were approved by each participant.

While I provided the participants with clear guidelines for their participation to positively encourage an open and honest responses during the interview process, it is possible that some of the participants were not completely comfortable speaking deeply about their personal experiences with someone they did not know. Although the participants answered the questions during the interviews, the participants may have shared their experiences and perceptions in a manner that prevented them from feeling judged.

There is also the limitation associated with utilizing a thematic based generic qualitative approach. To counter this limitation, I was careful to bracket out my own biases so that they would not influence how I interpreted and analyzed the data. I also gave participants a copy of the interview transcripts to ensure that my notes accurately reflected their responses. Lastly, I utilized the computer software program NVivo to

ensure that the themes I saw emerging from my initial coding of the data were aligned with the data.

Recommendations

The purpose of this research study was to explore the experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of African-American mothers, ages 30-40, particularly for understanding how these mothers formulate and communicate their expectations for their daughters, and how they utilize external resources to help shape their daughters' academic aspirations. The research findings of the current study describe how the challenging experiences that participants had as students that, when paired with the personality and desires of their own daughters, have shaped the expectations they have (see Harding et al. (2015). Findings also offered that these mothers share their expectations through conversations that are often initiated by them, but in always in alignment with the goals that the daughters also have for themselves (see Toren, 2013). In most cases, the aspirations that the daughters have for themselves also reflect the mother's experiences and carefully crafted expectations (see Yamamoto, 2016).

A recommendation for future research on the topic of understanding the experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of African American mothers would be to include scenarios in which either the mother or the daughter might have special needs or learning disabilities that would impact their academic experience. Future studies could also give more attention to the how living in certain geographical or cultural regions shape the academic experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of mothers. Future research could extend the literature that currently exists by focusing on mothers who have adolescent daughters

who do not live with them, as this may impact how expectations are communicated and maternal engagement. Future research could expand what is known about the experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of African American mothers by expanding the age group of the mothers and/or the daughters that are included in the study. Finally, I would suggest that researchers consider expanding on the findings of the current study by utilizing a larger sampling size to better understand the more mothers' experiences, or to choose a quantitative, or mixed-methods approach to generate statistical data and data that reflects a period of time.

Implications

The findings of the current study offered that through the combination of their personal experiences and the abilities and goals of their daughters, mothers carefully formulate and communicate their expectations for their adolescent daughters. For the mothers who participated in this study, that expectation includes college attendance or vocational training. The knowledge gained from the current study may be beneficial for aiding in the creation of interventions and other studies aimed at helping mothers communicate high educational expectations for their daughters. Findings may also be beneficial for informing mothers of possible connections between their experiences and their daughters experiences so that they are able to develop strategies and routines that correlate with the development of positive academic aspirations.

The findings of this study also have implications for the development of alternative and mentoring programs that provide resources for girls whose mothers may not have expressed educational expectations for their daughters, or who do not feel they

have the skillset to be able to do so independently. In the case the mother is not present, organizations may also be able to use this research to further support their work.

Conclusion

The experiences and perceptions of African American mothers is underrepresented in the current literature that addresses parent involvement and children's academic aspirations. This generic qualitative study extended that representation by offering meaningful insights into the experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of African American mothers. The participants in this study shared how their own experiences helped them so shape the expectations they have for their adolescent daughters. The participants shared how they use external resources to be able to support their daughter's educational aspirations. From the analysis of the data, the themes of challenging experiences, high expectations, conversations, and it takes a village were conceptualized, and the responses collected in developing these themes provided the answers to the research questions. These themes represent a wealth of richly detailed findings that have strong implications for positive social change both at the individual, organizations, and community level. This research could be extended, and improved upon by being conducted as a quantitative or mixed-methods study, or by exploring different aspects of the mothers' experiences.

References

Al-deen, T., & Windle, J. (2017). 'I feel sometimes I am a bad mother': The affective

    dimension of immigrant mothers' involvement in their children's schooling.

    Journal of Sociology, *53*(1),10 –126. https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783316632604

Ames, P. (2013). Constructing new identities? The role of gender and education in rural

    girls' life aspirations in Peru. *Gender and Education*, *25*(3), 267–283.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2012.740448

Buzdar, M., & Ali, A. (2011). Parents' attitude toward daughters' education in tribal area

    of dera ghazi khan (Pakistan). *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, *2*(1).

Beamon, L., Duflo, E., Pandy, R., & Toplova, P. (2012). *Female leadership raises*

    aspirations and educational attainment in girls: A policy experiment in India.

    htpps://doi.org/ 10.1126/science.1212382

Braun V., Clarke V., Hayfield N., & Terry G. (2019) Thematic analysis. In P.

    Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in health social sciences* (pp.

    XX-YY). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_103

Carter, R. S., & Wojtkiewicz, R. A. (2000). Parental involvement with adolescents'

    education: Do daughters or sons get more help? *Adolescence*, *35*(137), 29–44.

    https://www.researchgate.net/publication/12477594_Parental_involvement_with_

    adolescents'_education_Do_daughters_or_sons_get_more_help

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Coronavirus (COVID-19)*.

    https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Creswell, J. W. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

approaches (3rd. ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dubow, E. F., Boxer, P., & Huesmann, L. R. (2009). Long-term effects of parents'

education on children's educational and occupational success: Mediation by

family interactions, child aggression, and teenage aspirations. *Merrill-Palmer*

quarterly (Wayne State University Press), *55*(3), 224–249.

https://doi.org/10.1353/mpq.0.0030

Finlay, L. (2014). Engaging phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in*

Psychology, *11*(2), 121–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.807899

Foster, T., Froyen, L., Skibbe, L., Bowles, R. & Decker, K. (2016). Fathers' and mothers'

home learning environments and children's early academic outcomes. *Reading*

and Writing, 29. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-016-9655-7

Gandara, P., Locks, A., Molina, D., Fe, J., Oseguera, L, & Perez-Huber, L. (2013).

Making education work for Latinas in the US.

https://sites.ed.gov/hispanic-initiative/2014/06/making-education-work-for-

latinas-in-the-u-s/

Gniewosz, B., & Noack, P. (2012). What you see is what you get: The role of early

adolescents' perceptions in the intergenerational transmission of academic values.

Contemporary Educational Psychology, (37).

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2011.10.002

Green, F., Han, L., & Marlow, S. (2013). *Like mother, like daughter? Analyzing maternal*

influences upon women's entrepreneurial propensity.

https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/social-

sciences/schools/business/documents/public/LikeMother,LikeDaughter.pdf

Hannum, E., Kong, P., & Zhang, Y. (2009). Family sources of educational gender

inequality in rural China: A critical assessment. *International Journal of*

Educational Development, *29*(5), 474–486.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.04.007

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & De Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods:

When to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction*, *31*(3), 498–501,

https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dev334

Harding, J., Morris, P. & Hughes, D. (2015). The relationship between maternal

education and children's academic outcomes: A theoretical framework. *Journal of*

Marriage and Family, *77*(1). https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12156

Kennedy, D. M. (2016). Is it any clearer? Generic qualitative inquiry and the VSAIEEDC

model of data analysis. *Qualitative Report*, *21*(8), 1369–1379.

https://doi.org/ 10.46743/2160-3715/2016.2444

McLeod, S. A. (2008). *Social roles. Simply psychology*.

https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-roles.html

Montañés, P., de Lemus, S., Bohner, G., Megías, J. L., Moya, M., & Garcia-Retamero, R.

(2012). Intergenerational transmission of benevolent sexism from mothers to

daughters and its relation to daughters' academic performance and goals. *Sex*

Roles: A Journal of Research, *66*(7-8), 468–478. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-

011-0116-0

Moseson, H., Mahanaimy, M., Dehlendorf, C., Gerdts, C. (2019). "Society is, at the end

of the day, still going to stigmatize you no matter which way": A qualitative study

of the impact of stigma on social support during unintended pregnancy in early

adulthood. *PLoS ONE 14*(5): e0217308.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0217308

Mireles-Rios, R., & Roma, L. (2014). Latina daughter's attitudes about childbearing: The

role of maternal expectations and education communication. Developmental

Psychology. https://doi.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0035471 Nada, P. (2009).

.Education of parents and attitudes towards school of their daughters and sons.

http://www.oalib.com/paper/2531162#.VKI6s5kIAN8

National Center for Education Statistics, (2019). College enrollment rates.

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cpb.pdf

Ollson, M. & Martiny, S., (2018). Does exposure to counterstereotypical role models

influence girls' and women's gender stereotypes and career choices? A review of

social psychological research. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02264

Percy, W. H., Kostere, K., & Kostere, S. (2015). Generic qualitative research in

psychology. *Qualitative Report*, *20*(2), 76-85.

http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss2/7

Ridgeway, C. (2011). The resilience of gender and gender equality in the contemporary

United States.

Rogers, M.A., Theule, J, Ryan, B.A., Adams, G.,R., Keating, L. (2009). Parental

involvement and children's school achievement: Evidence for Mediating

Processes. *Canadian Journal of Psychology 24*(1), 34-57.

https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0829573508328445

Simon, M. K., & Goes, J. (2011). Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for

success. Dissertation Success, LLC.

Sluss, D., & Dick, R. (2011). Role theory in organizations: A relational perspective:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242256962_ROLE_THEORY_IN_OR

GANIZATIONS_A_RELATIONAL_PERSPECTIVE

Strand, S., & Winston, J. (2008). Educational aspirations in inner city schools.

http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/30631500/Strand___Winston

_2008libre.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=141

9912178&Signature=fAkFskq05gpR21CCjq9u3dQZnKE%3D

Toren, Nurit. (2013). *Multiple dimensions of parental involvement and its links to young

adolescent self-evaluation and academic achievement.* Psychology in the Schools.

https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21698

Trochim, M.K. (2020). *Research methods knowledge base*.

https://conjointly.com/kb/qualitative-measures/

Vukovic, R. K., Roberts, S. O., & Wright, L. G. (2013). Parent Involvement Measure.

PsycTESTS. https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/Full text;

999928480_full_001.pdf

Yamamoto, Y. (2016). Gender and social class differences in Japanese mothers' beliefs

about children's education and socialization, *Gender and Education*, *28*(1), 72-88,

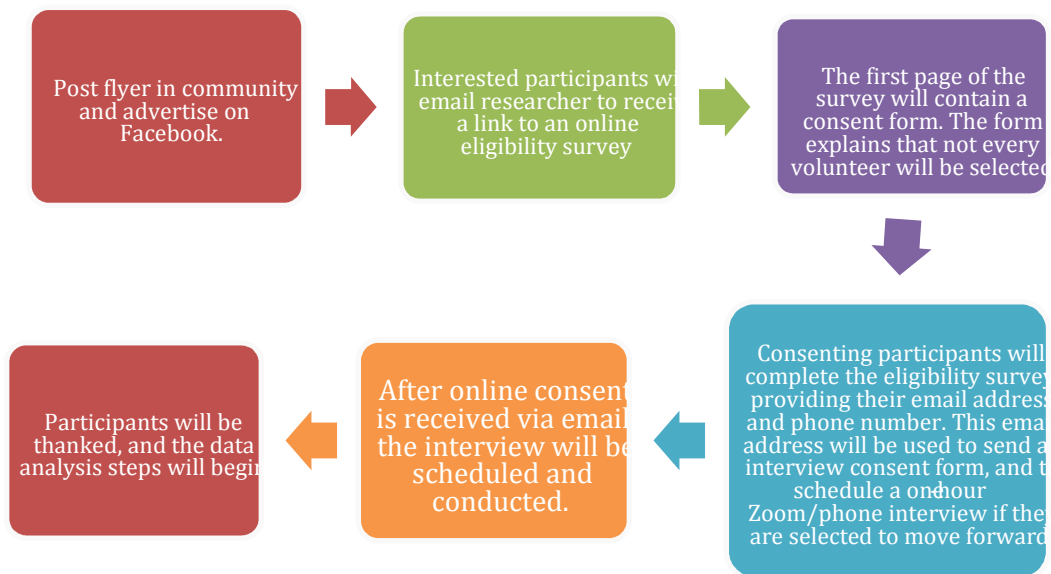https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2015.1091917

Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publishing.

Zadeh, Z. Y., Farnia, F., & Ungerleider, C. (2010). How home enrichment mediates the

relationship between maternal education and children's achievement in reading

and math. *Early Education and Development*, *21*(4), 568–594.

https://doi.org/10.1080/10409280903118424

Appendix A: Recruitment Flowchart

Post flyer in community and advertise on Facebook.

Interested participants w email researcher to recei a link to an online eligibility survey

The first page of the survey will contain a consent form. The form explains that not every volunteer will be selected

Consenting participants will complete the eligibility surve providing their email address and phone number. This ema address will be used to send a interview consent form, and t schedule a one-hour Zoom/phone interview if the are selected to move forward

After online consent is received via email the interview will be scheduled and conducted.

Participants will be thanked, and the data analysis steps will begin

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate Flyer

Participants Needed!

Greetings**,**

My name is Brandie Lee and I'm a doctoral student at Walden University. I am looking to learn about the academic experiences and perceptions of African-American mothers, particularly as it relates to how she formulates and communicates her educational expectations to her daughter. My research study has been approved by my institutions' Institutional Review Board, but I am in need of study participants.

Participant Criteria

1. Must be an African-American mother, age 30-40.

2. Must have an adolescent daughter, age 13-17.

3. Must be willing to share information about your educational experiences and the academic aspirations you have for your daughter in a one hour ZOOM or phone interview.

If you meet this criteria, and you are interested in participating in this innovative study, please email me at brandie.lee@waldenu.edu , to receive a link to the online eligibility survey.

Thanks,

Brandie Lee

Appendix C: Online Eligibility Survey Questions

Thank you so much for your interest in participating in this study! Please answer the following questions to ensure that you meet the criteria necessary to proceed.

1. What is your age?

2. What is your race/ethnicity?

3. Do you have a daughter that is between the ages of 13-17?

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (Some examples responses would be middle school, high school, some college, college, postgraduate)

5. Do you have an adolescent daughter between the ages of 13-17?

6. Do you have access to:

   a. Phone

   b. Zoom

   c. FaceTime

7. If selected to participate, will you be willing to share information about your educational experiences and the academic aspirations you have for your daughter during a one-hour Zoom or phone interview?

8. If selected to participate, please enter the name you would like to be referred to during the interview. (The name entered can be real, or can be a pseudonym. No real names or identifying information will be included in the final study).

9. Please include your email address to set up a hour ZOOM interview, or your phone number to set up a phone interview. After your information is received, you will be contacted to set up the one hour ZOOM interview.

Appendix D: Semistructured Interview Questions

1. How would you explain you educational experiences?

   Follow up questions might include:

   a. When you were a student, what was your perception of school? Did

   you like/dislike school?

   b. Could you describe your experiences as a student?

   c. Could you describe your study habits? Tell more about your grades?

   d. What factors informed your feelings about school? (***Examples might***

   include successes, failures, friends, family/community standards,

   extra-curricular activities, other).

2. What academic expectations do you have for your daughter?

   Follow up questions might include:

   a. Do you set rules/have established standards for grades or the

   completion of school work?

   b. Do you ever assist in homework/project completion? If so, could you

   tell me more about that experience to include your feelings about the

   process?

c. Have you ever participated in parent-teacher conferences? If so, could you tell me more about that experience to include your feelings about the process?

d. What goal(s) do you have for your daughter?

e. Why is that your goal(s) for her?

3. How do you share your expectations about school/grades/graduation/college/ alternative post-high school experiences with your daughter?

Follow up questions might include:

a. Do you have any routines surrounding academic check-in conversations? If so, could you share more about that (to include who initiates the check-ins, what the experience is like?

b. Could you describe your experiences talking with your daughter about your expectations and goals for her?

c. What is your opinion of whether or not your daughter connects to the expectations and goals that you have for her, or sees value in those goals?

4. What external resources do you use to help shape your daughter's educational aspirations?

a. Who do you rely on to support you in helping you support your daughter goals? The goals you have for her? ***Could you tell me more about those people/programs/experiences?***

b. In your perception, how have these people/programs/experiences helped shape your daughter's goals? The goals you have for her.

Thank you so much for participating!