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Parenting Black Daughters: The Parenting Experiences of Previously Incarcerated African American Males.

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Abstract

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MS, Walden University, 2017

BS, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Having a parent incarcerated can have a major effect on children. As it is difficult for the

child, it is also difficult for fathers to be away from their children. African American

males suffer from various issues revolving around not being present in their children's

lives. African American males are one of the largest populations of men incarcerated, and

that has a strain on their relationship with their children during and after their release

from incarceration. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to gain a better

understanding of the parenting role of African American males while incarcerated to help

them become better parents upon their release. The participants were formerly

incarcerated African American males with at least one daughter. The researcher applied a

qualitative research design using John Bowlby's stages of attachment theory. The

research question for this study examined how incarceration impacts African American

fathers' parenting experience with their daughters. Through purposive sampling, eight

African American males from rural areas who had been released from prison between 5-

15 years and had at least one daughter provided a detailed account of their lived

experiences in semi-structured in-depth telephone interviews. Braun and Clark's data

analysis method was used to identify the themes and patterns in the data. Findings

included eight themes, examples include: being actively present and building a healthy

attachment bond to establish father-daughter relationships. This study fills the existing

literature gap and supports positive social change by encouraging and promoting services

to increase awareness of parental incarceration of fathers.

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Dedication

First and foremost, without having faith in God, I would not be writing this dissertation or this dedication. With God, all things are possible, and I dedicate my entire being to God!

I dedicate this dissertation to my children, Shamari, Alpha, and Amari-ah, who believed in me and motivated me to continue to push through this journey. I have tried my best to be the most incredible role model and mother to pave the way for each of you to have your own road to success. Thank you for being patient with me through these years and growing with me; I love each of you dearly, my three babies. Go out into the world and be fabulous!

I also dedicate this dissertation to my father, the late Donald Woodson, I know you are smiling hard and bragging about your baby girl. I miss and love you! I also dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Barbara Woodson; with your strong-mindedness to be a successful woman and mother, I have overcome minor obstacles that have made me the woman I am today, and I thank you. Love your Rai! I also dedicate this dissertation to my big sister, Marissa, who has always, and I mean ALWAYS, had my back; she has always been the best sister anyone could ask for, and I am forever grateful for you. I love you, Re! I could not leave out my strong-minded and stern brother Umoja who has always provided me with great business advice. Your baby sister did it! To my other siblings, I thank you for being supportive and motivating me to continue my journey. I love each of you!

It's one person who I must include in my dedications who has been in my corner for many years. He has never complained about the long nights, stressful days, missed meals (when I didn't feel like cooking), or even the ugly attitudes; he would always say "ok, bae," and let me continue with my rants. Ronnie, I dedicate this dissertation to you for always believing in me, never leaving my side, and listening to me gripe and complain. Even when I wanted to give up, you pushed me to get back on task; even when I was struggling with Chapter 2, you were right by my side. I am forever grateful for you and appreciate you sticking with me. We made it!

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to all the fathers who have been incarcerated or are still incarcerated, fighting for, holding on to, or building their relationship with their children, especially those who participated in my research study. I appreciate each participant for sharing their experience and providing a voice for other fathers. Thank you!

Acknowledgments

I thank God for the strength to make it this far in my education. I am at a place in my life where I feel I can provide others with the education and resources to help build better families and communities. I would like to acknowledge my committee, especially Dr. Tracy Jackson, who continued to push me to keep going and not give up. Dr. Jackson, I thank you for your continued support, motivation, and guidance throughout my journey. You ROCK! I want to thank my Second Committee Member, Dr. Delores Langston, for her support and guidance to keep pushing forward. Again, to my children, I thank you for being with me along my journey. To my mother and siblings, thank you for believing in your baby girl and little sister to take the lead in becoming the first in our family to hold this title. Thank each of you. Ronnie, thank you for your continued patience, love, and support. I love you! In the words of Nelson Mandela, "It always seems impossible until it's done." It's DONE!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

McLeod and Tirmazi (2017) stated that fathers' involvement in their children's lives is beneficial; however, incarceration disrupts family relationships. Due to incarceration, African American fathers' removal from the home disrupts families and weakens their social networks in communities, causing more burden on their children's lives (Lewis & Hong, 2020). African American fathers' incarceration causes their children to be susceptible to living in poverty or at greater risk for homelessness (Lewis & Hong, 2020). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2018), the U.S. prison population went from 190,794 in 1970 to over 1.5 million men by 2016. According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (2020), 38.5% of incarcerated inmates are African American males. Upon their release, African American fathers face barriers when returning to their communities, making it difficult for them to reestablish a relationship with their children (Williams et al., 2019). Garretson (2016) stated that African American fathers deal with consequences that limit their abilities to do for their children as they would like after incarceration. Lack of education, vocational skills, and employment history are only a few of African American fathers' struggles after their release from incarceration to provide for themselves and their children (Garretson, 2016).

Chapter 1 included background information on the topic and highlighted the importance of this generic qualitative study. The chapter consists of the problem statement, purpose statement, theoretical framework, and the nature of the study. Other sections included in the chapter are definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitation, limitations, significance, and a summary.

Background

Emory (2018) shared that incarcerated father is separated from their children, and incarceration may be stressful for the child. Campbell and Winn (2018) found that parent-child relationships serve as models for the child's future relationships. A multifamily study on father-child relationships also showed how fathers connect and support their children during and after imprisonment (McKay et al., 2018). According to Tasca (2018), many incarcerated fathers were not living with their children before being involved with the justice system. Yet, they were engaged in other ways, such as being financially supportive and spending time with their children (Tasca, 2018).

On the other hand, Emory et al. (2020) showed that African American fathers with a history of incarceration provided less formal and informal support, less in-kind support, and accumulated more arrears than those African American fathers' who have not been incarcerated. Keefe et al. (2017) conducted five studies based in Syracuse, New York, and indicted that policymakers look down upon African American fathers for their lack of involvement in fulfilling their parental roles in the lives of their children. The criticism stems from the policymakers' views of African American fathers' lack of providing economic support and ignoring other forms of nurturing and parental involvement to their children (Keefe et al., 2017).

Kirk and Wakefield (2018) mentioned how parental incarceration could be more harmful to children than maternal incarceration due to the father's role as the leading financial provider and protector. Hanley (2018) expressed how formerly incarcerated fathers were ecstatic and thrilled to be addressed as parents, expressing their love for their

children. The fathers reflected that their bonds with their children before incarceration were strong but later became frayed and distanced over their incarceration sentence (Hanley, 2018). Skinner-Osei and Steptoe-Watson (2018) expressed that incarcerated African American fathers' struggle with reunification into society as family life and caring for their child may be dominated by fear of not living up to their potential as a father. Charles et al. (2019) stated that fathers' perspective of their parenting experience from prison to reentry back into society is to clearly understand the connection between fatherhood and community reentry after incarceration. During this time of reentry into their child's life, fathers are navigating and attempting to step back into their social roles and family responsibilities to help improve the adverse child outcomes such as poorer health, academic, social, and behavior outcomes (Turney, 2018).

Problem Statement

Studies from 2018 show that 1 in 10 African American men was in prison or jail (Sentencing Project, 2018). Parks and Donson (2018) shared that paternal incarceration has significant negative consequences on the socioemotional aspect of a child's life. A father's lack of involvement with their child due to incarceration has a negative effect on child outcomes such as lower health, academic problems, behavior issues, and social distractions (Charles et al., 2019). Yaros et al. (2018) sought to understand how a father's release from incarceration affects the child's wellbeing. Western and Smith (2018) discussed that economic uncertainty is linked to formerly incarcerated fathers' adverse effects on the child's welfare.

According to Campbell and Winn (2018), father-daughter relationships are essential for a daughter to understand their development and build a close-knit bond with their father. Based on the study's findings (Campbell & Winn, 2018), daughters would like to see more engagement from their fathers during their developmental growth (i.e., supporting and helping them learn as they become young adults). Sentino et al. (2018) discovered that daughters whose fathers were involved in their lives were less likely to become sexually active and pregnant at an early age and have better wellbeing. Andersen (2018) stated that girls are prone to suffering the consequences of having their father incarcerated or convicted of a crime.

Although the research regarding the welfare of father-daughter relationships after incarceration provided essential findings, I found no research that has addressed African American fathers' perspectives and their parenting experience after release from incarceration. Brunton-Smith and McCarthy (2017) state that a father's transition back into his parental role after release from incarceration has been linked to better child and family outcomes. Further research is warranted to address the problem of incarcerated fathers in society (Mears & Sirenic, 2016).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore incarcerated African American fathers' perspectives as absent parents and how absence may have affected their parenting skills once they are released. This study's target population was African American males (ex-offenders) incarcerated during the early years of their daughters' lives and kept in contact with them during their sentence. For this generic qualitative

study, I interviewed African American fathers to explore their overall perspective as parents and their relationships with their daughters after incarceration.

Research Question

How does incarceration impact African American fathers' parenting experience with their daughters?

Theoretical Framework

Attachment theory will provide the framework for this generic qualitative study to address the father's role and relationship with their child after release from incarceration. Attachment theory focuses on children's "lived experiences" and the bonds developed with caregivers that show secure attachments as they grow older (Vaughn et al., 2016). Based on the study's purpose and the literature gap, I will attempt better to understand Bowlby's attachment theory of father-daughter relationships. Bowlby's (Scharfe, 2017) attachment theory focuses on the psychological connection between a child and their caregiver, who have been separated for periods throughout the child's early life (Cherry, 2019). I explored the four stages of attachment theory within which the father-daughter relationship falls apart. The four types of attachment are: secure, avoidant, resistant, and disorganized/disoriented (Scharfe, 2017). According to Scharfe (2017), secure attachment is when children develop trust in their primary caregivers' responsiveness and availability. Avoidant attachment is when children do not feel comfortable with their primary caregiver, and they avoid building a bond or attachment (Scharfe, 2017). When a child feels the attachment is unpredictable, they become inconsistent, often switching from clingy to angry (Scharfe, 2017). Disorganized attachment is usually in children

whose parents are abusive (physically, emotionally, or sexually) (Scharfe, 2017). As van Zendon (2019) stated, attachment is a significant milestone in a child's first few years. This time is considered the most sensitive period for attachment, whose effects last throughout their life.

Nature of Study

Qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study because qualitative research relies on data collected from interactions between the researcher and participant from the following sources: interviews, focus groups, observations, documents, or other written materials (Kisley & Kendall, 2011). Creswell (2013) stated that researchers could use a qualitative approach to collect in-depth data from multiple reports within a case description and case themes. Purposeful sampling was the sampling method to recruit African American fathers' who meet the criteria of the proposed study to provide in-depth information about their parenting experience after release from incarceration. The current study included data from fathers' experiences conveyed through their viewpoint, perception, or fractional truth of their parenting experience (Reczek, 2014). I conducted semi-structured interviews with African American fathers to understand their interactions and experiences, whether positive or negative, regarding their relationship with their child. Findings from the study may be used to enhance African American fathers' and daughters' relationships.

Definitions

African American father: A biological father of African American descent who may or may not reside with their child (Madhavan & Roy, 2012).

Father-child attachment relationships: Interactions between a father and child during the child's first years of life (Bowlby, 1969).

Fatherhood: Resident and nonresident fathers provide more than financial support for their children (Marsiglio et al., 2000).

Father involvement: Direct involvement, accessibility, and responsibility for the child's daily needs (Adamson, 2018).

*Incarceration***:** Confinement in jail or prison (Turney, 2014b).

Parent-child relationship: The emotions connected to and familiarity of a parent and their child (Kelley et al., 2014).

Assumptions

Several assumptions are necessary for this study. I assumed each participant had a daughter with whom they had some relationship to complete the study. I also assumed that the fathers had experience related to the topic, such as being absent from their daughters, which may have impacted the father-daughter relationship. I also assumed participants were honest and forthcoming during the interview process. I assumed the interviews for this case study provided adequate data to show the need for more research on this topic. Assuming there were themes to show that African American fathers' absence does influence their lack of parenting skills.

Scope and Delimitations

This study addressed the literature gap regarding African American fathers' parenting role after their release from incarceration. African American fathers' role as parents is still valid in their child's life. Whether absent or present, Western and Smith

(2018) discussed the adverse effects of the child's wellbeing when they have an imprisoned parent, looking at the parent-child interaction during incarceration. Studying African American fathers' parenting experiences after release from incarceration will allow their voices to be heard and their experiences to be shared. Based on the perceived gap in the literature, I chose to exclude other racial groups and women and focus on African American fathers to learn about their parenting styles and skills with their children and how they mended their relationships after being away for an extended time. The population for this study was further limited to African American fathers living in rural, low-income communities.

Limitations

Limitations in this study included gathering specific information from fathers that may strengthen the analysis for additional variables that may predict fathers' involvement in their child's lives during incarceration (McLeod & Tirmizi, 2017). Additional information such as the father's family history, employment earnings, and incarceration history may show his involvement in his child's life (McLeod & Tirmazi, 2017). Another limitation was getting fathers to provide their stories about how they understand their role as formerly incarcerated African American fathers. Personal bias can cause friction between the researcher and participant, affecting the data collected. According to Hammarberg (2016), qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to gain enough data to define the phenomenon of interest and answer the research question. Limitations in this generic qualitative study included the incapability to attract the sample size needed to get

essential data; in return, it may cause unintentional conclusions or deficient generalization findings (Vasileiou et at., 2018).

Significance

This study's significance benefited African American fathers released from prison by providing a sense of relationship goals and parenting perspective with their daughters. A more robust understanding of the relationship-building process between a father and daughter highlights unique features that influence closeness, which may offer guidance to elevate family dynamics and improve family strengths by caring for their daughter's development (Campbell & Winn, 2018). Results within this study will contribute to social change, giving fathers a better understanding of how their absence impacts their daughters' development during and upon release from incarceration. Yaros et al. (2018) stated that specific measures should be considered to maintain and enhance father-child relationships while incarcerated to improve the likelihood of a positive, healthy father-child relationship following the father's release. Tasca (2018) suggested that policymakers and practitioners promote parental involvement and child and family well-being, focusing on father engagement while incarcerated.

Summary

This study provided an inclusive research study of African American fathers' parenting experiences after release from incarceration. A generic qualitative research design was used in this study, focusing on attachment theory. Completing interviews and gaining personal knowledge about father-child relationships and parenting roles were used to collect data. Chapter 2 of this study provides a more in-depth review of the

literature relevant to this study's overall foundation and background. More resources will

be used to provide the information necessary to understand African American fathers'

parenting roles after release from incarceration.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

As stated in the previous chapter, this generic qualitative study explores incarcerated African American fathers' perspectives as absent parents and how absence may have affected their parenting skills once released. This study's target population is African American males (ex-offenders) incarcerated during the early years of their child's lives and who have stayed connected with them during their sentence. Therefore, for this generic qualitative study, I will interview African American fathers to explore their overall perspective as parents and their relationships with their children after incarceration.

There are five sections in this chapter that will be covered. The first section briefly introduces the chapter and the purpose of this generic qualitative study. The second segment will explore the literature search strategy and keyword findings on African American fathers' parenting experience after incarceration. The third portion details the theoretical foundation based on John Bowlby's attachment theory, its origin, and significant theoretical propositions. The fourth part will provide a literature review on key variables and concepts based on African American fathers' parenting experiences after release from incarceration. This literature review will be divided into five topics centered around African American fathers. The topics include incarcerated African American Fathers, barriers faced by African American fathers, African American father-daughter relationships, the impact incarceration has on children, and the last topic will discuss African American fathers' parenting after incarceration. I will then summarize Chapter 2.

Literature Search Strategy

Searching for literature on recently released incarcerated African American fathers was not accessible under the Human and Social Services database. Instead, several library databases and search engines were used to find the little available literature. I found literature in the Criminal Justice Database, SAGE Journals, SocINDEX, and Social Work Abstracts within the Walden University Library database. Google Scholar became a helpful search engine as well. Key search terms such as the following were used to conduct searches that provided the literature for the topic: *African American and/or African American, male and/or father and/or parent, incarceration and/or jail and/or imprisonment, and/or confinement, parent-child and/or father-daughter, relationships and/or parenting*. These were the key search terms used to gather literature related to the topic within the last five years. Each group of words was used in every search engine to gain the best results. Using the terms described, I found little research that focused on African American fathers' parenting experiences after release from incarceration.

Most of the literature provided information about incarcerated fathers or incarcerated mothers. There was little to no literature on African American father-daughter relationships during incarceration or parenting after incarceration. With little to no literature on this topic, it can be hard to conduct data without previous findings or studies to build on. While conducting research, I found some literature that provided insight on African American fathers and incarceration and how parenting plays a role in their absence from their children. Further research is needed on African American fathers' parenting experience after release from incarceration to understand African

American fathers' parenting roles better as parent-child relationships develop. This research must provide resources and data to show that African American fathers' parenting roles and experiences are essential in their children's lives.

Theoretical Foundation

Researching the topic of African American fathers' parenting roles after the release of incarceration, I considered attachment theory as the best fit for this proposed study. Attachment theory is the collaboration of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's research findings during the 1950s (Bretherton, 1992). As Bretherton shared, Bowlby created the blueprint for attachment theory that included many concepts revolving around ethology, control systems theory, and psychoanalytical thinking. According to Bretherton, after Ainsworth returned from Uganda, she and Bowlby teamed up to conduct the first study of empirical attachment on infants' and mothers' attachment relationships. Both theorists worked jointly and individually to contribute their findings and experiences, conducting research and data with families on the discoveries of attachment theory. Ainsworth went on to test and expand on Bowlby's research on attachment theory which led to new findings used in current literature and data (Bretherton, 1992).

Attachment theory dates to Bowlby's educational background and experience working with families and children. Attachment theory originated from Bowlby's scientific training and instruction in what is now known as developmental psychology, which led to his career in child psychiatry (Senn, 1977b). Bowlby's volunteer work at a maladjusted school for children helped persuade his career goal to study family relationships (Senn, 1977b). Bowlby was later introduced to Melanie Klein, a significant influence at the British Psychoanalytic Institute, where he studied medicine and

psychiatry (Bretherton, 1992). Through Bowlby's training analysis with Joan Riviere, he was exposed to Klein's ideas of child psychoanalysis, and later, he planned to counter Klein's ideas in his research (Bretherton, 1992; Klein, 1932). Bowlby's involvement with many studies led to the formulation of attachment theory and the first attachment study (Bretherton, 1992).

Bowlby's studies included his first empirical study based on case notes at the London Child Guidance Center. World War II halted his career as a child psychiatrist, but that helped him lay the foundation for his career as a researcher (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby's work at Tavistock Clinic in London gave him the experience of statistical methodology expertise, which led to his paper titled "Forth-Four Juvenile Thieves: Their Characters and Home Live" (Bowlby, 1944). Bowlby was named the head of the Children's Department at Tavistock Clinic in London, which he renamed the Department for Children and Parents after World War II ended (Bowlby, 1949). In 1948, Bowlby hired and worked alongside James Robert, who helped observe hospitalized and institutionalized children separated from their mothers (Bretherton, 1992). This was the emergence of attachment theory, and two years later, Bowlby's and Mary Ainsworth's collaboration alongside three other workers contributed to Bowlby's attachment studies (Bretherton, 1992). As the years went on, Bowlby encountered several theorists, researchers, and other people contributing to his research findings on family relationships in child therapy and mother-child separations.

Bowlby considered attachment theory a protective and comforting relationship between two humans, whereas Ainsworth viewed it as individual differences in the importance of attachment (Crittenton, 2017). Bowlby also described attachment theory as

a child's tie to their mother going beyond the scope of disruption through separation, deprivation, and bereavement (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby later came up with four stages of attachment. The four stages of attachment theory are broken down as follows: birth through 6 weeks known as the "pre-attachment phase," 6 weeks to 6-8 months known as "attachment in the making phase," 6-8 months to 18 months to 2 years of age known as "clear cut attachment phase," and 18 months to 2 years & older known as "formation of reciprocal relationship" (Bowlby, 2008). Ainsworth expanded on Bowlby's attachment stages, created three attachment patterns, and later added a fourth pattern: secure attachment, anxious-avoidant insecure attachment, anxious resistant insecure attachment, and disorganized attachment (Ainsworth et al., 1970).

Phases of attachment recognized by this theory are the pre-attachment phase, the attachment in-making phase, the clear-cut attachment phase, and the formation of a reciprocal relation. The pre-attachment phase is between zero to 6 weeks. Here the child recognizes the caregiver or the mother using voice recognition. The attachment-making phase occurs between 6 weeks to 6 to 8 months (Strand et al., 2019). The child starts gaining trust in the caregiver; he can start learning different caregiver's faces but is not much choosey. Children now fully know their caregivers from 6 to 8 months and 18 to 24 months, and if separated, they express discomfort. Their social skills also grow in these phases (Tyrell & Masten, 2021). The last phase is the formation of reciprocal relations between 18 to 24 months and beyond. Children can learn their limits and boundaries and negotiate for their needs.

There are four types of attachment, according to the theory. The first is secure attachment, where we have a healthy relationship between the child, parent, society, and

environment. Second is resistant, who tend to seek approval, distrust caregivers, and are emotionally dependent due to the environment they grew up in (Crittenden, 2017). Thirdly, these people avoid emotions and feel unloved and insignificant; it is hard for them to express and feel emotions even when they grow up (Warren et al., 2019). The last category is the disoriented type who has anger issues and is always running from emotional relationships because they cannot manage them (Warren et al., 2019). Attachment theory is a theory that has been widely used to explain some behaviors in individuals.

Bowlby emphasized that mothers are the core of their children; whereas fathers had their uses in the child's life, they played second to the mother. A father's primary role was to provide emotional support to the mother, the dominant parent (Bretherton, 1992). In this study, African American fathers may have experienced a lack of attachment theory when separated from their children for long periods. MacDonald (1992) expressed that a father's affection is shared by showing love, interchange emotions, and shared enjoyment with their child, supporting the child's affiliative system that promotes social and cognitive competence. Lamb and Stevens (1978) discussed how fathers and other adult caregivers outside mothers form an attachment relationship with their child during infancy. Attachment between a father and child is characterized by accurately perceiving and responding to the cues and needs of their child (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Pleck (2007) mentioned that a father's involvement might promote child development because the father's involvement promotes secure attachment. On the other hand, Pinto and Figueiredo (2019) stated that adults develop meaningful relationships based on their attachment tendencies, including memories, beliefs, and expectations that shape how they may think or feel about their role in the relationship. For fathers who have been

incarcerated, their attachment tendencies may have disconnected from their child over long periods, causing the child to withdraw from the father-child relationship (Pinto & Figueiredo, 2019).

Bowlby produced several key assumptions about attachment theory and children; these major theoretical propositions are appropriate for applying to this study. Bowlby discussed how attachment theory played a part in the lives of children from infancy through childhood with the assumptions presumed. The first assumption includes attachment or bonding behaviors regarded as adaptive, expanding individuals' survival capacity (Bowlby, 1969). The second assumption is the development of tendencies predominantly shaped during the early years affected by sensitive cues and events (Bowlby, 1958). The third assumption consists of children developing a need to pursue their primary attachment figure as the most accessible and responsive during stressful and threatening situations (Bowlby, 1958). The fourth assumption is that infants seek support from individuals they prefer the most, usually their mothers (Bowlby, 1958). In the fifth assumption, the tendency towards a key attachment caregiver grows from support and compassion during social interactions and frightening contexts. However, providing food or relief from discomfort does not affect this fondness (Bowlby, 1958). The sixth assumption is experienced with caregivers over a period that shapes beliefs, expectations, feelings, remembrances, and behaviors about self and other individuals, known as social relationships (Bowlby, 1973). The last assumption based on Bowlby's research is persistent separation from a familiar caregiver or constant changes in the primary caregiver, impeding the formation of adaptative attachment behaviors and displaying problems later in life (Bowlby, 1958).

The bond between an infant and caregiver is significant. Theories of parent-child relationships have focused on how parents shape their child's behavior and emotions. Secure attachments are characterized by a child feeling safe and confident around their parent, while insecure attachments occur when they feel distant or avoid their parent. These attachments have impacted a child's behavior and emotions, affecting the parent-child relationship (Waters et al., 2018). The rationale for attachment theory is based on early relationships between the infant and caregiver, which provides the foundation for later development (Van Rosmalen et al., 2016). Bowlby (1982a) stated that attachment theory was an alternative to psychoanalytic theories of objective relations to clarify three aspects. The first characteristic is why ordinary separation should cause anxiety, the second is the connections between adult and childhood mourning, and the third is defensive processes. Bretherton (1985) stated that mothers tend to become the favored attachment figure in Western cultures while fathers tend to become the preferred playmates, which several authors documented. Gaining a better understanding of a father's role as a parent will help rationalize the missing concepts of father-child relationships being equal to a mother-child relationship.

Parent-child relationships are complex and multi-faceted phenomena. Numerous theories seek to explain and predict the development and functioning of parent-child relationships. One such theory that has been extensively studied in psychology is attachment theory (Chatoor et al., 2021). Attachment theory hypothesizes that parent-child relationships are characterized by attachments between parent and child (Chatoor et al., 2021). I will present in this research study opinions from different scholars paying

attention to the study of African American father-daughter relationships using attachment theory.

In the past two decades, a growing body of literature has emerged on father-daughter relationships, with much of the research focusing on the role of attachment in these relationships. Waters et al. (2018) examined the role that coherence of discourse and secure base script, two components of adult attachment theory, play in the excellence of people's associations with maternities and romantic partners. They hypothesized that the strength of a secure base script would be positively connected to the value of children's affiliations with parents and the excellence of their affairs with beloved children. The coherence of discourse would be positively correlated to the feature of their dealings with parentages. Fletcher et al. (2021) examined the role of affection in the African American community through the lens of father-daughter relationships. Their research has been attentive to the unique role of the African American father, who is often characterized as a more active, engaged, and sensitive figure in his daughter's life than his white counterparts. However, while the African American father has often been characterized as an attachment figure, our understanding of the role of attachment in father-daughter relationships is still in its nascent stages (Chatoor et al., 2021). This is especially true concerning how families experience discrimination and how they may be marginalized by broader society.

Further studies show that racism and discrimination are linked to attachment theory. In a study, Coard (2021) argued that racism and discrimination are "growing points" for further study in attachment theory, which has traditionally focused on the relationship between parents and their young children. In conjunction with this study,

Koehn and Kerns (2018) point to the relationship between parents and their children as a critical aspect of attachment theory and research, primarily focusing on the attachments between children and their parents. Further, Cooper et al. (2019) argue that the relationship between children and their parents is as meaningful as that between children and their caregivers.

This proposed research study is understanding African American fathers parenting role after the release of incarceration. According to McLeon (2009), Bowlby stated that children come into the world pre-designed to form attachments with others, to help them survive because the contributing factor of affection is not food but care and responsiveness. Bretherton (1992) stated that by exploring the fundamentals of future attachment theory, others would need to exercise similar bravery in expanding, increasing, and challenging it. Another research analysis on how the approach has been applied similarly to this current study is slim to none.

Attachment theory relates to this proposed study because it allows this study to recognize African American father-daughter relationships after release from incarceration. The challenge is to see how incarceration impacted African American fathers' relationships with their daughters over some time. As Van Rosmalen et al. (2016) stated, attachment theory is a steady nurturing relationship between an infant and one or more delicate caregivers developing a healthy relationship. With African American fathers being absent in their child's lives due to incarceration, they may or may not produce a nurturing, healthy father-child relationship before their incarceration. Attachment theory will allow the researchers to understand better when and where the attachment bond has been broken. The research question is related to the existing theory

by connecting the bonding relationships between a child and its father, who was present as a care provider at some point in their lives, financially, emotionally, or physically. The challenge is when and how the bonding relationship between father-daughter was broken and then repaired for a healthier relationship.

The current state of my research in the field of parent-child relationships is based on the attachment theory. The foundation of attachment theory is that all children need secure relationships with their caregivers to feel safe and avoid developing psychological disorders. Secure connections are characterized by a close, loving bond between the child and the parent based on the caregiver's ability to provide the child with what they need for emotional and physical safety. The secure base is a keystone of attachment theory and is the foundation on which all other aspects of the theory are built.

Incarcerated African American Fathers

Children are being raised without their fathers present in their lives. Wagner and Rabuy (2016) stated that the United States has the highest incarceration rate globally. According to Lewis and Hong (2021), most African American fathers are not uncommitted as portrayed by the diverse media and literature; instead, they are confined in cells. This is evident in the proliferating rates of prison in the United States. According to research conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2018), an upsurge in the growth of the United States prison has been evident up to 2016. In 2016, the growth rate was reported to have declined (Lewis & Hong 2021). The prison population accommodates approximately one million people, following Bureau of Justice statistics for a significant year.

These African American fathers have been subjected to mass incarceration. Unfortunately, Turney and Conner (2019) noted that the impact of a father's jail incarceration has rarely been examined compared to prison incarceration. When it comes to young African American men and prison, it also stated that men between the ages of 20-and twenty-four who did not complete high school or get a GED had a greater chance of being incarcerated than employed (Fullilove, 2020). Regardless of whether a father is incarcerated in jail or prison, in 2014, African American men made up less than 6% of the total United States population but were 39% of the male population in jail, according to the United States Census Bureau conducted in 2014 (Lewis & Hong, 2021). The absence of these African American fathers is associated with disrupting their families and forming feeble networks among the families.

Some repercussions include reducing general family income and leaving the children in poverty, prompting the need to justify the root cause of the incarceration. Browning et al. (2018) stated that fathers usually play a significant role in families. Therefore, this advocates that their absence from incarceration is associated with many social implications. According to Brunton and McCarthy (2017), in the incarceration process, the families have suffered from financial difficulties and the subjection of the children to diverse problems. Often, the pressures of caring for these children are directed to other parents and kins (Lewis & Hong 2021). This is evident in that most of these fathers are the sole providers for their families before incarceration, so this accounts for their absence attracts various consequences (Lewis & Hong, 2021).

The question that remains is why many African American men are incarcerated. According to Fullilove (2020), in past research, this question brings about the history of

the harsh drug law created back in the 1930s by Harry Aslinger. As Aslinger referred that

Negros, Hispanics, Filipinos, and entertainers were the largest group of people in the U.S.

that smoked marijuana (O'Neil, 2020). O'Neil stated that at least 100,000 people of that

population, along with their jazz and swing music and the use of marijuana, may have

sparked white women to seek relations with men of these cultures. Harry Aslinger's

racial tactics began the evolution of the war on drugs that several presidents followed up

over the coming years (Lewis & Hogan, 2021).

The root cause of the incarceration of African American fathers is also associated

with the war on drugs. According to O'Neil (2020), the enactment of the federal

legislation in the 1970s advocated the war on drugs. The implementation influenced the

occurrence of ma ss incarceration (Lewis & Hogan, 2021). The fight against the war-

initiated offenders' sanctions to control drug use instead of curbing its use accelerated the

rate of offenders' arrests (Moore, 2017). Lewis and Hogan (2021) stated that the initiation

of these drug policies led to the implementation of longer terms of imprisonment, and the

subjection after their release is associated with more incidences of racism. Concurring to

Wagner and Rabuy (2016), the bias in the administration of law enforcement practices,

such as the convictions and the subjection to communal-based programs, has also led to

the control of mass incarceration.

The relationship that exists between crime and incarceration is sometimes

challenging to establish. Carson (2018) mentioned that the effect of mass imprisonment

had been a contentious issue since the government confines more African American men

for significant periods. The same problem is also difficult to establish because

discrimination against African American men is evident in everyday offenses (DeGiorgi,

2017). Pfaff (2017) claimed that only about 16% of state prisoners are incarcerated for drugs, while the war on drugs is not exclusively responsible for mass incarceration. In 2016 there were 1900 exonerations of the wrongfully accused; 47% of those exonerated were African Americans (National Association of Advancement of Colored People, 2021).

As the years went on, drug use became more popular and more accessible for African Americans to become targets for prison. The 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act was created to have mandatory minimum sentences for federal drug offenders; this act was extensively considered a racially distinct impact that deprived African Americans (Enders et al., 2018). An example of how the Anti-Drug Abuse Act works is it sets a minimum sentence of 5 years without parole for possessing 5 grams of crack cocaine, which is mainly used by African Americans, compared to the same punishment of having 500 grams of powder cocaine, used by Whites (Enders et al., 2018). As a result, African Americans get the same amount of time or, in most cases, more time for possessing the least number of drugs as Whites (Folk et al., 2016). The use of drugs between African Americans and Whites is comparably at the same rate; however, the percentage of drug charges put African Americans almost six times that of Whites sentenced to prison (National Association of Advancement of Colored People, 2021).

African American men have a higher incarceration rate than other races regarding race and prison. African Americans are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of Whites (National Association of Advancement of Colored People, 2021). The National Association of Advancement of Colored People (2021) also mentioned at least three hundred million people are in jail or prison; this number has drastically changed over the

years; between 1980 and 2015, the numbers have changed from nearly 500,000 to 2.2

million. Carson (2018) stated that 18 and 19-year-old African American men are 11.8

times more likely to be imprisoned than White men of the same age. Studies have shown

that African Americans represent 5% of illicit drug use, 29% who get arrested, and 33%

of those charged for drug charges (National Association of Advancement of Colored

People, 2021). According to Moore (2017), more African American men are incarcerated

in the United States than the total prison population in nine countries, including India,

Canada, Japan, Germany, Argentina, Lebanon, Finland, Israel, and England.

Racism has been an issue in the African American community, especially

regarding men and prison rates. Western and Sirois (2019) stated that the labor market

shows racial inequality resulting from incarceration, criminal stigma, and network

support. William et al. (2019) shared that most researchers do not examine the impact of

cultural race-related stress; instead, the focus is only on the effects of individually and

institutionally mediated racism. On the other hand, Kerrison (2018) mentioned that

cultural racism views African Americans as criminal drug users and dealers, compared to

White drug users who are regarded as sick and in need of treatment. Kovera (2019) stated

that cultural inadequacy of institutional policies such as the "three-strikes' law for drug-

related offenses, individual bias in the African American communities, and over-policing

add to the unequal frequency of African American men in the criminal justice system.

When it comes to African American men, their chances of staying out of prison

are slim to none, especially in low-poverty communities. Pettit and Gutierrez (2018)

shared that, like other forms of criminal justice; incarceration is unreasonably

concentrated among men, especially African Americans who are from low poverty areas

and have low education status. Kaeble (2018) described how nearly half of African American men (48.9%) are arrested or have been arrested by the time they reach 23 years of age. Kaeble (2018) also mentions that one in every fifty-five adults is under parole or probation in the criminal justice system. Phelps (2017) compared those numbers to show that African American men are 3.4 times more likely than white men under probation or parole supervision. Research expounds that most African American men usually return to prison within five years of release (Lewis & Hong 2021).

Generally, the correctional fallibilities are primarily situated in rural areas. Therefore, this accounts that these African American men are transferred to various facilities, thus reducing their contact with their children. Shlafer et al. (2020) revealed that the relevant number of long sentences had hindered the bond between father and child. Most of the media and literature that focuses on parental incarceration elaborates on its consequences on the women and the children as the initial caregivers. According to Welch (2019), it is also notable that criminal justice policies do not advocate the consequences for African American fathers. The prison is believed to record African American men's existence and facilitate the subjection of the fathers (Smith, 2017).

Barriers Faced by African American Fathers

African American men face as many if not more barriers as any other race regarding fatherhood. In the United States, one in every nine children has a parent who is in prison (The Century Foundation 2021). According to Western and Smith (2018), this is exceedingly high compared to White children, who 1 in every 57 children have a parent in prison. In The United States, thirteen percent of the population is composed of African Americans, yet 40% of the incarcerated parents are African American (The Century

Foundation 2021). This shows that incarceration is widespread in African American parents. Siennick (2016) stated that once these fathers are in prison, they lack time to be with their families, significantly impacting their children.

Having an absent parent incarcerated can cause more harm than good economically and financially. On the other hand, Arditti (2016) mentioned that the incarceration of an absent parent could provide a sense of relief to families in domestic violence, child maltreatment, or blatant misconduct. On the other hand, Roubinov et al. (2016) stated that parental involvement is one of the most notable changes from a devoted analysis of fatherhood, a theoretical concept involving commitment, availability, and accountability. However, Cooper et al. (2019) shared that there is a lot of negative representation of African American fathers in research studies that displayed their lack of support and low income. Coakley et al. (2016) shared studies also show how father contributions influence risk-taking and self-harm behaviors within their child that are often infrequent and underreported.

Regarding inequality among African American men, they are among the top contesters for misdemeanor offenses. Baumgartnet et al. (2018) revealed that excessive and unnecessary traffic stops are another barrier impoverished communities face. Studies on the local level show that despite the similarities in crime rates or rate of offending, African American men are excessively monitored and stopped by the police (Stuart, 2016). Baumgartner et al. declared how African Americans are more likely than Whites to be stopped by the police and receive something as little as a citation; for this reason, other views underline a discriminatory system designed to crush people of color. On the

other hand, Enders et al. (2018) shared that many racial disparity increases are refined from back in the 1980s and possibly connected to the crack epidemic.

With little to no statistics available on how African American fathers interact with their children, it is hard for researchers to gather helpful information. Alternatively, the National Institution of Justice (2017) mentioned that research has focused on more children with a parent incarcerated rather than parents involved in other phases of the justice system. It states that both parents may share similar risk factors and needs. On the other hand, Icard et al. (2017) mentioned not many statistics are available on how non-residential or absent African American fathers should be involved with their children. However, some research showed that African American fathers are engaged in socializing and modeling being respectful citizens in their community and having self-respect (Abbdill, 2018).

Imprisonment of African American fathers leads to financial complications for their families, who are left to fend for themselves. Studies have shown that many fathers viewed work as the leading financial provider as an essential aspect of their parenting role; they also associate being a good father with being a good provider (Icard et al., 2017). Many incarcerated African American fathers are the sole breadwinners of their families (The Century Foundation 2021). Once these fathers are imprisoned, it increases the cases of child poverty in the country (Siennick, 2016). Once the father is imprisoned, the family's average income decreases by 22% (The Century Foundation 2021).

Child poverty due to the imprisonment of the father may lead to stress for the children. This is because the children must adjust and cope with this new situation. The children must first cope with the stress of missing their fathers; they must also deal with

the stress of child poverty (Pettit& Sykes, 2017). Stigmas accompany the poverty caused by the parent's incarceration, leading to little community and social support (Siennick, 2016). The National Institute of Justice (2017) shared that a family's income is 22% lower during parent incarceration and 15% lower after the parent is released from incarceration.

Little information is ever spoken on the mental health of African American fathers to help them become great fathers to their children. Contrary to the African American father's psychological experience, they also lack the support of mental wellness to help build their foundation as a primary caregiver (Icard et al., 2017). However, Langley (2016) expressed African American fathers are present in their children's lives. Being present in their children's lives, African American father's also experience parenting stress, which is correlated with substantial challenges in caring for their children and bitter and undesirable parenting behaviors (Arditti, 2016). It is also reported that fathers transitioning to parenthood for the first-time places them at risk for depression, especially low-income African American fathers (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Incarceration is considered a health risk and stressor for men entering incarceration and being released. According to Pettit and Gutierrez (2018), incarceration introduces acute shock to the inmates' immune systems, which affects their health both short and long term, during and after incarceration. Nowotny et al. (2017) shared that African American and White men display similar health issues upon entering prison; however, studies show incarceration lowers the morality rate of African American men during and after their time incarcerated. One benefit that many African American men gain while incarcerated is healthcare, whereas health benefits may not have been an

option or priority in their daily lives (Pettit & Gutierrez 2018). At the same time, incarcerated African American men can seek medical care more easily and often.

Coparenting takes two parents to become one for the betterment of their child. Pinto and Figueiredo (2019) indicated that attachment theory could be a helpful tool to recognize a father's difficulties when acquiring a co-parenting relationship during the change to parenthood. Negativity from the children's mothers also causes barriers for African American fathers not being involved; the mother-father relationship's quality is a deciding factor in establishing the extent of the father's involvement with the child (Icard et al., 2017). According to Icard et al. (2017), there are other shocking results: few men regarded the child's mother as a stumbling block to their involvement, and often not enough choices to help fathers become involved with their children. According to Western and Smith (2018), if the relationship between the incarcerated father and their child's mother is in good standing, the father is most likely close to the child. This means the father is most likely to receive visits, make phone calls to his child, and maintain a positive and healthy relationship based on his relationship with the mother.

Father-Daughter Relationships

Fathers play many roles as caregivers, providers, protectors, discipline, playmates, and teachers in their daughters' lives. Anderson (2018) stated that girls are likely to suffer the effects of parental incarceration and conviction instead of boys. It is noted that daughters perceive fathers as "caring" fathers based on their level of communication, active engagement, time spent together, and conveying affection (Sentino et al., 2018). A father's communication pattern with his daughter considerably impacts her social and cognitive development, influencing her sense of confidence (Sentino, 2018). Some

research indicates that although strong father-daughter relationships positively impact their relationship, researchers have found that fathers tend to be less attentive and engaged with their daughters instead of the lives of their sons (Campbell & Winn, 2018).

Girls look up to their fathers early on in their lives. Therefore, studies have shown that early fathers' involvement with their daughters has been linked to decreased risk of early puberty, reduced teen pregnancy, and reduced early sexual activity (Yogman & Garfield, 2016). Sentino et al. (2018) acknowledged that when fathers are actively involved in their daughters' lives, studies show that daughters are less likely to be interested in boys early and are more successful academically. It is also known that daughters securely attached to their fathers have higher self-esteem, social competence, better emotional regulation, healthier communication, and more fun (Cochran et al., 2018). On the other hand, according to Sentino (2018), daughters who are less likely to have their fathers actively in their lives regularly are more prone to become involved with sexual behaviors, negative attitudes, and low academic achievement. It was also noted by Sentino et al. (2018) that fathers are often disregarded as valuable supporters due to their daughter's decision-making process.

Boys and girls are different when it comes to father-child relationships. According to Sentino et al. (2018), in some recent studies, it has been noted that in father and son relationships, a father's brains work differently when interacting with their daughter versus their son. While many people understand that this is true for young boys, the value of father-daughter connections should not be underestimated (Sentino et al., 2018). Cabrera et al. (2018) compared fathers who spend more time in rough and tumble play with their sons than their daughters, but they are more sensitive to their daughters'

emotional needs than their sons. On the other hand, Adamson (2018) stated that daughters require more than a positive relationship; to achieve academic success, strengthen cognitive abilities, and promote physical, emotional, and physiological health, as opposed to sons.

A unique link exists between fathers and daughters. Women who have a good relationship with their fathers have the incredible fortune of looking back on memories as they get older. Bennett and Knight (2020) said a daughter's relationship with her father shapes her childhood experience, and her relationship with her father also influences her behavior toward other men later in life. The position of a father is irreplaceable, and a solid father-child bond offers significant long-term benefits. According to Cochran et al. (2018), if a girl's father is unpredictable or completely absent by nature, she may find it challenging to trust men. As a result, every parent should recognize and comprehend the significance of a father's position in a girl's life.

Research has repeatedly demonstrated the favorable effects of a positive father-daughter relationship on a daughter's mental health. Cochran et al. (2018) stated that researchers have discovered that girls reportedly show less loneliness as they progress through their grades. Still, loneliness decreases substantially faster among girls with a deeper relationship with their fathers (Sağkal et al., 2018). These findings highlight the importance of fathers nurturing their ties with their children, especially their daughters. Campbell and Winn (2018) shared how it can help daughters feel less lonely over time.

Having a father present helps girls deal with less emotional inability. Sağkal et al. (2018) shared that past research has found that young women who report having healthy

father-daughter connections are less likely to develop clinical depression or worry. They are also less likely to suffer from eating disorders, body dysmorphia, or self-consciousness about their looks or weight (Lewis & Hong, 2020). They claim to improve overall emotional and mental wellness (Sentino et al., 2018). There is a clear link between how females interact with their fathers as children and how they manage stress as adults.

A girl's sense of security becomes increasingly vital as she grows older. As stated by Sentino et al. (2018), if a girl knows that her father is watching for her, she can thrive in a relatively safe setting, gain self-assurance, and lack inhibitions. Given the advantages of having a positive relationship with her father and feeling connected to him, their correspondence and friendship are crucial (Ali et al., 2016). Nonetheless, daughters indicate that they feel closer to their mothers and that it is easier to communicate with them about issues that affect them at home (Pinto et al. (2019). This is most likely inferable from the assumption that children, particularly females, are "assumed" to discuss enthusiastic problems with their mothers rather than fathers (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the relationship status of little girls is impacted by their fathers. The men with whom ladies date and long-haul relationships are connected to the kind of relationship with her father. Little et al. (2019) explained the expectation is that a mentor in a young lady's life will undoubtedly impact that young woman's perspectives on guys. Little et al. stated that many psychologists believe that a daughter's future romantic relationships will influence how she perceives and interacts with her father. Respectful and supportive fathers who follow through on their promises encourage their daughters to expect the same from their partners (Campbell & Winn, 2018).

The well-fathered girl is likelier to have emotionally connected and rewarding relationships with men. Lewis and Hong (2020) shared that well-fathered girl is more confident than poor-fathered girls to look for enthusiastic reassurance and backing from their beaus during their school years, and they are less inclined to be "convinced to have" sex. Sentino et al. (2018) mentioned fathers do not substantially affect their little girls' associations with men yet have a more significant effect than moms. Their other developed associations with guys might be how fathered girls are more averse to fostering profound gloom or dietary issues. Campbell and Winn (2018) stated these girls are less hesitant about their appearance and body weight. These girls are bound to have what it takes and perspectives that lead to additional satisfying associations with men because of their passion and psychological well-being (Sentino et al., 2018).

Moreover, numerous individuals are worried about girls' academic and professional courses, explicitly what her father association means for her scholarly presentation and, subsequently, her vocation achievement and monetary prosperity. According to Cochran et al. (2018), girls whose fathers have been effectively involved throughout their adolescence in advancing their academic or athletic achievements and empowering their independence and decisiveness are bound to leave school. They apply themselves in more lucrative, demanding occupations customarily held by men. Washington (2018) clarified why young ladies without kin are overrepresented among the world's political chiefs: their fathers are bound to encourage them to be successful people. Indeed, even proficient and school female competitors acknowledge their fathers for assisting them with becoming industrious, self-trained, eager, and practical. A girl with a solid, cherishing and open relationship with her father is more averse to becoming

physically dynamic at her initial younger age and less inclined to become pregnant as a teen (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Fathers impact their girls' lives both safely and unsafely. Abdill (2018) shared girls should invest the most energy in offering the most confidential information to their moms. However, Campbell and Winn (2018) stated girls pass up a great opportunity if they ignore their connection with their fathers. While it very well might be less complicated for fathers to identify with and associate with their children, they ought to likewise put forth an attempt to speak with their daughters (Washington, 2018). After all, girls are considered "daddy's girls."

African American Father-Daughter Relationships

In the existence of African American girls, father-daughter relationships are additionally significant. African American fathers must contribute indistinctly to their daughters' sound and positive adolescent results (Abdill, 2018). In contrast, a few studies discovered a lessening closeness and expanding struggle among fathers and daughters during youthfulness, expressing that father-daughter ties stay close during this period (Sentino et al., 2018). Fathers' relationships with their children have been demonstrated by limited presence and interaction; in most instances, absence is the most common factor (Carbrera et al., 2018). Therefore, the search conducted in this assignment presents different literature sources that illustrate African American father-daughter relationships.

Just like a mother's relationship with their children is essential during their growth, a father's relationship also shapes different aspects of their children's lives. Nonetheless, this examination has zeroed in on mother commitments to belief or general family work (Brown et al., 2016). McMunn et al. (2017) shared various ethnicities and

dynamics of the society dictate different values for fathers and their children. In the existence of African American girls, father-daughter relationships are additionally significant and greatly upheld. Several scholars have studied the father-daughter relationship among African Americans and its impacts (Carbrera et al., 2018). Emotional attachment, physical protection, and role models are roles that fathers play in their relationships with their daughters.

Research illustrates that father-daughter relationships are essential throughout their daughter's lives and impact how they interact with other men. According to Carbrera et al. (2018), stronger father-daughter relationship connections increase confidence in young girls, which are preserved throughout their lives, thus illustrating that fathers also matter. Despite the daughter's stage, the father-daughter relationship does not fade and demonstrates the need for maintaining stronger bonds. As Nielsen (2019) stated, several studies have illustrated with supporting evidence that father-daughter relationships shape distinct factors that are essential aspects of their lives. There is a need to understand contributing factors to be positive and supportive of father-daughter relationships since they have positively impacted their daughters' lives (Fletcher et al., 2021).

Father-daughter relationships are essential in numerous aspects. Fatherhood plays a significant part in their children's lives and, in most instances, prompts the future behavior of their children (Nielsen, 2019). A substantial difference exists between daughters who have had a positive relationship with their fathers and those whose fathers were absent (Leath, 2017). This illustrates the crucial need African American families identify to ensure positive relationships between father and daughter. Father-daughter

relationships are essential for the general development of children, as the literature presented in this assignment illustrates.

African American Daughter's Academic Achievement

The father-daughter relationship was connected well with girls' scholarly commitment. Although research has revealed that paternal interactions are significant for girls' outcomes, few studies have investigated how features of the father-daughter relationship influence educational outcomes (Mattis et al., 2020). Moreover, global, and academic confidence correlates with the connection between father-daughter relationship quality and scholastic contribution (Sentino et al., 2018). Corresponding to Browning et al. (2018), discoveries suggest that the nature of a father-daughter relationship is fundamental for African American girls' scholarly commitment and confidence. Positive social relationships and connections may affect African American girls' academic achievement.

Their father-daughter relationship boasts academic achievement for African American girls. As Mattis et al. (2020) specified, the current examination explores whether the nature of the father-daughter association is identified with scholarly commitment and self-insight among African American girls. Mattis et al. (2020) stated that some studies have shown that steady father-daughter associations are imperative in cultivating astounding scholastic accomplishments in girls; better relationships have been connected to positive scholarly results for all girls. Arditti (2016) revealed that specialists tracked down a more grounded association with fathers associated with higher grades and professional objectives in an example of African American females aged 13 to 28. Other examination of African American girls has additionally discovered a connection between

nearness and expanded scholastic association; notwithstanding, the investigations were not sexed explicit (Stewart et al., 2019).

Given the potential for more clashes among moms and their girls during pre-adulthood, the father-daughter relationship may be significantly more essential to young girls' outcomes. Father-daughter relationships are specifically discovered to be distancing and conflictive in an example of low-pay African American families (Mattis et al., 2020). Expanded burdensome manifestations, delinquent activities, and school conduct troubles are connected to father-daughter connections, especially among young girls who have less contact with their fathers (Little et al., 2019). Additionally, Bennett and Knight (2020) later found that having a mindful and open father-daughter relationship is connected to a lower hazard of participating in unsafe wellbeing practices among African American juvenile girls. Moreover, as Browning et al. (2018) mentioned, further examination of the nature of father-daughter connections and their importance to scholarly accomplishment in African American girls is required. More research is needed on the relationship between a father-daughter relationship and African American young girls' academic inclusion.

Sexual Activity Among Daughters

Communication about sexual activity among fathers and daughters is mixed. According to Stewart et al. (2019), parental exploration and positive parental correspondence about dangerous practices have been related to less baffled sexual perspectives and medication mentalities and practices. Arditti (2016) stated while some researchers find no link between parent-child communication and sexual behavior, others find it significant. Stewart et al. (2019) mentioned it could be due to difficulty reconciling

traditional conceptions of masculinity with the modern-day perspective of emotionally committed fathers. Nonetheless, it does not appear that fathers engage in sexual communication with their daughters about specific themes as mothers do, such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted illnesses, abortion, condoms, or birth control (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Initially, most fathers do not discuss sex with their children. This could be due to uneasiness about the subject. The literature is scarce and outdated regarding father-daughter relationships and sexual behavior (Campbell & Winn, 2018). The impact of fathers on their daughters' sexual behavior and the type of relationship with their daughters may be the most crucial element (Cabrera et al., 2018). Sentino et al. (2018) stated daughters with authoritative, authoritarian, unlikable, distant, and dishonest fathers are more prone to engage in sexual promiscuity than those whose fathers are viewed positively. On the other hand, some fathers struggle with the idea of the "baby" girl growing up and thinking about sex.

Daughters benefit from spending personal time with their fathers since they can connect and share mutually relevant interests. Campbell and Winn (2018) shared that some fathers chat with their daughters about romantic and sexual relationships related to their current partnership. Stewart et al. (2019) also shared how fathers regarded as warm, honest, give their daughters good attention, and emotionally available are more likely to have more nonsexual connections with men and fewer casual sex partners (Stewart et al. 2019). These fathers also address the emotional hazards of male-female sexual alliances (Sağkal et al., 2018). However, most avoidant fathers postpone sexual communication with their daughters and have little or late discussions about sex. As a result, directive

and intelligent fathers positively influence their daughter's sexual development (Sağkal et al., 2018).

A father's view on the importance of physical attractiveness and their daughter's dieting habits has a significant positive association. The molding of a daughter's body image is another possible outcome of the father-daughter relationship (Campbell & Winn, 2018). Most girls become aware of their changing bodies and how boys react to those changes during adolescence (Lewis & Hong, 2020). Girls analyze their physique and sexual appeal and base their overall impressions of their bodies on these signals, influenced by the media, family, and peers (Steinhilber et al. 2020). The quality of the father-daughter relationship substantially affects body image satisfaction.

A parent's acceptance can shield against negative cultural messages about body, beauty, and image. Poor body image has also been linked to a higher chance of engaging in sexual conduct (Sentino et al., 2018). Alternatively, Steinhilber et al. (2020) stated girls who are happier with their bodies report having a better father-daughter relationship. Fathers who are loving, consistent, and available to their daughters are more likely to create positive relationships (Sağkal et al., 2018). A father's involvement continues into the daughter's adolescence, as supported by activity sharing, parental supervision, acceptance of puberty-related changes, and open communication that is most likely not sexual (Campbell & Winn, 2018).

The Impact Incarceration has on Children

As stated previously in this chapter, the United States has the most significant incarceration rate of at least one parent to a child under 18 years. Bagaric and McCord (2019) argued that the high incarceration rate in the United States primarily contributed

to current" get tough on crime" rules and the fight against drugs that have led to the imprisonment of many people for more extended periods. According to the study conducted by Wildeman et al. (2018), many United States convicts have minor children, and 45% of them lived together with their children before they were convicted. Therefore, the high imprisonment rate in the United States shows an increased number of children, predominantly the minority and the poor, who suffer from the incarceration of a parent. According to Cortina (2017), between 1980 and 2012, the number of children with a parent behind bars grew by five times, from approximately 500,000 to 2.6 million. Loprest et al. (2019) also claimed that at any given time, almost 4% of children under 18 years are disconnected from a parent due to incarceration.

Having a parent incarcerated significantly impacts the lives of children, ranging from emotional trauma to the well-being of their development. Statistics showed that by the end of 2015, 2.5 million children had a parent incarcerated in a local, state, or federal facility (Pettit & Sykes, 2017). On the other hand, Parks and Donson (2018) mention that parental incarceration has demonstrated substantial and adverse outcomes for the socioemotional development of their child. Yaros et al. (2018) also agreed that a child's emotional development is affected by the release of their father's incarceration. Further research from Cochran et al. (2018) stated that adolescents with a father incarcerated are more likely to experience societal segregation, higher levels of absenteeism, and decreased educational success.

However, many penal institutions can separate inmates' families, which may cause or trigger a multitude of bad outcomes. Yet, occasionally, kids can manage being separated from their parents, but this separation is not easy for others. Moreover, the developmental

stages, gender, and cultural differences make it hard to concentrate on the problem (Tadros & Finney, 2018). Leroux (2019) mentioned how a parent's incarceration has a connection to financial strain, family re-organization, and grandparents raising children or going into foster care. Children of imprisoned parents are identified as a highly vulnerable group and are more likely to have mental, physical, and behavioral health conditions than their peers. According to Kim and Kiesel (2018), racial minorities and poor people are more likely to be imprisoned than others. Incarceration affects children, contributing to social and class inequalities in children's health.

The available studies show that African American children are more likely to face behavior problems when a parent is incarcerated. Browning et al. (2018) revealed that substantial research indicated parental incarceration hurts children. Carson (2018) mentioned that scarce studies explore the impact of parental incarceration on African American families. On the other hand, Shlafer et al. (2020) stated that it is an essential aspect of the child's well-being when parent-child contact is made during incarceration. Although parent-child communication may help a child's well-being, much work is needed to understand the child's reaction to parental incarceration (Washington, 2018).

African American children are more likely to be incarcerated at some point during their life than any other race. Welch et al. (2019) discussed that 25.1% of African American children's likelihood of having their parent incarcerated compared to White children born the same year is 3.6%. The National Association of Advancement of Colored People (2021) stated that African American boys have higher rates of one out of 3 being sentenced to prison than 1 out of 6 Latino boys and 1 out of 17 white boys. In contrast, Kopak and Smith-Ruiz (2016) stated that African American children whose

fathers had been incarcerated were more likely to be arrested in adolescence or adulthood than those whose fathers had not been arrested. The National Association of Advancement of Colored People (2021) stated that more than one out of every six African American men between the ages of 25 and 54 have disappeared from daily life, being productive citizens and fathers to their families.

Policymakers regularly censure underprivileged and African American fathers for the absence of association in their kids' lives. These reactions are restricted to characterizing mindful parenthood as offering financial help while disregarding different types of sustaining. Hahl et al. (2016) mentioned that ongoing investigations give a more extensive point of view on how devastated African American fathers nurture their kids. Glaze and Maruschak (2016) shared how studies support the conflict that the primary viciousness intrinsic in the imbalance is the detainment of African American fathers, which is an essential factor hindering them from fulfilling their fatherly jobs. According to Lewis and Hong (2021), discoveries showed that jail climate and post-detainment limitations do not uphold fathers' capacity to play out their careers or maintain solid connections between fathers and their children.

African American children face many obstacles when separated from a parent for long periods. According to Cabrera et al. (2018), children who endure maternal separation due to incarceration are at a higher risk for various bad outcomes, including mental health problems, criminality, and violence. On the other hand, during detachment from their children, fathers can likewise encounter feelings like misery, depression, and even blame (Norris et al., 2021). Norris et al. (2021) also mentioned that parents again experience massive difficulty as they make an honest effort to focus on children despite substantial

monetary strain and medical conditions. These circumstances are given as records of African American parents, and these issues are examined regarding strategy ramifications and future exploration headings.

Children's development is impacted as adolescence is interrupted by another social adjustment of the reentry of a parent from a prison environment. As Poehlmann-Tynan and Turney (2020) point out, a significant percentage of parental incarceration occurs before the teen years. The release occurs when they are fourteen or just transitioning to adolescence. While the transitioning phase is already coupled with emotional and other issues and incarceration, these challenges are blown up to significant levels leaving the teen in confusion and behavioral problems (Poehlmann-Tynan & Turney, 2020). Antle et al. (2019) assert that the problematic teenage hood experience by those whose parents were incarcerated is due to externalizing and internalizing issues related to interaction and absence of the supposed caregiver. Additionally, the adolescents present antisocial behavior and delinquency attributes, which emanate from early deprivation of attention from parents, resulting in aggression and other problematic forms of expression (NeMoyer et al., 2020).

Children of African American origin and those from low-income families are more vulnerable and exposed to parental incarceration. Haskins and Turney (2018) elaborate that the impact of incarceration on children is experienced differently for each of them. Nevertheless, the implications of parental incarceration may be experienced disproportionately, and this is in the context of gender. Finkeldey (2017) reinforced this by stating that male children are more likely than female children to exhibit early childhood behavioral problems following their parents' incarceration. Furthermore,

DeHart et al. (2017) said the impact of incarceration hit most when the children lived with the parent before incarceration more than those who did not live together with the incarcerated parent. Children whose fathers did not exhibit violent tendencies before the incarceration are often left with significant intergenerational consequences due to failure to understand why a good person had to be placed in prison (Finkeldey, 2017).

Also, children experiencing incarceration of parents have a higher risk of incarceration due to a causal effect of parental incarceration on the child's criminal justice involvement later in life. However, Copp et al. (2018) explained that this might be difficult to explain in terms of the cause since criminal participation cannot be established as a reason for the parent's incarceration or other adversities. Gius (2016) signaled that parental incarceration and delinquency are moderated by race, where White children whose parents are incarcerated found themselves in theft during adolescence and early adulthood. On the other hand, African American children with imprisoned parents exhibited fewer theft tendencies (Turney, 2019). The behavior explains an increased probability of crime involvement in children with a parental incarceration history from the mentioned engagement in theft.

Moreover, some children are categorized as a high-risk group for measures that may lead to arrest in the future, such as substance use and delinquency. Besides, the traumatic experience leaves the children with suicidal ideation and attempts (Kjellstrand et al., 2020). Another social issue most likely to be experienced by children with incarcerated parents is the social isolation of the individuals even in adulthood (Gifford et al., 2019). Moreover, parental incarceration even leads to the early transitioning of affected children into societal roles of parenthood as most of them feel older on entering

teenage hood and opt to seek employment and live independently. Turney and Lanunza (2017) highlight that the feeling of being older forces children to enter into childbearing at an early age, from about eighteen and twenty-three years. This has a deleterious outcome for their future.

The stress of parental incarceration results in low performance following the caregiver's absence, who acted as their support system. Shlafer et al. (2017) reinforce the college dropout aspect by identifying that youth whose fathers were incarcerated had a low probability of completing college than those with no such experience. The children's educational performance also drops due to poor concentration and attention from emotional and behavioral problems (Thomson et al., 2020). Also, children with parental incarceration tend to exhibit antisocial, aggressive, and delinquency, leading to suspension and even suspension from school. Warren et al. (2019) added that parental incarceration stigmatizes the children in the school setting where even the teachers maintain low expectations regarding competency level. Furthermore, the experience leaves the children disconnected from the academic environment due to feelings of inferiority following their parents' choices.

Parental incarceration also significantly impacts the children's social life due to the experience. Martin (2017) identified that children with parental incarceration are often hidden victims since they receive minimal personal support and rarely benefit from the systematic societal mechanism. Additionally, these children face some form of discrimination from others due to their being offspring of criminals, promoting their social isolation (Martin, 2017). Davis and Shlafer (2017) added that parental incarceration leads to relationship problems as the children experience weaker family

bonds and detachment following the parent's absence in their lives during development. Furthermore, incarceration weakens the bond between parents and children, negatively affecting or reflecting the child's relating capabilities (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2018).

The incarceration process is marked by a series of stressful scenarios and separation that distort the peace and psychological wellbeing of the children. Therefore, the correctional system requires an approach that avails a social support system for the children and other family members affected by the incarceration of their loved ones (Martin, 2017). Overall, incarceration detriments the child-parent bond even after release, especially for those who had no positive relationship with the parent before incarceration (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2018). Additionally, the worsened relationship occurs due to the long duration of separation that makes a parent miss out on the important attachment moments that occur during growth. Davis and Shlafer (2017) shared those fathers also miss out on their child's development growing up, building healthy attachment relationships, and losing their parenting role.

However, it is generally known that children suffer from having a single or two parents in prison. People must realize that this is only one of the factors in paternal and maternal incarceration. In the case of incarcerated fathers, Morgan-Mullane (2018) found that children are much more comfortable living with their mothers. Even in these difficult situations, they have trouble living with their fathers because their mothers are incarcerated. According to Wakefield and Wilderman (2018), the downside is that the father's imprisonment jeopardizes family finances since the mother is now supporting the family. It is also noted by Mik-Meyer and Silverman (2018) that the family's finances are also inconsistent, and they have more trouble finding shelter.

Incarceration of parents remains a socially relevant topic following its significant implications on a child's life. Yet, it has received the least amount of attention in the child development sector research. Harris (2020) stated more studies need to be conducted to explore the incarceration and vulnerability it causes to affected children. Additionally, it is established that most individuals affected by incarceration are minorities, especially African Americans (Morgan-Mullane, 2019). From such a pattern, social injustices and inequalities are prevalent among this group compared to the Whites who experience low incarceration rates (Morgan-Mullane, 2019). Turney and Goodsell (2018) mentioned how social oppression transforms even into children of incarcerated individuals, bringing a case of concern since this cohort has a great future due to time and unraveled opportunities. Therefore, it is prudent that more is done in terms of research to identify ways of minimizing social injustices and inequalities experienced by children faced with the incarceration of parents.

Most people overlook children who grow up without their parents' influence, and while children are rarely affected now, they tend to have more difficulties later in life. Around 33% of children in the U.S. have at least one parent who has been incarcerated for a crime (Turney & Goodsell, 2018). One could almost consider this an inevitability nowadays, as the number of children dealing with parental abandonment continues to grow, putting more and more children into a position where they must live independently without their parents. Morgan-Mullane (2018) found that children with a confined parent were more or three times more likely to be depressed or have behavioral issues than those without incarcerated parents. Bomysoad and Francis (2021) compared children under eighteen with similar family backgrounds and socioeconomic characteristics; the results

showed that having a parent behind bars or in prison is associated with a higher incidence of different conditions such as poor deficit health and hyperactivity disorder.

There are too many parents incarcerated and not in their children's lives. One million parents are being held in jails run by the federal, state, and local governments, where the courts supervise over 4 million parents (Harris, 2020). Cabrera believes it et al. (2018) that the number of children under 18 in this group exceeds 2.3 million. According to Harris (2020), over half a million parents in federal and state prisons have a combined 800,000 children in their care. That figure has grown drastically since 1991. Bomysoad and Francis (2021) shared that number more than doubled in 2019, with approximately 750,000 parents currently incarcerated with about 1.6 million children.

African American Men and Parenting after Incarceration

African American fathers face many issues once they are released from incarceration. DeGiorgi (2017) found that African American fathers return to the same neighborhood where they were arrested after release from incarceration. Welch et al. (2019) mentioned that another African American father's issue after release was his parenting role and identity. Many other fathers provided financially for their children before incarceration but sought financial support after discharge. Brown et al. (2016) stated that despite the voluminous research linking ethnicity and incarceration to systematic inequalities, particularly regarding African American families, little research examines fathers' experiences regarding their relationships with their children after imprisonment.

Imprisonment is a particularly pervasive involvement with the existence of African American people to the point that several researchers have started portraying

detainment as an undeniably standard "life-course occasion." Detainment rates vary significantly by race, with individuals of color bound to be detained more than White men (Icard et al., 2017). According to Turney and Goodsell (2018), African American kids are lopsidedly affected by parental detainment, making up almost 50% of kids with a father in jail. Due to limited sample sizes, dissecting race, nationality, and sex simultaneously could not be provided (Icard et al. (2017). Although we could compare males and females and the offspring children of African American, Hispanic, and White fathers, we couldn't compare girls and boys by ethnicity and race. Brown et al. (2016) shared that after a father leaves prison or jail, the antagonistic effects of detainment on conduct endure young men and African American and Hispanic kids.

Kids are exceptionally helpless in negative encounters as they grow up. Awful encounters, such as the imprisonment of a parent, can fundamentally affect children's prosperity. According to Turney and Goodsell (2018), while children can be versatile, they can likewise engage in great mischief under unfavorable conditions. However, children may not generally express their pressure or conduct, even as little children can show possible future mental troubles (Welch et al. (2018). McLeod (2017) presented research that affirms that relational individualities and design, guardians' degrees of instruction, admittance to a solid job pay, and well-being can impact what therapists allude to as externalizing and disguising practices in kids. Kids with externalizing conduct issues may get out of hand at school, home, or youngster care by fighting or shouting (Fullilove, 2020). Children with disguising social issues may refuse to talk, scowl regularly, fatigue, or be tentative and unsure.

African American men serving parole or probation have persistent challenges fulfilling their father's responsibilities. Not having had many obligations while incarcerated, they take on the liabilities of remedial prerequisites and disadvantages to their kids upon discharge (Kaeble, 2018). Chamberlain and Wallace (2016) shared how previously imprisoned fathers are helpless in the face of monetary troubles because of difficulties in getting jobs and public advantages upon release. Financial demands such as compensation installments and parole supervision charge further diminish their capacity to give financial help to their youngsters (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016). Limitations on personal time because of obligatory gatherings or classes and movement and housing limitations can likewise restrict contact. The semi-restorative condition of waiting on the post-trial process or parole makes them feel frail and stressed, further hampering their capacity to reconstruct associations with their kids (Phelps, 2017). Simultaneously, research shows that parents who invest energy in their kids are more averse to being discouraged or committing crimes.

Additionally, imprisonment disturbs relationships and increases the chances of dysfunction in the family. Browning et al. (2018) mentioned how companions with an imprisoned partner are more likely to try for separation or gain independence from their partner, inferable from high conjugal pressure, disgrace, and geographic separation. Detainment and ensuing relationship disintegration may affect parent-child contact (McKay et al. (2018). Likewise, the imprisonment of a parent has negative results on children's well-being and prosperity (Williams et al., 2019). It can prompt or demolish attention issues and externalizing practices.

A parent's imprisonment has likewise been connected to learning handicaps, formative deferrals, and discourse and language issues in children. McLeod (2017) explained how parents' imprisonment is related to increased kid self-reports of solitary practices. A few investigations find that impacts are more grounded for kids whose fathers lived with them before incarceration. Yet, the effects are critical for children and fathers who live separately (Brunton-Smith & McCarthy, 2017). Mcleod (2017) shared these effects are also associated with race, proving that detainment significantly strengthens externalizing practices among African American kids.

Criminal equity contribution differs by identity and race. Hispanics and African Americans are around 60% of the equity-included populace, despite representing under 30% of the population (Turney & Goodsell, 2018). According to Williams et al. (2019), one out of every four African American persons will be detained in their life compared to one out of six Hispanic men and one out of seventeen white men. As detention experiences and consequences differ according to race and ethnicity, kids' outcomes may differ (Williams et al., 2019). McLeod and Tirmazi (2017) showed how in comparison to kids of White fathers who have never been imprisoned, kids of White fathers show no critical changes in externalizing or disguising practices because of fatherly detainment. On the other hand, McLeod and Tirmazi (2017) shared how kids of Hispanic and African American fathers show quantifiably gigantic developments in externalizing and distinguishing practices attached to detainment. This relationship is not significant for children of White fathers (Brunton-Smith & McCarthy, 2017).

Incarceration influences the one being detained as well as their families. William et al. (2019) shared the family framework is one of the two significant social constructs

an individual engages with, the second being allies. Brunton-Smith and McCarthy (2017) stated that even though losing any relative to the jail framework can be mentally agitating, families will focus on losing a parent. Since numerous detainment facilities are situated in regional settings, groups of people should adapt to the test of maintaining a relationship with their incarcerated relative who is physically harder to visit (Chamberlain & Wallace, 2016). In addition, a few men mislead their families about their open areas while in jail or hinder families from seeing them. Some end family associations while in prison to shield their families from humiliation. There is an inclination for families to deteriorate and reconstitute with proxy guardians because of parental takeoffs and frequent incarceration.

Due to the challenge of getting ongoing work, numerous African American ex-criminals experience increasing homelessness necessary to live with family members or in the city. Williams et al. (2019) stated that finding a spot to live is an entirely different problem for an ex-criminal who returns from prison on top of discovering work. DeGiorgi (2017) shared that those African American men returning to their families and networks portrayed dubious inclination toward the setting or whether they would remain invited in their new day-to-day environments.

Imprisonment is not arbitrary—it is an encounter excessively gathered in communities of concentrated disadvantage and communities of African Americans. Pettit and Gutierrez (2018) shared that mass detainment is a local area-level marvel with overflow impacts for all occupants. According to Turney and Goodsell (2018), a study speculates that individuals who experience numerous minimized situations might experience intense adverse results. For instance, a dark kid would be influenced by

fundamental bigotry and an imprisoned parent (Turney & Goodsell, 2018). Children confronting various threatening conditions may have more complex memories of adapting to a guardian's imprisonment.

High imprisonment rates can, under specific conditions, lead to considerably higher crime percentages. Several scientists accept that high convergences of detainee expulsion and return can also destabilize communities effectively in trouble (DeGiorgi, 2017). Simultaneously, various endeavors in progress influence these focuses—where local area, service providers, rectifications, and the private area are making associations to expect and address the requirements of relatives affected by detainment and previous detainees who get back to the local area to reconstruct their lives (Williams et al., 2019).

Summary

This research shows that imprisonment extends well past the prison walls, harming children, diverse families, and communities. Distinct lawbreakers must be punished and removed from society according to the moral basis for incarceration (Tasca, 2018). Although people must be careful not to extrapolate too far from the results of this single-site study, this research implies that incarceration hurts African American fathers' identification (Dallaire, 2019). In this research study, additional research could investigate the importance of father identity in promoting a fruitful reentry process based on the fathers' definition of father distinctiveness. A comparative qualitative investigation may be needed in future studies regarding this topic.

When people are separated and unable to communicate daily, any relationship is strained. Being the kid of an incarcerated parent has a lot of negative consequences for today's youth. Wang et al. (2020) shared that many children look up to their parents as

role models; someone they may put their trust in, who will protect them, and who will lead them through life—for most children, having a parent who is incarcerated means that their positive role model is missing. The absence of a parent in one's youth has numerous harmful consequences and effects. According to statistics, one in five children has witnessed their parent's arrest (Giménez-Dasí et al., 2020).

There are several short-term consequences for younger children who were there throughout the detention of their absent parent. Children under seven have incubuses and flashbacks because of the incident (Wang et al., 2020). When a parent is taken away from their child, the child is often at school. As a result, the children return home to an empty house and are unaware of the arrest (Valadez et al., 2020). It is difficult for young children to understand what's happening with their parents, so parents must explain the issue.

In most cases, indirect communication in letter form and, whenever present, phone conversations must be relied upon between families. According to Romero et al. (2020), the restricted contact that offspring with incarcerated parents possess with their parentages, the often-insufficient quality of that interaction, and the stigma and guilt that comes with being the child of a prisoner can make maintaining an association with a parent extremely difficult. Valadez et al. (2020) stated that visits from the inmate's family on temporary leave schemes in cases where they occur are the prominent direct manner of preserving relationships, but they are not often practicable. Direct contact between children and their confined parents might be prevented or limited by prison rules, travel distances, rival demands on household members, or the reluctance of one or both parties to meet, affecting their relationship amongst themselves (Wang et al., 2020).

People are frequently pushed in and out of custodial and in and out of their children's lives. McLeod and Tirmazi (2017) stated that several fathers aged between twenty to forty years serve their sentences unconfined and then are detained and re-incarcerated for bail or probation breaches. Recent studies show that the revolving door does not stop until men reach their mid-forties (Valadez et al., 2020). Still, the harm to fathers, their kids, and communities persists long after the physical imprisonment ends, resulting in virtual life sentences (Charles et al., 2019). This, in some ways, is a type of social violence.

The involvement of the criminal justice organization in promoting the myth of the absent African American father is obscured by various media representations, civic debate, and literature depicting African American males as absent and uncommitted uncomplicated deadbeats. Besides, African American fathers are not missing, though many are imprisoned, as Michelle Alexander eloquently put it (Haskins & Turney, 2018). Fatherhood is rendered impotent while imprisoned. Fathers are forbidden from engaging in practices that assist their children's healthy associations. Fatherhood, as previously said, is a social concept created and reconstructed via social interaction, and it is shaped by ever-changing past, financial, and social-radical forces (Voith et al., 2020).

Families bear tremendous burdens as a result of parental incarceration. Additionally, it has been found that vulnerable families are usually burdened by parental incarceration, and it is primarily evident amongst families of African American men (Strom & Lan, 2019). Valadez et al. (2020) named a few consequences of incarceration, and involvement with the criminal justice structure increases family uncertainty, joblessness, socioeconomic drawback, substance abuse, and mental health difficulties, to

name a few. Since children who have a parent confined already live-in homes are disproportionately affected by many of these concerns, the damages resulting from having a parent incarcerated compound a wide range of problems that these children are already dealing with (Fan et al., 2021). Besides, Strom Lan (2019) stated that families bear tremendous burdens due to parental incarceration.

As a result, mass incarceration has altered African American males' fatherhood recital and practices and their conception of father identity. The formerly jailed and not ever incarcerated men in this study had more in common than not when it came to schooling, marital status, and monetary stability (Washington et al., 2018). This can be due to a shared set of experiences. Males from low-income families are more likely to be jailed, while men who have been incarcerated are more likely to be low-income. Patricia Hill Collins' notion of crossing oppressions may be extended to represent the related element and particularity of domination when one is poor, African American, masculine, and a criminal, thereby exemplifying an intersection of authorities when one is underprivileged, obscure, male, and an offender (Parkes & Donson, 2018).

This study indicated that jailed men were less expected to be married and possess several children, consistent with earlier research on incarcerated fathers. Although marriage is deteriorating amongst most African American men, research shows that low-income fathers want to marry only when they are financially and fervently ready and have found the appropriate lady (McLeod et al., 2019). Men's capacity to prepare for marriage and possess an opportunity to choose a marital partner is hampered by economic hardship and, in some instances, jail. Despite African American males' difficulties in marriage, parenting is celebrated.

Their learning of low-income fathers discovered a movement away from the traditional two-parent relations "package deal." The adult relationship takes precedence over the children's bond. Fathers are more willing than moms to obligate their children (Adams, 2018). The results contradict William Julius Wilson's theory that low-revenue African American men have a "decreased commitment to parenting" due to economic drawbacks. This study revealed that various circumstances limit and obscure a father's aptitude to be current and tangled in his children's lives (Rambert, 2021). Most fathers are not uncommitted and uninterested; instead, they are incarcerated, and as this research has demonstrated, incarceration renders fatherhood ineffective.

Furthermore, according to this study, fathers with children from numerous women face difficulties providing equal attention and fiscal support to all their children (Green et al., 2019). Men may be unable to achieve the "full fatherhood experience," They dwell with a child, observe their development directly, and assist raise them if they are spread among many residences. With various mothers and their children vying for one man's consideration, having several children with numerous partners may be the source of immense tension and struggle (Haney, 2018). Multiple families also scatter the father's inadequate financial resources instead of concentrating them.

More research is required to see how jail and reintegration experiences affect a single father's responsibilities for many households. Future research is also needed to investigate the findings of this survey, which show that most recently jailed, men cannot wage their bills, possess no plans to retire, and have no retirement savings (Giordano et al., 2019). This could have ramifications for upcoming asset accumulation. According to research, augmented asset possession and work may lower recidivism (Sandberg et al.,

2020). Failing to save or build assets has ramifications for the financial and social issues formerly jailed people may confront as they grow older.

The idea of father identity here reflects the men's perceptions of what a parent is and what various fathers should do (Lemmons & Johnson, 2019). They saw being there as an instance and providing as essential aspects of fatherhood. In this study, fathers explained how incarceration prevented them from engaging in the behaviors required to achieve the father identification requirement. They could not be present, set the example they desired, and offer love, necessities, and guard for their children while incarcerated (Muentner et al., 2019). When they couldn't satisfy the father's identification requirement, some tried to change their ways, while others gave up their father's identity while in jail.

Moreover, the findings of this study back up earlier research on parenthood and incarceration. Fathers highlighted how the jail framework limits their relations with their children and how it is problematic to classify as fathers while in custodial, like earlier findings (McCarthy & Adams, 2019). The results imply that the criminal justice structure's stress and tension on fathers' relations with their children cause widespread and, in some cases, irreversible damage. Therefore, social strain happens, making extreme and now and again unsalvageable harm between fathers and their children (Muentner et al., 2019). Additionally, these relationships should exist between the father and their child and the diverse family aspect to ensure strong interactions in the future (Lemmons & Johnson, 2019).

To minimize the effects of the absent parents and how absence may have affected their parenting skills once they are released, several options should be undertaken to curb the effects. Besides, it must be a deliberate effort to position and maintain fathers as near

home as possible. Regular visits can help reintegrate and must be encouraged and reinforced by institutions. Extortion of family resources should be replaced by subsidies to cover the costs of transportation and boardinghouse accommodations for visitation and the high expense of prison phone calls (McCarthy & Adams, 2019). Postage assistance is also required. E-mail and video visitation (to be utilized in sum to but not as a substitute for contact visitation) are two other ways of communication that can be expanded. Prisoners should be allowed to work and support their families.

Besides, imprisonment is practical to society for it causes decreased lifetime and a reduction in intergenerational earnings; hence the development of the community will reduce. According to Ansari et al. (2018), formerly incarcerated people's incomes may be restricted when they complete their term due to their criminal record. Besides, people with specific criminal records face hurdles and, in some situations, are excluded from getting financial assistance, such as SNAP (food stamps) and housing aid. Studies have shown benefits like SNAP to effectively minimize poverty and aid working families (Harding et al., 2019). However, confinement can sometimes be beneficial to the community. The experience of being imprisoned may dissuade someone from performing crimes in the imminent to avoid going to prison. As drug and alcohol action, education, or counseling, rehabilitation chances may be available in prison (Johns, 2018).

Convincingly, over the last thirty years, the phenomenal rise of African American men in the United States prison populace has wreaked havoc on the men, their relations, and the societies in which they dwell. When incarceration rates are low, they might be seen as having a direct effect on people and families, though they have a minor impact on communities (Haskins & Jacobsen, 2017). Nevertheless, African American men's

excessively high incarceration rate is a significant concern for persons, families, societies, and cultures. While African American fathers make up less than 6% of the population in the United States, they now account for approximately thirty-nine percent of the adult male custodial populace. They are confined to a proportion six times greater than non-Hispanic whites (Haskins & Jacobsen, 2017).

The presented literature in this chapter shows the need for this generic qualitative research design to explore more experiences of absent African American fathers. With limited research available in this area, this study will help more African American fathers voice their role as a parent. Given such, further research could increase understanding of African American fathers' parenting experiences after release from incarceration to address the documented problem of incarcerated fathers in society (Mears & Siennick, 2016). This gap within the literature will be addressed with the participants. Chapter 3 will provide more details on the methodology of this study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This generic qualitative study aims to explore incarcerated African American fathers' perspectives as absent parents and how absence may have affected their parenting skills once they are released. This study's target population is African American males (ex-offenders) who were incarcerated during the early years of their daughter's life and have kept in contact with them during their sentence. For this generic qualitative study, I will interview African American fathers to explore their overall perspective as parents and their relationships with their daughters after their release from incarceration.

This chapter will begin with the research design for this study. Following that paragraph will be the role of the researcher. Next, I will present the study's methodology, which will provide sections on the participant selection logic, the data collection of instruments, the recruitment and participation procedure, and the data analysis plan. I will then discuss the trustworthiness issues and the study's ethical procedures. The final section will summarize Chapter 3 and provide a transition into Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question for this study is: How does incarceration impact African American fathers' parenting experience after their release from incarceration? A generic qualitative study was the suitable method for this study. Merriam (2009) stated that a generic qualitative approach could stand alone as a researcher's formulated approach and be considered a simple or basic study. A generic qualitative study investigates the participants' personal experiences, principles, opinions, and reflections to better understand their viewpoint through a questionnaire structure (Percy et al., 2015).

According to Devers and Frankle (2000), generic qualitative is often evolving, flexible, and somewhat vigorous before the researcher develops or assesses other general theories and explanations. Most generic qualitative studies rely on one of three data collection methods that fit the participant's experience and perception, including semi- or fully structured (open-ended) interviews, questionnaires, and written or oral surveys (Percy et al., 2015). For this generic qualitative study, my use of semi- or fully structured open-ended interviews will provide the participants the exploration of expressing their personal experiences of parenthood after their release from incarceration.

The focus of any qualitative study is to describe the essence of lived experiences of the participants. Conducting a generic qualitative survey will allow me to understand each participant's personal experience through interviews. Sekaran and Bougie (2010) mentioned that a qualitative study is assumed when little is known about the situation or very little information is available on similar problems researched in the past. This generic qualitative study was suitable because of the limited research on the topic. Little is known about the personal experiences of father-daughter relationships after release from incarceration. Therefore, attachment theory will allow fathers to provide their personal experience of being detached from their daughters. Additionally, a considerable gap exists in the current literature concerning African American fathers' perspectives and parenting experiences after release from incarceration. Further research is warranted to address the problem of incarcerated fathers in society (Mears & Siennick, 2016).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, my role will be to conduct structured interview questions with each participant individually. I will be an observer-participant that interacts with the participants by asking open-ended questions that will allow them to freely express their experiences, opinion, and reflections as African American fathers after the release of incarceration. The interviews will be audio-taped for data collection purposes through transcripts. All data collected will be analyzed using thematic analysis. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) stated that thematic analysis is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns seen within data.

With any study, personal and professional biases will be mentioned in managing and avoiding doing so. All participants will be recruited using the snowball effect via social media and local communities. My personal beliefs, analyses, and perceived notions about this research and the participant's feedback will be set aside to conduct this study more objectively to receive the data needed. To ensure the impact of research bias is not possible, member checking will be provided to participants to ensure the transcripts are accurate before any data is analyzed. As stated by Barbour (2001), member checking is used to retain authenticity in qualitative research. All interviews will be conducted via video chat or in-person at a local library or community center. Each participant will be pre-screened to ensure they fit the criteria of this study, and any ethical issues will be addressed during the pre-screening to avoid problems later in the interview.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

This study's target population is African American males (ex-offenders) who were incarcerated during the early years of their daughters' lives and have kept in contact with them during their sentence**.** The sampling strategy will consist of adult males ages 33 and older who now have an adult age daughter 18 years of age or older. The father must have had contact with their daughter during their incarceration sentence. Participants will be selected based on their pre-screening questions via social media, flyers, and word of mouth to conduct interviews via video chat or face-to-face. The criterion for participants in the study is based on the following: (a) African American male, (b) have a daughter, (d) ex-offender, (e) had contact with daughter sometime during incarceration, (f) parenting role reestablished after the release of incarceration. Each participant will be pre-screened via phone call or email to answer the questions above to meet the required criteria. The selection of participants will not be of any male from within my workplace nor of personal relationships.

The number of participants will be between eight and 10 African American males; this number will allow the researcher to collect enough data to see any patterns in this study. Boddy (2016) stated that a sample size as small as one participant could be justified based on the participant's personal experiences. On the other hand, Dworkin (2012) shared that an appropriate number for sample size should be between 5 and 50 participants to gain adequate and sufficient saturated data. Data saturation and sample size go hand in hand. According to Walker (2012), data saturation is reached once

sufficient data is gathered to replicate the study. However, Guest et al. (2006) stated data saturation is enough when the researcher can acquire new data or when additional coding is not feasible. Therefore, the sample size in this study may include snowball sampling.

Purposeful and snowball sampling will be used in this study to gain enough participants. Palinkas et al. (2015) shared that purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative studies, recognizing and choosing cases that provide much information about the phenomenon of interest. As Etikan et al. (2015) shared, the snowball sampling method is useful when a specific population of interest is hard to reach and may pose difficulties for the researcher. Snowball sampling will be used in this study if I find it hard to recruit enough eligible participants. However, Tenny et al. (2017) stated participants or other people who may know eligible participants would use word of mouth (snowball sampling) as a referral or recommendation to the study.

To recruit potential and eligible participants, much work is needed. Creating an appealing and informative flyer will grasp the attention of potential participants. Posting flyers in rural and urban areas within Central Alabama with a majority-minority population at grocery stores, barbershops, community centers, and even on Facebook groups geared towards ex-offender fathers will help recruit eligible participants. I will send the flyer to the Facebook group administrator to post it on their page for potential recruitment. Participants will contact me by phone or email from the contact information listed on the flyers. Once a participant contacts the researcher, then a date and time will be scheduled to complete the pre-screening to determine if the participant is eligible.

Once a participant is qualified, the researcher will make an appointment for the interview, date, time, and contact (via video chat, face-to-face, or phone calls).

Instrumentation

The data collection for my study will include individual interviews, field notes, and audiotape to collect data. I will conduct an interview guide (see Appendix D) with open-ended questions to express their experience as an -offender African American father. The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed using transcription software. No historical or legal documents will be used in this study. I will use the participants' experiences to explain why this research is needed to help African American fathers voice their role as a parent.

Conducting semi structured interview questions will allow me, the researcher, to provide some structure to my study of interest and allow flexibility to the participants for the unplanned and natural replies. As Englander (2012) stated, interviews are a leading tool by which phenological researchers gather data. The researcher's semi-structured interview questions (see Appendix D) will simplify providing insightfulness and personal perspectives of African American fathers providing essential data that is hardly known about the ex-offender's parenting experience after release from incarceration. Hammarberg et al. (2016) stated that when researchers ask participants to speak about their reflections/experiences related to the study, they often reveal more than what the researcher set out to learn. Using open-ended questions will allow the participants to be comfortable in their responses and truthful in expressing their feelings (Chenail, 2011).

Field notes will help record any body language and responses that participants may have issues discussing or expressing. Cohen Crabtree (2008) shared that qualitative research should be fair, significant, and logical in describing participants' responses. The use of field notes will help me remember any special moments or gestures from the participants. As Phillippi and Lauderdale (2017) mentioned, field notes are generally suggested in qualitative research to help document needed contextual information.

Audio-tape recordings collect the participant's responses to the interview questions so that the information can later be transcribed to find common themes and patterns among the participants. Each participant will be audio-recorded and asked the same interview questions, provide a member-checking for accuracy, and transcribe the recordings for data analysis. Stockdale (2002) stated that audio recording for interviews provides an easy way for researchers to capture details that cannot be seen but heard, for example, when a participant's voice cracks or goes low or high. Neal et al. (2014) shared that audio recordings help researchers identify themes rapidly to help code and analyze the data without time-consuming transcription.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participant, and Data Collection

I will create a flyer to display within the African American community at barbershops, corner stores, gyms, and housing authorities for the study's recruitment. Flyers will also be posted on social media and by word of mouth to recruit potential participants. Potential participants can contact via the contact information provided on the flyers. Once potential participants contact me, I will conduct a simple pre-screen to ensure they fit the required participation criteria. Once they are approved for the pre-screen, I set up a scheduled day and time to conduct the initial interview via video chat or

in-person at a library or community center. Before the initial interview, I will provide participants with informed consent, guidelines for the interview, the purpose of the study, and ask any questions they may have.

The data will be collected by audiotape or zoom video chat; the researcher will record and transcribe each interview. Each interview will be scheduled to last 45-60 minutes and will be a one-time interview. If more time is needed to complete the interview, I will schedule another day and time for completion; however, the goal is to complete the interview in one sitting. Suppose there are not enough participants for the study. In that case, I will recruit in other rural and urban areas in Central Alabama at gas stations, grocery stores, and shopping malls to gain more potential participants.

When interviews are complete, I will summarize and allow the participants to answer or provide last-minute feedback. I will then thank the participant for participating and providing their experience in this study. Once I have completed all interviews, I will transcribe each and send a copy to each participant for member checking. This will allow the participants to make sure everything is accurate. Creswell and Miller (2000) mentioned that researchers should consider the possibility of member checking impacting the participants. Hallet (2013) says that the relationship researchers build with the participants can sometimes affect their feelings while members check and realize they may have been vulnerable during that period. After each participant has confirmed their transcripts are accurate, I will continue with data analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

I plan to use thematic analysis to analyze the data plan. Thematic analysis is considered the most commonly used approach for qualitative research because of the vast array of research questions and topics that can be addressed using this data analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The procedure for coding this study will be through typed transcripts of the semi-structured interviews with each participant. MAXQDA software will be used to complete the coding process using Braun and Clarke methods. Once each interview is coded, I will look for patterns and common themes among the fathers' experiences. Using thematic analysis aims to discover substantial cohesion within the data collected.

To complete the data analysis, I will include the steps of Braun and Clarke (2006). The first step is to conduct the interview, reading and transcribing each interview to obtain the subject matter. The second step is to provide participants with a copy of the transcribed interview for member checking before proceeding with qualitative data analysis. The third step is to start the coding process, which includes identifying and signifying any statements or expressions made by the participants. These statements or phrases will be organized based on any found codes. The fourth step will involve arranging the codes into tentative themes and linking them to coded data and the dataset to find any thematic structure to support each identified theme. The fifth step is to refine each theme to produce named and differentiated themes. The final step is to create a narrative of the findings within the data analysis themes.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To evaluate the issues of trustworthiness in the research study, member checks

and peer reviews will be used to validate the study's credibility. As stated by Tenny et al.

(2017), four correlating concepts evaluate qualitative research; these concepts are internal

validity (credibility), external validity (transferability), reliability (dependability), and

objectivity (confirmability). Internal validity (credibility) will be the concept used for

triangulation. According to Tenny et al. (2017), triangulation uses several data collection

methods to gain dependable and precise results. To ensure the trustworthiness of my

study, I will utilize structured interviews.

Ethical Procedures

Before recruiting participants, I must be approved by the IRB to conduct this

study and move forward with collecting data. Once I am approved, I will recruit (see

Appendix A) 8-10 participants, and those of interest will be pre-screened for

qualification. After each qualified participant is pre-screened, I will provide each with a

consent form (see Appendix B). The consent forms will provide the requirements of each

participant, an explanation of the purpose of the study, privacy/confidentiality

agreements, and the option to opt-out of the study at any time. This study is entirely

voluntary.

Once interviews are scheduled with the participants, I will designate a folder and

audiotape for each individual to keep their data separate within a locked cabinet in the

researcher's home office. Each participant's information will be kept anonymous. A

fictitious name will recognize each participant to distinguish who is who. Gathering

information about their demographics will be asked before the interview begins (See Appendix D). After this information is collected, the interview process will begin.

The researcher and committee members will access any raw materials used during the interviews (audio recordings, consent forms, and notes). After every interview is complete and each participant has member checked their transcript for accuracy, I will continue to store the audio recordings until the final transcriptions are finalized. Once the transcriptions are complete, the audio recordings will be destroyed.

This study will not include nor be done within my work environment. Therefore, no conflict of interest or power differentials will occur. This study will be based on recruitment from participants who meet the criteria within the community or by word of mouth. No form of incentives will be used during this study.

Summary

This generic qualitative study aims to explore incarcerated African American fathers' perspectives as absent parents and how absence may have affected their parenting skills once they are released. This study focuses on African American fathers and their relationship with their daughters. This study will conduct structured interviews with 8-10 fathers qualified to participate and provide their parenting experience. Participants will be recruited from African American communities and social media groups. A thematic analysis will transcribe the interviews to discover patterns, commonalities, and themes that pertain to the father's parenting experience after release from incarceration. Chapter 4 will examine the raw data and results from this study. It will also provide more details

about the data collected and analyzed and any themes or patterns found among the

participants.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This generic qualitative study aimed to better understand African American fathers' parenting role while incarcerated to help them become better parents upon release. This chapter will explore the analyzed data transcribed from the interviews to address the research question: how does incarceration impact African American fathers' parenting experience after incarceration? The participants in this study were formerly incarcerated African American males who had a daughter during incarceration. Through audio-recorded semi structured interviews, participants could share their experiences of being an incarcerated father and the effects it may have caused on their father-daughter relationships. I will provide an overview of the interview setting, the participant's demographic information, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, the results of the study, and a summary of chapter four.

Settings

No personal or organizational conditions that influenced participants or their experience during the study impacted the interpretation of the study results. I recruited eight participants for the study and conducted semi-structured interviews. Each interview was scheduled for 45-60 minutes; however, the times ranged from 20-30 minutes. Participants were reminded that this study was entirely voluntary. If they wanted to end the interview, they could say "they no longer want to continue." Due to participants sharing personal and sensitive information, I provided a toll-free number for support and counseling.

Demographics

A purposeful sampling strategy was used in this study; I recruited eight formerly incarcerated African American males who have a daughter. Participants were recruited by placing flyers within local rural communities at various locations (barbershops, gyms, housing authorities, etc.) until 8 participants qualified for the study. Only eight participants qualified out of 9 interested in the study. Participants contacted the researcher by telephone, stating they were interested in the study. I reviewed the criteria with each participant to see if they qualified and proceeded to schedule interviews via phone. Due to the privacy and confidentiality of each participant, I coded each participant as a respondent, for example, R1, R3, and R5. Table 1 provides detailed demographic information based on the criteria needed to participate in the study.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participants	Age	Number of Daughters	Number of Times Incarcerated	Number of Years Since Released from Incarceration
Respondent 1	45	5	2	7
Respondent 2	54	1	1	14
Respondent 3	45	2	2	12
Respondent 4	41	1	3	6
Respondent 5	45	1	4	10
Respondent 6	34	3	2	5
Respondent 7	38	1	1	5
Respondent 8	57	4	2	9

Data Collection

Data was collected through eight semi structured interviews of formerly incarcerated African American males with lived experiences of father-daughter relationships. Interviews were completed once with each participant via telephone after 8 participants were considered qualified for the study. After IRB approval for the data collection on February 15, I started the recruitment process, which took place from February 18 to March 17, 2022. Once participants were qualified for the study, I scheduled a day and time to complete the audio-recorded interviews and verbally reviewed the consent form. I provided an electronic copy to each participant via email to obtain their consent to voluntary participate.

An audio device recorded the interviews during the phone call. There were eleven semi-structured open-ended questions with some sub-questions to gain further information. See Appendix C for the interview questions. Some questions had to be broken down into two questions to acquire the needed information for the question. Participants were told to allot 45-60 for the interviews to be completed and allow time for possible technological difficulties. The average time for the interviews ranged from 20-30 minutes. Most of the questions were straightforward, so I had to probe for more information to understand the father's parenting experience better.

Once interviews were completed, I reviewed each recording twice to check for technical difficulties or unclear/unheard questions and answers. I followed up with each participant 3 days later to provide them with a transcribed copy of the interviews to complete member checking. Participants received an electronic copy of the transcripts and were asked to confirm accuracy via email for me to continue coding and to analyze

the data. Each participant was thanked once again for their participation in the study and informed they would receive an electronic copy or link of the final study once complete. There were no unusual circumstances encountered during data collection.

Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed interview data verbatim and analyzed it using MAXQDA software once each interview transcript was confirmed accurate per the participant. The analysis process was based on the six steps of Braun and Clark (2006). The first step is to conduct the interview, reading and transcribing each interview to obtain the subject matter. This step was achieved through the researcher working on setting aside personal preconceptions and biases about the topic in preparation for the analysis of the data.

The second step was providing participants with a copy of the transcribed interview for member checking before proceeding with qualitative data analysis. For accuracy, this step was completed by sending each participant an electronic copy of the transcripts. The third step was starting the coding process, which includes identifying and signifying any statements or expressions made by the participants. Statements and expressions were organized based on codes found such as the following: good relationships, reasons for being away, reassurance, not intentional, feelings about daughter, negativity, and many other codes that will be shared later in this chapter. The fourth step consisted of arranging the codes into tentative themes and linking them to coded data and the dataset to find any thematic structure to support each identified theme. The fifth step was to refine each theme to produce named and differentiated themes. The

final step was to create a narrative of the findings within the data analysis themes, which described the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated African American males' parenting experience with their daughters.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

These study results were supplemented by examining the data, data analysis, and assumptions to determine whether the study is accurate. The results of credibility findings were guaranteed through member-checking. The researcher sent each participant their interview transcripts via email to review accuracy and any changes they may have wanted to make. None of the participants had any changes; each verified their transcripts as accurate. Transferability was established by providing detailed analyzed data that can be applied to other situations and populations, such as incarcerated mother-daughter relationships. Audit trails and detailed descriptions were combined with the research design and methods to improve dependability. The use of field notes/audit trails helped reduce bias and focus on the participants' trustworthiness. The reflexivity of participants supported the confirmability of the results from member checking, lived experiences, acknowledging personal relationships, and preferences by remaining neutral to participants' responses.

Credibility

Credibility was established through detailed analysis of the data and member checking to ensure the results were correct and accurate. As stated by Korstjens and Moser (2018), the strategies to ensure credibility are prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and member checking. Each participant was emailed a copy of

their interview transcripts to complete member checking. I performed triangulation to establish credibility through the outcomes of each participant's results/experiences through the interviews. All participants verified their transcripts as accurate; no changes were needed.

Transferability

Transferability provides a detailed analysis of your study for others to transfer the findings to new settings or situations. Korstjens and Moser (2018) indicated that transferability allows readers to assess whether their research findings are transferable to their environment. Providing a rich account of descriptive data such as how the research was carried out, sample size, demographic info, and interview procedure are ways to help others in the transferability of your research. My research findings provided detailed and thick descriptions of research design and methods to develop transferability for others to apply to other populations, situations, and settings.

Dependability

Dependability is the aspect of consistency in research. Ensure the analysis process is aligned with the research design to create consistency and reliable findings. Audit trails and detailed descriptions were kept throughout the entire process of the study. An outside contractor was used to help determine the study's dependability based on the data collection, data analysis, and study results. Dependability was established based on the audit trails confirming that the data collected from the participants was accurate and ensured the data collection supported the findings.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the reflection of the participant's experiences rather than the experiences/ideas of the researcher. Confirmability was ensured through the process of notetaking and reflexivity. Korstjens and Moser (2018) shared that reflexivity recognizes the significance of being self-aware and reflexive about your role in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data and pre-conceived assumptions. In the process of confirmability, I had to reassure there were no chances of having the participant's transcripts distorted. The confirmability of the results from member checking and participants' lived experiences remained neutral to participants' responses.

Results

The results of this study are organized by the research question: how does incarceration impact African American fathers' parenting experience after their release from incarceration? This research question formed the basis of presenting the results of the study. Eleven semi-structured open-ended interview questions were audio-recorded with the eight participants based on their lived experiences as incarcerated fathers. Due to confidentiality, each participant was referred to as a "respondent" and given a number based on the interview order. All interviews were completed individually, and member-checking was accurate based on the participant's confirmation. Two coding cycles were completed; the second cycle produced thirty-eight codes from which eight categories and themes were developed. Braun and Clark's method of data analysis was utilized to identify the themes and patterns in the data. Nine themes emerged in the data analysis from the gathered participant's narratives.

The participants' responses entailed a percentage of the overall frequency and meaning of the participant's terms of incarceration. The following tables 2-4 entail information about; the number of times incarcerated, the number of years incarcerated, and the number of years since the last release from incarceration.

Table 2

How Many Times Have You Been Incarcerated?

PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER OF TIMES INCARCERATED	VERBATIM
R1	2	
R2	1	
R3	2	Twice
R4	3	
R5	4	Hell, I've been in and out so many times I can't keep track
R6	2	
R7	1	
R8	2	
MEAN	2.125	
FREQUENCY	1time	25%
	2-3 times	63%
	4 times	13%

Table 3

What Was Your Longest Incarcerated Sentence?

PARTICIPANT	NUMBER OF YEARS SERVED	VERBATIM
R1	14	13 years and 11 months
R2	16	15 years and 9 months
R3	11	11 years
R4	7	7 years
R5	13	12.5 years
R6	3	32 months
R7	15	14 years 8 months
R8	10	10 years
MEAN	11.125	
FREQUENCY	1-5 years	13%
	6-10 years	25%
	11-15 years	50%
	>15 years	13%

Table 4

How Long Have You Been Released from Incarceration?

PARTICIPANT	NUMBER OF YEARS OUT OF PRISON	VERBATIM
R1	7	7 years
R2	14	14 years in May 2022
R3	12	About 12 years
R4	6	Five going on six years in April
R5	10	I been out since 2012. I went back in 2010 for a violation
R6	5	Little over 5 years
R7	5	5 years
R8	9	9 years
MEAN	8.5	
FREQUENCY	1-5 years	25%

	6-10 years	50%
	11-15 years	25%

Table 5 entailed the ages of each participant when they became a father and whether the pregnancy was planned. It also shows the mean age and frequency of ages of each participant.

TABLE 5

At what age did you become a father, and was the pregnancy planned?

PARTICIPANTS	AT WHAT AGE DID YOU BECOME A FATHER?	VERBATIM	WAS THE PREGNANCY PLANNED?
R1	16		No
R2	17	Between 17-18 years old	No, it wasn't at all
R3	18		No
R4	30		No, it wasn't really planned
R5	16		No, not at all
R6	20		No, I never had any planned pregnancies

R7	18		No
R8	19		No
MEAN	19.25		
FREQUENCY	Under 18	38%	
	18-20 years	50%	
	Over 20 years	13%	

Responses to the interview Question 2

In response to Interview Question 2: What were your daughter's ages (s) during your time of incarceration? Respondent 1 stated: "The oldest was 1 year old, and the other two was born after I was incarcerated." Additionally, Respondent 2 shared: "I think she was around 5 or 6 years old."

Respondent 3verbalized:

"She was born when I was incarcerated."

Respondent 4 said:

"She was 18 months until she was 5 years old when I got home."

Respondent 5 expressed:

"She was born, then I don't think she was a year old when I got incarcerated."

Respondent 6 shared:

"She was an infant."

Respondent 7 expressed sadness:

"She was 4 days old when I got incarcerated."

Respondent 8 stated:

"My oldest was 9 then had a 5-year-old, 1-year-old, and 6-month-old."

Theme 1: Being actively present and building a healthy attachment bond to establish a father-daughter relationship.

Being actively present in their daughter's life before incarceration was one of the interview questions; this question was recognized as one of the key themes in the data analysis. 7 out of 8 participants acknowledged they were actively present in their daughter's life before they were incarcerated. It was also acknowledged that they had a secure attachment bond within that finding. Except for participant 3, the remaining participants expressed their active role in their daughter's life.

Respondent 1 replied:

"Yes, I was active in her life before I went to prison; I seen her every day. Yes, we had attachment bond because she was a baby then."

Respondent 2 shared:

"Yes, I was actively present in her life. All yeah, it was a attachment bond."

Respondent 4 stated:

"Yes, I was actively involved in her life, and we had a bond."

Respondent 5 verbalized:

"Oh yeah, I was present in her life, and the attachment bond was there."

Respondent 6 implied:

"Yes, I was very active, and it was a close bond."

Respondent 7 shared:

"She was 4 days old, and I was present each day until I went to prison."

Respondent 8 stated:

"Yes, I was present in all of their lives and had a bond with each one."

Theme 2: Building Good Father-Daughter Relationships

This theme emerged from the analyzed data that addresses the overall father-daughter relationship prior to incarceration. All except participant 3 expressed good relationships or a neutral mention.

Respondent 1 shared:

It was a good relationship. Really just going to get her every day and spending time with her. Other than that, I didn't know how it was sleeping with her every night because I didn't never sleep with her at night.

Respondent 2 stated:

"Our relationship was good, it could have been better, but it was good overall."

Respondent 4 implied happily: "Shit, that was my first daughter; our relationship was beautiful. You know she was my first child."

Respondent 5 replied:

"Our relationship was good."

Respondent 6 verbalized:

"It was good she always wanted to be with me."

Respondent 7 shared:

"I was not physically present. I got locked up when she was 4 days old."

Respondent 8 stated:

"Before I was incarcerated, I only had a relationship with one (my 9-year-old). It was a normal relationship. We lived together all her life until I got locked up. With my other daughters, I still seen them every day."

Theme 3: Explanation, reasons for being away, and reassurance of why daddy is not coming home.

The third emerging theme from the data analysis was explaining and reasons for being away from home. This theme emerged from interview question 4. There was a 50% split among participants who shared with their daughter why they were physically absent and 50% who did not share the reason for absence in their life during a specific time. Respondent 1 implied:

"No, I didn't explain because, over time, I think she figured it out."

Respondent 2 shared:

"Umm, I don't think I ever really explained; I think her mom did, but she seemed to understand. She didn't really ask me no questions or nothing like that, so her mom explained it to her."

Respondent 3 stated:

"I explained to her when she was about 15-16 years old, something like that."

Respondent 4 verbalized:

"When I got locked up, you know she was coming to see me in Big Muddy, and she was wondering how come I wasn't coming home. I was explaining to her that

daddy can't come home; I did some bad things that landed me up in here. There I was, letting her know that I will be home soon and everything and that I need her to try to be strong and wait until I get home."

Respondent 5 shared:

"It was during the time I was incarcerated that she got curious why I wasn't coming home, and I explained to her."

Respondent 6 replied:

"I never explained it because they were so young at the time. No need to explain. If she asks question, I will explain, but I won't bring it up."

Respondent 7 verbalized:

"Yes, as she got older, I explained to her."

Respondent 8 shared:

"I don't think I ever explained to them. But my oldest really didn't need an explanation; she understood."

Theme 4: Keeping in contact while away and how often.

The fourth theme emerging from the data analysis was the form of contact while incarcerated. Each participant expressed their form of communication they may have had with their daughter while incarcerated. The forms of contact included regular visits, letters, telephone calls, and videos. All participants except participant 3 provided their form of communication while incarcerated.

Respondent 1 implied:

"I had pretty good communication because my mother had her all the time and I used to have visit, talk to her on the phone and sent her letters and everything. I kept in contact my whole bid."

Respondent 2 shared:

"Mostly phone calls, very few visits. Overall, through phone calls throughout my whole sentence."

Respondent 4 stated:

"Yeah, I wrote letters, called home, and they came up to visit me twice a month. Once I got to the feds, I was still able to contact her and call home but the visits, there was no more visits. That's when it really got hard. I didn't see her for 19 months. That's when her mother got on drugs, and I was fighting for custody from the joint, for me to have custody because I have full custody of my girl now."

Respondent 5 verbalized:

"Yes, I wrote letters, and I would make her videos. The institution I was at, we were able to make our kid's videos. So, I made her videos at least once a week and sent them home. I kept in contact my whole time incarcerated."

Respondent 6 shared:

"I used to talk to them; I rarely got visits because I was so far away. I would send pictures home. I did keep in contact throughout my time."

Respondent 7 replied:

"I used to have to call my mom's house to talk to her or call my sister's house. My mom and sister brought her to see me; well, her mom did bring her at the

beginning to see me. After a while, her mom couldn't bring her because of her

grandma's funky ass."

Respondent 8 stated:

"I did all three, visits, letters, and calls home. Sometimes there wasn't visits

depending on where a muthafucka was. Colorado was like 1300 miles away from

home. I kept in contact my whole bid."

Theme 5: The overall thoughts on your daughter being told negative things about you

being away.

The fifth theme emerges from the possibility of the daughters being told negative

things about their father while away and having an impact on their father-daughter

relationship. Each participant expressed their experiences of the possibility of negativity

being said about their absence and the avoidance it may have caused.

Respondent 1 replied:

"Yes, it happened to me a lot with her throughout our relationship through her

mother. It happened a lot her mom used to always tell her negative things and turn

her against me, and I always proved her momma wrong. After I came home, she

was able to see it was all lies."

Respondent 2 shared:

"I don't think any of that happened, but you know, it could have been possible,

and you know, probably would have been a different turn out. But overall, like

through the phone calls and everything went well, and there was no negativity, so

I don't think anything like that occurred."

Respondent 3 response was:

Oh, some of the negative things that I think, pretty much of that was I wasn't too much of a father, period. Or I wasn't reliable or dependable or anything like that. I mean things like that if you wanna call that negative. But it puts a strain on your relationship with your child. I was never in her life; you know what I'm saying, like in the physical. You know she was born when I was incarcerated. I think that makes a major difference when you're able to be in your child's life, even though visitations or just talking on the phone. You know, I never really had the opportunity because, at the age of like 3, her mom told me not to call their house no more. Pretty much, I didn't have any contact with my daughter or anything like that. So, if I was able to be there, then there would be a difference in the physical or maybe through calling and checking on her and stuff.

Respondent 4 verbalized:

"Oh, strong thoughts. There were very strong. I knew she was getting told bad things about me. Once I left the state and went to the feds, it got kinda hard because I couldn't physically let her know about the bad of what she was hearing."

Respondent 5 stated:

"I don't really get off or look off into the negativity things of what someone told her. I teach her to make her own decisions, and regardless of what anybody got to say, that's their opinion. Form your own opinion, whatever you think you know right from wrong."

Respondent 6 added:

"They were too young to understand, so I'm not sure if they were told anything negative."

Respondent 7 stated:

"Oh, BIG POSSIBILITY, 100%. My support group, they never let things get out of control. My baby started walking for me when I was in prison; she didn't walk for nobody but me. She didn't walk; I made her stand up and start walking for me in there. I raised her from the inside."

Respondent 8 shared:

"Oh, it's pretty high. I didn't let the negativity affect me because my daughters pretty much knew who I was. The negative stuff didn't interfere with my relationship with them."

Theme 6: Rule enforcement, involved on decisions, and having a fatherly role while incarcerated.

The sixth theme emerged from the data analysis of the participant's parenting role and what input they had on the development and choices of their daughter's life.

Respondent 1 said:

"I didn't try to force the rules. I didn't try to do nothing that I wasn't there to deal with if it went wrong. I didn't never try to force no rules on her, none of that. I really didn't have no input on that because I let her mom deal with it because I wasn't there.

Respondent 2 replied:

"Oh yeah, you know if her mom was getting on her about things, then she would come to me, and I wouldn't take side. I would explain to her that you need to

listen to your mom stuff like that. But I'm glad about the way she turned out; I wasn't very involved in that process. Her mom had the final decision, but if something came up, I would give me input, but her mom had the last say so on that.

Respondent 3 stated:

"I had no knowledge of any of that."

Respondent 4 verbalized:

"I was very involved. Because I know when being around the wrong friends what that leads to. With her doctor visits and everything, I stayed on top of that, even to this day. I take them all to the doctor (laughing); yeah, I wanna know what's going on. Just like at school right now. The school knows to call daddy, and I'm go come out and discipline.

Respondent 5 shared:

"As far as her doctor visits and everything that was solely upon her grandmother, she took care of that aspect of things. But as far as helping with her school and what to look for in being out there in the streets by herself is what I really focused on."

Respondent 6 implied:

"With one daughter, I was informed on things, but with my other daughter, I had no say-so. It made me feel like I was absent in the physical form."

Respondent 7 shared:

"It was natural as if I was there. It's just that my body wasn't there. My voice was LOUD! I had input on everything."

Respondent 8 stated: "

> I was actively involved, but I didn't try to overplay my role. I couldn't threaten
>
> them into doing nothing, and I didn't make a threat I couldn't deliver on. So, I
>
> enforced as much as I could.

Theme 7: Father-daughter relationship after release from incarceration and current

status.

Relationship status once released from incarceration until now is the seventh

emerging theme from the data analysis. Each participant reflected on their relationship

entering society after incarceration until now.

Respondent 1 shared:

> "Our relationship been good. I communicate with them, I talk to them at least
>
> three times a week, and then other than that, that's how it is."

Respondent 2 stated:

> "It was like it was strange being home, but then everything worked out. That's
>
> been great, been really great. I'm proud of her, the way she turned out."

Respondent 3 verbalized:

> Well, really, for real, for real, I'm still trying to get to that positive relationship, to
>
> be honest with you. I mean, it's done got better. You know we umm, she grown
>
> now like 25 about to turn 26. So, I mean, it's gotten better, but it was hard trying
>
> to get that father-daughter bond. Yeah, it was real tough. At one point of time, it
>
> was seeming like instead of the love being real; you find yourself trying to buy
>
> your daughters love during that time. I mean, it goes back to finance dealing with
>
> my daughter. You know the only time she calls me is when she needs me or when

she want something. I mean, I get tired of that; you know, it makes me feel like the only time your child wants to reach out to you is because she wants something or wanna go somewhere, and I don't really think it's fair for your child to be like that. You know why does it feels like the only time your child reaches out is when she wants something. It comes a point when you just sit down and open up to your child and talk to her about it. You know that's what I get out of all of it. I think I have gotten past that pretty much now.

Respondent 4 replied:

We had to start all the way over from scratch because for those 19 months without them coming to see me, the physical form was dimensioning away. Because when you are used to seeing the father gone for that long, even for today, family members are here for the physical form, it's there until after a period of time. It was something like outta sight outta mind to most people. That's what was really going on with her until I did come home. She was stun like I know this, my daddy's voice, but the physical form was new. But our relationship grew beautifully because you know the negativity of what she was getting told by her mother; she finally realized now that it was all lies. And that grew our relationship even stronger because this whole time when I was locked up at first, she was kind of scared to talk to me. Now since I been out, our conversations have gotten an understanding, and comprehension have gotten broader. She is getting older now; she understands and see's things now like, "oh, that's what daddy means.

Respondent 5 shared:

"It's still great; it is really great, surprisingly so, especially when I've been gone for so long. But overall, I think what helped it was being able to have that communication. I'll go back to the first time she came to see me; she was at least 5 years old. When I left, she wasn't even 1 yet, so for her to remember me and know who I was, was surprising in itself. But I think what helped was me consistently sending her videos, talking on the phone with her, letters, and just being there by any means necessary. There have been little challenges or whatnot because she hasn't been used to me being there when I first came home, but we got through those things by her seeing that daddy ain't bending. And everything been positive and healthy."

Respondent 6 said:

"It's been the same as before I left. I have custody of two of my daughters now. I still talk to my other daughter and active in her life. We still building a healthy and positive relationship."

Respondent 7 replied:

There was never a disconnect. She never came with that. I hate you stuff; none of that you missed out. My support group was everything; it's all about a support group when you're in there. If your support group ain't as strong as you are, sometimes it might not work; I guess I was a lucky guy. I was scared when I got out; she was 14 years old. I didn't know how she was go come at me. I seen her a lot but being on the outside is different. She was scared as well; she stood and look at me at first. But overall, that's my little best friend. That's my baby! I mean, it's stronger; it's as if I never left. Our relationship has grown big time. Her

little big head butt will come and lay in bed with me. We have a beautiful father-daughter relationship. That's my heart. But we don't ever talk about it (me being incarcerated). She don't ever bring up the past. She only talks about the fun times of visiting me in prison. It's like I never left. You can't let those kids down; no matter what, give them the real and let them know ahead of time. When kids older, they see the real, and they understand that. Don't try to run no games on the kids because, for some kids, they get that negative feedback/energy from the other parent, but when they see it for themselves, they see it was all just negativity. Once she seen it and understood for herself, I think she was 7 years old when I got my first letter from her.

Respondent 8 shared

"It's been all positive because they are all grown now. We talk, and we all interact."

Theme 8: Daddy's girl

Being a daddy's girl was the final emerging theme from the data analysis. Participants shared their experiences and thoughts on if their daughter was considered a daddy's girl.

Respondent 1 implied:

"Yes, I think she's a daddy's girl still because every time her and her momma have a issue or something, she always call me or try to come around me. I always know the reason why without her even saying anything; I already know because I can tell by how long she stays around me. Every time she come to the house, she stay around me all day, and I know she been arguing with her momma. So, I

know how it is, and she don't never tell me, but I can look at her and tell what it

is."

Respondent 2 shared:

"Yeah, I consider she's a daddy's girl. She's always been and love me a certain

way."

Respondent 3 verbalized"

No, she's definitely not a daddy's girl."

Respondent 4 replied:

"Yes, she's definitely a daddy's girl. It's not like she get any and everything from

me, but she know now that she can come and talk to me about any and everything,

and I won't sugarcoat it or nothing with her. It's more than just materialistic,

when she come and talk to me now, she'll sit back and talk and ask me questions,

and she take heed to the things that I tell her."

Respondent 5 shared:

I don't know if I would say she's a daddy's girl because, like I said, I've been

gone for so long, so a lot of things I missed out on. I didn't really get to

experience a lot of those father-daughter relationships. Even though we have a

great relationship now were we can sit and talk on the phone for hours, we have to

say, "man, look, we gots to get off this phone; we been on here for so long." So

it's always a blessing, but I know it be times she feel some kind of way, but our

relationship is one of the best I couldn't ask for a better relationship. But I know

she have that feeling of missing out on a lot, not getting to do this or getting to do

that. So, I can't really say how that feels or what that would be like, so only thing

I can say is that far as her being a daddy's girl, if she needs something, she definitely know when to call. But she's my baby girl, and I tell her all the time me being free and being home today is solely due to her because I didn't have anything that I have now, but I have her, and she was my motivation for doing what I did to get myself back out for her. Like I said, I'm grateful for everything for the issues I had because at that time, that's all I had, and I needed to get back out here to her, to make a wrong, right.

Respondent 6 stated:

"One is a daddy's girl, and one is not. One would rather talk to her mom about things, and the other would run to me."

Respondent 7 shared:

"Well, my definition of a daddy's girl is a daughter who loves her daddy no matter what. I don't give a fuck how daddy was or what he did; a girl go always love her daddy. It's different from a boy. Yeah, my baby is a daddy's girl to the death. She does no wrong in my eyes, I would never let y'all see that, but she knows when she do wrong, I get her in line. But I am never going to put her out here on blast. That's my baby."

Respondent 8 replied:

"I think they all are daddy's girls. And what that mean to me is that they know they can depend on me. And they know I'm not go tun my back on them. And I think my level-headedness is what they get the most out of, and it makes me feel good. Because it ain't up to me to say whether I'm a great dad, it's up to my kids

to say I'm a great dad. And they give me validation on that. And the biggest

validation they can give you as their dad is trusting their kids with you."

Summary

The data analysis accounts for the current study and provides insight into the research

question: How does incarceration impact African American fathers' parenting experience

with their daughters? There were 8 participants in this study, and audio-recorded

telephone interviews were conducted. Braun & Clark methods were used for thematic

analysis before using MAXQDA for transcription. I did have notes jotted down during

the interview to help emphasize words and take down extra information. Throughout the

coding process, I obtained 36 codes, nine categories, and 8 themes from the first and

second coding cycles analyzed data.

Each theme reflected the interview questions; however, the themes allowed the

participant's responses to flow into a story. Each participant had a story to share about

their personal experiences of having a daughter before, during, and after incarceration. In

the responses to each theme, the participants provided great information that shows how

the father-daughter relationship evolves over time. Each participant's responses were raw,

uncut, with no filter expressing their parenting and father roles while absent from their

daughter for long periods.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the interpretation of the finds and provide support for

the research question and the eight themes provided in this chapter. Chapter 5 will also

present the study's limitations, recommendations, and implications for positive social

change. Lastly, in chapter 5, I will provide final thoughts from participants and highlight

notable quotes that stood out during the interviews.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Introduction

This generic qualitative study was conducted to understand African American fathers' parenting role/experience while incarcerated to help them become better parents upon release. During this process, I recruited nine participants through purposeful sampling. Although nine participants were recruited, only eight qualified for the study. Data collection was completed through open-ended interview questions via telephone (see Appendix C). Once each interview was complete, the audio recordings were transcribed and analyzed using Braun and Clark's method of data analysis. During the process of coding, I found eight themes from the overall analyzed data, such as (a) being actively present and building a healthy attachment bond to establish father-daughter relationships; (b) building good father-daughter relationships; and (c) explanation, reasons for being away, and reassurance of why daddy is not coming home; (d) keeping in contact while away and how often; (e) the overall thoughts on your daughter being told negative things about you being away; (f) rule enforcement, involved on decisions, and having a fatherly role while incarcerated; (g) father-daughter relationship after release from incarceration and current status; and (h) daddy's girl.

Conducting this study will allow professionals from the justice system to social workers to understand how African American father-daughter relations are essential before, during, and after their release from incarceration. There are no research findings on the study involving African American father-daughter relationships that focus on the aspect of fathers incarcerated. However, studies are available on father-daughter relationships and studies on mother-child relationships. Once again, there is minimal

research on the parenting roles of African American fathers in the justice system that may have an attachment bond with their daughters.

Hopefully, the findings and analysis of this study can help and support existing and future parenting programs and possibly personnel in the criminal justice system. Programs such as the National Fatherhood Initiative and National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse are just a few programs that may benefit from this research. These programs cover many great topics discussed in the literature review section of Chapter 2 that would help any father become the best dad he can be. The participants provided great information not always shown in the media about formerly incarcerated African American males' dedication and hard work as a father behind bars. Key findings in this study show that African American men are involved in their child's life before, during, and after their incarceration release. It also shows how the fathers contact their children throughout their sentence to be present mentally and emotionally. I will discuss and interpret the findings obtained from the identified themes in this chapter and compare them to the peer review findings in Chapter 2. This chapter also discusses the study's limitations, recommendations, implications, and summary.

Interpretation of the Findings

Each of the eight participants in this study had several matters in common, yet their stories offered a different perspective as formerly incarcerated African American fathers. According to Thomas et al. (2022), the qualitative analysis showed fathers' three attributes during their incarceration: a nurturer, a protector, and a provider. These qualities are the same as some fathers physically present in their child's life. Being that a person is out of sight does not always mean they are out of mind. The participants'

experiences will reveal what it's like to be an African American male, father, and formerly incarcerated inmate.

The findings of this qualitative analysis address the research question, which was arranged into eight themes that explain how African American fathers faced fatherhood while at the same time suffering separation from their families due to incarceration. The themes characterize eight unique fatherhood identities: actively present and building healthy attachment bonds, building good father-daughter relationships, explanations, reasons for being away, reassurance, keeping in contact and how often, negative thoughts on way daddy is behind bars, relationship status upon release and now, and daddy's girl. These themes align with the four stages of Bowlby's attachment theory. The four stages include secure attachment, resistance, avoidance, and disoriented. Throughout the results section, aliases are utilized in place of participants' names to protect privacy.

Daddy is No Longer Here

The second interview question explained how old the daughters were when daddy left for prison. This question shows how an attachment was established (if any) before dad went to prison. One dad stated, "she (my daughter) was four days old when I got incarcerated." As the literature review section in Chapter 2 mentioned, under Incarcerated African American fathers' children are being raised without their dads present in their life. Another dad shared, "she (my daughter) was born while I was incarcerated. The crimes of the participants were not asked, but as Chapter 2 stated, racism and drugs are two of the leading causes of imprisonment for African American males in the United States (Enders et al., 2018). Although African American fathers face many barriers while

incarcerated, this was not a merging theme. In Chapter 2, Siennick (2016) shared fathers in prison lack time with their families, which impacts their children.

Theme 1: Actively present and build healthy attachment bonds.

Like the first theme, actively presenting and building healthy attachment bonds supported the literature identified in Chapter 2. Many of the participants reflected on simply building that bond with their daughter. This included being in the physical form, providing financially, and just being a dad to their daughter. Of the 8 participants, only one father did not have the pleasure of building that healthy attachment bond (Bowlby's attachment theory stage 1) during the first two years of his daughter's life. The peer-reviewed literature supported girls value the father-daughter attachment bond early. One dad shared how he established an attachment bond "I was active in her life before I went to prison; I saw her every day."

Theme 2: Building "good" father-daughter relationships.

Building "good" father-daughter relationships are associated with the literature presented in Chapter 2. My literature highlighted the good relationships these participants built with their daughters as the daughter grew older. The literature supports how early fathers' involvement with their daughters has decreased the risk of early puberty, reduced teen pregnancy, and reduced early sexual activity (Yogman & Garfield, 2016). A quick response from one participant was expressed with excitement; he stated, "Shit, that was my first daughter; our relationship was beautiful! You know she was my first child." Just hearing how this father expressed his relationship with his daughter provided a sense of his impact on his daughter's early life. His response shows his attachment bond with his first child (daughter).

Theme 3: Exploration, reasons for being away, and reassurance.

Exploration, reasons for being away, and reassurance were the third emerging themes from interview question 4: At what point, if any, do you explain to your daughter why you were incarcerated? This theme was interesting because the findings were 50/50 between participants who shared why they were incarcerated with their daughter and those who said nothing. Peer review literature supported this theme by tying into the father-daughter relationship, and the impact incarceration may have on the daughters. A participant shared, "It was when I was incarcerated that she got curious why I wasn't coming home, and I explained to her." Another participant stated, "I was explaining to her that daddy can't come home; I did some bad things that landed me here. There I was, letting her know that I will be home soon and everything and that I need her to try to be strong and wait until I get home." Another participant stated, "I don't think I ever explained to them."

Theme 4: Keeping in contact and how often.

Keeping in contact and how often emerged from interview question six, "During your time of incarceration, were you able to keep in contact with your daughter, and if so, what form of contact (phone, visits, letters)? How often?" Peer review literature supports this theme by the communication level fathers have with daughters. As stated in the literature review, some fathers chat/communicate with their daughters about romantic and sexual relationships as they age. Although most of the participant's daughters were very young when they were incarcerated, those levels of communication probably did not happen. However, each participant either did or tried to keep in contact with their daughter throughout their incarceration sentence. Forms of contact ranged among the

participants from phone calls, letters, visitations, and even videos. A few participants

shared: "I kept in contact my whole bid." Another participant shared, "Sometimes there

weren't visits depending on where a muthafucka was. Colorado was like 1300 miles away

from home. I kept in contact my whole bid." One participant stated, "Once I got to the

feds, I could still contact her, call home, but there were no more visits. That's when it got

hard. I didn't see her for 19 months." One statement stood out to me because I had never

heard of this form of contact from prison; the participant shared, "The institution I was at,

we were able to make our kids videos. I kept in contact my whole time incarcerated."

Theme 5: Negative implications on why daddy is behind bars.

The fifth theme emerged from interview questions eight and 8(a), which asked,

"What are your thoughts on the possibility of your daughter being told negative things

about you which may have influenced your father-daughter relationship? 8(a) Do you feel

like there was an avoidance that made your daughter look or think of you in a different

perspective? Explain.

Peer review literature from Chapter 2 supports this theme by discussing

incarceration's impact on children when a parent is locked up. Not only does the parent

being locked up cause a negative impact on the child but being told negative things about

the child's father can also carry more burden for that child. This theme was based on

negative things told to the daughter from various sources (mother, grandmother, aunts,

cousins, etc.). Each participant shared their experiences and thoughts of their daughters

being told negative things about them while incarcerated. One participant replied, "Oh,

BIG POSSIBILITY, 100%. My support group, never let things get out of control."

Another participant shared, "Oh, some of the negative things that I think I wasn't too

much of a father, period. Or I wasn't reliable or dependable or anything like that." Here's the statement of another participant "It happened a lot her mom always used to tell her negative things and turn her against me, and I always proved her momma wrong." Two participants had different reactions; one indicated, "I don't think any of that happened, but you know it could have been possible, and you probably would have been a different turnout." The other implied, "I don't get off or look off into the negative things of what someone told her. I teach her to make her own decisions, and regardless of what anybody got to say, that's their opinion."

Theme 6: Rule enforcement, involvement in decisions, and fatherly role while incarcerated.

My analysis and findings for this theme revealed a split on how involved these participants were with their daughters while incarcerated. This theme emerged from interview questions 9, 9(a), and 9(b). The interview questions asked: Tell me about your parenting style while incarcerated. 9 (a) How did you enforce your rules? 9(b) How much input did you have in the decision-making process of your daughter's life? Please provide some examples. (Example: doctor/dentist visits, school, friends, etc.). The peer-review literature supports this theme under African American Men and Parenting after Incarceration. Finance is one of the leading parenting roles that fathers face, unable to provide financially as they used to before incarceration. Some participants felt like they had no voice in their daughter's life because they were incarcerated and not there physically to contribute or give an opinion. One participant spoke, "It was natural as if I was there." Another participant shared, "I was actively involved, but I didn't try to

overplay my role." Another participant revealed, "But helping with her school and what to look for in being out there in the streets by herself is what I focused on."

Theme 7: Relationship status upon release and now.

Peer review literature supported this theme in Chapter 2. This theme emerged from interview questions 10, 10(a), and 10(b); the questions asked: Tell me about your relationship with your daughter since you have been released from incarceration? 10 (a) How was the connection, was there a disconnect or uncertain feelings? Please explain. 10 (b) How has the relationship grown in a positive or negative way? Please explain. Data analysis shows that this theme produced great detailed information from each participant. The following statements are the ones that stood out the most. "At one point, it seemed like instead of the love being real, you find yourself trying to buy your daughter's love during that time." Another participant "We had to start over from scratch because the physical form was dimensioning away for those 19 months without them coming to see me." A third response "There was never a disconnect."

Theme 8: Daddy's girl

The final theme emerged from interview question 12 to understand what the participants considered "daddy's girl," the question asked, "Would you consider your daughter as a "daddy's girl" if so, tell me what that means? The literature review supports this theme by research showing the effects of not having a father in their daughter's life. Research has shown that girls go through so much without having their fathers physically present. Even the participants provided their definition of a daddy's girl. Participant reaction "No, she's not a daddy's girl." Another response "I don't know if I would say she's a daddy's girl because, as I said, I've been gone for so long, so a lot of things I

missed out on." On the other hand, the following responses show a more positive response. Participant shared, "Well, my definition of a daddy's girl is a daughter who loves her daddy no matter what." The participant stated, "Yeah, I consider she's a daddy's girl."

According to the four stages of Bowlby's attachment theory, my study outcomes revealed that participants who were actively involved in their daughter's lives had a more robust attachment bond than a resistant or disoriented bond. The discoveries support Bowlby's attachment theory. Therefore, chapter 2 verified that individuals who were present/active during their incarceration sentence had less hassle rebuilding or re-establishing a father-daughter bond.

Limitations of the Study

Data analysis of this study was consistent with the limitations of the study findings mentioned in chapter one. Gathering background information about the participant's incarceration history was one of the limitations of the research study. Another limitation was understanding the participant's role as a formerly incarcerated African American father. A considerable sample size to acquire the essential data was a limitation that addressed the possibility of not recruiting enough participants. However, I was able to recruit 9 participants for my study, yet only 8 participants fit the study's criteria. My sample size for the study was 8-10 participants. Those 8 participants allowed me to gather rich and detailed information for my study.

Recommendations

Although I found very little to no research focused on formerly incarcerated African American males with daughters, research is available on fathers. I would like to

see more research focusing on African American males because they seem to be the race with the most negative image as fathers. This especially applies to African American males from low-poverty communities. As stated in chapter one, research shows African American males with a history of incarceration provide less than fathers who have not been incarcerated. This is the negativity portrayed in the media, but my study shows that the participants were active before, during, and after their incarceration sentences.

The analysis and findings of the generic qualitative study answered the research question: How does incarceration impact African American fathers' parenting experience with their daughters? The eight formerly incarcerated African American males shared their experiences through audio telephone interviews. The analysis of the findings shows the interconnectivity between father-daughter relationships and Bowlby's attachment theory, along with the peer review articles in chapter two. Although some of the themes did not align with some articles in chapter two, the overall study aligns to show that Bowlby's attachment theory was present in the lives of many of the participant's relationships with their daughter.

I recommend the following for future studies on generic qualitative studies. Future studies can entail a larger sample size, including daughters and sons. That sample size should also include formerly incarcerated African American males who have served a minimum of 5 years, compared to my current study, which focused on individuals released 5-15 years. I recommend future research on daughters' perspectives of having a father incarcerated while growing up. That study can compare the different experiences of both a father and daughter. Overall, my current study can produce many future research topics that can be useful in creating fatherhood programs, reentry programs, and

parenting classes, all of this information can be meaningful within jails and prison systems to provide fathers the opportunity to be "dad" again once they are released back to society.

Hopefully, my study will bring awareness to the justice system and other professions on how not all African American fathers are deadbeats. This study has shed some light on those fathers actively in their daughter's life. It may not always be easy, but this study shows it's still possible to be a father behind bars.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for criminal justice systems programs and policies that impact African American fathers in jail/prison. A positive social change for this study would be to offer parenting programs that help fathers throughout their sentence and provide specific programs for fathers transitioning back to society at least one year before their release. Providing these programs in the prison system may help fathers maintain and build positive/healthy relationships with their child/family from a distance. Programs such as the National Fatherhood Initiative provides the tools and training to increase father involvement. If such programs were offered through the criminal justice system, I believe father involvement would be more noticeable.

There are many positive ways to implement social change in the criminal justice system, but the question is, "will change happen?" As Thomas et al. (2022) stated, prisons/jails should be able to provide and support parent-child contact during incarceration; this may include but is not limited to low-cost or free phone calls, in-person, or remote visits. Those things sound simple and easy, but the criminal justice system has not implemented such changes in prisons/jails. Providing the parents with

low-cost or free phone calls to their children or in-person/ remote visits can strengthen those parents' self-esteem and identity. It would also increase resilience in both parents and children.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shed some light on how involved African American fathers are in their children's lives, whether before, during, or after incarceration. Although my sample size was small, it provided detail on the importance of how incarceration may or may not affect father-daughter relationships/bonds. There is a stigma attached to African American fathers. The identified themes from this study highlighted the positivity of attachment bonds and healthy father-daughter relationships despite any negativity instilled in the daughters. I hope this study will bring about positive social change in the criminal justice system, even on a local community level. The following are quotes that some of the participants wanted to share as their final thoughts on the interview.

> **R1 shared:** basically, a lot of fathers being away from their kids then when they come back to society it is like some parts of me didn't even want to deal with my kids, because of some of their mothers. I thought they were wrong, but after I grew up and thought about it, I realized I got to be the dad and not the child. Many people don't admit to or don't want to admit it, but I finally saw the wrong and try to correct things now.

> **R4 stated:** with people locked up away from their kids for a long time, it puts a damper on the child. Especially when they're young and unable to communicate with their father because a child looks up to their father like you're my superhero. Nowadays, the incarceration system is higher. With the inmates not physically

having contact or sent way downstate or upstate away from their loved ones, the physical presence means a lot. When I came home, I got full custody of my little girl, it took me a minute to do so, but through the steps and degrees of education, I got her. Education plays a big part in the process. That's what Black men must get first; we must re-educate ourselves. The education we get in these school systems is not there. The educational program got me through the penitentiary; they offered it, and I took it. I definitely utilized my time with education, so that's what I want my kids to know. Even today, my little girl is a high honor roll student. I went through it with my pops being incarcerated, so I knew how it felt with my father locked up. I didn't want my kids going through the same thing!

R7 implied: "one thing you can't do with girls is play with their hearts! You have to be prepared for the teenage, YES, she go have a boyfriend and temptation go come, but you have to be prepared for it. You can't overlook it, be honest, talk to her, and give her the game. You have to be real with your daughters because if you don't, who be real to her. She go start taking advice from so ol' knucklehead. You have to break old patterns. You are your child's first teacher!"

R8 replied: "daughters hit your pockets more than sons, (laughing) that's the one thing.

But you have to do what you have to do. You don't ever want to see them (daughters) going through nothing, but sometimes you have to stand back and let them do them."

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Appendix A: Flyer

A new study looking for previous incarcerated African American adult fathers with daughters. Must been released within the last 5-15 years

A new study is geared towards African American fathers who are ex-offenders and have a daughter. This study is called "Parenting Black Daughters: The parenting experiences of previously incarcerated African American males." The purpose of the generic qualitative study is to gain an understanding of African American fathers' parenting experience with their daughters.

This study is part of a doctoral research study by Sarai Hollis, Ph. D student at Walden University

About the study:
- One structured interview 45-60 minutes
- Real names will not be used in the study
- Interviews can be completed by phone, video chat, or in-person

Criteria needed to participate:
- must be an ex-offender
- must have a daughter
- must be an adult African American male
- must be released from prison within the last 5-15 years

Appendix B: Consent form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research study on providing parenting experiences of previously incarcerated African American fathers and daughters. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study seeks 8-10 volunteers who meet the following criteria:

- Must be an ex-offender

- Must have a daughter

- Must be an adult African American male

- Must have been released from prison within the last 5-15 years

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Sarai Hollis, a doctoral student at Walden University.

Study Purpose:
The purpose of the generic qualitative study is to gain an understanding of previously

incarcerated African American fathers' parenting experiences with their daughters.

Procedures:
This study will involve you completing the following steps:

- Conducting an open-ended audio-recorded interview for 45-60 minutes

- Identify the accuracy of the interview transcripts. After all, interviews are complete, a follow-up email will take place to conduct member checking. Member checking is to ascertain information collected is not misinterpreted. This process should take 20-30 minutes to review.

Here are some sample questions
1. At what age did you become a father? Was the pregnancy planned?
2. What were the ages of your daughter(s) during your time of incarceration?
3. Were you active in the first two years of your daughter's life?
   a. What was that relationship like?
   b. Was there a secure attachment bond during this time period?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So, everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not.

If you decide to join the study, you can change your mind later. You may stop at any time. The researcher will follow up will each participant to let them know whether or not they were selected for the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study would pose minimal risk to your wellbeing.

This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. However, the benefit of this study is to educate the larger community on how incarceration has an impact on the lives of African American fathers and their relationships with their daughters. This study would be beneficial to the Bureau of Prisons to provide incarcerated fathers with parenting education. Once the analysis is complete, the researcher will share the overall results by email a link to the summary.

For participants who may want or need support, you are encouraged to call 211. This is a toll-free resource for support such as counseling.

Payment:

There is no compensation for participating in this study

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by data security measures such as a password-protected computer. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, then destroyed.

Contacts and Questions:

If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here**. It expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you understand the study well enough and wish to volunteer, please reply to the email with the words "I Consent" by stating you give your consent to participate in this interview.

Appendix C: Research question, Demographic information, Interview questions

Research question: How does incarceration impact African American fathers' parenting experience with their daughters?

Demographic information:

- How old are you?

- How many children do you have? How many are daughters?

- How many times have you been incarcerated? What was your longest stay?

- How long have you been out since your last incarceration?

Interview questions:

1. At what age did you become a father? Was the pregnancy planned?
2. What were the ages of your daughter(s) during your time of incarceration?
3. Were you active in the first two years of your daughter's life?
   c. What was that relationship like?
   d. Was there a secure attachment bond during this time period?
4. At what point, if any, do you explain to your daughter why you were incarcerated.
5. As a parent, what is one thing that you hope your daughter could understand about you being absent from her life?
6. During your time of incarceration, were you able to keep in contact with your daughter? If so, what form of contact (phone, visits, letters)? How often?
7. If you had no contact with your daughter while incarcerated, how did that make you feel as a father?
8. What are your thoughts on the possibility of your daughter being told negative things about you which may have influenced your father-daughter relationship?
   a. Do you feel like there was an avoidance that made your daughter look or think of you in a different perspective? Explain.
9. Tell me about your parenting style while you were incarcerated.
   a. How did you enforce your rules?

    b. How much input did you have in the decision-making process of your daughter's life? Please provide some examples. (Example: doctor/dentist visits, school, friends, etc.).

10. Tell me about your relationship with your daughter since you have been released from incarceration?

    a. How was connection, was there a disconnect or uncertain feelings? Please explain.

    b. How has the relationship grown in a positive or negative way? Please explain

11. Based on your absence, what were some issues/behaviors in your daughters' life?

    ~~a.~~ How would you describe these issues/behaviors which caused her to act out?

    b. How could these issues/behaviors have been avoided if you were physically present in her life? How might things have been different?

12. Would you consider your daughter as a "daddy's girl"? If so, tell me what that means?

13. What are your other thoughts, comments, or information that you would like to share before we wrap up this interview?