

2022

The Beliefs and Practices of Black Single Mothers Who Promoted College Completion Among Their Offspring

Michelle Arlene Akere-Azeez
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), and the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Michelle Akere-Azeez

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. Tracey Phillips, Committee Chairperson, Human Services Faculty
Dr. Nathan Moran, Committee Member, Human Services Faculty
Dr. Jeffrey Harlow, University Reviewer, Human Services Faculty

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

Walden University
2022

Abstract

The Beliefs and Practices of Black Single Mothers Who Promoted

College Completion Among Their Offspring

by

Michelle Akere-Azeez

MSN, University of Phoenix, 2012

BSN, University of Maryland, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services—Family Studies and Intervention Strategies

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

In the United States, the number of single mothers among Blacks has steadily increased over time, with single motherhood being associated with a higher level of poverty and other social problems. Unfortunately, these adverse effects have led to a low rate of college completion among children of low-income Black single mothers, which has resulted in a cycle of generational poverty. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to identify the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who influenced successful college completion among their offspring. Data were collected using semi structured interviews of eight low-income Black single mothers who were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling. Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles guided this study. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The key findings revealed that the participants wanted their children to have a better life, knew that education was important for success in life, and believed that certain values and qualities were necessary to encourage educational success. They also emphasized early education, both formal and informal; learned to maneuver around barriers; were willing to make sacrifices that led to educational success; maintained a good support system; and maintained strict rules and structure that fostered learning. This study contributes to the current body of literature by addressing the issue of reducing generational poverty and achieving positive social change through education.

The Beliefs and Practices of Black Single Mothers Who Promoted

College Completion in Their Offspring

by

Michelle Akere-Azeez

MSN, University of Phoenix, 2012

BSN, University of Maryland, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services—Family Studies and Intervention Strategies

Walden University

February 2022

Dedication

I dedicate this study to the many strong Black single mothers who, despite many challenges, have provided an environment that encourages their children to grow and rise above the status quo educationally and financially. Their strength and the sacrifices that they have made for their children to ensure success are worthy of high honor and utmost respect. As Psalm 30:5 states, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

Acknowledgments

First, I want to thank and acknowledge God's goodness and help along this challenging journey. He who started this good work in me has helped me to complete it. To Dr. Tracey Phillips, my dissertation committee chair, I will be forever grateful for your patience, support, and willingness to guide me through this journey, and for your standard of excellence. To Dr. Nathan Moran (committee member) and Dr. Jeffrey Harlow (URR), thank you for your willingness to be part of my dissertation committee and for your input to ensure a high-quality study. I will also like to say a hearty thank you to my husband Kehinde and my sons, Victor and Kenny, for their love, patience, and support throughout my educational journey. To my mother, Ursula, and brother, Cecil, who made many sacrifices that ultimately culminated in my educational pursuit; for your continual support, thank you. I would also like to acknowledge my friends and family members who contributed to and supported me through my academic journey. Words cannot express my gratitude to each of you for your contribution to making this milestone possible. Each of you has contributed to this study in some way, and I want to say thank you and I love you all.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| List of Tables | v |
| Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study..... | 1 |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Background..... | 2 |
| Problem Statement..... | 4 |
| Purpose of the Study..... | 4 |
| Research Question | 5 |
| Conceptual Framework for the Study..... | 5 |
| Nature of the Study..... | 6 |
| Definitions..... | 8 |
| Assumptions..... | 9 |
| Scope and Delimitations | 9 |
| Limitations | 10 |
| Significance..... | 10 |
| Summary | 11 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review..... | 12 |
| Introduction..... | 12 |
| Literature Search Strategy..... | 13 |
| Theoretical Foundation or Conceptual Framework | 14 |
| Authoritative Parenting..... | 15 |
| Authoritarian Parenting..... | 15 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Permissive Parenting..... | 16 |
| Neglectful Parenting | 16 |
| Education and Poverty Among Low-Income Families..... | 18 |
| Single-Parent Families | 21 |
| Successful Single-Mother Households | 23 |
| Barriers to Education Among Black Families | 25 |
| Factors That Lead to Educational Success..... | 26 |
| Black Single Mothers' Parenting Styles and Their Influence on Educational Attainment | 30 |
| Summary..... | 32 |
| Chapter 3: Research Method..... | 35 |
| Introduction..... | 35 |
| Research Design and Rationale | 35 |
| Role of the Researcher | 36 |
| Methodology..... | 38 |
| Participant Selection Logic | 38 |
| Instrumentation | 39 |
| Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection..... | 40 |
| Data Analysis Plan..... | 41 |
| Issues of Trustworthiness..... | 43 |
| Ethical Procedures | 44 |
| Summary..... | 46 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 4: Results | 47 |
| Introduction..... | 47 |
| Field Test of Interview Questions..... | 47 |
| Research Setting..... | 48 |
| Data Collection | 49 |
| Data Analysis | 52 |
| Evidence of Trustworthiness..... | 53 |
| Transferability..... | 53 |
| Confirmability..... | 53 |
| Dependability | 53 |
| Credibility | 54 |
| Study Results | 54 |
| Attitudes and Beliefs Revealed by the Participants | 55 |
| Mothers’ Practices and Behaviors That Promote College Completion | 60 |
| Summary..... | 74 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations | 76 |
| Introduction..... | 76 |
| Interpretation of the Findings..... | 77 |
| Attitudes and Beliefs Revealed by the Participants | 78 |
| Mothers’ Practices and Behaviors That Promote College Completion | 80 |
| Conceptual Framework..... | 87 |
| Limitations of the Study..... | 88 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Recommendations..... | 89 |
| Implications..... | 89 |
| Positive Social Change | 90 |
| Conclusion | 90 |
| References..... | 92 |
| Appendix A: Interview Guide..... | 103 |
| Appendix B: Interview Questions..... | 104 |
| Appendix C: Letter of Invitation for Participation in Research..... | 106 |
| Appendix D: Introduction Letter and Request for Recruitment of Participants | 108 |
| Appendix E: Research Flyer | 110 |

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics..... 49

Table 2. Themes..... 54

Table 3. Theme 1: Attitudes and Beliefs Revealed by the Participants That Promoted
College Completion—Subthemes..... 60

Table 4. Theme 2: Mothers’ Practices and Behaviors That Promote College
Completion—Subthemes 73

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The number of Black single-parent households in the United States continues to escalate as the divorce rate and the number of children born out of wedlock steadily increase. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2018), 64% of Black children under the age of 18 years old live in single-parent households, compared to 24% of Whites and 41% of Latino children. In 1970, 33.6% of Black children lived in single-parent households; in 1994, the number was 59.5%. This trend has negatively affected Black families, as many single-mother families (SMFs) live in poverty (NCES, 2018). Najman et al. (2018) stated that poverty has adverse effects on the physical, mental, and emotional health of children, which can adversely affect school attendance. These challenges can negatively affect the children in Black SMFs and can result in failure in completing high school and obtaining a college degree. Education has been proven to be one of the most reliable strategies for ending the cycle of poverty (Kilty, 2015). Despite educational challenges related to poverty, some low-income single mothers have defied the odds and guided their children to obtain a college degree successfully. Therefore, it is worth exploring the beliefs and practices of these single mothers who have promoted successful college graduation among their children. The attempts to understand their practices may give relevant information that may help in addressing the documented social problem of lower college graduation rates among the offspring of Black single mothers.

In this chapter, I briefly summarize the literature as it relates to the phenomenon of the study, the reason this study was warranted, and the significance of the study to social change. The problem statement, research question, purpose of the study, and conceptual framework that guided my study are introduced. The chosen methodology is highlighted with some definitions of key terms used throughout the study. There is also a discussion of the assumptions, the scope of delimitations, and the limitations of this study.

Background

Johnson (2016) and Richter and Lemola (2017) stated that there are higher levels of poverty, rates of school dropout, teenage pregnancy, illegal drug use, violent crime, incarceration, and psychiatric disorders among single-parent-headed households. Daryanani et al. (2016) stated that although single parents are not inferior to cohabiting parents, their parenting style is often different to ensure a supportive home environment amid many added responsibilities and stressors. These stressors may include solo parenting, a higher level of poverty, personal health challenges, and depression (Daryanani et al., 2016; Koh et al., 2015). These stressors can also lead to child abuse and neglect, which can result in trauma and engagement in risky behaviors among their children (Daryanani et al., 2016; Daryanani et al., 2017).

A lower level of education can often be associated with poverty. The NCES (2018) found that approximately 46% of Black SMFs and 35% of Black single-father households with children under the age of 18 years live in poverty. Phillips et al. (2014) found that based on the level of poverty among Black single mothers, public policy has

been geared toward replacing fathers' income. When trying to end poverty, one can look to education as the most proven way (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016). Unfortunately, the rate of advancement to college after high school is lower among Black SMFs compared to other ethnic groups, and some children of Black SMFs even become juvenile offenders (Jones-Eversley & Ravenell, 2018).

According to NCES (2018), in the fall of 2016, there were 16.9 million registered undergraduate students. Of these, 9.1 million were White, 3.2 million were Hispanic, and 2.2 million were Black. Children of SMFs have lower college attendance and graduation rates, and therefore earn less over their lifetime (NCES, 2018). Duarte et al. (2018) and Seabrook and Avison (2015) noted that family income and level of parental education were better predictors of whether children graduate from high school and attend college than whether or not they lived in a single-parent or dual-parent household. Anderson (2018) noted that multiple obstacles such as financial issues, low test scores, difficulty with math, and lack of support services at school prevent African American children from attending colleges.

The academic success of students requires a multifaceted approach, and understanding some of the factors that contribute to educational success is essential in motivating the low-income population. Common themes regarding students' academic achievement include students' determination to succeed, appropriate social support, and professors who care about their students' success (Isaiah & Poyrazli, 2018). However, there are also barriers to academic success for some African Americans, such as financial

issues, low test scores, difficulty with math, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of support and educational service at school (Anderson, 2018).

Problem Statement

Over generations, poverty has been closely linked to a lack of formal education (Kilty, 2015). The median income for someone with a bachelor's degree is approximately \$50,000. In that same year, the average earning for a young adult who had completed high school was \$31,000, while those who had not completed high school earned approximately \$25,400, which was below the national poverty level (NCES, 2016). NCES (2018) also reported that among Blacks, the number of undergraduates registering for college is lower than White Americans. Low college attendance can result in a cycle of generational poverty (Jones-Eversley & Ravenell, 2018) which can affect society as a whole. Given such, further research is warranted that could address the documented problem of lower college graduation rates and higher poverty rates among offspring from single-mother homes (Jones-Eversley & Ravenell, 2018; Maître et al., 2013).

Although the aforementioned research regarding SMFs and educational attainment illuminates essential findings, I have found no research that has explored the beliefs and practices among low-income Black single mothers who have promoted successful college completion among their offspring.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who have promoted successful college completion among their offspring. This study is different from previous research as I

sought to explore the ways that low-income Black single mothers practicalize goals for educational achievement, which have resulted in college completion among their children.

Research Question

In this study, I sought to answer the following research question: What are the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who have promoted successful college completion among their offspring?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

This study was seen through the lens of Baumrind's (2005) influential model of parenting styles. There are four main parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved (Baumrind, 2005). According to Baumrind (2005), authoritative parents usually have a high level of warmth but are firm and encourage independence among their children. This style yields the best outcomes. Authoritarian parents are high in control and low in warmth and are usually strict disciplinarians. Permissive parents are high in warmth and low in control and are seen as passive by giving to their children to show love. The fourth parenting style is shown by uninvolved parents, who are low in control and warmth. With uninvolved parents, the interaction time with children is minimal and can even be neglectful. The uninvolved parenting style usually results in the worst outcome.

Baumrind's four primary parenting styles represent a combination of two identified behaviors, which are exhibited by parents at different levels. The first behavior is parental control, which is the degree to which parents manage children's behavior.

These can be psychological or behavioral. Psychological control can be attained by manipulation of the child's thoughts and emotions, and behavioral control can be attained through formulated rules, rewards, and punishment (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). The other behavior is parental warmth, which is the level of acceptance and responsiveness by parents to their children's behavior (Smetana, 2017). Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles helped in describing how the parenting styles of these participants influenced their children and how the beliefs and practices of these Black single mothers influenced their children to be successful in higher education.

Nature of the Study

A generic qualitative approach was used for this study. A generic qualitative approach was ideal for exploring the real-life experience of these participants because many children raised in low-income Black SMFs do not attend college (Bingham & Mason, 2018; Seabrook & Avison, 2015). Therefore, this approach helped me gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. Exploring the beliefs and practices of participants helped me identify recurrent themes. The generic qualitative approach also enabled me to view the phenomenon of interest in a new way, because it does not adhere to a single established methodology (Kahlke, 2014).

Purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods were used. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants who meet predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. In snowball sampling, the population is selected in a multistage process. The preliminary sample introduces other people to participate in the research (Naderifar et al., 2017). The inclusion criteria applied to low-income Black single mothers with children

who had graduated from a 4-year college. Low income was defined as yearly income that did not exceed 150% of the U.S. poverty limit the previous year (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). The low-income threshold was less than \$38,625 for a family of four in 2019 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Therefore, to identify different practices within the low-income population, the mothers' highest level of education in this study was a high school diploma, and their age range was between 30 and 65 years old (making allowance for the incidence of teenage and late pregnancy). Those who were excluded were mothers who were married or cohabiting, were outside of the age limits, had an income above the stated threshold, did not identify as Black/African American, and did not have children who had graduated from college.

Sample size varies based on the type and extent of the study. For this study, I interviewed eight participants until saturation was achieved. The goal was to achieve saturation, which means that there is no new content achieved, and all areas of the theory have been explored (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Among the physical avenues used to recruit participants were flyers posted on bulletin boards of local businesses, apartment buildings, and bus stops. I was also allowed to post my flyer within a mentoring group and was allowed to introduce my study to the group. Social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram were also used in recruiting participants while ensuring a high level of transparency and respect during the process. Data were collected from the participant interviews, as well as from memos and journal entries that I made during the interviews and through the reflexivity process. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

Definitions

African Americans: Blacks who were born in the United States.

Black: An ethnic group whose ancestors can be traced back to Africa.

College degree: A degree that is earned from a higher learning institution that shows that the student completed the necessary credits in a particular area of study (“College Degree,” 2019).

Education: Specific knowledge acquired by an individual after studying a particular subject matter or through life experiences (“Education,” 2019).

Low income: Yearly income that does not exceed 150% of the U.S. poverty limit the previous year (U.S Department of Education, 2017); the low-income threshold is less than \$36,000 for a family of four (U.S Department of Education, 2017).

Parenting style: “A constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent’s behaviors are expressed” (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 488).

Poverty: Living below the poverty threshold in the United States, which is less than \$26,200 for a family of four (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

Single-mother family (SMF): A social unit in which there is a relationship between a nonconjugal mother and a child or children living in the same home (De Lange et al., 2014).

Assumptions

There were two assumptions associated with this study. I assumed that members of the sample population would be willing to participate in the qualitative study through interviews. The successful completion of a college degree is an exciting and rewarding milestone for the children of Black single mothers. Therefore, talking about their experience should be worthwhile for this population. I ensured that participants understood the purpose of the study and were treated with the utmost respect during the interview process.

Second, I assumed that the participants would answer the interview questions truthfully and accurately based on their lived experiences. Participants may exaggerate their experiences in an interview if the experience was challenging or there are regrets. Participants were assured that their identity would be confidential to promote truthful responses.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was limited to exploring the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who had promoted successful college completion among their offspring. The culture and the influence of friends and other family members in the child's ability to complete college were not taken into consideration. Therefore, additional research will be needed to understand the significance of these additional factors on college completion.

The scope of this study was also limited to low-income Black single mothers aged 35 to 65 years. I did not include low-income single mothers of other ethnic backgrounds.

I did not include low-income Black single fathers to explore their influence on successful college completion among their children.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was that the study did not take into consideration the children's perspective on their mothers' influence. This study addressed the perception of the single mothers only via interviews, which may not have taken into account other variables such as culture, family, and friends' influence on the decision to complete college. Another limitation was that the study was specific to a particular population. Therefore, the result of this study may not apply to a different population.

Significance

According to NCES (2018), 69% of children under 18 years old from the Black community whose parents' highest level of education is high school are living in poverty. Because education is one of the proven means of ending poverty (Kilty, 2015), the knowledge gained from this study may be instrumental when looking at the issue of reducing generational poverty. This study may also add to the existing body of knowledge around family studies as it addresses parental beliefs and practices that can promote college advancement and degree attainment. When combined with the current body of literature, this research may help in the development of policies and practices to promote better family outcomes. Community partners and nonprofit organizations may also use the information to develop policies and practices to help in addressing lower college attendance levels among Blacks and help foster better financial stability.

Summary

Blacks are completing college at a lower rate than White Americans and are often more challenged economically (NCES, 2018). Unfortunately, many Blacks continue in the cycle of generational poverty because they lack a college education, which has been proven as a way of breaking this cycle (Koh et al., 2015). Some Black low-income single mothers have overcome many challenges, and despite not attending college have created an environment that has promoted college completion by their children (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2014). Therefore, in this generic qualitative study, I explored the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who had promoted successful college completion by their offspring. The beliefs and practices of this population are worth studying because of the financial disadvantage experienced by this population; as such, this study adds to the existing body of knowledge in family studies.

In Chapter 2, I describe my comprehensive search for literature about low-income Black single mothers. I included their environment, successful parenting, challenges to educational advancement among Blacks, and strategies for overcoming and succeeding in college. I also looked at parenting styles in greater detail.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Research has shown that children of Black parents are completing college at a lower rate compared to children of White Americans, and the rate of college completion is even lower among Black low-income single-mother households (Anderson, 2018; Jones-Eversley & Ravenell, 2018; NCES, 2018). There is a documented social problem of lower college graduation rates and higher poverty rates among the offspring of Black single-mother homes compared to White and Hispanic single-mother homes (Jones-Eversley & Ravenell, 2018; Whelan et al., 2013). Over the years, Blacks have had a unique experience because they are very often generational single parents (Labella, 2018). They also have been disproportionately disadvantaged socioeconomically and are often marginalized (Labella, 2018). This trend continues as the number of SMFs increases.

While research has been completed regarding the negative aspects of educational attainment among African American single-mother households (Johnson, 2016; Richter & Lemola, 2017), other studies are emerging that focus on low-income SMFs who have deviated from the norm and overcome their challenges with excellent educational outcomes among their offspring (Koh et al. 2015; Suminar et al., 2018; Vargas, 2016). However, these studies did not articulate the beliefs and practices of single mothers that led to educational success. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to understand the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers that they believed had promoted successful college completion among their children.

Literature Search Strategy

In conducting a review of the literature, I looked at the U.S. data on education by race and home structure. I also reviewed research on barriers to educational attainment, successful SMFs, education and poverty, factors that lead to educational success, and Black families. The goal of Chapter 2 is to present an assessment and analysis of current literature on the above research.

For this literature search, I used multiple databases and search engines to obtain professional journals, peer-reviewed articles, and dissertations, ranging primarily from 2015 to 2019. I used the Walden University library to access the following databases: PsycINFO, ProQuest Central, SocINDEX with Full Text, and SAGE Journal. Google Scholar was also used to identify articles that helped in directing the search in the Walden databases. In addition to the articles obtained from the former databases, statistical information from the U.S. Census Bureau (2017) and NCES (2018) was also retrieved. The sources that were reviewed included a combination of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies.

The following key terms were used to obtain the peer-reviewed and scholarly articles from the databases mentioned above: *Black families, poverty and education, single-mother household, single mothers' practices, single parents, single fathers, college attendance, generational poverty, educational barriers, single mothers' parental style, and successful single parents*. From these search results, pertinent articles were chosen and reviewed that addressed the topic.

In conducting a review of the literature, I first looked at the single-family structure, successful SMFs, and U.S. data on education by race and home structure. I also reviewed research on low-income SMFs and the way that the family structure influences the social, financial, educational, and behavioral aspects of children's lives. I further narrowed my search to the factors that influence educational success as well as barriers to educational attainment among Black single-mother households, which ultimately led to the focus on how Black single mothers influenced their children in educational attainment. This chapter contains the result of the analysis of past literature on the single-family structure, successful single parents, the role of education in poverty transfer, as well as a discussion on some of the factors that lead to educational success, and barriers to educational attainment in the Black population.

Theoretical Foundation or Conceptual Framework

Quantifying beliefs, viewpoints, perceptions, and even values is complicated. Therefore, many researchers have used a conceptual framework as the building block for their generic qualitative studies (Goldberg & Allen, 2015). Using this type of framework allows the exploration of the real-life experience of the participants and therefore allows for a better understanding of the phenomenon (Kahlke, 2014).

This study was viewed through the lens of Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles. According to Baumrind (1971), there are four primary parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved (or neglectful) parenting. Each style is a combination of two main behaviors exhibited by parents. The first behavior is demanding, which includes parental control and responsiveness as well as warmth at

different levels (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Smetana, 2017). Parental control is the degree to which children's behavior is managed by parents and can include psychological or behavioral control. Psychological control includes manipulation of the child's thoughts and emotions. It is associated with maladjustment, while behavioral control can be attained through formulated rules, rewards, and punishment and is usually associated with the child's competence (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Parental control is usually associated with some social behavior regulation, direct supervision, and some form of confrontation (Baumrind, 1971). Parental warmth is the level of acceptance and responsiveness by parents to their children's behavior (Smetana, 2017). The parent is attuned and supportive, which results in assertion and fosters the individuality of the child (Baumrind, 1971).

Authoritative Parenting

Baumrind's first parenting style is authoritative; these parents usually have a high level of warmth but are firm and encourage independence among their children. Although the ultimate responsibility lies with the parent, the authoritative parent will encourage dialog with their child and consider the child's perspective. According to Kuppens and Ceulemans (2019), this style yields the best outcomes, as children with authoritative parents are usually autonomous, responsible, and socially competent.

Authoritarian Parenting

Authoritarian parents are usually high in control and low in warmth and are strict disciplinarians. These parents have rules of engagement and believe that the child is expected to follow the rules because they are the parents. The family rules are not

debatable, and dialog is not encouraged. Unfortunately, these children can become either rebellious and aggressive or dependent on their parents. Mowen and Schroeder (2018), in their study on delinquency and race, concluded that authoritarian parenting is least effective in deterring delinquency among Blacks, Hispanics, and Whites.

Permissive Parenting

Permissive parents are high in warmth and low in control and show passivity by giving in as an expression of love. These parents do not like to say no, resulting in boundary problems for the child. These children make important decisions without the parents' involvement because the parents view themselves as a resource if needed. These children tend to be egocentric and may lack self-control, which may result in relationship issues.

Neglectful Parenting

The last style is seen in the uninvolved parent who is low in control and warmth. Interaction time with children is minimal and can even be neglectful. These parents have a careless attitude. Noninvolvement may be a result of parents who are overwhelmed or frustrated with life, have difficulty managing the family, or are self-centered. The uninvolved parenting style usually results in the worst outcome; these children usually lack self-regulation, resulting in impulsive behaviors.

Researchers have addressed parenting styles in the prevention of problem teenagers. Meldrum et al. (2016) and Phillips (2012) indicated that family structure is not as significant in the prevention of delinquency when compared with attributes such as parental self-control, skill, style, and level of supervision. Hill and Wang (2015) also

stated that parental warmth, monitoring, and free support affect school engagement, achievement, and aspiration. However, the amount of these parental attributes differ based on ethnic background. Bingham and Mason (2018) noted that among Blacks, authoritative parents were more involved with teaching reading and writing skills and sharing books with their children than those parents who were authoritarian. This resulted in a higher level of literacy among children of authoritative parents compare to those with authoritarian parents. Although family structure, which includes single-parent families versus dual household families, is vital in children's outcomes, behavior and family practice are better indicators of preventing negative social behaviors among teenagers (Meldrum et al., 2016; Phillips, 2012; Suminar et al., 2018).

Many African American single mothers live in poverty and often live in poor urban neighborhoods (Labella, 2018). Mowen and Schroeder (2018) stated that the authoritarian parenting style has proven positive for Blacks in preventing delinquency in those living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Although single low-income Black mothers may have many odds against them, many have risen above the challenges and nurtured well-adjusted, responsible, and socially competent children who have attended college and achieved more than their parents (Johnson, 2016; Poyrazli & Isaiah, 2018).

Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles helps explain the way that parenting style influences children and how the beliefs and practices of Black single mothers may influence their children to be successful in higher education, despite the odds against them. The theory was a focus in my development of the interview questions to provide a better understanding of how parenting style influences practice within the

SMF structure. Because Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles was used in the development of the interview questions. It also influenced the analysis of the data as the different themes emerged, relating the participants' beliefs and practices to their parenting style.

Education and Poverty Among Low-Income Families

According to the NCES (2018), in the fall of 2016, there were 16.9 million registered undergraduate students in the United States. Of these, 9.1 million were White, 3.2 million were Hispanic, and 2.2 million were Black. Children of SMFs often have lower college attendance and graduation rates than those of two-parent families, and therefore earn less income over their lifetime (NCES, 2018). In 2017, the median income for someone with a master's degree was approximately \$65,000, while someone with a bachelor's degree earned approximately \$54,990. In that same year, the average earning for a young adult who had completed an associate's degree was \$38,850, whereas the average earning for a young adult with a high school diploma was \$31,990. In contrast, those who have not completed high school earn approximately \$25,980, which is below the poverty level (NCES, 2019). This data supported the assumption that education is one of the best avenues for ending poverty (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016; Kilty, 2015).

Despite youths' desire for independence, parents remain the most influential factor in their choice of careers and life goals (Hill & Wang, 2015). The parents' level of educational achievement and economic accomplishment have been cited as predictors of their children's level of educational attainment (Duarte et al., 2018; Koh et al., 2015). In their study of the African American population, Bingham and Mason (2018) showed

that parental education was associated with parental literacy beliefs and that this affected home literacy and emerging writing practice among children. Williams et al. (2017) added that general parental practice (encouraging the child to work hard, getting involved when necessary, and ensuring that the child is prepared to learn), socialization at home, and parental involvement in school are also critical in the academic success of children.

Generational poverty is linked to a lack of cultural capital, which involves knowing the value of education. This affects the financial, human, and environmental resources of the individual or family (DeNavas-Walt et al., 2013). Poverty has been known to affect the physical, mental, and emotional health of an individual and is associated with higher levels of morbidity and mortality. In their longitudinal study, Najman et al. (2018) observed that economic advantages and disadvantages are transferred from generation to generation and that there is a bidirectional relationship between low family income and increased risk of adverse life events. They also noted that the three factors that are responsible for poverty passing from generation to generation are the breakdown of the family, changes in the labor markets, and the aging of the population (Najman et al., 2018). Najman et al. added that attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within the family are influenced by family poverty, which has an impact on children's educational attainment.

According to Arnett-Hartwick and Walters (2016), children living in poverty may experience inadequate living conditions, poor health, lack of parental supervision, a volatile family dynamic, poor nutrition, and an adverse social and physical environment. These conditions can affect school attendance, behavior in the classroom, and learning.

Unfortunately, these social constraints can cause families living in poverty to seem to be in a vicious cycle, which requires significant efforts to rise above the status quo. For example, families living in poverty may have poor health due to poor nutrition and living conditions, which affect school attendance and the ability to learn (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016).

Studies have pointed to the fact that parents' levels of education are associated with their belief in education and are a predictor of their children completing high school and attending college (Bingham & Mason, 2018; Seabrook & Avison, 2015). Therefore, many low-income families also have a low level of education. Adverse economic and health outcomes can result from housing instability as the family struggles to meet the physical and emotional needs of the children (Fowler & Farrell, 2017). Some adversities in childhood, such as housing instability, poverty, child abuse, and neglect, can result in low educational attainment and poverty which can impact low-income families for generations (Font & Maguire-Jack, 2016; Merrick et al., 2013;).

Based on the information above, poverty is closely linked to a lack of formal education. Therefore, in trying to end poverty, one can look to education as the most proven way (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016; Kilty, 2015;). Nolan et al. (2016) noted that poverty continues to be higher among Blacks than other ethnic groups, although historical supplemental poverty measures such as Food Stamps, housing and energy assistance, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), supplemental lunches, and tax credits have been given. Lower rates of work, family structure, and educational levels have also been stated as contributing

factors to the number of Black families living in poverty when compared to White and Hispanic families (Thiede et al., 2017). However, Anderson (2018) stated that although most Blacks acknowledge that education is a crucial factor in them achieving their life goals, many do not attend college because of financial drawbacks, and they lack the knowledge to navigate the educational landscape successfully.

Single-Parent Families

The number of single-parent families continues to increase as a result of out-of-wedlock children, marital breakdown, and unemployment (Koh et al., 2015; Najman et al., 2018). According to NCES (2019), in 2017, 64% of families with children under 18 years old in America lived in married-couple households, while 26% lived in single-mother households, and 8% resided in single-father households. The survey also indicated that among single-parent households, 64% of children were Black, whereas 24% were White and 41% were Latino. According to Kramer et.al. (2016), one of every three single mothers lives in poverty, and most SMFs are a result of having children out of wedlock.

On the other hand, one of every six single fathers lives in poverty, and the journey to becoming a single father is usually the result of divorce (Kramer et.al., 2016). There are higher levels of physical neglect in children raised by single mothers due to financial instability and lack of paternal support, resulting in many mothers working long hours (Schneider, 2017). Many of these mothers work multiple jobs to provide for their families, so some children are left unsupervised, which leaves the children exposed to different kinds of abuse. Researchers have pointed to some of the adverse effects of

children being raised in a single-mother household, which include socioeconomic challenges, limited time for the parent to spend with children, health issues, and lack of support within the family (Johnson, 2016; Richter & Lemola, 2017). In their longitudinal study, Richter and Lemola (2017) concluded that children between the ages of 1 and 15 years old raised in single-mother households showed lower levels of life satisfaction as adults compared to those raised in households in which both parents were present. A lower level of life satisfaction was mostly due to lower socioeconomic and educational success, romantic relationship outcomes, and poorer physical and social wellbeing in adulthood.

American children raised in single-parent homes appear more significantly disadvantaged educationally than ever before. When compared to other family structures, there is a relationship between children in single-parent families and low college attendance, which has become more significant over the years (Ziol et al., 2015). The rate of poverty, school drop-out, teenage pregnancy, illegal drug use, violent crime, incarceration, and psychiatric disorders are higher among single-parent households compared to the two-parent household (Johnson, 2016; Richter & Lemola, 2017). However, Koh et al. (2015) stated that behavioral outcomes in the home are not merely because of the structure of the home but include other factors such as the quality of the home, family income, parental education, and mental health status. Koh et al. also added that a high level of financial hardship, lack of engagement with their children, increased stress, low self-esteem, and low self-confidence were also noted as some of the difficulties that low-income single parents encounter.

According to NCES (2019), 17% of White families live in SMFs, 7% live in single fathers' households, and 74% live in married-couple households. NCES also noted that within the Blacks community, 55% of children under 18 years old live in a single-mother household, 9% live in single-father households, and 35% live in married-couple households. Therefore, Black children are more prone to the many socioeconomic challenges that accompany being raised in a single-parent home.

Successful Single-Mother Households

Johnson (2016) found that participants who lived in African American single-mother households said that their mother's investment in the relationship, their character, and actions, whether positive or negative, resulted in the desire to achieve academic excellence. The participants also revealed that their mothers engaged them in conversation about gender, race, and social class to stimulate their children's academic capabilities and ultimate success in their social and financial wellbeing. Single mothers have significant power to influence their children's self-esteem, autonomy, and accountability (Johnson, 2016).

In their phenomenological study, Suminar et al. (2018) noted that single mothers with successful children created a healthy home environment through "intense" and frequent communication which fosters openness, empathy, equality, and a supportive and positive attitude. This type of communication creates a feeling of inclusion, control, and great affection between mothers and their children. Koh et al. (2015) also studied 35 children of single mothers' households who received scholarships for college. The researchers noted that although single mothers faced many hardships and challenges

while attending college, the process had a positive generational impact on the families. The children in this study were able to see their household becoming more financially stable, which motivated them to make good choices and thrive for educational attainment.

Vargas et al. (2016) explored the potential impact of single mother parenting on 13 minority adolescences. These adolescences observed their parental struggles, which led to the development of a high level of emotional intelligence. They also achieved a perception of masculinity that was nontraditional, sometimes assuming a parent role and they also showed a high level of resilience. Despite the experienced paternal void, these adolescences understood their limitations and were able to trace their career pathways (Vargas et al., 2016). Taylor and Conger (2017) observed that the role of single mothers is very challenging and they tend to be more isolated, work more hours, and usually have less emotional and social support from family. They also noted that single mothers with high perceived social support have a lower level of internalizing symptoms (anxiety and depression) and have a better relationship with their children. They also observed that internal resources such as self-esteem and self-efficacy are linked to better coping mechanisms, decrease stress, and overall better mental health. Both social support and internal resources are associated with higher quality parenting practice, effective parenting behaviors, and positive child outcomes (Taylor & Conger, 2017). Although being raised in a single-mother family home can be challenging, Koh et al. (2015) noted that being in a single-mother family household does not necessarily lead to poor behavioral outcomes. However, the level of parental involvement, family income, parental education, and mental health status are better predictors of behavioral outcomes.

Barriers to Education Among Black Families

Anderson (2018) noted that many African American youths want to attend college but have multiple obstacles such as financial issues, low test scores, difficulty with math, and the lack of support service at school. In a phenomenological study with 18 Black high school seniors enrolled in STEM programs, Stipanovic and Woo (2017) found that the students' interest and perception in pursuing STEM careers were influenced by factors such as family expectation, academic counseling, and available resources. Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) also observed that it took aspirational, familial, social, navigational capital to attain academic success, many of these may be lacking in low-income African American families. Short (2016) added that educational attainment requires a partnership between parents and teachers.

Ford and Moore III (2013) stated that four factors significantly contribute to African American male students' poor academic performance. These include social factors (biases and prejudice), school factors (e.g., lower expectations and lack of academic rigor), cultural/familial factors (less access to resources and lack of role models and mentors at home), and individual factors (poor motivation and negative affiliations). Although parental expectation and belief of their child's potential to succeed affect school performance, helping the teachers to understand the dynamics of African American families and partnering with a parent will yield more exceptional results (Short, 2016). Unfortunately, the issue of race is another consideration that a Black child has to cope with when addressing academic success (Williams et.al., 2017). Researchers have stated that some areas need to be addressed to increase college attendance among

Blacks. These include reducing barriers to college education, addressing discipline disparity, improving school-based practices that foster achievement and dispelling the narrative that African Americans are lazy, lack respect, has a poor attitude, and are not interested in higher education (Anderson, 2018; Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016; Ford & Moore III, 2013). Willian et al. (2017) observed that some Black mothers look at the racial composition of their children's school and the attitude of the teachers and administrators to determine if race is a factor in their children's educational success. These factors determined the level of protection strategies such as school choice, class drop-ins, or parent-teacher communication that parents deem necessary for academic success.

Many African American SMFs are caught in a cycle of poverty and do not see the means of attending college, which leads to generational poverty (Anderson 2018; Ford & Moore III, 2013). However, some of these single mothers have defied the odds and provided an environment for their children to attend college to end the cycle of poverty (Danforth & Miller, 2018; White-Smith, 2018). This study aims to take a closer look and explore the beliefs and practices that made a difference in the trajectory of the family.

Factors That Lead to Educational Success

According to Blackwell and Pinder (2014), first-generation students are at four times higher risk of not completing college because of a lack of motivation, compared to students who have family members who attained a college degree. These and other factors, such as mediocre academic abilities, lack of social preparation, reduced expectation, financial constraints, and low self-esteem, are barriers to academic success

(Petty, 2014). However, as discussed below, the literature has proven that some children have overcome these challenges by having the intrinsic motivation and a sound support system.

In a grounded theory study conducted with three first and third-generation college graduates, Blackwell and Pinder (2014) concluded that some external motivating factors for the first-generation college student completing college included a goal of a better life, encouragement from family members, other college students' support, and having teachers as a mentor. The internal motivating factors for these college graduates was that they all liked to read and they felt different from their siblings because reading opened their minds to other possibilities. They wanted a life better than what they knew within their families. However, the third-generation college graduates had better family support and the expectation was that they attend college because they had college graduates in their family (Blackwell and Pinder, 2014). Petty (2014) also noted that the first-generation student might lack motivation and direction from home and within colleges, which makes it difficult to succeed. The students who are involved in college activities had feelings of inclusiveness, a sense of belonging, increased self-esteem, and are had greater motivation to succeed.

Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) saw similar results in their study with 26 African American and Latino community college students. They found that the need to be a role model, the prospect of a better life, and their spirituality, were their motivating factors for completing college. However, they also noted that to be successful (GPA higher than 2.5) required that students maintain hope and dreams, and the desire to succeed (aspirational

capital). Other factors that ensure success included having family support and cultural bonds, which help them to connect with others (familial capital), having access to a social network, contacts, and community resources like their peer and faculties (social capital), and having the knowledge to navigate the system (navigational capital) (Sandoval-Lucero et al. 2014). Means and Pyne (2017) found a similar result which is, the institutional support structure was crucial in making first-generation college students have a sense of belonging, which aided in their success. Hickman et al. (2017) added that GPA is a powerful predictor of school success. In their longitudinal study among high school students, they concluded that the first semester GPA in high school was similar to the graduating GPA or dropout GPA, and students who demonstrated attentional bias by seeing school-related cues as threatening were more likely to drop out of school (Hickman et al., 2017).

The factors that lead to academic success are global and can affect students of different cultural backgrounds. In their study with 21 international students, Poyrazli and Isaiah (2018) concluded that negative factors such as a lack of adult supervision, unfamiliarity with the U.S. school system, culture shock, difficulty adjusting to different climates, and language barriers led to academic failure in American universities. However, when these students started having social support, seeking tutors, asking questions in class, and having meetings with their professors, there was a turnaround in their academic achievement. They also found that students succeeded academically when their professors were concerned about students' success and had a more engaging teaching style (Poyrazli & Isaiah, 2018). This is similar to what Gatlin and Wilson (2016)

found. They found that among their participants (who were students from special education classes), the themes of expectations, support, and organization were consistent in the educational success of students who were in special education classes. They were branded with intellectual disabilities but graduated from high school as honor students and went on to be successful in college. However, Gatlin and Wilson also noted that African Americans are over-represented in special education classes, which puts them on the negative edge of academic success.

To graduate, students need to be in school and stay in school. The classroom environment needs to be relevant, engaging, and full of affirming relationships and requires accountability by both students and educational professionals (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016). Engagement requires a shift in the teachers' attitude by removing labels such as "at-risk" and "gifted." Educators can also shift the application of the lessons when teaching, by using examples from the local community instead of textbook examples and shifting boundaries by encouraging students to work in pairs or give time in the classroom to complete assignments (Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016).

These studies showed that students' academic success requires a multifaceted approach, which involves teachers, parents, and students working as a team to ensure students' success. Whether African American or international students, a common theme exists regarding students' academic success, which included the student's determination to succeed, appropriate social support, and professors who care about their students' success. Also, parents' educational achievement and economic accomplishment have been cited as predictors of the childrens' educational attainment (Koh et al., 2015). In

their qualitative study, Gannouni and Ramboarison-Lalao (2018) concluded that leadership within the educational system should motivate and enhance students' confidence, which results in the students aiming higher, persevering, and achieving their academic goals.

NCES (2018) reports that among Blacks, the number of undergraduates registering for college is the lowest compared to White Americans. Therefore, looking at barriers to education among Black families is necessary for closing the gap.

Understanding some of the factors that contribute to educational success is also essential in motivating the low-income population.

Black Single Mothers' Parenting Styles and Their Influence on Educational Attainment

The Black culture values family connectedness, emotional expression, and oral communication. However, due to the influence of oppression and discrimination, parents had to suppress emotional expression in public (Labella, 2018). Rioux et al. (2019) noted that the goal of Black parents is to protect their children from the effects of racism, transfer cultural values, and foster cultural pride, through the socialization process which emphasizes respect, obeying, and learning from their parents, elders, and others in the community. McCallum (2016) stated that there are five significant strengths of the Black family. These strengths include strong education and work ethics (informal and formal education), extended family kinship network, flexible and healthy coping skills, strong religious orientation, and egalitarian and adaptable family roles. Another cultural norm in the Black community includes orality in the form of name-calling, verbal play, ritual

insults, and “hostility,” which is associated with love, care, and support (Rious et al., 2019). Some of these parental behaviors have resulted in their children's resilience, adaptability, and prosocial behavior.

In their study with sons of African American single mothers, Danforth and Miller (2018) noted that one of the driving forces for their sons' attending college was their mothers' non-negotiable expectation that their sons attained post-secondary education. There were three parental practices that the sons mentioned that resulted in their college attendance, which included the practice of authoritative parenting through monitoring and controlling daily activities that could be adapted based on the settings. These single mothers were providing hands-on assistance during the application process from immediate and extending family, and they also set the example by either attending college or linking their sons' other members of the family attending college (Danforth & Miller, 2018).

McCallum (2016) stated that Black families are known for their authoritative parenting style. However, many are willing to make financial sacrifices, such as relocating or sending their children to private schools to ensure their children obtain a “good” education. In her study with 35 African American Doctoral students, McCallum explored their motivation for attending graduate school. She noted that first of all, their parents did not make college attendance an option for them. It was a decision made by their parents that they had to follow. Other motivating factors were that the parents expected them to attend graduate school, they had a good network of support, they used narratives of oppression, and they engaged in community parenting.

In their ethnographic study of four poor and working-class African American mothers, Allen and White-Smith (2018) shared how they used cultural wealth in different forms to support their son's education. Many working-class and poor parents may encounter barriers (such as time, poverty, and limited access to child care) to involvement in activities at their children's school. These barriers are sometimes seen as uncaring, and lack of involvement by their teachers, and communication is misinterpreted as confrontational and uninformed. Despite the economic, racial, and school barriers they faced, these mothers were able to use navigational capital, aspirational capital, and racial capital to advocate for their sons against school failure and uncover opportunities to be successful (Allen & White-Smith, 2018). Rioux et al. (2019) stated that the ideal parenting style for Blacks is that of Baumrind (1967) with the addition of adaptive racial socialization.

Summary

The issue of a lower number of Blacks attending college has been an issue for generations, and many families live in poverty that transcends many generations (Anderson et.al, 2018; NCES, 2018). Barriers to educational attainment such as financial issues, low testing scores, difficulty with math, and the lack of support service at school have prevented many children from SMFs from advancing educationally and have therefore resulted in generational poverty (Anderson, 2018; Arnett-Hartwick & Walters, 2016). However, Blackwell and Pinder (2014) and Sandoval-Lucero et.al. (2014) discovered that some children of Black single mothers have beaten the odds and

completed college because they wanted a better life and they had the internal drive and external support, which was necessary for academic success.

Research has shown that children are more likely to attend college if their parents have graduated from college because it will be an expectation of the family (Blackwell & Pinder, 2014; Hines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2013; Koh et al., 2015). However, some single mothers, despite the challenges, have also created a home environment conducive to the physical and emotional wellbeing of their children, who grew up and became well-adjusted, successful adults (Johnson, 2016). Others, single mothers have even attended college and become role models for their children, which ended the cycle of poverty in their families (Koh et al., 2015). However, the successful educational attainment among Black students involves a multifaceted approach that requires the students to be motivated to learn, engage, have social support, and train educators who believe in the success of the students and can alter teaching style to meet the need of this population (Poyrazli & Isaiah, 2018; Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2014).

Although many of these families have broken the cycle of poverty by pursuing higher education, there is still a significant disparity regarding economic stability among Black SMFs (Johnson, 2016; Suminar et al., 2018). Rising above and challenging the status quo is a journey that many Black SMFs have to contend with because of the many constraints working against them, as discussed above. Therefore, the beliefs and practices which are necessary for encouraging educational success are relevant and were explored and addressed in this study.

Many of the studies previously discussed were done using quantitative constructs, as they sought to establish cause and effect or compare races or family dynamics concerning education and Black single parents. They sought to know the “why” of this phenomenon. However, this study aims to understand and uncover how these low-income single mothers were able to defy the odds and channel their children not only to enter college but also to complete successfully. This study will examine the specific beliefs and family practices that these low-income single mothers valued and incorporated while parenting their children, which resulted in the prevention of delinquency and fostering completion of higher education.

A generic qualitative methodology will be most appropriate for this study. The goal of a generic qualitative approach is to discover and understand a phenomenon, the perspectives, and the worldviews of the people involved (Kahlke, 2014). This method will allow the flexibility to incorporate different qualitative approaches while remaining true to the rigidity and reliability necessary in the qualitative method. Kahlke, also stated that this approach has the advantage of helping the researcher to become bricoleurs.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the beliefs and practices of Black low-income single mothers who promoted successful college completion among their offspring. The focus of this chapter is to explore the research question through the lens of Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles, to help better illuminate the experience of the participants. In this section, I discussed the method and design that were used in this study, along with the design strategy and rationale. The role of the researcher, participant selection inclusion criteria, and data collection and analysis are also summarized. A discussion of issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures then concludes this chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

In this study, I sought to answer the following research question: What are the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who have promoted successful college completion among their children? A generic qualitative approach was most appropriate for exploring each participant's views as they relate to the issue of generational poverty, the role of education, and their beliefs and practices that may have contributed to their children completing college. Overall, the goal of a qualitative study is not to generalize the findings to a larger population, but rather to find meaning in individual experiences (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This study illuminated the issue from a new, strengths-based perspective that, when combined with existing research, may contribute to policy and practice changes that may positively contribute to addressing the

social problem of lower college attendance rates among Black youth. According to Kahlke (2014), this approach has the advantage of drawing on the strengths of established methodologies while remaining flexible. Using a generic qualitative approach was ideal for exploring the real-life experience of these participants to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon. The generic qualitative approach also had the advantage of helping me find new ways of looking at this phenomenon (Kahlke, 2014).

Role of the Researcher

In this study, I was the instrument. My role was to collect and analyze data from the participants. To do this, I developed a list of semistructured questions that was used for the interview. This tool was field-tested before use in this study. A field test is a process by which experts in the field review an untested instrument or tool, which was the interview questions in this study. This was done to ensure that the requirements for dependability, credibility, and validity were met and to assess the risk level. My research supervisor, who is a content expert and a methodologist, reviewed the questions and offered suggestions where appropriate. I then chose someone who fit the inclusion criteria and conducted an interview. I sent the audio and the transcript to my committee chair for feedback on the interview protocol. This test participant was included as part of the study.

The participant selection process was vital to ensuring that the data gathered were accurate and answered the overarching research question. Therefore, it was necessary to ensure that biases were minimized throughout the research process. Some of the biases that one has to guard against are researcher bias, interview bias, and conceptual bias.

As a first-generation college graduate, I knew that there was potential to incorporate my experience, beliefs, and judgment about the dynamic of the low-income family college pathway, which is anticipation bias (Wadams & Park, 2018). As a researcher, one of my roles was to ensure that researcher bias, which involves personal beliefs and judgment about the research topic, was eliminated. Identifying and controlling for these biases was done by bracketing through using self-reflection journaling to record and understand my personal beliefs and thought process throughout the study.

Preventing interview bias was also essential. To avoid conflict of interest, I ensured that there was no professional affiliation with any of the participants. Semistructured interviews and open-ended questions allowed me to remain in control of the interview process, ensuring a rich array of participants' experiences (Wadams & Park, 2018). A field test of the interview questions was done to ensure that there was an alignment of the interview questions and the study.

Conceptual bias is another potential bias that can occur. Conceptual bias occurs when the researcher generalizes their findings to fit a concept or theory (Wadams & Park, 2018). Peer review by my dissertation committee, which was composed of content and methodology experts, was conducted during the analysis phase to prevent conceptual bias. Member checking was also done, which involved allowing the participant to review the interview document to ensure that it accurately reflected their thoughts and responses (Wadams & Park, 2018). Member checking also ensured the authenticity and accuracy of the responses received during the interviews in the analysis phase. As the researcher, I

created memos and journal entries during the interviews and through the reflexivity process.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

Purposeful sampling, which involves selecting participants who meet predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and snowball sampling, in which participants suggest other possible candidates, were used for the study (Farrugia, 2019). The avenues that were used in recruiting participants included flyers posted in public places such as apartment complexes, bus stops, and local businesses, as well as referrals. Social media sites including Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram were also used in recruiting participants while ensuring a high level of transparency and respect during the process. According to Baker et al. (2012), the sample size is not easily predicted because data should be collected until the point of saturation. Farrugia (2019) also stated that for a qualitative study, the appropriate sample size is one that adequately answers the research questions. Therefore, sample size can vary based on the type and extent of the study. For this study, I interviewed eight participants before saturation was achieved. The goal was to reach saturation, which occurs when no new content is produced and all areas of the theory have been explored (Fusch et al., 2018).

The inclusion criteria encompassed low-income Black single mothers with children who had graduated from a 4-year college. Low income was defined as yearly income that did not exceed 150% of the U.S. poverty limit the previous year (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). The low-income threshold was less than \$38,625 for a

family of four in 2019 (U.S Department of Education, 2020). Daryanani et al. (2016) and Koh et al. (2015) noted in their studies that parents' level of education is a predictor of their children's level of education. Therefore, to identify different practices within the low-income population, the participating mothers' highest level of education in this study was a high school diploma, and the age range for participants was between 35 and 65 years old (making allowance for the incidence of teenage and late pregnancy). However, one participant who was included in the study was 67 years old. Mothers who were married or cohabiting while their children were in college were excluded. Other exclusion criteria applied to those mothers who were outside the age limits, had an income above the stated threshold, did not identify as Black/African American, or did not have children who had graduated from college with a bachelor's degree.

All potential participants were given an informed consent, which was an invitation to participate that highlighted the purpose of this research, participation criteria, the structure of the interview, and my contact information. The informed consent also stated the duration of participation, permission to audio record the interview, and any risks involved. The participants were also informed that participation was voluntary and there was no penalty for leaving.

Instrumentation

The data were collected using semistructured interviews. The instrument used for this study was a field-tested semistructured interview protocol designed by me. The data were then analyzed using content analysis. According to Bengtsson (2016), content

analysis involves organizing and eliciting meaning from the data and reaching a realistic conclusion.

The interview questions were a combination of behavior, values, feelings, knowledge, sensory, and background questions. Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles was incorporated into the interview guide through the structuring of questions that explored factors affecting participants and the topic of study from a theoretical perspective. I used Jacob and Furgeson's (2012) interview protocol to develop the interview guide. An interview guide consisted of the invitation, informed consent, introductory statement, interview questions, and a closing statement that was developed and used to help ensure a smoother interview process, as outlined in Jacob and Furgeson.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

My preference was face-to-face interviews. However, all of the interviews were done via telephone because face-to-face interviewing was not feasible. An invitation to participate was sent to prospective participants, via email, less than 2 weeks before the planned time for the interview. The email contained the consent form, with the explanation that the interview would be recorded, the information would be confidential, and participants' identities would be preserved. Prospective participants were called less than 1 week before the interview to set up a time for the interview, with a reminder, sent 1 to 2 days before the scheduled interview. The consent form was also sent via Docusign or Hellosign and was returned before the interview. The venue for the telephone interviews was my home office.

On the day of the interview, questions concerning the consent and procedure were answered. Risks and benefits of the study were disclosed, and participants were informed of the procedure that would be used to protect confidentiality. The participants also received a copy of the informed consent with my contact information, should there be further questions. The recorded interview was approximately 30-45 minutes long and addressed the participant's view of the subject captured in the research question. The interview was recorded using the Super Voice recording app, and notes were taken throughout the interview sessions. There were also follow-up questions based on the response from the participants. General questions concerning the participants' wellbeing and family were used as an icebreaker to ensure that participants felt comfortable during the interview process so that they would share honest and accurate information. As a researcher, I ensured that my tone was welcoming and showed genuine interest, thereby helping the participants to relax and share necessary information. Permission was obtained to contact the participants via phone if additional information was needed. After the interview, a thank you card with a \$20 gift e-card of the participant's choice was sent to each participant in the study to express appreciation to them for the time invested in participating in the study.

Data Analysis Plan

The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcribing has the advantage of visualizing the data so the researcher can see codes and themes more readily as they appear. Rubin and Rubin (2012) also stated that transcribing provides easy and fast access to data for coding. After transcribing, member checking was done. Member

checking involves allowing the participant to review the transcript of the interview to ensure that it reflects their thought and responses (Amankwaa, 2016). I completed member checking with each participant after the interview by emailing the transcript to them to ensure its accuracy. I emailed the interview transcript to the respective participants, allowing them to read and make corrections and then return the transcript to me, followed by a phone call.

The data were analyzed using content analysis. According to Bengtsson (2016), content analysis involves organizing and eliciting meaning from the data and reaching a realistic conclusion. Bengtsson outlined four stages in the analysis process: decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation. The first stage is decontextualization, which involves familiarizing oneself with the data. When the researcher is familiar with the data, codes can be identified and grouped into categories. NVivo12 was used in this process. However, I was responsible for deciding the themes and conclusions that were drawn in the result.

Next is the recontextualization stage, which ensures that the context is consistent with the aim. The original transcript is re-read, and a comparison is made to the list of meaning units derived from data. Distancing is needed because the researcher must be able to let go of any information that is not parallel to the aim of the study.

The third stage is the categorization and includes the process of condensing data without losing meaning. This is especially important when data are based on interviews. Categories and themes are identified in this stage, and the researcher arrives at a

reasonable explanation. The theoretical assumption from the literature or the interview questions can be used to drive this phase.

The last stage is the compilation, which is the analysis and write-up process (Bengtsson, 2016). In this stage, the researcher must objectively look at the data to see if the result is logical and how the new findings correspond to the literature. Writing up the outcome concludes the process. These steps are done several times to ensure trustworthiness.

After transcribing the interviews, part of the data analysis process was done using NVivo 12, which is qualitative data analysis (QDA) software. The transcribed interviews were uploaded to NVivo 12, which allowed for coding of the documents. Coding involves looking for broad concepts, not just ideas within the documents. After the initial coding, pertinent emerging themes and patterns were identified by categorizing results.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is demonstrated by ensuring transferability, confirmability, dependability, and credibility (Emerson, 2015). Transferability indicates that the results are applicable in other contexts, and this was accomplished by providing a description that was thick and rich (Amankwaa, 2016; Emerson, 2015). A thick description involves describing the process in detail from the beginning to the conclusion to capture a detailed story of the process (Amankwaa, 2016). The researcher should give a vivid picture that is resonant with readers.

Confirmability is the extent to which the result is influenced by the respondents and not the researcher's interest or bias (Amankwaa, 2016). It is necessary to be aware of

and address all biases of a researcher to ensure that data collection and interpretation are not affected by researcher biases and any prior experience. To ensure confirmability, reflective journaling and an audit trail were done, with a peer reviewer during the analysis phase (Amankwaa, 2016; Emerson, 2015).

Dependability shows that if the study is repeated, it will yield consistent results (Bengtsson, 2016). The way that dependability was accomplished was by audit trail. This involved detailing the process from data collection to data analysis (Amankwaa, 2016). Detailing this process should allow another researcher to duplicate the process.

Credibility in a study provides confidence that the findings are accurate. One of the strategies that were used to ensure credibility was first to ensure that participants wanted to be part of the study. Another strategy included member checking, which involved allowing the participant to review the interview document to ensure that it reflected their thought and responses (Amankwaa, 2016).

Ethical Procedures

It was crucial to ensure that each participant knew that their participation was voluntary and that there was no penalty for withdrawing. I also ensured that each participant gave informed consent, which also ensured that their participation was done of their free will. During the interview process, an active listening technique was used while maintaining rapport with the participants. I maintained an objective and empathetic attitude during the interview process. For the participants' confidentiality, the strictest measures were used to ensure de-identification. Therefore, all participants were designated with a numerical identifier or pseudonym.

Confidentiality is a critical ethical consideration for a researcher. Necessary Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received, and required disclosures and consent was obtained from anyone participating in the study. The strictest measures were used to de-identify participants, which included using an alias.

Before the interviews, I ensured that each participant read, understood, and signed the consent form. The consent reiterated to the participants that the interviews will take approximately 60-90 minutes, and it will be audio-recorded and written permission received from each participant. I reiterated with the participants that at any time, they could decide that they do not want to continue the interview process without justification. Although I did not foresee any ethical issues during the interview process, I remained vigilant to any problems that could have arisen.

The data obtained from the interviews were stored electronically in a password-secured, coded file on my computer. My hand-held device, which has a passcode, was used to record the interview. The password access ensured the security of the interview recording done via the Super Voice recording app. The data will be maintained for five years, which is the minimum amount of time required by Walden University to maintain all confidentiality documents. After this, the audio recording of the conversations and computer files will be deleted.

The interviews were done in a private room in my home via telephone. To ensure confidentiality during the interviews, I first receive permission to record the interview sessions, and my mobile device was used for this purpose. Only me and my dissertation

team will have access to the data. For confidentiality, all participants were identified by a numerical identifier or pseudonym.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the general qualitative methodology and the rationale for using this chosen method in addressing the research question. My role as the researcher was also discussed, and the way the semistructured interview was used to explore the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who have influenced successful college completion among their offspring. The data analysis plan and the plan to ensure that the study has a high level of trustworthiness were discussed. The chapter concluded with the plans to ensure confidentiality is maintained, and ethical consideration was addressed. Chapter 4 will address data collection, analysis, study results, and evidence of trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who promoted successful college completion among their offspring. A qualitative analysis was conducted using data obtained from eight in-depth semistructured interviews with Black single mothers. The research question that guided this study was the following: What are the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who have promoted successful college completion among their offspring?

In Chapter 4, demographic details of the participants, the settings, and the method used for data collection are described. Using the inductive analysis process, I first identified codes and used them to discover the themes that emerged from the data. Strategies used to ensure credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability are described. Chapter 4 concludes with a summary of major findings as they relate to the research question.

Field Test of Interview Questions

For this study, I completed a field test of the interview questions. In January 2021, I interviewed one participant who met all of the inclusion criteria. I recorded and transcribed the interview and sent it to my chair for assessment. The purpose of the field test was to assess for bias and to ensure that the questions were able to answer the research question. The participant was recruited via the participant flyer. The consent form and letter of invitation for participation in the research were then sent via email the day before the interview. The telephone interview session lasted approximately 30

minutes, which yielded six pages of transcribed data. The interview recording and transcript were sent to my chair, who then made suggestions based on the information received for a more robust interview session. No modification was necessary for the interview questions. However, the feedback given was to focus on asking deeper probing questions to obtain detailed and rich descriptions from participants.

Research Setting

I collected data between January 2021 and August 2021. I conducted semistructured phone interviews of eight Black single mothers residing in the northeastern region of the United States. All participants gave consent for the interviews to be recorded. One participant said that she was not comfortable using the computer and requested that she provide verbal consent. The consent form was read to the participant, and she verbally agreed to participate. The verbal consent was recorded with the interview. Two participants signed and scanned the consent and returned it to me. Five participants' consent forms were e-signed because they did not have access to a printer.

To ensure confidentiality, all participants were identified by a pseudonym. None of the participants withdrew from the study; however, one was disqualified because it was revealed that she had a 2-year college degree. Additionally, one participant was 67 years old, which was 2 years above the age stated in the criteria. However, I included her because the information that she provided helped me understand the phenomenon of interest in the study. She also had a vivid memory of the educational journey of her children, who had completed their educational journey within the last 10 years. The other seven participants met all inclusion criteria.

I collected demographic information for all eight participants, including age, marital status, level of education, employment status, number of offspring who completed university, and degree level obtained. Each of these characteristics is listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

| Participants | Age | Highest level of education | Employment status | Marital status | Number of offspring completing university | Degree obtained by offspring | Nationality |
|---------------|-----|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|------------------------------|-------------|
| Participant 1 | 58 | M/school | Part time | Single | 1 | Bachelor's | Trinidadian |
| Participant 2 | 46 | High school | Full time | Single | 1 | Bachelor's | American |
| Participant 3 | 57 | High school | Full time | Single | 1 | Bachelor's | Trinidadian |
| Participant 4 | 67 | High school | Retired | Single | 2 | Bachelor's/PhD | Trinidadian |
| Participant 5 | 65 | High school | Retired | Single | 3 | Bachelor's | Trinidadian |
| Participant 6 | 61 | M/school | Full time | Single | 1 | Bachelor's | Trinidadian |
| Participant 7 | 65 | High school | Full time | Single | 1 | Bachelor's | Trinidadian |
| Participant 8 | 62 | M/school | Full time | Single | 1 | Bachelor's | Trinidadian |

Note. All participants were identified as Black single mothers.

Data Collection

Before the interviews, each participant provided written or oral consent. Five of the participants e-signed the consent form and returned it before the interview. Two printed, scanned, and sent the consent back via email, while one participant verbalized that she was not comfortable using the computer and wanted to provide verbal consent. I read the consent form to her, and she gave verbal consent before the interview, which was recorded. The consent form included the title, a summary of the study with contact information, examples of the interview questions, the inclusion criteria, and the IRB approval number 12-29-20-0479199, with an expiration date of December 28, 2021.

Following verification that the participant met the inclusion criteria, I scheduled the interview. Before the interview, each participant was allowed to discuss any questions that they might have. I reiterated that participants could discontinue the interview at any time. Semistructured interviews were conducted via phone in my home office, using an interview protocol (see Appendix A). Follow-up questions and probes were used to gather detailed and rich descriptions.

A 30- to 45-minute semistructured interview was conducted with each participant. This interview was done via phone from my home office. Each interview was recorded via the Super Voice recording app, which was downloaded on a password-protected handheld device, which was tested before to ensure it was working well.

Active listening skills were used with an occasional verbal cue to let the participant know that I was listening. Voice tone and emotion were observed and noted during the interview. After seven interviews, a level of saturation was reached, as no new data were emerging. I conducted the eighth interview to ensure that saturation had been achieved.

The interviews were then transcribed verbatim. I transcribed the first two interviews manually, but the remaining six interviews were transcribed using a transcription software called Otter.ai. After the preliminary transcription by Otter.ai, I listened and made corrections to the transcripts and saved each to a Microsoft Word document. This correction was necessary because the software did not transcribe some of the words accurately; therefore, I listened to each interview several times to verify the accuracy of the data.

Within 2 weeks after the interviews, the transcripts were sent to each participant via email for verification of information. I later called the participants to ensure that they had received the transcripts and to inquire if they were accurate. I also asked if they wanted to add any other information. Each participant found the summaries to be an accurate reflection of their thought and actions. The participants were sent a \$20.00 gift card of their choice.

One of the difficulties that I encountered during the process was acquiring participants for the study. At the time of my study, there was a nationwide shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I was unable to visit face-to-face gatherings such as churches and businesses to recruit participants. I had to depend on social media for recruiting. Many groups on social media had banned recruiting for participants. I had to go back to the IRB to receive permission to revise my recruiting strategy and to create a research page on Facebook for recruiting. When public places started reopening, I was then able to post flyers in businesses and apartments to recruit participants. I also assumed that the sample population would be willing to participate in the qualitative study through interviews; however, I had difficulty recruiting participants. Two single mothers who were potential participants did not answer their phones or call me back after verbally agreeing to participate in my study. Although their children's college completion is a great achievement, there might have been some hesitation in telling the story for these single mothers.

Data Analysis

Data analysis included generating initial codes using NVivo 12 software and then reviewing the data to look for other codes that might have been missed. These codes were then grouped into clusters with similar meanings or themes. After the interviews were transcribed, I analyzed the data, conducting a four-stage process, including decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation (Bengtsson, 2016). First, I read the data multiple times, looking for patterns within the data. The data were downloaded into NVivo12, which helped with generating initial codes that represented meaningful information from the data. Important sections of the text were identified and labeled based on the codes.

Next was the recontextualization stage, which ensured that the context was consistent with the aim. The original transcripts were reread, and a comparison was made to the list of codes derived from the data. The codes had to be aligned with the aim of the study to be able to answer my research question.

The third stage was categorization and included the process of condensing data without losing meaning. The themes were initially generated inductively from the raw data. During this stage, two main themes emerged, with multiple subthemes. However, my research question was important in determining the themes that were relevant in this study. Codes were linked, themes emerged, and then conclusions were drawn and discussed in the result.

The last stage was compilation; this was where I analyzed and wrote up the data. I assessed the data to ensure that the result was logical, then I compared the new findings

to the existing literature. The results were then written up. This step was done several times to ensure trustworthiness.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Transferability

Transferability indicates that the results are applicable in other contexts; this was accomplished by providing a description that was thick and rich (Amankwaa, 2016; Emerson, 2015). I addressed transferability by describing the process from data collection to analysis in great detail to capture a detailed story of the process and show a vivid picture of the process. Direct quotes from the interviews with the participants were also documented.

Confirmability

To ensure confirmability, I engaged in reflective journaling, which involved reflecting on my feelings and thoughts and writing them down. This was done during the process of data collection and analysis, to ensure that I was aware of any biases so that the data collection and interpretation were not affected by my biases or any prior experience. Peer review by my dissertation committee, which is composed of content and methodology experts, was conducted during the analysis phase and conclusion phase. An audit trail was also done

Dependability

Dependability shows that if the study is repeated, it will yield consistent results (Bengtsson, 2016). I addressed dependability by detailing the process from data collection to data analysis, which is known as an audit trail. Each step in the research

process was clearly articulated and written down systematically to reveal my choices and insight into the decisions made during the process.

Credibility

Credibility in the study involved the confidence that the findings were accurate. I enhanced credibility through member checking. After the interviews were transcribed verbatim, I provided each participant a copy of their interview transcript for feedback on any discrepancy and clarification. I also called each participant to ensure that they received the document and inquired about any addition. There were no concerns or additional input by any of the participants, and they said that the data were an accurate representation of their beliefs and practices.

Study Results

The research provided valuable responses on the beliefs and practices of the participants that ensured that their offspring obtained a 4-year college degree. The participants also shed light on their struggles, their sacrifices, and the structure that was necessary for their children to obtain a 4-year degree. The themes that evolved were discussed under two main sections, which addressed the attitudes and beliefs revealed by the participants that promoted college completion and the mothers' practices that promoted college completion.

Table 2

Themes

| Themes | Themes description |
|---------|---|
| Theme 1 | Attitudes and beliefs revealed by the participants that promoted college completion |
| Theme 2 | Mothers' practices and behaviors that promoted college completion |

Attitudes and Beliefs Revealed by the Participants

Want Their Children to Have a Better Life

All eight of these participants (100%) stated that they wanted a better life for their offspring compared to what they had. Seven of the participants did not have anyone among their known family members who had completed a 4-year college degree and were determined that their children had to change the trajectory of the family and be college graduates. Additionally, all eight of the participants (100%) had high expectations for their children.

Participant 4 stated, “I know my children have to be something good in this life.”

Likewise, Participant 2 stated,

I just always wanted better for my kids. I’ve always wanted better for them. You know, I didn't get a college education and I wanted so much for her to have that because I didn't get that. So that was my driving force.

Participant 5 said, “So they can turn out something much better than you are so their life can be much more advance.”

Participant 6 said about education, “So, I didn't get it. So, I made sure that my kids got it.”

Participant 2 also said,

it’s so funny I always told both of my kids after you graduate from high school you have a choice: Death or College, you decide which one you want. Because

you're either going to go to college or I'm going to kill you cause you're not going to just do nothing with your life.

All eight participants (100%) also worked low-wage jobs in the service industry, such as babysitting (2), home health aide (2), housekeeping (2), nursing assistant (1), and daycare worker (1), and wanted something better for their children. These experiences were the driving force to encourage their children to achieve more than they did so that they would not have to work as hard to provide for themselves.

Participant 5 said, "I have three girls, but that marriage didn't work out because he was abusive. You know all that kind of physical abuse, insecurity, and all of that."

Participant 2 stated,

the one thing I will tell you is that you know, I was a teen mom, I promised myself, it would stop with me, that I would be the last one, to be a teenage mom, and that I wanted her to attend college.

She also said,

Whether single or not, but when you are a single parent, you don't want the kids to go through what you go through so you always try to be that person that they could see an example of what you want them to be later in life.

Participant 4 said,

I know that education was it for them to get them out of not being what I am: a babysitter and—and to clean apartments and I didn't want that for them. So that's why I actually—and they came up here with intention of going to school and wanting to study more.

She also said,

sometimes I will threaten them like you want to be like me, girls? Do you want to be able to go into people's houses and do these things? Girl, try and study your work and get a good education that you'll be able to be somebody someday. To help yourself. And these things stay with them.

Participant 4 also said, "I did a next job, I used to just go to work, I work overtime right through. I make all my money in overtime."

Education Was Important for Success in Life

When the participants were asked, "What does education mean to you?", eight of the participants (100%) believed that education was important and was the way out of a life cycle of poverty. They realized that they did not have the opportunity because of their social situation and worked hard to ensure that their children were able to be educated and be something in society. These are some of the participants' views of education.

According to Participant 1,

education is very important because for you to achieve what you have to achieve in life you must have an educational background because if you don't have an educational background, you wouldn't be able to fit into a lot of places. I let my kids know that education is the top priority. All I ask is go to school and learn and I will work hard and get what you're supposed to get to reach the potential that you could be better men and women up to date.

Participant 2 stated, “education means a lot. Like you can do so much with it, but I want you to find what you're passionate about. What you put in your brain; nobody can take that out.”

Participant 3 stated, “I see today as being a black mother with two boy children.

Education is the key. You don't have education, you go nowhere.”

Participant 8 added, “as we come to this country from Trinidad, we see how important education is. it's very, very important.”

Participant 4 said,

you could be whatever you want when you know what you're doing. But when you don't have an education and you don't know what you're doing it's like you're a dropout. What I know is the knowledge that you know is the power, it's not exactly any knowledge. That is what education did for them. It gave them the power to do what they want to do.

Participant 5 said,

Let me tell you something, Education is something necessary to fit into the working and advancing world that we living in. Education makes-equips you, then gives you a place in society -where you could be gainfully employed, where you could share, where you could influence another generation. Education is something so necessary, liberating, freeing. It takes you away from the 'just getting by' living and put you in a place where you can be more useful.

Values and Qualities Necessary to Encourage Educational Success

Communication and Involvement.

The participants were asked about the qualities and values that they believe were necessary as a single mother for raising offspring to advance academically. Six of the participants (80%) said communication and involvement with their offspring were necessary.

Participant 1 said, “spend the time, discuss, have talk time, have playtime together with your kids.”

Participant 3 said,

they have to be there for them. And they have to listen, you know, because they have to remember that they were once younger too, and they used to do messed up things, you know, and they have to listen, and pay attention to them very well.

Participant 6 said,

love, attention, support, prayer, being available when they need you, and most good communication. Always, always be interested in whatever it is they do, because you to, get to know your kids. Hug our children enough, you know, we don't tell them, we love them enough. You know, I let them know that they are beautiful, they're strong, they are intelligent, install certain things in them, that nobody else could take that away from them.

Participant 7 said, “I would tell a single mom to have time for her children because, in the end, it will pay off well.”

Participant 8 said, “pay attention to them. You need to be there for them. And you need to have communication with them.”

Table 3

Theme 1: Attitudes and Beliefs Revealed by the Participants That Promoted College

Completion—Subthemes

| Subthemes | Subthemes description |
|------------|---|
| Subtheme 1 | Want their children to have a better life |
| Subtheme 2 | Education was important for success in life |
| Subtheme 3 | Values and qualities necessary to encourage educational success a. Communication and involvement |

Mothers' Practices and Behaviors That Promote College Completion

Emphasis on Early Education

When asked how early they were involved in their children's learning, eight participants (100%) stated that before their children start kindergarten. Participant 1 stated,

I taught her from home. So, when she went out to school at five years, she was prepared to continue the journey. I taught her ABC's and you know when you go to school these are the things that they teach the kids and start them off as. She could have read; she could spell so that when she went to school, the things that they were teaching her she already knows that so she was ready to learn because she was prepared.

Participant 3 said, "I use to like, read while they were in my tummy, you know, reading".

Participant 7 stated,

At an early age, they know what it is to form letters. Yeah, at two and a half I teach them how to write their name. They might not know how to spell it out properly put it down on paper and let them write their names underneath the

paper. I teach them their ABCs, I taught them how to count, I taught them how to add one and one make two, and stuff like that.

Participant 4 said,

When she'd be able to pronounce words and be able to understand what it means, and I took her to an expensive school (that was back in my country Trinidad) I sent her there. I wanted them to go to the best school.

Formal and Informal Education

Actively Involved in Their Children Learning.

Another theme that emerged is that all eight participants (100%) were very engaged with their children learning and their school. For the question, how early in your child's education did you start taking an active role to ensure educational success?

Participant 7 said, "after school and they come home and they would sit and do their work well and then I check it."

Participant 1 stated, "from 1st grade to 8th grade in which I made sacrifices and I keep on top of her that she could excel."

Participant 5 said,

when my children used to go to school I would come and see what home lessons they have to do, what you learn in school today, what you have to do for home lessons do you understand? What you learning, you understand what you doing? Come let's see how we could do this together.

Participant 6 said,

First, you have to be on time. Early! She came home in the evening from school. I made sure she ate and relaxed for maybe an hour and give her something to eat and everything and make sure she's ready to do her home lesson. Never faltered with her home lesson. If the teacher gives you a project to do, you have to finish on the timeline that they give it to her to do.

Participant 8 said, “when they were back home (Trinidad) in school, they would always go to school. And I would always insist that when they come home, they do their homework.”

Actively Involved in Children’s School.

Participants also expressed the need to be involved in their children's education through supervision and having a presence at their school. These participants had a relationship with their children’s teachers.

Participant 2 stated,

I’ve always—as far as both of my children are concerned, I’ve always played an active role in their school. She also stated, “I am that parent that the teachers will see my face, they're going to know my name, they're going to see my face.

Participant 5 said, “if there's a little problem I will go to the school and talk to the teacher and how is this one doing.”

Participant 6 stated, “I checked their books, visited the school, and made sure that they were good kids, good students, and everything.”

Tutoring Was an Option to Ensure Success.

When asked about a time that their children were not focused in school, three of the participants (38%) said they utilized tutors to help their children to progress academically.

Participant 2 stated,

Science and math were not her strong suits and we knew this so we got tutors to help. And when I say tutors, I mean friends that have older kids that have gone through these classes because of course, I'm a single mom I can't afford to pay for a tutor like that.

Participant 6 said, "Even after school is over, she took lessons. After lessons, she comes home."

Participant 7 said, "The only thing that I did for some of them, they had extra ... like lessons. They had extra lessons on the outside."

Learned to Maneuver Around Barriers

Educational Barriers. The participants also had to overcome some educational barriers.

Participant 5 said,

when I came to this country the first thing I was finding out: what is the basic requirement of this country that I'm in? What is the educational requirement? What are the law requirements and I realized I had to get a GED? So, me and my three daughters, we went back to school up here just to get a GED because our education wasn't that much recognized. if there's a little problem I will go to the school and talk to the teacher and ask how is this one doing. when they went to school and there were graduations and there were these functions you know, I

would go to all the little graduations and you know when I realized they got this award and this award and I feel well.

Participant 3 said,

So, when she came here from Trinidad, she had already passed, the kindergarten and first-grade stuff. So, I wanted her to go into the appropriate class instead of keeping her back. They were trying to tell me she was dyslexic. Tell me that, you know, all sorts of terms to coming up with Why she doesn't fit to be. So anyway. So, they finally put her in the class. And they realize she's way advanced than the kids in the class that they put her in. So anyway, she went to first grade. And then they had to change her to second grade. She was an honor student until college.

Financial Barriers.

A financial barrier was also identified by the eight participants (100%) because they worked low-wage jobs. Participant 1's child received an academic scholarship, Participant 3's child received a sports scholarship, and Participant 2 said that her child took a loan. The children of seven participants had to work while in school to help pay for university or other related expenses.

Participant 3 said,

she knew she got a scholarship academic scholarship from the school, along with the track and field, but she had to pay for boarding and rooming. She worked her butt off. She knew I couldn't support her financially because of paying rent and you know, so she uses to work her way through.

Participant 1 said she was willing to send her children to private school on a low income, for elementary and middle school. She said,

Where we were located the school wasn't up to standard so for me to get my kids the education that they need I had to send them to a private school which is a Catholic school. I had to pay and since she attended there well, I taught her from home. So, when she went out to school at five years, she was prepared to continue the journey because she had already been taught from home and as she moved alone.

Participant 4 said, "if you get your foot in just start with one subject, one each semester. And that is what she did. I did another job, and she was going to school, and she had a job in a daycare."

Participant 5 said,

I said, if you get your foot into college just start with one subject, one thing out the semester. And that is what she did. I mean-I did a next job, and then she get-sometimes people in the church will get another-a hundred dollars to help her with transportation and she did have one subject until maybe about like two years in.

Participant 7 said,

I became ill so she had to stop school. And then when I started to work again, well she ended getting a little work at a daycare and she paid her way. She mostly paid her way through college for herself. And what I did when she was missing, then she would tell me because after that she never really bothered me.

Participant 8 said, “she was going to college and doing it and doing babysitting, she saw how valuable and how important education is, she was living by herself in an apartment.

Generational and Cultural Barriers.

Another barrier that eight participants (100%) had to deal with was the challenge of being a first-generation college student. Some of these barriers included the application process and college life. The children of seven of the participants were first-generation graduates, so the participants did not have the knowledge to maneuver through the higher education system. Therefore, the single mothers had to depend on their teachers and friends to assist with the application process

Participant 2 stated,

the biggest barrier, first of all, it's new. So, you know it's like this is kind of scary because nobody in our family has ever gone to college, I don't know what to expect, so that right there then you have to fill out all these applications forms and meet all these deadlines, you know, trying to get stuff turned in on time.

Participant 3 said when applying to college,

She did everything on her own. And I just, you know, support, everything. She went to look for her colleges, she did everything, everything by herself. She's always that sort of a go-getter, person. You know, because I cannot go, she will go herself, and she will say, write an excuse why you can't come, because I'm going by myself. she had also good high school teachers, they pushed them and give a lot of support, and gave her counsel, her guidance counselor.

Willing to Make Sacrifices That Led to Educational Success

I asked the participants about the ways they care for and invest in themselves while raising their children. Seven participants (88%) said when they were raising their children, the focus was their children, not themselves, while one participant saw the importance of taking time for herself.

Participant 3 said, “While raising them I had to make a lot of sacrifices I had to make to keep my roof over my head and put food on the table.”

Participant 5 said,

I’ve made the sacrifice, doing without a whole lot of stuff to make sure I help put my children through college and I feel good today about that. Like any mother that I and you know about, we do without a whole lotta thing to make sure that the children are in order. I do without a whole lot of stuff to make sure they had what they wanted to be comfortable especially when it came to schoolwork.

Participant 6 said, “I used to just go to work, I work overtime right through. I make all my money in overtime. Go to church, and that's it. I'll come home.”

Participant 8 recalled, “I was always working to make sure I provided for them. Buy clothes, they have transportation to go to school. It was always about them. I don't think no time it was about me.”

Participant 2 stated,

honestly, I don’t think I invested in myself; I think my focus was on her. I was so focused on making sure she didn’t make the same mistakes-not saying it was a mistake to have her, but I just wanted her to have a different outcome of life. I did

not want her to be a teen mom like me and so I spent my time and energy making sure that she had what she needed.

Participant 1 was the only one who stated that she took time for herself so she can give more to her children. She stated,

I would go out a little bit maybe get my nails done, get my hair done, and maybe go out to dinner with friends so that's where it wouldn't be very strenuous on me and most, I used to pray to God a lot to give me the strength that I could do what I have to do for my kids because I know this will take them to the future.

Participant 8 also said,

They were good girls and then my sister, my sister will always stop by and make sure they are ok and they doing everything. But I would talk about that part like I was always gone because I had to work. I had to take care of them. My second daughter was in middle school. And I think my first daughter was in college when I was still doing a living-in job. I will cook for the week, make sure they have food and my sister would come by and make sure they are ok.

Maintained Strict Rules and Structure That Fostered Learning

The participants were asked about the kind of structure they developed to help their child succeed at school. Participant 1 said,

I let them know there are rules, there are regulations, there are consequences. I let them know I need respect. I need you to know the friends you associate with and the parents. so, in that way when they're at school, I know they're at school.

Participant 2 said,

I'll tell you right now boys aren't the answer so let's put them on the back burner and focus on school. There was no tv until homework was done and checked. It's so funny I always told both of my kids after they graduate from high school you have a choice: Death or College like, you decide which one you want. Because you're either going to go to college or I'm going to kill you cause you're going to just do nothing with your life.

Participant 5 said,

I used to go to the school, talk with the teacher, find out how she's doing, go to her graduations, and make sure—"You have homework this evening? Make sure before you sit and watch any TV that you do that homework for me, please."

Participant 4 said,

sometimes I will threaten them like you want to be like me, girls? Do you want to be able to go into people's houses and do these things? Girl, try and study your work and get a good education that you'll be able to be somebody someday. To help yourself. And these things stay with them.

Maintained a Good Support System

Participants were asked about the kind of personal and external support they were able to give to their child to ensure success in school. All eight participants (100%) agreed that they were very grateful that they had a good support system. The main support system was either family, church, teachers, and employers or a combination of these.

The family was the first of the support system that six of the participants verbalized and integral to their children's success. Creating a home environment that facilitates learning was important to the participants.

Participant 4 stated,

don't involve your children with what struggles you have. What you're going through. Because no matter what it is, you want their mind to be free to be able to study and if you keep telling them what you're going through, you think they have-they would be able to study.

However, Participant 6 said the opposite, which was “most of us we like to hide, our tears. But if they see you crying, they know very well look, Mommy, mommy is not strong enough today.”

The struggles that they faced as a family also brought the family closer together. Those who depended on the family as their support system had this to say: Participant 5 said, “the bigger ones were in college so they understood a little more than I understood so they were more helping her.”

Participant 1 said,

I had great family support in which they all grew up the same way I grew up, so they know the value of school and I had their support to help me you know, to make me that better person, then I could teach my kids what to do.

According to Participant 2,

We have a very close-knit family so my mom, my dad, we're super close so they were able there to help a lot as well. When the semester would end, they would

rent out storage so she could put her stuff in storage so she wouldn't have to lug it all the way home so they did help out financially especially the first time she went down there.

Participant 8 also said, "it was just my encouragement and you know, my sisters will encourage them to. Okay. My sisters encourage them and go after the dreams that would make it one day."

Teachers were also identified by three participants (35%) as a part of their support system that influenced college success among their offspring. Collaborating with the teachers early in their education journey set the stage for continual engagement.

Participant 3 said, "she had also good high school teachers, they pushed them and give a lot of support and gave her counsel, her guidance counselor."

Participant 1 said, "her teachers say she was a very smart kid, very quiet and focused so her teachers played a great part in her going to school until she reached high school and then to college." She also said that

she had great teachers and a teacher to the end who worked with her because she saw her potential and with myself and him working together, we achieved a lot because that keeps her focused and let her know that you know, you have to do what you have to do to get ahead.

Participant 6 added this about the teachers: "They understood what was the aim and the goal of her being successful. They knew that I had it tough. So, they were ready to step in, where I might fall short. And it was a great help."

The church family was another form of support for two participants (25%).

Participant 5 stated,

You know the church is a close-knitted body, looking out for one another. So yeah, we made friends along the way and you know, some people were teachers in the school and they helped, a particular teacher helped pay one of my daughter's college fees.

She also stated, “one person bought a computer for her. Another person bought a computer desk. Another person, friends you know? Friends you know, another person helped pay her college fees and all of that.”

When asked about support, Participant 4 stated,

my church family did and my employer. My pastor was so good-and what he did too, what I did love about him was he encouraged the members to help me as a single mother. Look for a child that is going to school and try and help. That is what they used to do.

Five participants (63%) also stated that their faith played a great part in helping them remain strong and focused when their children were in school.

Participant 1 said, “foremost I have God to give me the strength that I needed because without Him I could not have done anything.”

Participant 4 stated, “when it comes to me with something-first all I know how to do was to pray and I say alright, let's pray and see what God will do.”

Participant 2 stated, “Trust God. Trust God, God will see you through. You can't see how it's going to work out, but trust God, and then the second thing is to believe in yourself. “

Two of the participants (25%) had a level of support from their employers.

Participants 1 and 4 said that their employers were understanding and worked with them so they can better manage their homes and children.

Participant 1 said,

I went to my boss and I let them know that I'm a single parent and I would have to work around my kids. I would not be able to work the long hours, I would not be able to work on weekends because I need that time with my kids especially my son.

Participant 4 said,

At the time with my job, the woman encouraged me and she tells me she said, "Girl, keep them. I will help." And she did help me, they filed the papers for me, and whatever. If I have to work to go away, she'd invite my kids to come along, you understand? And I'd have them with me so it was a big support for me that they were—you know?

Table 4

Theme 2: Mothers' Practices and Behaviors That Promote College Completion—

Subthemes

| Subthemes | Subthemes description |
|------------|---|
| Subtheme 1 | Emphasis on early education |
| Subtheme 2 | Formal and informal education <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Actively involved in their children learning b. Actively involved in children's school c. Tutoring was an option to ensure success |
| Subtheme 3 | Learned to maneuver around barriers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Educational barriers b. Financial barriers |

c. Generational and cultural barriers

Subtheme 4 Willing to make sacrifices that led to educational success

Subtheme 5 Maintained strict rules and structure that fostered learning

Subtheme 6 Maintained a good support system

Summary

In summary, the purpose of this general qualitative research was to explore the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers, who have promoted successful college completion among their offspring. The research question was designed to understand what are the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers that have promoted successful college completion among their offspring. Several subthemes emerged from the study under two main themes which was the attitudes and believes revealed by the single mothers and mothers' practices, and behaviors that promote college completion. The main attitude and belief of these mothers were that they wanted their children to have a better life, they saw education as important for life success and there were certain values and qualities that they possessed and understood as necessary to encourage their children to succeed academically. The main practices and behaviors that they exhibited were they emphasize early education, were actively involved in their children's learning and their school. Participants stated that they had to learn to maneuver educational, financial, and other barriers of first-generation students. These participants maintained a good support system, made strict rules, had structure, and made the necessary sacrifice that they believe lead to educational success among their children.

They will advise other single mothers that communication and involvement with their children were necessary values to encourage educational success.

The following chapter will provide discussion, interpretation, conclusion, and necessary recommendations for the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to use a generic qualitative approach to explore the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who influenced successful 4-year college completion among their offspring. The approach used allowed me to attain comprehensive and extensive detail about the participants' experience. During my literature review, I found substantial research regarding SMFs and educational attainment. However, I was unable to find any research study that focused on the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who had promoted successful college graduation among their offspring. My goal for this study was to focus on the perception held by these single mothers on how their behavior and beliefs contributed to their offspring completing college.

To accomplish this, I interviewed eight low-income Black single mothers in the northeastern region of the United States. I used semistructured, open-ended interview questions to gather participants' perceptions of their beliefs and practice that had promoted successful college graduation among their offspring. Content analysis was used for the data analysis process. According to Bengtsson (2016), content analysis involves organizing and eliciting meaning from the data and reaching a realistic conclusion.

The key findings related to the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who influenced successful college completion among their offspring were under two main themes, with subthemes. The first theme was attitudes and beliefs revealed by the participants that promoted college completion, with subthemes (a) want their children

to have a better life, (b) education was important for success in life, and (c) values and qualities necessary to encourage educational success, which included the importance of communication and involvement. The second theme was practices and behaviors that promoted college completion, with subthemes (a) emphasis on early education; (b) formal and informal education (actively involved in their children learning, actively involved in children's school, and tutoring was an option to ensure success); (c) learned to maneuver around barriers (educational barriers, financial barriers, and generational and cultural barriers); (d) willing to make sacrifices that led to educational success; (e) maintained strict rules and structure that fostered learning; and (f) maintained a good support system.

In this chapter, I discuss the research finding through the lens of Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles to explain the way that these single mothers' parenting styles influenced educational success among their offspring. I also discuss the dominant parenting style exhibited by these single mothers through their beliefs and practices while raising their children. Then I discuss the limitations of the study, recommendations for future study, and implications for positive social change. The chapter concludes with a summary of the overall research.

Interpretation of the Findings

The findings from this qualitative study deliver important viewpoints concerning the attitudes and beliefs of eight Black single mothers who influenced their children in completing college, thereby changing the trajectory of the family. These data expanded on the information presented in Chapter 2. The expansion was related to some of the

beliefs and behaviors of these single mothers that promoted college completion among their offspring.

Attitudes and Beliefs Revealed by the Participants

Want Their Children to Have a Better Life

One of the main beliefs of the participants was that they were not well educated. Therefore, many of them had to work harder to provide for their families, which took time away from their children. Their life experiences became one of the driving forces to ensure that their children received a college education, and this also shaped their view on the importance of education. They wanted better for their children, and they believed that this could be achieved through education. They also believed that there were certain values and qualities that they had to have in leading their children to educational success.

Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) observed that college students revealed that the prospect of a better life and spirituality were their motivating factors for college completion. Although these studies were conducted with college graduates, all eight participants heralded the same desire of wanting better for their children. They all worked low-income jobs and sometimes could not provide comfortably for their children. In this study, there was a clear expectation of all the participants for their children to complete college, as they wanted a better life for their children and they only saw that this was possible through education. Participant 5, for example, told her children to study so that they would not have to work as house help as she did.

Education Was Important for Success in Life

Koh et al. (2015) stated that education is one of the proven ways to ensure financial success. This was also the view of all eight participants. The participants' views were that with a college degree, their children could have what they wanted in life. They believed that knowledge is power, that education opens doors of opportunity so they can be something in life, and that their children did not have to go through what they went through. One participant said that her children did not wear brand-name clothes while growing up, but she knew that with good education, they would be able to afford to do so as an adult.

Najman et al. (2018) said that attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within the family are influenced by family poverty, which has an impact on children's educational attainment. In this study, the participants did not let poverty lead to a negative path. Although poverty can negatively affect many families, the single mothers in this study used their financial situation to be one of the greatest driving forces to educational attainment and advancement for their offspring.

Values and Qualities Necessary to Encourage Educational Success

Importance of Communication and Involvement.

Two things that the participants valued while raising their children were open communication with their children and involvement with their children. Koh et al. (2015) noted that being in a single-mother household does not necessarily lead to poor behavioral outcomes. However, the level of parental involvement, family income, parental education, and mental health status are better predictors of behavioral outcomes.

All eight participants in the study were intentional in providing an environment in the home that was conducive to learning, and they classified their children as “good”.

Respect from their children was an expectation of all of the participants.

The study by Suminar et al. (2018) noted that single mothers with successful children created a healthy home environment through “intense” and frequent communication that fosters openness, empathy, equality, and a supportive and positive attitude. Participants in this study also said that open communication was important in helping their children to succeed. All the participants said that they had a very close relationship with their children and they were their children’s greatest cheerleaders. Three of the participants said that they discussed everything with their daughters. The participants also valued spending quality time with their children. Time in great quantity was not always possible because of the participants’ work schedule, but all of the participants acknowledged that they had to make time for their children so that they would remain stable and be successful. Other values that the participants identified that they communicated to their offspring as necessary for them to succeed included integrity, honesty, open communication, morals, the value of education, having a life plan, and putting God first.

Mothers’ Practices and Behaviors That Promote College Completion

Emphasis on Early Education

All of the participants stated that they began the education process with their children before they entered school. They saw learning as a practice that should be started as early as possible to give their children an advantage academically and to prepare them

for kindergarten. One participant said that she read to her baby in utero. The other seven started the learning process before their children attended kindergarten. Their belief in education and wanting better for their children were among the driving forces to ensure academic advancement.

Formal and Informal Education

Actively Involved in Their Children's Learning.

Danforth and Miller (2018) and Williams et al. (2017) observed that general parental practice (encouraging child to work hard, getting involved when necessary, and ensuring that the child is prepared to learn), socialization at home, and parental involvement in school are also critical in the academic success of children. This study saw a similar result. The participants in this study were involved in their children's learning process and acted as a resource or obtained help when necessary for their children. They provided hands-on assistance and linked their children with other siblings or friends in high school and college, to ensure that their children understood and completed their homework before playing or participating in other nonacademic activities. They were involved in the learning process and ensured that their children did their homework. They also were aware of areas in which their children struggled and did that which was necessary to ensure success.

Actively Involved in Children's School.

All participants also stated that they took an active role in their children's education by ensuring that they communicated with their teachers. They knew the teachers and ensured that they felt comfortable reaching out to them if their children were

not doing well in school. Poyrazli and Isaiah (2018) stated that students succeeded academically when their professors were concerned about students' success and had a more engaging teaching style. The participants in this study were visible in their children's schools. They communicated with the teachers and worked together to ensure that their children continued to advance academically.

Tutoring Was an Option to Ensure Success.

One of the strategies that three of these participants used to help their children academically was tutoring. Participants in this study sought educational help for their children to ensure that they continued to advance educationally. Formal tutoring was done by two participants, and another sought out the help of family and friends as tutors in areas of academic weakness because she could not afford to pay for formal tutoring. They were also involved with their children, checking both school and homework and ensuring that their children were doing their work and continued to excel academically.

Learn to Maneuver Around Educational Barriers

Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) stated that to ensure educational success it is necessary to have family support and cultural bonds, which help them to connect with others (familial capital), having access to a social network, contacts, and community resources like their peer and faculties (social capital), and have the knowledge to navigate the system (navigational capital).

The participants in this study were able to understand and navigate through some of the barriers that they encountered. They had to receive help from family, friends, and

their church to navigate the educational system, and their children worked and paid for school as finances became available.

Educational Barriers.

Gatlin and Wilson (2016) observed that Blacks are overrepresented in special education classes, which puts them on the negative edge of academic success. One of the participants in this study said that she encountered some bias as a Black single mother when her child migrated to the United States. She said that she was told that her child was dyslexic because she spelled a word incorrectly during a placement assessment. She was also told that she did not qualify for a program for honor students because she was a single mother. Her daughter went on to be in high honors class doing college classes in high school and receiving sport and academic scholarships in college.

Poyrazli and Isaiah (2018) said that negative factors such as a lack of adult supervision, unfamiliarity with the U.S. school system, culture shock, difficulty adjusting to different climates, and language barriers led to academic failure in American universities. Seven of the participants were originally from Trinidad and stated that some of their children began their education there and had to adapt to the new system of education. However, remaining active in their children's school helped in overcoming that barrier.

Financial Barriers.

Anderson (2018) stated that although most Blacks acknowledge that education is a crucial factor in them achieving their life goals, many do not attend college because of financial drawbacks, and they lack the knowledge to navigate the educational landscape

successfully. This study did not yield the same result. The participants did not let finances or lack of navigational capital deter them from helping their children achieve. They sought help where necessary and engaged their support system to ensure that their children completed college. To pay for college, two participants received scholarships, one took a loan, and the four paid as finances were available. Their children also had to work while in school to help pay for their education.

Generational and Cultural Barriers.

Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2014) observed that it took aspirational, familial, social, and navigational capital to attain academic success; many of these may be lacking in low-income Black families. One of the participants in the study explicitly said that fear of the unknown was a barrier that she encountered as the mother of a first-generation student. Although these participants had difficulty helping their children to navigate the educational system, they assisted them by reaching out to external resources such as family members and teachers for help. They all had closely knitted families and drew from extended family, church family, and teachers in the process of development. The participants in this study, although single mothers, were able to motivate their children to achieve educational success. In this study, six of the participants' children remained at home while in college, and two left home and lived in a dormitory. One mother said that she discouraged her child from moving away to college for fear that she would lose focus. For the other participants, it was purely a financial decision.

Willing to Make Sacrifices That Led to Educational Success

Two participants sent their children to private school on a limited income to give them a good educational start. One said that she was very strategic in her approach; she sent her children to a private school until middle school, and then they went to public school for high school so that her daughter could receive a scholarship for college. Her daughter did receive an academic scholarship. This is similar to what McCallum (2016) found in a study indicating that many Black single mothers are willing to make financial sacrifices, such as relocating or sending their children to private schools, to ensure that they obtain a “good” education.

Schneider (2017) stated that there are higher levels of physical neglect in children raised by single mothers due to financial instability and lack of paternal support resulting in many mothers working long hours. Although these single mothers sometimes worked long days to provide for their families based on the interview, neglect was not an issue for these participants. According to Baumrind (1971), neglect entails having a careless attitude. Noninvolvement may be a result of parents being overwhelmed or frustrated with life, having difficulty managing the family, or being self-centered. I found that one of the areas that some of these participants felt guilty about discussing was that they did not have the amount of time that they wanted to have with their children. One participant said that she had to work to keep a roof over their head and food on the table, but she did exclaim that she did not have to do that anymore. One participant had to sometimes choose between the rent and school books for her children when they were in college.

Seven participants said that they did not have a social life while raising their children.

The children and their success were the focus of their life.

Taylor and Conger (2017) observed that single mothers have a very challenging task and tend to be more isolated, work more hours, and usually have less emotional and social support from family. It was found in the study that seven of the participants did not have an active social life. For seven of them, their life was centered around home and work, and for three of them, the church was included.

Maintain Strict Rules and Structure That Fostered Learning

Danforth and Miller (2018) stated that there are three practices that Black single mothers used to encourage their children to attend college, which include the practice of authoritative parenting through monitoring and controlling daily activities, providing hands-on assistance, and linking their sons with other members of the family attending college. In this study, all eight parents, monitored their children's activities ensuring that their school work was done before playtime and there were consequences for not completing their work. One parent told her children that they had to attend college, and that was not negotiable. Another one said that she pushes her kids more than her mother pushed her to succeed, but supported whatever they want to do 100%. Two of the participants said they had to know wherever their children went and one said sleepover was only done at her home. However, as the children became older, they were given more autonomy, and decision-making was done and valued as a family.

Maintained a Good Support System

Taylor and Conger (2017) stated that social support and internal resources are associated with higher quality parenting practice, effective parenting behaviors, and positive child outcomes. The participants in this study understood the importance of a good support system. The support system which the participants said was instrumental in their children's education journey and ultimate success comprised of their family, teachers, the church, and their faith. Four of the participants said that their family was very supportive while raising their children and also very instrumental in the educational process. The church family also assisted two of the participants to navigate the school system and helps in obtaining school supplies and other financial obligations. Two participants said that their employers were very understanding and helped to ensure that they had a good work/life balance.

Short (2016) stated educational attainment requires a partnership between parents and teachers. Three of the participants said that their children had at least one teacher that came alongside them and was instrumental in their children's educational attainment. Also, three participants explicitly stated that their faith was very important in their family journey and the ability to be successful.

Conceptual Framework

This study was viewed through the lens of Baumrind's influential model of parenting styles. Baumrind's (1971), four parenting styles include authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and uninvolved (or neglectful) parenting. McCallum (2016) said that Black families are known for their authoritative parenting style. However, in this

study, there were two dominant parenting styles which were the authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. The participants changed their parenting style based on the situation and age of the children.

The participants in this study exhibited a high level of parental control, which was seen through their level of engagement in their children's learning process and involvement with their teachers and support system to ensure that their children progress academically. They monitored their children's activities closely and maintain rules that they believe helped their children to succeed. The participants also provided a home environment that they believe was conducive to learning and provided the necessary support to their children, that fostered learning.

Although attending college was not negotiable, the children were able to choose their career paths. One participant said that she advised her daughter to choose a helping profession, but her daughter wanted to choose a profession based on the salary potential. However, she later changed her profession to a helping profession.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the experiences were subjective, therefore, they cannot be generalized, but transferability can occur. Another limitation is that most of the participants were obtained by snowball sampling which narrowed the geographic area where participants were from and might have influenced the recruitment of participants with similar views. Also, the study did not take into consideration the children's perspective on their mothers' influence. This study addressed the perception of the single mothers via interviews, which did not take into account factors such as culture,

family, and friends' influence on the decision to complete college. Another limitation is that it is specific to a particular ethnic group. Therefore, the result of this study may not apply to another ethnic group.

Recommendations

After exploring the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers, who have influenced successful college completion among their children. One recommendation is for the study to be expanded to other regions of the United States. The perception of Black single mothers may be different in other regions of the country, and lifestyle practices may be different, hence the rationale for this recommendation. Another recommendation is to explore the perception of the children from these families to understand their educational journey, struggles, and success in a single-parent low-income environment. Later research could also be conducted, comparing the differences between beliefs and practices of low-income single mothers of other ethnic backgrounds.

Implications

The goal of this study was to explore the beliefs and practices of low-income Black single mothers who have influenced successful college completion among their children. From the findings that were previously mentioned, the potential implication for positive social change could include helping human service professionals and other family and mentoring organizations to understand some of the actions that can be taken to encourage college completion. The ultimate goal is that the knowledge gained from this study can be instrumental when looking at the issue of reducing generational poverty.

Positive Social Change

This study may add to the existing body of knowledge around family studies as it addresses parental beliefs and practices that can promote college advancement and degree attainment. This idea is based on understanding some of the practical steps that were taken by these parents to help their children graduate from college. When combined with the current body of literature, this research may help in the development of policies and practices to promote better family outcomes. Community partners like mentoring groups, parental classes, parent teachers' associations, educators, and other non-profit organizations may also use the information to develop policies and practices to help in addressing lower college attendance levels among Blacks and help foster better financial stability.

Conclusion

In this study, I interviewed eight low-income Black single mothers whose offspring completed college. Through interviews, these single mothers said that the journey was hard but worth it. The long hours spent working to provide for the family while remaining active and involved in their children's academic journey have paid off. Their drive for wanting better for their children did not allow them to quit, as they encourage their children throughout the journey. They also understood that they could not do it all alone, so they asked for help from their support system in meeting their goal of college completion among their offspring. McCallum (2016), stated there are five significant strengths of the Black family. These strengths include strong education and work ethics (informal and formal education), extended family kinship network, flexible

and healthy coping skills, strong religious orientation, and egalitarian and adaptable family roles. The families in this study exemplified that statement.

Koh et al., (2015) stated that parents' educational achievement and economic accomplishment have been cited as predictors of the children's educational attainment. Blackwell and Pinder (2014), also said that first-generation students are at four times higher risk of not completing college because of a lack of motivation, compared to students who have family members who attained a college degree. However, the single mothers in this study used the fact that they did not graduate from college as a motivating factor to ensure their offspring did not follow in their footsteps but changed the trajectory of the family. With their support, encouragement, and relevant actions, their offspring completed college and are now financially stable.

The findings from this qualitative study may contribute to the existing body of knowledge on Black family studies and education. These results can potentially lead to positive social change within human service, mentoring groups, and parental education. The results may also help in creating policies and procedures to increase college completion within the Black community.

References

- Allen, Q., & White-Smith, K. (2018). “That’s why I say stay in school”: Black mothers’ parental involvement, cultural wealth, and exclusion in their son’s schooling. *Urban Education, 53*(3), 409–435. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085917714516>
- Amankwaa, L. (2016). Creating a protocol for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 23*(3), 121–127.
- Anderson, M. B. L. (2018). *A seat at the table: African American youth’s perceptions of K-12 education*. <https://uncf.org/pages/perceptions-a-seat-at-the-table-african-american-youths-perceptions-of-k-12>
- Arnett-Hartwick, S. E., & Walters, C. M. (2016). Advancing learning by countering the effects of poverty. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, 108*(4), 18–22. <https://doi.org/0.14307/JFCS108.4.18>
- Baker, S., Edwards, R., & Doidge, M. (2012). *How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research* (National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper). https://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/id/eprint/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology Monographs, 4*(1, Pt. 2), 1–103. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0030372>
- Baumrind, D. (2005). Patterns of parental authority and adolescent autonomy. *New Directions for Child & Adolescent Development, 2005*(108), 61–69. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.128>
- Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content

- analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 2, 8–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001>
- Bingham, G. E., & Mason, A. (2018). Contexts of African American children's early writing development: Considerations of parental education, parenting style, parental beliefs, and home literacy environments. In S. Sonnenschein & B. Sawyer (Eds.), *Academic socialization of young Black and Latino children* (pp. 61-89). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-04486-2_4
- Blackwell, E., & Pinder, P. J. (2014). What are the motivational factors of first-generation minority college students who overcome their family histories to pursue higher education? *College Student Journal*, 48(1), 45–56.
- College degree. (2019). In *BusinessDictionary.com*.
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/college-degree.html>
- Danforth, L., & Miller, J. (2018). African American males from female-headed households: Using family resilience to navigate their way to college. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 21(1), 63–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10522158.2017.1321604>
- Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting style as context: An integrative model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487–496.
- Daryanani, I., Hamilton, J. L., Abramson, L. Y., & Alloy, L. B. (2016). Single mother parenting and adolescent psychopathology. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 44(7), 1411–1423.
- Daryanani, I., Hamilton, J. L., McArthur, B. A., Steinberg, L., Abramson, L. Y., & Alloy, L. B. (2017). Cognitive vulnerabilities to depression for adolescents in single-

mother and two-parent families. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46, 213–227.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-016-0607-y>

De Lange, M., Dronkers, J., & Wolbers, M. H. J. (2014). Single-parent family forms and children's educational performance in a comparative perspective: Effects of school's share of single-parent families. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 25(3), 329–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2013.809773>

DeNavas-Walt, C., Proctor, B. D., & Smith, J. C. (2013). *Income, poverty, and health insurance coverage in the United States: 2012—Current population reports*. U.S. Census Bureau.

Duarte, R., Ferrando-Latorre, S., & Molina, J. M. (2018). How to escape poverty through education? Intergenerational evidence in Spain. *Applied Economics Letters*, 25(9), 624-627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504851.2017.1352073>

Education. (2019). In *BusinessDictionary.com*.

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/education.html>

Emerson, R. W. (2015). Convenience Sampling, random sampling, and snowball sampling: How does sampling affect the validity of research? *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 109(2), 164–168.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0145482X1510900215>

Farrugia, B. (2019). WASP (Write a Scientific Paper): Sampling in qualitative research. *Early Human Development*, 133, 69–71.

Font, S. A., & Maguire-Jack, K. (2016). Pathways from childhood abuse and other adversities to adult health risks: The role of adult socioeconomic conditions. *Child*

Abuse & Neglect, 51, 390–399. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.05.013>

Ford, D. Y., & Moore, J. L. (2013). Understanding and reversing underachievement, low achievement, and achievement gaps among high-ability African American males in urban school contexts. *Urban Review* 45, 399–415.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-013-0256-3>

Fowler, P. J., & Farrell, A. F. (2017). Housing and child wellbeing: Implications for research, policy, and practice. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 60(1–2), 3–8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12154>

Fusch, P., Fusch, G., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin's Paradigm Shift: Revisiting Triangulation in Qualitative. *Journal of Social Change*, 10(1), 19-32.

<https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02>

Gatlin, B. T., & Wilson, C. L. (2016). Overcoming obstacles: African American students with disabilities achieving academic success. *Journal of Negro Education*, 85(2), 129–142. <https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.2.0129>

Goldberg, A. E., & Allen, K. R. (2015). Communicating qualitative research: Some practical guideposts for scholars. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, (77)1, 3-22

Hickman, G. P., Sabia, M. F., Heinrich, R., Nelson, L., Travis, F., & Veri, T. (2017). Predicting high school freshmen dropout through attentional biases and initial grade point average. *Journal of At-Risk Issues*, 20(2), 45-54.

Jacob, S. A., & Furgerson, S. P. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The*

Qualitative Report, 17(42), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2012.1718>

- Johnson, J. W. (2016). "All I do is win. . . No matter what": Low-income, African American single mothers and their collegiate daughters' unrelenting academic achievement. *Journal of Negro Education*, 85(2), 156–171.
<https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.85.2.0156>
- Jones-Eversley, S., & Ravenell, J. (2018). Four elephants in the room: A reflective analysis of the wailing rage displayed by Baltimore youth after Freddie Gray's death. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 28(1), 90-108.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2017.1355767>
- Kahlke, R. M. (2014). Generic qualitative approaches: Pitfalls and benefits of methodological mixology. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, (13), 37-52.
- Kilty, K. M. (2015). Fifty years later: access to education as an avenue out of poverty. *Journal of Poverty*, 19(3), 324-329.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2015.1047715>
- Koh, E., Stauss, K., Coustaut, C., & Forrest, C. (2015). Generational impact of single-parent scholarships: Educational achievement of children in single-parent families. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38(5), 607 – 632.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X15576963>
- Kramer, K. Z., Myhra, L. L., Zuiker, V. S., & Bauer, J. W. (2016). Comparison of poverty and income disparity of single mothers and fathers across three decades: 1990-2010. *Gender Issues*, 33(1), 22-41. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-015-9144-3>

- Kuppens, S., & Ceulemans, E. J (2019). Parenting styles: A closer look at a well-known concept. *Child and Family Studies*, 28: 168-181. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1242-x>
- Labella, M.H. (2018). The sociocultural context of emotion socialization in African American families. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 59, 1-15
- McCallum C.M. (2016). “Mom made me do it”: The role of family in African Americans’ decisions to enroll in doctoral education. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. 9(1):50-63. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039158>
- Means, D.R., & Pyne, K.B. (2017). Finding my way: Perceptions of institutional support and belonging in low-income, first-generation, first-year college students. *Journal of College Student Development* 58(6), 907-924. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0071>
- Merrick, M. T., Leeb, R. T., & Lee, R. D. (2013). Examining the role of safe, stable, and nurturing relationships in the intergenerational continuity of child maltreatment—Introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 53(4), S1–S3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.06.017Suppl>
- Mowen, T. J., & Schroeder, R. D. (2018). Maternal parenting style and delinquency by race and the moderating effect of structural disadvantage. *Youth & Society*, 50(2), 139–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X15598028>
- Naderifar, M., Goli, H., & Ghaljaie, F. (2017). Snowball sampling: A purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Journal of Strides in Development of Medical Education*, 14(3): e67670. <https://doi.org/10.5812/sdme.67670>

- Najman, J. M., Bor, W., Ahmadabadi, Z., Williams, G. M., Alati, R., Mamun, A. A., & Clavarino, A. M. (2018). The inter-and intra- generational transmission of family poverty and hardship (adversity): A prospective 30-year study. *PLOS ONE*, *13*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190504>
- National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Youth Indicators 1996 / Indicator 11: Children of Single Parents. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/yi/y9611a.asp>
- National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education (2017). Fast facts: Income of young adults. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=77>
- National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. (2019). Fast facts: Income of young adults. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_502.30.asp
- National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2018). Undergraduate Enrollment. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cha.asp
- Nolan, L., Garfinkel, I., Kaushal, N., Nam, J., Waldfogel, J., & Wimer, C. (2016) "Trends in child poverty by race/ethnicity: New evidence using an anchored historical supplemental poverty measure," *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*, *7*(1), 1-22, Article 3.
- Petty, T. (2014). Motivating first-generation students to academic success and college completion. *College Student Journal*, *(2)*, 257-262. Retrieved from [https://search-](https://search-ebscohost-)
[ebscohost-](https://search-ebscohost-)

com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsgea&AN=edsgecl.377286769&site=eds-live&scope=site

- Phillips, T. M. (2012). The influence of family structure vs. family climate on adolescent well-being. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 29(2), 103-110.
- Poyrazli, S., & Isaiah, J. (2018). International students' journeys from academic probation to academic success. *International Perspectives in Psychology Research, Practice, Consultation*, 7(2), 62–75. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ipp000008>
- Richter D, & Lemola S (2017). Growing up with a single mother and life satisfaction in adulthood: A test of mediating and moderating factors. *PLOS ONE* 12(6): e0179639. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0179639>
- Rious, J. B., Cunningham, M., & Spencer, M. B. (2019). Rethinking the notion of “hostility” in African American Parenting Styles, *Research in Human Development*, 16(1), 35-50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427609.2018.1541377>
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sandoval-Lucero, E., Maes, J. B., & Klingsmith, L. (2014). African American and Latina(O) community college students' social capital and student success. *College Student Journal*, 48(3), 522–533. Retrieved from <https://search-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=98748718&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Schneider, W. (2017). Single mothers, the role of fathers, and the risk for child maltreatment. *Children and Youth Services Review* (81), 81–93.

- Seabrook, J. A., & Avison, W. R. (2015). Family structure and children's socioeconomic attainment: A Canadian sample. *Canadian Review of Sociology Journal*, 52(1), 66-88
- Short, R. (2016). Understanding the schooling and literacy beliefs, behaviors, and self-efficacy of low-income African American families. *National Teacher Education Journal*, 9(2), 67–74. Retrieved from <https://search-ebSCOhost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=116393307&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Smetana, J G, (2017). Current research on parenting styles, dimensions, and beliefs. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 15:19–25
- Suminar, J. R., Siswadi, A. G. P., & Setianti, Y. (2018). Single Mother Role in the Success of their Children (Phenomenological Study of Single Women in Makassar City). In Proceedings of MICoMS 2017. *Emerald Publishing Limited*. (1) 229–234
- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, 68(3), 226–231. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- Taylor, Z. E., & Conger, R. D. (2017). Promoting strengths and resilience in single-mother families. *Child Development*, 88(2), 350–358. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12741>
- Thiede, B. C., Kim, H., & Slack, T. (2017). Marriage, work, and racial inequalities in poverty: Evidence from the United States. *Family Relation*, 79: 1241-1257.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12427>

U.S. Census Bureau (2017). American FactFinder. Retrieved from

<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

U.S. Department of Education (2020). Federal TRIO Programs Current-Year Low-Income Levels. Retrieved from

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2020). Poverty Guideline 2020.

Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

Vargas, A. P., Park, T. J., Harris, A. M., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2016). The identity development of urban minority young men in single-mother households. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 94*(4), 473–482.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/jcad.12106>

Wadams, M., & Park, T. (2018). Qualitative research in correctional settings: Researcher bias, Western ideological influences, and social justice. *Journal of Forensic Nursing, 14*(2), 72-79.

Whelan, C. T., Nolan, B., & Maître, B. (2013). Analysing intergenerational influence on income poverty and economic vulnerability with EU-SILC. *European Societies, 15*(1), 82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2012.692806>

Williams, A. D., Banerjee, M., Lozada, S. F., Lambouths, D., & Rowley, S. J. (2017).

Black mothers' perceptions of the role of race in children's education. *Journal of Marriage & Family, 79*(4), 932–946. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12410>

Ziol, K. M., Duncan, G. J., & Kalil, A. (2015). One-Parent Students Leave School

Earlier. *Education Next*, 15(2), 36–41. Retrieved from <https://search-ebshost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=101552173&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Appendix A: Interview Guide

I would like to welcome and thank you for offering to participate in this study. I am Michelle Akere-Azeez, a Ph.D. student from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the School of Human Services at Walden University. As we have discussed, the purpose of this research study is to explore some beliefs and practices among single mothers within the Black community that may have resulted in their children completing college. Your responses may give other moms parenting tools that will help their children.

The expected time of this interview is about 60-90 minutes, and I will be taping the conversation to ensure that I capture all that you have to share with me and will also be taking some notes throughout the process. All information shared will be confidential, and your name will not be used to ensure that confidentiality is preserved.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Research Question

What are the beliefs and practices of African American low-income single mothers that have influenced successful college completion among their children?

Interview: Using Appendix B

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. Both demographic & social questions- Tell me about your background, including your family (children, etc.).

Prompts-Age

Race

Gender

Education level attained

Income

Marital/relationship status

2. Tell me about your educational journey?

3. Tell me about your child's educational journey from elementary to college?

4. Think about what education means to you and tell me how did it influence your practice or actions while you were raising your child.

5. How early in your child's education did you start taking an active role to ensure educational success?

6. Tell me about a time that your child did not focus or struggle to earn passing grades.

7. Tell me about the kind of personal and external (with teachers, guidance counselors, tutors, mentors, financial, etc.) support you were able to give to your child to ensure success in school.

8. Tell me about the kind of structure you developed to help your child succeed at school.

9. Can you think about any period that you felt like you were not connecting enough with your child, and what did you do to reconnect?

10. Tell me about a time that you felt like you are not giving your child enough attention and how did you work through this.

11. Tell me about the ways you care for and invest in yourself while raising your child.

12. If you have to advise other single mothers, what would you say are the qualities and values that you believe are necessary as a single African American mother for raising a child who will advance academically?

13. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Conclusion:

I would like to thank you again for the time spent doing the interview and involvement in this study. Also, can I contact you if needed for any verification, clarification, or additional information?

Appendix C: Letter of Invitation for Participation in Research

Title of Study: Practices of Low-Income Single Mothers that Promoted College Completion in their Children.

Principal Investigator: Michelle Akere-Azeez, Department of Human Services
Faculty Supervisor- Dr. Tracey Phillips

I, Michelle Akere-Azeez, from the Department of Human Services at Walden University, invite you to participate in a research project entitled practices of low-income single mothers that promoted college completion in their Children. All participants should be low-income African American single mothers with children who have graduated from college. The mother's highest level of education in this study will be a high school diploma, and their age range should be between 35 and 65 years old.

The purpose of this research is to explore the beliefs and practices of African American low-income single mothers, that have influenced successful college completion among their children. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 60-90 minutes' question interview session, with the opportunity for follow-up questions for clarification if necessary.

This research may help in the development of policies and practices to promote better family outcomes. Community partners and non-profit organizations may also use the information to develop policies and practices to help in addressing lower college attendance levels among Blacks that may help foster better financial stability. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant

Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (see below for contact information).

Thank you,

Michelle Akere-Azeez

Principal Investigator's

Michelle.akere-azeez@waldenu.edu

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Walden University's Research Ethics Board.

Library location and dates- To be announced.

Appendix D: Introduction Letter and Request for Recruitment of Participants

Michelle Akere-Azeez

Maryland, 20784

Email: Michelle.akere-azeez@Waldenu.edu

Re: Request for Help with Proposed Research, "Practices of Low-Income Single Mothers that Promoted College Completion in their Children. "

Date:

Greetings,

My name is Michelle Akere-Azeez, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University. I am writing to seek your assistance with my proposed Qualitative study in which I will explore the beliefs and practices of African American low-income single mothers, that have influenced successful college completion among their children. I am hopeful you can allow me to give out flyers and/or post a flyer on the bulletin board or any assigned area where I can recruit participants. All participants should be low-income African American single mothers with children who have graduated from college. The mother's highest level of education in this study will be a high school diploma, and their age range should be between 35 and 65 years old.

I intend to recruit 10-15 research participants and perform the interview at a location convenient to this population. I will ensure potential participants sign an informed consent and give them information, which will include potential benefits, harm,

and the right to opt-out of the research at any time without consequence. I will obtain Walden University faculty and Institutional Review Board approval, along with your approval, before initiating research.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact me by email at Michelle.akere-azeez@waldenu.edu. Additionally, my university research supervisor can be reached at tracey.phillips@waldenu.edu.

If you agree with me using your facility for recruiting participants, send the Letter of Cooperation to the email addresses and EMAIL the letter to IRB@waldenu.edu and michelle.akere-azeez@waldenu.edu. Thank you,

Michelle Akere-Azeez,

michelle.akere-azeez@waldenu.edu

