



# Parents' Perceptions of their College Educated African American Daughters: Attributes Leading to Success and Advice for Parents

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## *Abstract*

This was an effort to address the phenomena of college-educated Black women from their parent's perspective, as well as provide advice directly from the parents of those women. Parents of college educated Black daughters who attended at least 2 years in college were recruited to participate in this survey. Twenty-seven parents completed this survey by answering demographic and open-ended questions. The results provided were answers to research questions related to attributions of success, as well as direct advice to parents of Black daughters. Conclusions regarding parents'

attributions to their daughters' academic successes included, but were not limited to, their daughter's motivation, extra-curricular support, and parent-daughter dynamics. Parents should be actively involved; maintain the course for the long-term with support, love, and faith; as well as keep a balance between being strict and supportive. Also, recommended are meaningful and enriching activities that are literacy-based.

### *Keywords*

African American, Black Psychology, college readiness, parents, women

## Introduction

Although the transition away from a deficit-model mindset has been a mantra for many years (Cross, 2021; Harry & Klinger, 2007; Hillard, 1995; James-Myers & Speight, 2010; Kunjufu, 2004), much of the scholarship on Black students and their parents in education has focused on their problems rather than their successes (Marchand et al., 2019). Nevertheless, for over five decades, the recently deceased progenitor of the term, Black identity development, Cross (2021), offered a great deal in his scholarship. Cross showed that scholars before him, such as Kenneth and Mami Clark and E. Franklin Frazier, may have done more harm than good by contributing to scholarship about Black American life that tended to focus on “cultural inferiority.” This is especially true for those researchers who started the 1900s speaking about the deficits of Black people to gain sympathy for public policy (e.g., Brown v. Board of Education, War on Poverty). Nevertheless, in spite of the very real and present challenges that Black people face, buffering continues to take place to insulate children and families from the legacy of racism and racial aggressions. For Sue et al. (2007), everyday buffering speaks to the psychological capacity and skill to protect oneself in the face of micro (subtle) and even macro (obvious) racial aggressions. Cross's research goes on to explain the challenges Black people faced in the past due to enslavement, and how we frame our view of Black people today:

Most importantly, we need to keep in mind that personalities, prosocial attitudes, and general psychological competence all resulted from the way they were raised as children in slavery, at the hands of human beings who were themselves slaves. This means the dehumanizing schemes of the elites were not as effective as originally designed, despite overwhelming evidence confirming the intent of slave owners was to fashion hell on earth. Thus we need to decouple intent from consequence. For humans who spent infancy through childhood in slavery to subsequently display remarkable success as freedmen and freedwomen, when they reached (adulthood), is historical evidence that something profoundly human happened to them as children, when the slave community shaped their self-concepts and informed their world views. (p. 154)

In effect, Black parents have demonstrated that they are exceedingly capable of raising their children in America to achieve outstanding accomplishments in art, education, science, etc., despite significant obstacles.

Noguera (2003), Skiba et al. (2010), as well as Smith & Harper (2010), offer examples of rigorous theoretical and empirical research that highlights the obstacles Black students must overcome when graduating from high school and becoming college students. These include disproportionate discipline and suspension for Black girls in elementary and secondary schools (Kunjufu, 2014; Morris, 2016), as well as challenges with academics, in both reading and mathematics, as indicated by lower test scores (Kunjufu, 2014). In the “decade of the woman,” from 1976-1985, there was a glimmer of hope in that more Black women were graduating from high school and going on to enroll in college (Wilkerson, 1985). Yet, Black girls and women faced many challenges in high school and college. Over twenty years later, some scholars were suggesting that Black women were “a new model minority” due to some interesting results of a review of research at that time, which compared them to their peers (Kaba, 2008). Kaba, utilized data points in his assertion that Black women experienced a relatively high college enrollment and degree attainment rate and fewer Black women died per every 100,000 of their population than Black men, White men, and White women. Moreover, there was a higher proportion of Black women, who were 100 years and over, compared to Black men and White men. Proportionally, fewer Black women than Black men, White men, and White women

committed suicide. Also, fewer Black women than all men commit crimes. Finally, proportionally, due largely to Black women, fewer Blacks consume alcohol and illicit drugs than Whites, etc. Kaba's article also presented numerous examples showing that Black women disproportionately experience discrimination in comparison to other groups, including their male counterparts (e.g., challenges paying college loan debt; fewer Black women as college full professors or college presidents; and earning less money in general, etc.). However, numerous examples also show that Black women are performing better or have higher participation rates on important economic, political, and social variables or indicators than non-Black women in the USA.

There remain challenges with economic development for Black women who have attended college, according to Kaba's (2017) more recent study. Black women's achievement in college enrollment has come at a financial cost, especially when compared to other groups. When we consider that Black families and the wealth gap are significant, the lack of funding from parents or family members is one factor that can deter or make college completion a challenge. This is compounded with the fact that, as Kaba notes, Black women pay more for college than most other groups of students. Other factors cited for the high debt burden on Black American students, especially Black women, are varied. However, according to Kaba, they can include the shift from grants to loans with significant interest rates to pay for college, as well as the lack of scholarships, research assistantships, and traineeships. This is compared to students from other groups. The final factor is the high cost of college education at for-profit institutions, which Black women tend to enroll at in high rates. Some recommendations to address this problem include, but are not limited to, increasing the number of "grant aid" and lowering the cost of undergraduate instruction.

By the mid 2010's, there was a focused discussion about Black women's college attainment. Research indicated that while 60-70% of Black women earned college degrees, only 28 – 30% of Black men earned college degrees (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). Blalock and Vonshay Sharpe (2012) also found that the percentage of Black women enrolled as first-time freshmen was greater than the percentage of any other non-white group. This educational aspiration was indicated via the growth in the total number of Black women enrolled at for-profit institutions: as first-time freshmen, they more than doubled. Also, Historically Black Colleges and

Universities (HBCUs) were successful in conferring degrees to Black women. According to the *National Center for Education Statistics* (n.d.), as of 2019:

The 6-year graduation rate was higher for females than for males overall (63 vs. 57 percent) and within each racial/ethnic group. The gender gap was narrowest among Pacific Islander students (53 percent for females vs. 50 percent for males) and widest among Black students (44 percent for females vs. 34 percent for males). (n.d.)

Black women, according to this data, appear to be doing well when it comes to enrolling in college and are in a better position than their male counterparts when it comes to graduating from college.

When it comes to Black parents, much of the research conducted about and with Black parents focuses on the challenges they face (Reynolds, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2015; Stevenson, 2003). Researchers, such as Hilliard (2003), and, more recently Cross (2021), Harper, (2012), Love (2023), and Marchand et al. (2019), have remained at the forefront in challenging others to consider what is going well, generally with Black people, and especially, with schooling and education. The current study focuses on the latter approach to identifying factors that lead to better life outcomes for Black girls and women. This is part of a growing camp of literature that has gone beyond highlighting shortcomings and vulnerability of Black women, in general (Evans-Winters, 2019), and Black people, specifically (Cross, 2021; Hillard, 2003) while, at the same time, moving away from deficit model. In the stories of fraternities and sororities that Black men and women have sought to join and/or in the expansion of higher education after World War II, due to the GI Bill being offered to African American service men and women, we find that college attainment for our current generation of Black people has not been easy; but, was always sought after, even when initially excluded (Ross, 2015).

## Purpose of the Present Study

This qualitative study investigates the perceptions of parents about raising college ready Black women and identifies attributions of success amongst Black women who enrolled in college and/or finished college. Too often, educators, in general, are concerned that Black parents are not involved in their children's education (Harry &

Kalyanpur, 1999; Harry & Kalyanpur, 2006; Kunjufu, 2004; Reynolds, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2015; Trotman, 2001). This study gives voice to the experiences of Black women as a result of their parents' involvement. Furthermore, parents and educators will learn about advice and mistakes to avoid in order to discuss their challenges and celebrations in raising Black daughters. As James-Myers and Speight (2010) have charged, "African psychologists must also be fearless in their studies, realizing that in order to meet the mental health needs of people of African descent current systems in place must be revamped and revitalized and new systems must be created" (p. 78). This study seeks to follow in that vein, emphasizing Optimal Psychology, via James-Myers and Speight, who state that Optimal Psychology "emerges from the realization that mainstream psychology and its psychological analyses was not been effective in meeting the mental health needs of people acknowledging African descent, and non-immigrant African Americans in particular" (p. 70). Help seeking behavior is important here as well. From Stanton Salazar et al. (2001), the authors of this current study are following in the same effort.

They write, "specifically, we look at young people's proclivity (or disinclination) to resolve personal, academic, and family problems through the mobilization of relationships and through the seeking of social support (i.e., coping by seeking help)" (p. 50). Therefore, in this present study, the authors asked Black parents who have sent their daughters to college: what they attribute their child's academic achievement to, as accomplished by their daughters?

## Parent Voice

For Stevenson (2003), families working for their own betterment and voicing their needs is important in his critique of school based mental health services and schools in general. Stevenson admonishes educators to be ready for change when the voices of parents inform our work. Because, as researchers, our prior notions about what or how they think will impact our current understanding and, hopefully, change educators, students, mental health providers, and community members for the better, especially since researchers and practitioners seek to serve them and their children. Finally, for Stevenson, social connections that become networks can help with the mobilization of parents to ensure academic success of their children.

## Previous Research with Parents of Black Youth

According to Evans-Winters (2019), there have not been many scholars discussing the “socio-emotional and educational development of Black girls and women from a strengths-based perspective” (p. 73). Evans-Winters goes on to lament that many topics focused on the life of Black girls and young women from a deficit or pathology lens. For example, focusing on such issues as school drop-out rates; teen pregnancy; obesity; and gang-involvement to smoking cessation. The strengths-based frame focuses on funds of knowledge the student and their family already possess, as well as resilience in overcoming obstacles (Linkins et al., 2015). Davenport (2019), Harris (2023), Marchand et al. (2019), and Sneed (2011) have examined Black girls and young women achieving success and demonstrating resilience from their parents’ perspective. Strategies to advocate and model overcoming, for Bailey-Fakhoury (2014), are seen as important to daughter’s success in education.

Even fewer studies capture what parents indicated as factors of success for their daughters. Davenport (2019) provided a theoretical lens to see Black mothers as educational leaders who often developed a relationship, “of an assumed or appointed leader and followers with emphasis on the leaders’ ability to influence followers to accomplish a goal” (p. 102). However, Davenport encourages readers to acknowledge the context of care in this role of leadership for mothers of Black daughters. Harris (2023), more recently, has focused on resilience and the support single parents have given to Black daughters in their educational journey. Each participant that Harris surveyed expressed the importance of having at least one Black woman who had significantly impacted her life in a positive manner, or expressed a need for one. Moreover, Bailey-Fakhoury (2014) identified strategies that suburban Detroit middle-class, African American mothers used to promote racial identity in their elementary-age daughters as they attended a predominately White school. These strategies are presence, imaging, and code-switching. Although only a sample of five mothers, the findings showed that the mothers encouraged resilience; influenced the development of a positive racial-gender identity; and were embedded within a gendered racial socialization process. The majority of the aforementioned studies in this section are dissertations. There remains a need for larger data samples, expanding anti-deficit frames, and further inquiry into the phenomena related to positive outcomes for parents of Black girls and young women.

Mitchall and Jaeger (2018) found that for low-income, first-generation students' self-determination was enhanced when parents were involved in college planning; served as positive examples; set high academic standards early; and fostered students' sense of career volition. Despite some things parents did to undermine their children, such as limiting their child's choices, not setting clear expectations for college attendance, providing little feedback, and over emphasizing family obligations, there are parents who still seek an education for their children.

## Social Capital and Parent Empowerment

According to Stanton-Salazar (2001), "social capital is a set of properties existing within socially patterned associations that, when activated, enable them to accomplish their goals or to empower themselves in some meaningful way. Such associations occur between individuals... between individuals in a group... and between groups within a community" (p. 265). Lareau and Hovart (1999), as well as Orr (1999), endeavored to capture parents' efforts at the school and district level, respectively. Although these two aforementioned studies were conducted in different parts of the country, they both looked at the phenomena of parents utilizing their social capital to challenge seemingly authoritarian decisions made at the school and district level. Yet, they did so by connecting their social networks, and mobilizing those networks in ways the school personnel had not been able to do, in order to demand larger reforms of their school systems. What they found is that educators had often framed their interactions with parents as problems rather than as opportunities. Additionally, when parents framed their issues as opportunities, even when they were addressing issues such as greater access to quality instruction and service, the emphasis was not placed on the deficit of the child and families but on the need for systemic and evidence-based changes that empower families (Gamble, 2007). Sadan (2005) defines empowerment as, "a process by which people struggle for control of their lives and their environments." In the schools and districts where Lareau and Hovart (1999) were observing, the district- or school-wide educational reforms did not work; but, the people did work towards their own empowerment rather than waiting for school officials to change things.

## Positive Parental Experiences with Schooling

Reynolds (2010) indicated that when discussing parental involvement, there is often a focus on deficits in parenting, as well as school personnel's perceptions of Black students' motivation for academic success. To investigate the impact on parent involvement for the educational outcomes of Black students, Reynolds (2010) surveyed a sample of 9 parents of children in elementary and middle school who cited diverse types of discrimination; but, racism was a root cause of unpleasant experiences they had within schools. Most damaging were the implied negative messages Black parents received about their children, especially boys, in this instance, as they explained their life at school. A limitation of this study was that it was restricted to small locations. Nonetheless, struggles with identity and stressors, due to micro-aggressions, were two main themes in parents' responses. Reynolds (2010) also found that parent role construction and the school personnel's invitations to connect with parents have a positive and significant relationship among Black parents for increased involvement.

In more recent studies by Marchand et al. (2019), of which Reynolds was a part, these authors underscored that:

Although decades of research document the positive benefits of parent involvement in schools, Black parents are not always welcomed in schooling spaces. Black parents have sometimes been perceived as uncaring about their children's education, and often racism has precluded their full inclusion and meaningful participation. (p. 367)

The authors go on to suggest that Black parents' critical reflections and motivations, influence the ways that they engage and advocate for their children in the school system that is often hostile to them as parents of Black children. Moreover, critical consciousness and critical race theory are used to bring attention to oppressive systems and structures, and have been utilized in the struggle for justice in the past with some level of success. About critical consciousness and critical race theory as applied to parent involvement, Marchand et al. (2019) state:

Further using the CC conceptual framework, we argue that parents' analysis of inequities in schools influences the reasons and ways they engage with their

children’s schools. When taken together, parents’ critical analysis of racism in schools creates particular forms of parent participation—which we call critical parent–school engagement—that accounts for parents’ intentions around their involvement and considers their understanding of racial inequities. Critical parent–school engagement reflects a social justice perspective in that it recognizes patterns and practices in schools that perpetuate inequity. By combining CRT (to contextually and historically understand Black parent participation) and CC (to examine the individual psychological processes that parents experience), this synthesis further extends literature that frames the developmental processes of Black parent advocacy in schools. (p. 368)

Actively engaging and critically strategizing past obstacles of institutional and interpersonal misperceptions around parents’ interest, involvement, engagement, and parental skills were seen as important for positive outcomes for Black students and their parents in the study. Cross (2021) has outlined that this is an old trope to depict Black parents as lacking in humanity by being poor in their parenting; but, history shows us something different: that in spite of many obstacles, Black parents manage to raise children to overcome those obstacles. Moreover, as James-Myers and Speight (2010) have noted, “African Americans have remarkably managed to play an integral role in all levels of this nation’s development from economics, science and cultural arts to moral leadership” (p. 68) in spite of efforts to thwart their progress.

## Factors of Success for Parents and Daughters in the Literature

Watkins (2006) conducted a qualitative study on how African American parents teach their children to excel academically. Themes of faith; literacy; teaching intergenerational life skills; high expectations; experiential motivation; parent advocacy; and family rituals were areas that played a key role in their children’s academic success. This was a smaller study including a handful of parents, but provides readers with points to consider. This study, by Watkins, also brings us back to some of Cross’ findings in his work on Black identity development. Cross and Watkins offer optimistic and practical strategies to deal with day-to-day realities.

Oshin and Milan (2019) sought to address the Strong Black Woman (SBW) ideal as it emphasizes self-reliance and strength, and may be reflected in maternal

socialization that is largely theoretical or qualitative. This SBW ideal in the study provided examples of women being strong-willed, independent, and assertive. According to the authors' review of the literature, Black girls tend to display high levels of self-esteem, regardless of their high or low academic achievement in schools. Oshin and Milan also go on to state that, "Self-esteem may, in turn, act as a psychological resource for Black females when faced with racism, sexism or other hardships" (p. 21). The methods that Oshin and Milan used were guided by cultural models of parenting. The team that Oshin worked with tested for racial/ethnic differences in the importance and meaning of SBW-related attributes. There were 194 participants who came from mostly low-income backgrounds. Their ethnicity was indicated as Black (22%), Latina (57%), and White (20%). Most of the mothers were just over 40 years old, and most of the daughters were about 15 years of age. Oshin concluded that, "Our findings indicate that SBW-related traits may be deemed particularly important and have a more positive meaning for Black mothers of adolescent girls, compared to White and Latina mothers" (p. 22).

Marchand et al. (2024) reaffirmed that Black parents held both critical and traditional views; expressed themes of internal and external efficacy in their motivation; and engaged critically and traditionally in their child's education. They interviewed twenty parents in an effort to counter the negative theoretical framing around Black parental involvement. They went on to state:

Some parents discussed their understanding of how systemic racism influences their Black children's experiences, while some parents did not name racism and instead discussed the root causes of inequities as being more individual in nature, reflecting notions of meritocracy and colorblindness... Nearly all parents in this study discussed instances of traditional home-based or school-based involvement. (Marchand et al., 2024, p. 441)

For Marchand et al., parents reported that raising a daughter in the United States of America can be very complex and lead to moments where varied perspectives are used to navigate challenges and opportunities.

Thomas et al. (2014) examined the psychometric properties of the *Parent Experience of Racial Socialization Scale* (PERS), a 40-item scale that assesses racial socialization messages given by parents. There were 474 participants: parents,

grandparents, and legal guardians comprising 316 women and 152 of those women were between ages 18 to 74 years old. Most had middle class incomes, but 31% reported incomes below the median range. Over 75% had attended college or earned college degrees. The study yielded four main factors: 1) religion and spirituality; 2) alertness to discrimination; 3) mainstream ideas on the benefits or cultural endorsement of the mainstream culture; and 4) cultural pride and coping regarding positive affirmations of Black people. The findings “suggest there is more work to be done with racial socialization with regard to measures among Black parents... Thus, the measurement of racial socialization messages sent by parents must be nuanced” (Thomas et al., 2014, p. 273). *Racial/Ethnic Socialization*, as offered by Brown et al. (2009) were defined as follows: Racial socialization refers to parental strategies that convey explicit and implicit messages regarding intergroup protocol and relationships such as teaching youth about racial barrier awareness; how to cope with racism and race-related discrimination; and promoting cross-racial relationships. This included the ethnic socialization of Black youth regarding cultural remembrance of Black history, celebrating Black heritage, and promoting ethnic pride.

Burnett et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study which examined the role of the parents in support of Black female youth as they dealt with challenges in the educational setting. There were 12 girls who responded via semi-structured interviews. The study asked how Black girls are making meaning during Black girlhood, and in what ways their identity develops in relation to parental socialization? For the authors, the following themes emerged: Burnett et al. (2022) stated, “(1) “Not like the other girls;” (2) Positive identities despite negative portrayals; (3) Awareness of stereotypes and their influence in K-12 Education; and (4) Affirmations in the face of anti-Blackness” (p. 8).

Other themes were related to differences in the identity processing and the content of reported parental socialization of Black girls in middle school compared to Black girls in high school. For instance, girls in middle school appeared to hold more closely to traditional gender roles and notions of femininity, but high school girls were less tied to such notions of gender and were more aware of hardship regarding being a girl. More specifically, Burnett et al. (2022) stated that regarding traditional gender roles and notions of femininity:

For instance, middle school girls made mention of physical appearance such as wearing dresses, being more “emotional” than boys, and having to be creative in order to help others. However, girls in high school distanced themselves from these ideals, emphasizing that they did not need to conform to or participate in traditional gendered norms. (p. 10)

They concluded, further, for girls, that middle school was about celebration and community, and high school was about fighting against negative stereotypes, both individual and collective portrayals. Addressing issues at another time and place with more support from a parental figure was an additional theme. A final theme reported from participants was that “silence and disengagement was the best survival strategy” (p. 13). Overall, the girls in this study often sought affirmation and support from their parents after experiencing instances of racism and/or discrimination from peers or teachers. The authors lament that more should be done to advocate for these girls, as well as provide information about ways to overcome stereotypes for the girls and their families.

## Methods

The research questions that guided this study focused on parents’ perceptions of attributions of success; their views of the factors that helped or constrained their daughters academic progress; and the advice they had for other parents of daughters. The lead author has conducted similar studies with parents of Black sons (Gamble, 2024) and with parents of Black children and youth who shared their perspectives and experiences with school based mental health providers (Gamble, 2021). Stevenson (2003) recommends that too often, as researchers of school based services, parents are taken for granted and seen as subjects of study but not as allies. He suggests that researchers, as well as educators, rethink the ways they engage parents as partners in the evaluation of programs that serve their children; but, also in ongoing research. Our process, as researchers, takes into account Stevenson’s admonishment.

## Research Questions

1. What attributions assist in parenting successful Black women?
2. How do the parents characterize their daughters' academic progress and career trajectory, and what do parents see as their greatest opportunity in raising Black girls to womanhood?
3. What constraints or helps (Stanton Salazar et al., 2001) occurred as their daughters matriculated between high school and their careers or college?
4. What advice do parents have for others raising Black women to be career-oriented and/or college ready?

## Research Design

Conventional, directed, and summative content analysis approaches (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2002) were utilized by generating categories of information via open coding: selecting the top 3-5 most frequently occurring codes per question. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), conventional content analysis is generally used with a study design whose aim is to describe a phenomenon. Whereas, if it is directed content analysis, then the use of existing theory or prior research helps researchers begin by identifying key concepts or variables as initial coding categories. Lastly, using a summative approach to qualitative content analysis, the authors went about identifying and quantifying certain words or content in text with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of the words or content. This quantification was an attempt not TO infer meaning; but, rather, to explore usage.

Then, the authors positioned the coded answers within an established theoretical model from our literature review. Phenomenological research for this study incorporated the analysis of significant statements; the development of units into meaningful categories; and the development of “essence descriptions.” As written by another qualitative author, “In particular, if we work within a phenomenological approach, we aim at essences of phenomena that are present in lifeworld descriptions of any kind, for example interviews, or written narratives, focusing particular phenomena. These descriptions must be ‘rich’ in order for essences to be found (Dahlberg, 2006, p. 12). The participant’s answers were collected through surveying - a method that was selected in order to “save researchers time and expense of transcribing” (Patton, 2002, p. 187).

## Instrument

The internet-based survey was the main source of data collection. Therefore, we asked parents if they would participate in a survey about parenting Black women who had attended at least two years of college (see Appendix A and B). To pilot the survey, we conducted a focus group with six parents to identify extraneous items that could be deleted, and to determine the overall clarity of the survey. Most of the changes made were to the demographics section which asked about ethnicity; how many children the parents had raised and if the parents were involved with any religious, civic, political, charitable, or recreational organizations in order to understand if these activities served as a way to extend their social capital on behalf of their daughters (Gamble, 2007; Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

For the current research, parents of college-educated Black women completed internet-based surveys with 12 demographic items and 7 open-ended questions (see Appendix A and B). Surveys were completed between the fall of 2017 and the spring of 2018. The lead researcher utilized his contacts in K-12 schools via email lists and public social media notices. Twenty-six of the respondents were from California. He also attended meetings for Black fraternities, Black sororities, churches, and Black cultural events held on his university campus (e.g. MLK Day; Black History Month events; etc.) to solicit participation. Potential participants were instructed to email or message (via social media) the researcher to receive a link to the study. The plan was that the majority of respondents would complete the survey online; but, we anticipated that some participants would not be as comfortable with internet-based mediums or are dealing with the impact of the digital divide (The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Public Policy Forum, 2000).

## Response Rates

Over 200 people were contacted via social media posts, emails to work colleagues, and word of mouth to church fraternal organization members. Forty-seven surveys were started or attempted on the internet-based *Qualtrics* platform. Twenty of these attempts were re-takes: respondents who started the survey and then stopped after a few minutes. It is assumed that the length of the questionnaire, especially the open-ended questions, precluded the twenty participants from completing the whole survey. Fortunately, 27 of the surveys were completed online.

According to *Qualtrics* data, time for completion varied between 15 minutes to over an hour.

## Participants

Most of the parents who completed the survey were between 43 to 60 years of age. Therefore, most daughters are estimated to be 22 to 40 years of age. A few of the daughters were in their third year in college, according to parents' specific answers outside of the demographics section. Nearly half of the respondents were married, and half were divorced and/or unmarried. Since the surveys were completed online, it was difficult to tell if one or both parents completed the survey; however, we were able to inquire about marital status. Twenty-five of the respondents had an  $M = 1.84$  daughters and 17 of the respondents had a mean of 1.53 sons. Most of the parents ( $N = 24$ ) identified their ethnicity as African American; one parent identified as "Caribbean/West Indian;" and two as "Other." Nearly all earned at least a bachelor's level education, and only two reported they had attended "some college." All parents who answered had attended college. The largest share of all the participants were educators or staff in K-12 or at the college level ( $N = 8.5$ ); the next was business or clerical work at ( $N = 6$ ); and the others were law or civic professionals ( $N = 5$ ). Other professions were a school nurse (.5) and retired. The latter five were unemployed, or their professions were not indicated. Nearly all had worked over 10-20 years, which indicated a high degree of financial stability. Only two out of the respondents indicated infrequent to no church / religious attendance. Seven reported they practice a faith but are not religious; 3 attended at least 4-12 times a year; and 13 attended weekly or more than once a week. There were 15 indications of involvement in professional organizations: 10 for other civic; 8 for charitable activity; 5 for recreational; and 3 indicated political party activity via contributions to campaigns. See Appendix B for the seven open ended survey questions asked that are similar to the research questions.

## Survey Protocols and Qualitative Data Analysis

According to Jansen (2010), a qualitative survey has been defined as an application of grounded theory, with theoretical sampling and constant comparisons, involving all studies of diversity in a population without restrictions as to the number of empirical cycles or the way of generating codes. These codes can be data-driven,

prior-research-driven, or theory driven. Also, for Jansen, “a qualitative survey is a simple research design that has often been reported under the labels of grounded theory or unspecified qualitative research” (p. 13).

All answers the respondents provided were grouped together in one document; reviewed for similar themes; and coded according to procedures associated with content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). As part of the coding process, similarly coded sections were referenced in a main listing, and the analysis organized based on the consistency of the themes related to the current literature. The members of our research team compared answers per respondent and per item in order to evaluate the consistency of responses across the data sources. This was done via Patton’s (2002) example of a utilization-focused evaluation also to find convergence via recurring regularities in the data such as internal homogeneity and external homogeneity. Divergence was considered as well to ensure first, the respondents provided consistent answers; but, also that our codes were consistently applied across the various answers to each of the questions.

## Results: Common Themes and Codes Reviewed

The researchers used coding as we read the data and began to demarcate segments within each respondent’s answer. Next, we made a list of the most frequently occurring codes, and those codes became themes. Exemplary answers of those themes were also indicated and summarized via recursive abstraction to provide summaries of these themes based on the parents’ words to see how they paralleled with definitions and current discussion within the literature. For more examples of answers, see Table 1, which lists the most frequently occurring codes in order of the seven open-ended questions, as well as the quotes as examples for each code (see Appendix B). The focus of Table 1 is on accounting for success, and the advice for parents is answered directly in a research question. Themes and the codes that were developed by the researcher are discussed directly below, especially with regard to their frequency, and brief examples of the types of statements parents made within each code. Frequency of a type of response is noted within the parentheses underneath the themes. Each theme is a summary of the more detailed and coded information provided in the parents’ answers.

## Attributions for Success

Theme 1: The top issues that parents indicated in accounting for their achievements as a parent, (i.e., their child was in at least two years of college) were their child's own motivation (Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018); extra-curricular support; parent daughter dynamics; and the value of and involvement in literacy and education (Kunjufu, 2014). The top five most frequently occurring responses to the following question are detailed below. After reviewing each of the respondents' answers and tallying the frequency of the words and similar concepts, I also utilized words that gave more detail about the general category. If the frequency was the same, then we put the categorized answers in alphabetical order. The question was asked to parents, "As a parent of a successful Black woman, how do you account for your success as a parent?" The response categories were:

- *Motivation*: passion/creativity and coals/problem-solving (14);
- *Extra-curricular involvement and support*: community; involvement/opportunities/activities (12);
- *Parent/daughter relationship dynamics*: listen/honesty/daughter's expression/encouragement (12);
- *Value of & involvement in literacy and education*: books /education (12);
- *Role modeling and leadership*: role model or lead by example as parents (8).

Internal and external locus of control, as suggested by Brown (2004), are practices that were attributed significantly more to the person (internal attribution) than to others (external attribution). Such attributions indicate an internal locus of control, perhaps, as part of incorporating the protective factor of high self-expectations. Such internalized attributions predict long-term behavioral change whereas external locus of control indicates fewer behavioral changes and lower motivation long-term. Other codes (answered 7 times or fewer) listed from most to least frequent include:

- *Taught to appreciate and stand up for self*: self-love; Blackness; as a girl or woman; and fight prejudice;
- *Other parents as role models*: family supported; friends supported; and role-model families;
- *Parent emphasis*: structure, consistency, and character development; and

- *In spite of prior circumstance*: different from poor parents/single mother.

Theme 2: Most of the parents who responded felt their daughters' progress was mostly positive based on employment. Also, helping guide their daughters via ethnic community development (Cross, 2021; Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018; Sue et al., 2007) and role modeling (Harris, 2023) were seen as two great opportunities as a parent. Parents offered very positive, negative, and mild appraisals in response to the question, "How would you characterize your daughter's academic progress and career trajectory?" There were nine parent respondents with 2 or more daughters out of the 27 who answered the survey, and 33 daughters were represented. There were 18-21 of the answers, which indicated that parents saw their daughters as progressing well and had a positive career trajectory. About a third of the respondents (7 -10 responses) indicated that their daughter was not on a good path, or had a non-existent career trajectory. Most answers attempted to refocus on the positive and offered examples of careers, education, and courses such as, "Marriage and Family Therapist, Law School, Speech Language Pathologists, Non-Profit work, Entrepreneurial activities, Math intensive courses, and graduate school readiness in general." Table 1 offers some examples of the parent statements.

When asked, "What do you think are the greatest opportunities parents have in raising Black girls as they grow towards womanhood?," parents provided thoughtful answers regarding the most frequently indicated three areas. They reported that a *positive parenting attitude* (9) could give them an opportunity to promote growth and offer leadership to their daughters. They were also very excited about their opportunity via *parental involvement* (8) to be a *role model or lead* (6) and to *influence* (9) their daughters. Role model and/or leading was more precisely stated, "to help them walk thru womanhood." Other responses in this category included: focus on their intersects as a young Black woman incentivized to help other marginalized people; be honest with daughters about life choices and definitions of success/failure; lead in front and protect in the rear; and effect leadership skills. Whereas, the category *influence* focused on: worldview (stated two times); friendships; a sense of sacrifice; leadership skills; redefine life; empower; provide structure in the home; and provide financial and other resources. Moreover, parents whose responses indicated that *ethnic community development* was important to them, used the following terms: "shoulders of progenitors;" Black literature and history access; develop culture and

self-worth; resilience; amazing genes; character development as Black women; shape the Black community via education; respect and love Black men; and prepare the next generation (9). Responses that were mentioned 4 or less times were the following:

- *Affirmation*: affirm; encourage; nurture; and pick them up when they fall;
- *Personal attributes*: (general) self-worth/esteem/values/confidence; and (psychological) strength via struggle (3), as indicated by (Brown, 2004; Marchand, et al., 2019).

Although education/literacy, role models, and peers are often indicated as issues of concern (Kujunfu, 2004; Kunjufu, 2014; Gamble, 2007; Harris, 2023), the parent's emphasis on their own influence, role-modeling, and ethnic community development in their daughters' lives were the most frequently occurring opportunities this group of parents identified and sought to address (Harris, 2023).

Theme 3: The daughters' internal locus of control, and, for some, women other than their parents supporting them (Brooks, 2015) were the factors most frequently indicated as helps rather than hindrances to their daughter's college matriculation. While the constraints reported were low expectations by school personnel or their parents' issues (e.g., divorce, career changes, finances, etc.), these two appeared to be mostly externally located attributions (Booker, 2016; Davis, 2017). Parents were asked directly, "What constraints or helps occurred as your child matriculated to high school then onto their career and/or college?"

### What Helped?

The top two most frequently occurring answers were as follows: their internal locus as evidenced by answers that focused on their daughters' *path towards college access in spite of their parents* (9) and *daughters helping themselves* (4). Other answers included: *women, helping women matriarchs* (3), which was similar to the theme of a previous answer in relation to women role models (e.g., educated women, and a single sex school). More answers included *athletics* (3) and *financial aid* (3). The latter two, again, speak to a sense of personal accomplishment that often went beyond their parent's support "in spite of" their parents' economic circumstances.

## Constraints

Conversely, external loci were the theme of the constraints or hindrances towards their daughter's education. *School counselor and teacher low expectations* (5) and *divorce and family issues* (3) were the highest responses for the external loci. Whereas, *medical and mental health* (2) could be seen as both internal and external. While the least occurring, or that which was mentioned one time, was *financial aid*, or lack thereof; *pressure to live up to siblings*; and/or *wrong career choices* could also be seen as both internally or externally located as far as the potential of the daughters to control or attribute blame in their successes or challenges.

## Advice to Parents

Theme 4: For parents actively involved in raising their daughter, they indicated that long-term support, love, and faith (Boyd-Franklin, 2013; Thomas et al., 2014), as well as keeping a balance between being strict and supportive parents, are what they attributed to their daughter's academic success and life achievements (Causey et al., 2015). Also, the parent respondents considered their efforts with their daughters, such as finding meaningful activities and opportunities to engage in, on an ongoing basis, were additional attributions for their daughters' achievements. Dweck's (2007) recommendations to encourage, reward, and teach children goal persistence, decision making, and future orientation, as well as Clark and Estes (2008) motivation indices, were in line with what the parent respondents stated. The most frequently occurring answers highlighted the need to avoid imbalance in parenting approaches; comparisons to others' beauty standards; and non-affirmations (Burnett et al., 2022).

The direct survey question was: "What advice do you have for other parents or family members raising Black women to be career oriented and/or college ready?" Parents offered the following most frequently occurring types of parent-focused advice:

- *Parenting activity or focus: active involvement* (7);
- *Maintain the course: for the long term* (5);
- *Provide support* (2); and
- *Love* (3).

For some parents, *prayer/church/faith* (4) were important. Others emphasized a balance between *strict and supportive* rearing (4), while a few emphasized the importance of *listening* (3). Other issues raised by parents, but only indicated one time, were to be a *hero/role model* (a recurring theme in most of the parents' answers). Admonishments were, *not to live vicariously through your child*; know their *friends*; and know their *report card*.

For *daughter focused* activities and efforts, parents' advice highlighted keeping daughters engaged in *activities and opportunities* (6) beyond school that would keep them on a path towards college. The respondents emphasized the need to provide daughters a great deal of the following:

- *Encouragement, reward, and praise* (5);
- Teach them about *goals, persistence, and choice* (4);
- *Control and decision making* (2); and
- *Future orientation* (1).

The aforementioned are all related to themes of growth mindset (Dwek, 2007) and motivation indices (Clarke & Estes, 2008; Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). Other lesser indicated recommendations were: to *travel* (2); avoid relationships, especially that can lead to long-term/pregnancy; have financial savings or a 529 plan; and talent development (e.g., arts, sports, etc.).

The survey asked for further advice regarding mistakes to avoid: "What do you think are the greatest mistakes parents make when raising Black girls to womanhood?" The most frequently occurring answers highlighted the need to avoid imbalance in parenting approaches; comparisons to others' beauty standards; and non-affirmations. More specifically:

- *Balance*: strict vs. freedom (4); friend vs. parent (2); dependence via overcompensation (2); and inflexibility and focus on tradition vs. new idea = (10);
- *Avoid comparisons*: boys; other girls; television; categorization; report cards; other parents' behaviors or expectations (6);

- *Lack of awareness of beauty/success and ethnicity*: White standards (2); color defining success; struggle/intersection (i.e. young, Black, woman); not telling them they are beautiful (5);
- *Non-affirming*: not cheering; fear tactics; whipping; limited affirmation especially from father (4);
- *Limited involvement*: general resources (general or family); being alone on the path to womanhood; not occupied with the child (4); and
- *Lack of exposure*: culture and travel; STEM and non-traditional majors; only on fashion; too much on dating (4).

Other less frequently occurring answers were *limits on daughter*: individual personality, thinking for self (2); *low or limited expectations*: too many expectations could lead to overwhelming, low expectations/goals (e.g. from family such as husband); and not persisting in spite of drama. Parents also mentioned *listening*: not taking time to hear or listen (2); *age-inappropriate expectations*: behavior, answers to life (2); and *denial of risk*: mental health, fear new things vs. traditional things (2).

Theme 5: Based on the 3 most frequently occurring types of answers, parent respondents indicated that they enjoyed their influence on their daughters' lives; provided ethnic community development (Brown, 2009; Causey et al, 2015; Cross, 2021; Hillard, 1995); and acted as role models/leaders in their daughters' lives (Davenport, 2019; Harris, 2023). The answers, more specifically stated, are as follows: *influence*: worldview (2); and friendships; a sense of sacrifice; leadership skills; redefine life; empower; provide structure in the home; and provide financial and other resources (9). *Ethnic community development*: "shoulders of progenitors;" Black literature and history access; develop culture and self-worth; resilience; amazing genes; character development as Black women; shape the Black community via education; respect and love Black men; and prepare the next generation (9) were also important. *Role model or lead*: be a role-model; "help them walk thru womanhood;" focus on their intersects as a young Black woman incentivized to help other marginalized people; be honest with daughters about life choices and definitions of success/failure; lead in front and protect in the rear; and effect leadership skills (6). Other less frequently occurring themes were: *affirmation*: affirm; encourage; nurture; and pick them up when they fall (4) and *personal attribute development*: personal attributes

(general to the daughter), self-worth; esteem; values; confidence and (psychological attributes), strength via struggle (3).

## Results Summary

Parent respondents reported the top issues accounting for their success as parents; factors attributed to their daughters' academic success; and their child getting into college and making it at least two years or more. These were as follows: their daughter's motivation; extra-curricular support; parent-daughter dynamics; and the value of, as well as involvement in, literacy with education (Kunjufu, 2004; Kunjufu, 2014). As parents focused on their daughters' career paths, they expressed that their daughters' progress was mostly positive based on employment. Helping to guide their daughters via ethnic community development (Brown, 2009; Causey et al, 2015; Cross, 2021; Hillard, 1995) and role modeling were seen as two great opportunities as a parent (Davenport, 2019; Harris, 2023; Mitchall & Jaeger, 2018). The daughters' internal locus of control and for some, women other than their parents supporting them (Brooks, 2015), were attributes of their success, according to the reporting parents. The factors most frequently indicated as constraints were low expectations by school personnel and/or their parents' issues (e.g., divorce, career changes, finances, etc.), most of which appeared to be externally located when considering attributes of success (Booker, 2016; Davis, 2017).

As far as advice to other parents of Black daughters, parents should be actively involved; maintain the course for the long-term with support, love, and faith (Boyd-Franklin, 2013; Thomas et al., 2014); as well as keep a balance between being strict and supportive. Also, as they address their daughters, find meaningful activities and opportunities such as trips and extra-curricular endeavors. Encourage and reward daughters, and teach them goal persistence, decision making, and future orientation [i.e., areas that are supported by the literature on growth mindset (Dweck, 2007) and motivation indices (Clark & Estes, 2008)]. The most frequently occurring answers highlighted the need to avoid imbalance in parenting approaches; comparisons to others' beauty standards; and non-affirmations, in other words, put-downs (Burnett et al., 2022).

## Discussion

The current literature over the last two decades suggests that parents of successful Black girls and women are generally optimistic (Blalock & Vonshay Sharpe, 2012; Kaba, 2008; Kaba, 2017). This highly educated and financially stable sample in our study, looking back at their daughters' lives, expressed a sense of pride regarding the future of their daughters as it is their privilege, via parenting, to have an influence on their development as leaders and future role models.

Aspects of the findings are consistent with various strands of prior research, including the need for parental skills and involvement (Marchand et al., 2019), as well as having a positive attitude in parenting (Jambunathan et al., 2000). All the parents had high expectations for their daughters. The direct advice to other parents is the most unique contribution to the literature, and provides a way to look at the consistency in which parents practice what they believe to be successful in their efforts with their daughters. Some parents were religious, and nearly all were spiritual. This was not a surprise considering Boyd-Franklin (2013) and Harris (2023) have indicated that Black families are traditionally spiritual. Additionally, Thomas et al. (2014) found that Black parents may use religion or spirituality as a way to cope with the stressors of life, in general, and discrimination, in particular.

Parents saw themselves as highly influential in their daughters' lives. Other women who were also strong role models in their daughter's lives. A strong theme that cut across each answer was of role-models, in nearly every set of answers provided by the parent sample. Hampton (2021), in an examination of transgenerational trauma, parenting styles, and attachment of Black women, concurs that role-modeling is important to Black women who struggled to raise their daughters. Respondents in our study validated that role-modeling is not only important, but central to the successful access of higher education for Black girls and women. Black women supporting Black girls and women in a way that leads to empowerment (Davenport, 2019; Harris, 2023; Sadan, 2005) is a key takeaway from this study.

## Limitations and De-Limitations

The consistency in which the parents in the study emphasize the importance of role-modeling as parents themselves, and for daughters to seek out role models, cannot

be overstated. This study is unique in that the parents did speak to the attributions of themselves that made their daughters successful, which somewhat had to do with personal factors, but also a great deal to do with teaching and nurturing an internal locus of control within their daughters via faith, encouragement, and reward.

Even though the survey was self-reported and anonymous, the researchers were able to at least follow-up through third party contacts via social media or the main researcher's professional or personal contacts. Fortunately, the survey format allowed the researchers to have some control over the line of questioning. Our presence could likely have biased responses. This study provided information in a designated place, and we advantageously were able to offer a medium that was similar to many interactions that contacts have had, via social media, where they express their challenges and celebrations as parents.

Also, considering the absence of a low-achieving comparison group, any conclusions based in the current study must be interpreted with caution. The results of this study provide considerations for parenting; school administrators; school support staff, such as school counselors and school psychologists; and policy makers who seek to address the obstacles Black girls and women face in education.

## Future Research

The current research is among a growing body of literature focusing on the phenomena of Black students (Baldrige, 2014; Perry et al., 2003), particularly Black women and girls (Evans-Winters, 2019), who are doing better in our society despite many societal obstacles (Kaba, 2017; Morris, 2016). Given the findings, the researchers look forward to conducting similar research with a larger sample around the themes raised by parents in this study and, from there, develop a measurement of parental success for parents of Black women. Also, to do more individual surveys via in-person interviews rather than via an impersonal internet survey. This may yield more authentic results. Nonetheless, this study is a beginning.

The above analysis does not mean that every parent in our sample feels their daughters are successful; but, by most metrics, the fact their daughters attended and/or graduated from college means that many life outcomes for the women will be better (Kaba, 2017). Also, notably, the findings suggest that for parents currently raising daughters, there is a need to share and discuss more precise indicators of progress as predictors, as well as indicators of success. For now, parents are

encouraged to be actively involved; maintain the course for the long-term with support, love, and faith; as well as keep a balance between being strict and supportive as parents of Black daughters. Future research is necessary to look more in-depth at convergence around these themes in broader samples.

It was gratifying that the parents answered the very abstract question with such clarity about “the greatest opportunity in raising their daughters.” As the parents indicated to be a role model; to be a leader in your child’s life; and to influence daughters toward womanhood are those great opportunities for parents, and an intriguing area of study to continue as researchers.

## Conclusion

This study brought voice to the parents of Black girls and women regarding their perceptions and experiences preparing and supporting their daughters via a college education. The parents in this study expressed their admiration of their daughter’s ability to overcome obstacles to college access based upon their daughters’ personal attributes; as well as women who were role models in their lives; and their own efforts to educate their daughters, who they admired. Parents of Black children want to be treated with respect and regarded as having agency, as well as the wherewithal to do what needs to be done to educate their children. Educators and mental health providers should be seeking to partner with parents in their efforts to support Black student achievement, wellness, and college readiness. Stevenson (2003), in his illustration on Black ways of being, states:

All bodies of water are not the same if you track their currents, temperatures, salt content, or role in the lives of the continents and people they boundary. Yet these bodies of water constitute a common substance, and the same exists among African Americans in a cultural urban context... Black people are indeed not all alike but nonetheless share commonalities that can be observed and/or experienced... I am not suggesting that all Black ways of being are the same, or that all Black people or communities are alike, but these ways are identifiable, even as they are diverse... Finally, if this different but diverse orientation exists, its existence is important, and its invisibility is detrimental to successful intervention research endeavors. (p. 522-23)

As educators, mental health providers, parents, and concerned citizens, it behooves us to listen to the parents of Black children about their experiences. They can provide advice for other parents of Black children. To raise a Black child amid national and local news cycles that feature Neo-Nazis, Confederate flags, politicians in black-face, and the shooting of unarmed Black people all inflamed via social media is to be surrounded by fear and negativity. Yet, in times as bad or worse, Black families have found a way, especially Black women and their parents, to encourage meaning and hope for their daughters. Their overcoming story must continue to be told to inspire the next generation. As Black social scientists versed in psychology, with this study, we endeavored, as James Myers and Speight have done, to “elucidate those conditions and forces which facilitate and encourage the ‘being, becoming, belongingness, and beholding’ of those of African descent” (p. 79).

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Appendix A:  
*Demographic Questions*

1. How old are you?  
32-37 years old; 38-42 years old; 43-48 years old; 55-60 years old; 61-66 years old; 67-72 years old;  
73+ years old
2. What is your marital status?  
Married; Single; Divorced; Re-married; Widowed; Other
3. How many children do you have? Girls, Boys...
4. What best reflects your ethnic background?  
Black; Caribbean/ "West Indian"; African from the Continent; Other
5. (If you feel the need, please share more about your ethnic background, especially if you marked "other")
6. What is your highest level of training in schools?  
High school; Some college; Bachelor's degree; Master's degree; Doctorate Degree,
7. Parents/Guardian's job situation? Type of company?  
Law; Transportation; Education; Intellectual property; Between jobs; Other
8. Employment title and brief job description (e.g. College faculty, teach courses in psychology)
9. Length of employment?  
Less than 3 years; 3-7 years; 7-10 years; 10-15 years; 20+ years
10. Do you attend church or other faith-based organizations? If so, then how often? Do not attend at all; Practice faith but not religious; Attend 4-12 times a year; Attend weekly; Attend more than once a week
11. If you are involved with a faith based organization, what is the name of your religious group or organization?
12. Are you affiliated with any political, trade, charitable, recreational, or professional organizations? (Check all that apply)

## Appendix B:

### *Open-ended Survey Questions*

#### *Factors of Success*

1. Please share 3 (1 sentence answers) to this question. "As a parent of a successful Black woman, how do you account for your success as a parent?"
2. When or how did you feel or know you were successful as a parent of an Black daughter?
3. How would you characterize your daughter's academic progress and career trajectory?
4. What constraints or helps occurred as your child matriculated to high school then onto their career and/or college?

#### *Advice to Parents*

5. What advice do you have for other parents or family members raising Black women to be career oriented and/or college ready?
6. What do you think are the greatest mistakes parents make when raising Black girls to womanhood?
7. What do you think are the greatest opportunities parents have in raising Black girls as they grow towards womanhood?

Table 1

*Examples of Themes on Accounting for Daughters' College Entrance and Career Pathway*

Response Category	Response Frequency	Examples of Qualitative Response
<i>Attributions of Success</i>		
Motivation	14	Being able to lead by example and demonstrate the importance of following your dreams. The ability to have real life, heart to heart conversations to educate and be honest about the difficulties of life and how preparation is important. Setting her up for success by showing options and supporting with a can-do attitude for all of her goals and aspirations.
Extra-curricular	12	I provided her with a strong educational and social foundation. I had family support to ensure she stayed busy after school. I ensured she participated in a plethora of extra curricular activities to give her a well rounded experience in more than just academics.
Parent/daughter relationship	12	My mother was a very strong positive influence in encouraging us to read and attending parent-teacher conferences, and performances, and taking us to various events and performances. She also gave us the freedom to choose, which my parenting was modeled after. My daughter was fairly cooperative, so she was relatively easy to teach and train. I also had help from other people and organizations, including my sorority's youth auxiliary.
Role models	8	As a single mother I attempted to always model for my children what hard work was and what it meant. I made every effort to help my children learn to understand how furthering their education would help them as they became adults. I feel my efforts paid off because 2 of my 3 adult children went onto college and received graduate level degrees.

*Knowledge of Success*

Role Models	13	There were some innovative programs that inspired my girls but mostly it was their vision and their perspective that made them decide to look for those innovative and inspirational moments. Furthermore, their grandmother and great grandmother had the same vision and expectation for their happiness and for their success.
Internal locus of control	7	She went to college straight from high school. School had always been easy for her. Her collegiate success was also made possible by the professors that mentored her.
External locus of control	5	I was very strict about grades in high school with my daughter. I took an invested interest in her curriculum early and recognized her ability. She graduated as a Junior. Her counselor stated that she wouldn't get into college and should remain in high school for her senior year to raise her GPA. I refused the offer. She had a strong foundation who believed in her. She used the free tutorial services offered by the school. She had to set a schedule for herself to ensure that she was able to balance school, work, & fun.

*Appraisal of Success*

Positive	20	Amazing!! Both my girls have done above and beyond what I have accomplished. My children have proven to me that nothing will stop them. That they will do whatever it takes to be a great example to other young girls, their children and their families.
Negative	7	I would characterize my daughters academic progress and career trajectory as the lone wolf in a forest filled with predators looking for any opportunity to take them down... They work very hard in their career pursuits, yet they face many outside influences which from my observation have intentions to hold them back. However, their personal dedication, determination and drive keeps them focused on their career pursuits, as much as they face obstacles they continue to persevere.

*Helps in Success*

Internal locus &  
Supportive people

13

Being surrounded by successful and educated black women helped motivate them. As far as constraints, growing up in a broken home has caused some lack but they have maintained a relationship with their father.

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