PARENTING SUCCESS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FATHERS

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The purpose of this study was to determine how African American fathers of 10- to14-year-olds viewed their strengths and limitations as parents, and to find out how children in this age group perceived the parent performance of their fathers. The Parent Success Indicator (PSI) was administered to 102 fathers and 104 adolescents. Significant differences were found between the generations on five of six sub-scales and 26 of 60 items. The independent variables demonstrating the greatest effect on how both generations saw parent success were the amounts of time father and child spent together, having an adult at home when the child returns from the school, and gender of the child. Recommendations were made for topics deserving emphasis in an educational curriculum to meet the needs of these fathers.

Most research addressing African Americans has emphasized problems that are more prevalent among low income households such as out-of-wedlock births, single parenting, school dropout, gangs, illegal drug use, health problems, and criminal activity (Cherlin, 1998; Miller, 1997; McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson & Futrell, 1998). In addition, there is a need to recognize that current education and employment opportunities are increasing the number of middle income African Americans whose parent role may present them with different challenges from disadvantaged families of the same ethnicity (Grover, 1999; Pitts, 1999). Similarly, middle income African American parents could encounter problems which differ from those of affluent parents in other racial groups (Hewlett & West, 1998; Hirschfeld 1999; & Hirschfeld 1999; Philogene, 1999).

Nevertheless, ethnicity has typically been ignored in studies of middle class parents. The usual explanation is that most scholars who track progress and mobility believe social class, rather than race, is the main determinant of success in America (Tolliver, 1998). Recently, however, the College Board formed a national task force to gather data from a dozen integrated communities across the nation composed mostly of Black and White, middle class, two-parent families having college degrees. The purpose of this task force is to explore the reasons that account for a large racial disparity in student achievement. No one presently claims to understand why boys and girls who come from economically successful African American homes tend to demonstrate lower academic performance than their Caucasian peers, but parent behavior is among the variables which the task force intends to examine (Belluck, 1999).

Much of the literature on middle class African American families describes a common desire to preserve aspects of cultural heritage while concurrently adopting goals held by people of other races who share their new financial and social status (Taylor, Jackson, & Chatters, 1997). To support adult and child development in these families, it would be helpful to learn how they function, discover strengths and shortcomings, and identify the concerns which trouble them most (Willis, 1998).

Within this context, perceptions of fathers seem to warrant careful consideration.

Fathers and Family Stability. African American families are often portrayed as endangered because of the high proportion of mothers raising children without assistance from fathers (Blankenhorn, 1996; Colex & Chase-Lansdale, 1999). It should be recognized that single parent households represent a departure from normative conditions in the past. To determine the accuracy of claims about persistent instability among Black families, the United States Census records and Freed-Man Bureau's population reports were examined for the entire century from 1850 to 1950. The 13 reporting sites from throughout the nation indicated fathers were living in 70 to 90% of Black families (Gutman, 1976). A corresponding review of Black households

headed by women with children from seven southern cities revealed their proportions ranged from 9 to 21%. These data confirm that, historically, fathers were present in most African American families (Gutman, 1976). Households led by women is a relatively recent phenomenon that has risen from 28% of Black families in 1970 to the current 67% (Cherlin, 1998).

Insider Perceptions of Fathers. The constructive and praiseworthy behavior of African American fathers is under represented in literature on family relations. An accurate portrayal requires going beyond the identification of father deficits to also make known the tasks they perform well. In addition, it could be useful to detect the obstacles they must overcome. African American men are commonly described as a homogeneous group. But the variance within this population must be acknowledged before the special challenges that confront middle class fathers can be understood (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Toward this goal, it is appropriate to explore how African American fathers are seen by spouses, children, and themselves. Awareness of these impressions can contribute to a broader understanding than is provided by the negative images attributed to Black fathers in general (Pitts, 1999).

Researchers have found that, in comparison to lower income peers, African American men who achieve financial success are more likely to be married, remain in a first marriage, and report greater contentment with their family circumstance (Gordon, Gordon & Nembhard, 1994). One speculative explanation is that the economic security which comes with higher income, attitude shifts about fathering associated with educational attainment, and longer, more durable marriages could account for increased satisfaction at home and motivate greater paternal involvement with the tasks of child care (McAdoo, 1997).

Studies of Caucasian American fathers have indicated that, on average, men living in dual-wage earner households spend about one-third as much time as their wives engaged in child care (Daly, 1996; Kamo & Cohen, 1998). For purposes of contrast, 45 middle class African American fathers were surveyed along with their wives. It was determined that, when fathers did the reporting, they spent 42% as much time as their wives taking care of preschoolers. Mothers reported father participation as child caretakers as only 37% (Hassani & Roopnairine, 1994). The estimate of either gender reveals that African American men resembled

Caucasian Americans in spending about one-third as much time, as their wives devoted to the care and supervision of children.

A related investigation considered father involvement and adolescent male outcomes. The 199 African American and Caucasian American wives of middle class husbands showed interesting differences in perception about fathers. African American wives rated the level of their husband's involvement with child care and guidance as slightly higher than did Caucasian wives. About 63% of the African American wives versus 47% of Caucasian wives saw their spouses as "providing a greater amount of assistance than the average American husband in helping raise their child" (Allen, 1981).

The observation that African American fathers often play an important but unheralded role in the family is reinforced by an assessment of parental attitudes among 136 middle class men (Connors, 1986). Self reports indicated that these men regularly took care of sons and daughters, shared in decision making about raising the children, often joined them at play and imaginative activities, and served as a powerful influence in socializing them. Similarly, Mirande (1991) determined that virtually all (99%) of 135 African American fathers considered child care to be a responsibility of both parents; 88% believed that children have needs which "only they, as fathers could meet." In studying 400 African American fathers who had been married for at least 5 years, Scanzoni (1985) found that middle class families had strong father figures who commonly shared decision making with their wives. Kamo and Cohen (1998) relied on National Survey of Families and Households data to ascertain how thousands of couples dealt with parental division of domestic labor. Black couples reported themselves to be more egalitarian than white couples.

These more positive than ordinarily reported impressions about African American fathers from intact families are underscored by a review of literature describing their participation in the socialization of children. McAdoo (1997) concluded that, as economic stability increases, corresponding gains occur in the level of father participation in children's education. Within this context, African American fathers have demonstrated their capacity to nurture and establish close relationships with children that tend to be developmentally supportive. Thus, the emerging picture of middle class African American fathers from intact families is that they are motivated to care for children and share responsibilities with their wives to a greater extent than familiar stereotypes attribute to them (Comer, 1997).

Purpose of the Study

There is growing interest in learning how parents and adolescents perceive their relationship in a rapidly changing society (Strom & Strom, 1998). During early adolescence and the biological and social changes associated with this transition, it is vital to maintain family communication (Steinberg & Levine, 1997). Most studies have attempted to identify qualitative differences in relationships with the emphasis on achieving reasonable balance between individuation and connectedness (Delany, 1996). Such an approach may help explain the relationship dynamic at this stage of development but is difficult to translate into skills which are practical or useful in shaping intervention programs for parents. A more feasible strategy is to increase parent knowledge about personal assets and shortcomings and acquaint them with the observations of adolescents about parent behavior. This more comprehensive outlook makes it easier for parents to support appropriate shifts in relationships.

Accordingly, the purpose of the present study was to determine how African American fathers of 10- to 14-year-olds rate their strengths and limitations as parents, and to find out how children from this age group viewed the parenting performance of their fathers. Perceptions of both generations were examined and compared to learn how well fathers are doing and detect behaviors an education program could target for improvement. To facilitate this process the following questions were used to guide analysis of responses from parents and adolescents who were administered the Parent Success Indicator (Strom & Strom, 1998) (a) Are the perceptions of fathers about their parental strengths significantly different from the perceptions of early adolescents for the same characteristics? (b) Which of the instrument subscales show the greatest differences in parent and adolescent ratings? (c) Within each subscale, which items account for significant differences between generations? (d) In the overall ratings of parents, which behaviors are identified by each generation as the most prominent strengths? (e) Which items identify the greatest family learning needs of parents as viewed by both of the respondent groups? and (f) How are the independent variables of parent schooling, parent income, time spent with the child, having an adult present when a child returns home after school, gender and the child and child age related to parent effectiveness ratings?

METHOD

Subjects and Recruitment.

Table 1 shows the adult subjects consisted of 102 fathers of 10- to 14-year-olds. Most (81%) were married and nearly all (96%) were biological fathers who lived with the child they reported on. A majority (63%) had attended college and 39% received a degree. The proportion who reported annual earnings of more than $20,000 (80%), more than $35,000 (52%), and more than $50,000 (22%) qualified most of the men as middle income while a smaller segment (20%) had incomes below $20,000. They (57%) spent more than five hours a week talking or doing things with their daughters (40%) or sons (60%) who were 10 to 11-years-old (46%), or 12- to 14-years-old (54%). When their children came home after school, most (76%) were always or often met by an adult. Most (92%) of the children had average or above average grades.

The 104 adolescent subjects consisted of boys (53%) and girls (47%) who were 10 to 11 years of age (41%), or 12 to 14 years of age (59%). Most (94%) earned average or above average grades at school. The parent they reported on and resided with was their biological father (91%) who was presently married (81%) and employed (98%). The proportion of their fathers who spent more than 5 hours a week interacting with them was 41%. When they returned from school, there was always or often (75%) an adult at home to meet them.

To ensure that the father and child subjects were not relatives, they were recruited from separate grade levels at middle and junior high schools located in the southeastern and southwestern regions of the country. This method was used to obtain the views of successive generations because parents are less likely to bias responses of children than when both parties are recruited from the same families. The importance of minimizing bias in multigenerational research was initially recognized by our team during the preliminary stage of large scale studies in Japan and the Republic of China. These investigations to determine perceptions of children, parents, and grandparents were conducted in collaboration with the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Japan Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture, and the Pacific Cultural Foundation (Strom & Strom, 1997; Strom, Strom, Collinsworth, Sato, Makino, Sasaki, Sasaki & Nishio, 1995; Strom, Strom, Wang, Shen, Griswold, Chan & Yang, 1999). Separate focus groups with the three generations led to a conclu-

sion that accurate reporting could be increased by using nonconsanguineous sampling.

African American fathers received a letter from the principal of their child's school informing them that the purpose of this study was to identify suitable content for an education program to improve adolescent guidance in the home. Some fathers were asked to complete a survey about their parent-child relationship and return it to the principal while others were asked to permit their child to complete the survey at school. Of 126 fathers invited to complete the parent survey, 102

(81%) consented. Permission sought from 125 fathers for their child to complete the survey resulted in 104 (83%) consents. All parties were promised that their name would not be revealed in any reports and adolescents were assured that the answers they gave would never be shown to their fathers.

Instrumentation

The Parent Success Indicator (PSI) evolved from the

Table 1

Frequency and Percent of African American Fathers and Children by Identification Variables

Identification Variables	Fathers n = 102		Children n = 104	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Child Gender				
Boy	61	60	55	53
Girl	41	40	49	47
Child Age				
10 to 11 years old	47	46	43	41
12 to 14 years old	55	54	61	59
Child School Grades				
Above average	45	44	39	37
Average	49	48	59	57
Below average	8	8	6	6
Parent Marital Status				
Married	83	81	84	81
Not Married	19	19	20	19
Relationship				
Father	98	96	95	91
Step-Father	4	4	9	9
Parent Age				
39 years old or younger	58	57	61	59
40 years old or older	44	43	43	41
Adult Home After School				
Always/Often	78	76	78	75
Seldom/Never	24	24	26	25
Time Spent Together				
More than 5 hours/week	58	57	43	41
Less than 5 hours/week	44	43	61	59
Parent Employment				
Full-time	92	91	92	90
Part-time	3	3	10	8
Unemployed	7	6	2	2
Parent Education				
College Degree	40	39	N.A.	N.A.
Some College	24	24		
HS/Voc or less	38	37		
Parent Income				
More than $50K	22	22	N.A.	N.A.
$35K to $50K	31	30		
$20K to $35K	29	28		
Less than $20K	20	20		

findings of an open-end survey (Strom & Strom, 1998). During the grounded theory phase these questions about parent behavior were formulated: (a) What are some things about being a parent that you find satisfying at this stage in your child's life? (b) Of the many things that you have to do as a parent, which do you think you do especially well? (c) What are some things about raising this child which you find most difficult? (d) What problems does your child have for which you need more information? (e) What do you think you as a parent should be helping your child learn at home? (f) What are some things this child does that frustrate you the most? (g) If you had to choose one thing about raising this child that you would like to understand better, what would you choose? Responses from parents, children, and teachers provided the information base for further development of the instrument.

The community selected for field-testing was an upper-middle-class suburb with the highest average level of education in Phoenix, Arizona metropolitan area. It was anticipated that this well-educated population would be able to generate many articulate responses for the open end questions that could then be converted to a choice response format for use with a wider audience. A randomly selected sample of 2,893 subjects included 1,286 parents, 907 children, and 700 teachers representing all elementary and high school grade levels. Corresponding items appeared on the child, parent, and teacher forms. Concerns implicating parent competence were identified and ranked in order of importance for every grade level. A 96% rate of inter-rater agreement was obtained for the coding of 33,000 responses (Strom & Strom, 1998)

Topics which were assigned the highest priority for families with children from ages 10 to 14 were used to formulate the Parent Success Indicator. The purpose for this instrument is to identify favorable qualities of parents of 10- to-14-year-olds and detect behaviors for which further education appears warranted. There are two versions of the PSI, one for adults to report on self-impressions, and the other for adolescents to describe observations of their parents. Most parents can recognize their own strengths and limitations. However, when they are allowed to serve as the sole source of judgment regarding their effectiveness, some assets and shortcomings are bound to be overlooked. A two-generational perspective of family interaction provides a more comprehensive index regarding parent competence as well as a more accurate portrayal of fathers' awareness of their child's developmental needs. Parent effectiveness is evaluated by 60 Likert-type items which are divided into six subscales that emphasize separate dimensions of development:

1. Communication – skills of advising children and learning from them;
2. Use of time – making decisions about the ways in which time is used;
3. Teaching – the scope of guidance and instruction expected of parents;
4. Frustration – attitudes and behaviors of children that bother parents;
5. Satisfaction – aspects of the parent role that bring satisfaction, and
6. Information Needs – things parents need to know about their child.

Scoring and Feedback

The same content is presented to both generations but the versions are worded differently to accommodate respondents. For example, item 1 for parents reads, "I am good at listening to my child," whereas the child's version reads, "My parent is good at listening to me." Optional responses for all of the items are – Always, Often, Seldom, or Never. Both versions are scored in the same manner, by assigning a numerical value of 4, 3, 2, or 1 to all of the 60 items. Responses which are most indicative of parental strengths are valued 4, with diminishing values assigned to other scores based upon their distance from the best response.

Scoring begins on the left or right as shown in this parent version example:

1. I am good at listening to my child.

       Always   Often   Seldom   Never

11. I have difficulty being patient with my child.

       Always   Often   Seldom   Never

The best indicator of parent strength for item 1 is "Always" whereas a response of "Never" reflects parent strength for item 11; these responses would be valued 4. Persons who circled other responses would be assigned the lower values of 3, 2 or 1. Then mean scores are derived for each scale.

Scores of 2.5, the absolute mean, were used to differentiate performance which is considered favorable and unfavorable. Whenever a score of 2.5 or greater is shown for an item or subscale, it is regarded as favorable and the particular source (parents, children, or both generations) has identified a strength. More specifically, a score of 2.5 to 2.99 is slightly favorable, and 3.0 to 4.0 is highly favorable. Conversely, mean scores below 2.5 are unfavorable; 2.0 to 2.49 is slightly unfavorable, and 1.0 to 1.99 is highly unfavorable.

Feedback to parents is provided by a Parent Success Profile which includes all items restated in a positive format. Parents examine the profile to learn item ratings based on their responses. There are four possible ratings for each item: highly favorable (responses scored as 4); slightly favorable (responses scored as 3); slightly unfavorable (responses scored as 2); and highly unfavorable (responses scored as 1). The ratings children assign parents are never revealed to them. However, parents can benefit from learning the group mean responses for their child's cohort group that appears on the profile. Similarly, the profile reveals how other parents as a group rated themselves.

Reliability and Validity

The psychometric properties of the Parent Success Indicator were originally assessed by analyzing responses from a culturally diverse sample of 1,634 parents and adolescents (Strom & Strom, 1998). These African Americans (34%), Caucasian Americans (49%), and Mexican Americans (17%) presented a wide range of education and income levels. High alpha coefficients on the overall instrument obtained for each subpopulation, ranging from .92 to .95. Alpha estimates for separate scales were also high in each cultural group, from .77 to .94. In the present study, overall alphas for the African-American fathers (.94), and adolescents (.95) as well as respective subscale estimates for the adults (.81 to .93) and children (.86 to .93) were within the good range. A confirmatory factor analysis involving 1,634 respondents found that 57 of the 60 items loaded at .40 or

greater on the anticipated scales while none of the items loaded significantly on two different factors (Strom, Strom, Collinsworth & Strom, 1998).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Separate multiple analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were used to measure the effects of independent variables including generation, child gender, child age, adult at home after school, and time together on the six parent success subscale scores that served as dependent variables. To test for differences in parent income and parent education, data were gathered from fathers only. One way analysis of variance (ANOVAs)was applied for each subscale, item, and total score. ANOVAs were also performed to detect differences relating to gender of a child and having an adult at home after school. Where significance was found, Scheffe t tests between pairs of groups were used　　　　　　　　to determine more closely the particular source of differences.

Influence of Independent Variables

Table 2 presents a summary of MANOVA findings for the fathers and children showing how each variable influenced performance ratings of fathers on the Parent Success Indicator. There were significant main effects for generation, $F(1, 204) = 7.35, p < .001$; child gender, $F(1, 204) = 2.51$, $p < .05$; adult at home, $F(1, 204) = 4.11, p < .001$; and time together, $F(4, 201) = 1.75, p < .05$.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance and Independent Variables for 206 African American Fathers and Children

		Univariate F					
Variation	Multivariate F	Communication	Time	Teaching	Frustration	Satisfaction	Information
Generation		8.80**	0.03		9.55**	5.50*	3.78*
Child Age		0.42	0.94		1.25	1.60	0.43
Child Gender		0.57	0.54		0.03	3.03	10.48***
Adult Home		3.85*	0.40		0.35	6.63**	0.16
Time Together		5.60***	3.34**		1.34	3.81**	1.50

* .05 Significance level.
** .01 Significance level.
*** .001 Significance level.

Generation. Table 3 shows that univariate tests found significant differences between generations on four of six subscales. Fathers rated themselves higher than the adolescents did for the Communication, F (1,204) = 8.80, $p < .01$; Teaching, F (1,204) = 4.77, $p < .05$; Frustration, F (1,204) = 9.55, $p < .01$, and Satisfaction, F (1,204) = 5.50, $p < .05$ subscales. The lone subscale for which children gave fathers higher rating was Information Needs, F (1,204) = 3.78, $p < .05$. The specific attitudes and behaviors of parents on which generational perceptions varied were detected by significant differences on 26 of 60 items.

Adolescents perceived a much greater level of father frustration than fathers reported regarding children's avoidance of household chores, F (205) = 11.20, $p < .001$. Perhaps fathers believe that it is easier and less time-consuming for them to carry out the chores themselves rather than engage in arguments and risk losing their favorable relationships with children. However, when sons and daughters lack responsibilities toward family members, they are being poorly prepared for the interdependent relationships that will likely be required of them as adults (Kamo & Cohen, 1998). Performing household chores during adolescence is a way to develop maturity needed in adulthood to care for the welfare of others (Shellenberger, 1999).

Fathers need to know that, even though they provide children with material advantages, boys and girls can still feel overwhelmed by daily pressures. One of the common stressors in middle-income minority families is high expectation for school achievement (Tolliver, 1998). Some men may suppose that, in overcoming great odds to attain middle class status, they have thereby made success for sons and daughters easier than may actually be the case. But, according to the

adolescents, their fathers performed more poorly than was recognized by the adults for teaching them how to cope with the stress of growing up as a minority child within a mostly Caucasian environment, F (205) = 6.34, $p < .01$.

Adolescents gave fathers more unfavorable ratings than the men did for their willingness to discuss dating. Fifty-five percent of adolescents felt their fathers were seldom or never good at discussing these kinds of relationships. Nearly half (46%) of the fathers acknowledged that they were seldom or never good at talking about this issue. African American men, more often than peers in other ethnicities impregnate females without marrying them or providing care for their children (Cherlin, 1998). It is difficult to foresee how the scale of this tragedy can decline unless more fathers get involved in educating children regarding the purpose of dating, how to act while on a date, and what couples should expect of one another. Perhaps fathers assumed that mothers and school teachers are a better source of information on dating than themselves. In that case, they underestimate children's need for their participation as well as personal potential for preparing sons and daughters to build healthy relationships.

Adolescents said fathers should be more capable of accepting criticism from their children. Nearly half (44%) reported that dads were seldom or never good at handling criticism from them. The gain in thinking capacity that occurs in early adolescence is usually accompanied by a fascination with finding faults in the logic of others, especially parents (Steinberg & Levine, 1997). This initial expression of critical thinking should be regarded by fathers as favorable evidence of mental development rather than be viewed as a personality defect. For certain men who have struggled to reach

Table 3

African-American Fathers and Children PSI Scale Means and Standard Deviations with Significant Differences between Generations

Scale	Fathers (n = 102)		Children (n = 104)		F Ratio	F Prob
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Communication	3.26	.43	3.04	.62	8.80	.003**
Time	2.92	.52	2.94	.62	0.03	.872
Teaching	3.46	.52	3.28	.68	4.77	.030*
Frustration	3.12	.54	2.86	.67	9.55	.002**
Satisfaction	3.40	.44	3.24	.56	5.50	.020*
Information	2.55	.86	2.79	.91	3.78	.053
TOTAL	3.12	.38	3.02	.50	2.45	.119

* .05 significance level
** .01 significance level

middle class status, it may be difficult to accept the notion that their own children have any right to be critical of them.

Discipline can be a demanding task for affluent fathers who grew up in low income areas where they often observed impulsive behavior and violent reaction to differences of opinion (Miller, 1997). As they became financially successful, these men moved their families to environments in which civil behavior is more common. Still, they remain ever mindful of their origins where boys frequently had trouble with the law and girls got pregnant without getting married (McAdoo, 1997). It is not surprising that such men would place a high premium on teaching their children to distinguish right and wrong, to obey authority figures, and expect punishment when the rules are broken. Indeed, one item on the PSI about teaching right and wrong received the highest ranking from both generations. As a possible repercussion, some adolescents considered their fathers to be overly strict. Most (76%) reported that their fathers seldom or never showed patience with them. A majority of fathers (78%) agreed with this unfavorable assessment of their behavior. These findings suggest some fathers may need to consider additional discipline strategies beyond those applied in their own upbringing, particularly methods that support development of self-evaluation.

Father education and income. Research on parenting has focused primarily on traditional variables. Education and income of parents are usually examined to detect the effects of poverty and lack of schooling. These effects are well recognized and require continued attention by the society. Nevertheless, the potency of such variables comes into question when dealing with a mostly middle class population. Univariate tests revealed no significant differences between fathers distinguished by their income (more or less than $35,000 per year), $F(101) = .814, p > .369$, and education (with or without a college degree), $F(101) = .001, p > .982$. It appears that the knowledge which is gained by general education or specialization in fields of study does not translate directly into parenting success. Instead, it seems that all fathers ought to consider taking parent education to become more effective in that sector of their lives. These findings also implicate studies of parental competence, suggesting that detection of better ways to support child development may necessitate the use of fewer common independent variables that may be more appropriate than customary indicators like parent education level and parent income.

Child gender. The common assumption that fathers are closer and more involved with their sons than daughters was contradicted by findings from this investigation. Univariate comparisons of gender revealed significant differences for the scale on Information Needs, $F(1, 204) = 10.48, p < .001$. Specifically, fathers, $F(101) = 6.33, p < .05$, and children, $F(103) = 3.69, p < .05$, both viewed fathers as better informed about what was taking place in the lives of daughters than sons. Such information is important for parents because knowledge of a child's situation is necessary in order to provide relevant advice. These results suggest that progress is being made in the national effort to debunk traditional gender preference patterns. MANOVA found that child age was not statistically significant, $F(796) = 1.23, p > .206$.

Adult at home. The independent variables offering the greatest opportunity for change were also the most pervasive. Whether an adult was home when a child arrived after school was a significant factor in how children saw the performance of their fathers on Teaching, $F(103) = 11.72, p < .001$, and Satisfaction, $F(103) = 6.89, p < .01$. Having an adult at home after school also significantly differentiated fathers' feelings about their teaching, $F(101) = 4.52, p < .05$.

Time together. Univariate comparisons detected differences for father groups classified by amount of time spent with their child (more or less than 5 hours per week). This was an influential factor in determining fathers' overall success as perceived by children, $F(103) = 3.63, p < .01$. Children who spent more time with their fathers assigned them higher ratings for Communication, $F(103) = 3.10, p < .05$; Use of Time, $F(103) = 3.51, p < .01$; Teaching, $F(103) = 3.25, p < .05$), and Satisfaction, $F(103) = 4.32, p < .01$. Fathers who spent more time with their children also saw themselves as better at Communication, $F(101) = 3.76, p < .01$. To succeed in most ventures, people must spend considerable time. These fathers invested themselves at work and are familiar with the financial rewards. However, adolescents seem to indicate that they need something more from their fathers beyond the provision of an affluent environment. Fathers who spend ample time with children can provide them with greater social, emotional, and psychological support.

Respondents in this study were asked to identify how they spent time together. Fathers and adolescents both reported that they mutually watch television more than any other activity. Some investigators have expressed concern that the effects of media on socialization may be greater for African Americans who

spend twice as much time "televiewing" than Caucasian peers (Belluck, 1999; Nielsen, 1999; Stroman, 1991). In combination, these findings suggest fathers could benefit from discussions regarding selection of television programs which could be considered worthwhile or considered unsuitable for adolescents. Equally important for the parents would be learning techniques to elicit sharing of the differing impressions that are bound to occur when two generations observe the same events.

Anecdotal Information

Following the last item on the Parent Success Indicator, the participants were given an opportunity to comment on fathers in their own words. Most statements by fathers centered on their satisfaction with being a parent. Fathers' remarks reinforced PSI responses such as "likes to be with the child" which garnered the second highest ranking among 60 items. It was clear that, as a group, these men prize their role as fathers.

"I really like the whole idea of being a parent and watching a young boy grow into manhood. Being raised by a single parent, it gives me great pleasure to now be involved in the decision making process of what's going to be right for my child and hoping that along the way he shows initiative to make wise decisions with or without my help. My kid is terrific."

"The most rewarding thing is knowing that I can help mold my child's character by teaching proper and right things to do in life. I hope that I am still around when she gets older so I can watch her make decisions that are going to be important and wise."

"It is fascinating for me to watch him grow and mature, to make choices, and become a person who really cares about other people. I am confident he will be a success in whatever kind of occupation he decides to pursue."

"Parenting is hard work but I would not trade the time that I spend with her for anything. I like to be with my child and enjoy almost all of the things we do together."

The adolescents understood that fathers were pleased with their parent-child relationships. This awareness by children was shown in their ranking "likes being with me" as the second highest score among 60 items. Feelings of being cherished were reflected by these personal statements:

"I like the way my dad understands the situations I get into and tries to help me figure out how to get along better with my friends and deal with enemies. When I do something that I know is wrong, he punishes me so I can become a better person."

"My dad encourages me in all my activities, when I succeed and when I fail. He believes I can make my own way in the world and have a great family like ours. I'm glad I have him to look up to and guide me in growing up."

"I like going places with my dad, especially the skating rink, bowling alley, and the mall. He is always willing to do things that give us chances to have fun together and talk about things that are important to both of us."

"I love my dad even though he is strict and expects too much of me. I wish he had a clue about what life is like at my age. The thing I hear most is how bad things were for him as a kid so I should be grateful for our neighborhood and all the other advantages that he and mom have given me. I do appreciate what I have but school is still harder for me than it apparently was for him."

Implications for Education

Guiding adolescents is a complicated task that requires knowledge and skills beyond what is necessary to provide adequate direction for younger children. The main purpose of this study was to identify the parent assets and learning needs of African American fathers of adolescents so that an educational program could be proposed for them. The data outcomes used to identify suitable curriculum topics included fathers self-defined impressions, adolescent observations of father behavior, areas of disagreement between the generations, demographic variable effects, and anecdotal information provided by the parents and children.

The following curriculum topics derived from the combined perceptions take into consideration adolescent experiences, father experiences, and dynamics of the father-adolescent relationship. The thematic contents identified by this investigation as deserving emphasis in an educational program for fathers in these families are:

The experience of adolescents. Cultural change and adolescent development, guidance for building friendships and dating, emotional resilience and stress management, and gender roles and achievement expectations.

The experience of fathers. Blending racial heritage and new traditions, identifying responsibilities for adolescents, parent discipline and child self-evaluation,

and the value of time spent with children.

The experience of father-adolescent relationships. Helping to define success and choose goals, preparation to interpret risks and failures, getting along and expressing differences, and critical thinking and watching television.

CONCLUSION

African American fathers were perceived as successful in most dimensions of their role. Both generations identified teaching, satisfaction, and communication as the most conspicuous paternal strengths. It was claimed by adolescents and fathers that dads could improve their influence by learning how to build healthy attitudes about dating. Fathers also seem to need guidance in helping daughters and sons cope with school-related problems and establishing reasonable expectations for their child's present age.

According to adolescents, fathers need to become more accepting of criticism from their children. Adopting discipline strategies that will support self-evaluation seem desirable as does exhibiting greater patience with the children. Listening to adolescents talk about their concerns is necessary so that relevant advice can be offered on ways to cope with daily stress. Both generations reported that adolescents benefit from having an adult at home when they return from school. When parents cannot be home, surrogate supervision deserves consideration. Higher learning did not qualify these men as better parents. Instead, it seems that fathers of all education levels should consider parent education to become more effective in that sector of their lives. Finally, middle class African American fathers need to realize that it is not enough for children to access their wealth. According to children, it is also important for fathers to spend time with them. Those who spent ample time with children were seen as more successful by their daughters, sons, and themselves. This parent education study is part of a large scale effort which includes separate gender populations from diverse American and overseas cultures. The next step is building lessons for a differentiated curriculum to match the education needs of these fathers.

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