Parenting: What's It Like for Black Fathers with Nonresident Children?

Katrina Ann Romaine Akande

University of Kentucky, ktakande@gmail.com

This Doctoral Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Family Sciences at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations--Family Sciences by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.
STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student’s advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student’s thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Katrina Ann Romaine Akande, Student
Dr. Claudia J. Heath, Major Professor
Dr. Ronald J. Werner-Wilson, Director of Graduate Studies
PARENTING:
WHAT’S IT LIKE FOR BLACK FATHERS WITH NONRESIDENT CHILDREN?

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Family Sciences in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment at the University of Kentucky

By

Katrina Ann Romaine Akande
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Claudia J. Heath, Professor of Family Sciences
Lexington, Kentucky

2014

Copyright © Katrina A. R. Akande 2014
ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

PARENTING:
WHAT’S IT LIKE FOR BLACK FATHERS WITH NONRESIDENT CHILDREN?

The demands on fathers to be more involved with their children have steadily been increasing since the 1970s. However, fathers have received less attention in the social science literature compared to mothers. This difference is evident regarding the parenting practices of ethnic minority fathers such as nonresident Black fathers. This dissertation investigates the effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support on their perceived father involvement and their perceived paternal stressors; while testing the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping.

The dissertation is presented in a three manuscript-style format with the intent to publish each manuscript in peer-reviewed journals.

The aim of the first manuscript is to assess the cross-cultural adaptation and reliability of a modified Everyday Stressors Index titled, the Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Fathers version (ESI-MNF). Using a sample of 105 nonresident Black fathers, the ESI-MNF was developed to include items that measure aspects of ethnic minority stressors and characteristics of nonresident fathering. The results indicate that the ESI-MNF is reliable. A paternal stressors subscale emerged that indicated specific areas of stress for nonresident fathers.

The goal of the second manuscript is to test the effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support on their perceived paternal stressors; while testing the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping. Results show that the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors are minimized when the relationships with their children’s mothers are good and their children’s mothers are perceived as supportive.

The purpose of the third manuscript is to test two models of nonresident Black father involvement with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator. Model 1 tests the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping when parenting with one mother. Model 2 tests the effects of maternal gatekeeping when parenting with two mothers. For the sample of fathers with
multiple sets of nonresident children, the results indicate that the dimensions of father involvement may be different when parenting with the first mother and when parenting with the second mother.

KEYWORDS: Nonresident Black Fathers, Coparenting Support, Father Involvement, Maternal Gatekeeping, Parenting Stress

Katrina Ann Romaine Akande
Student Signature

05/07/2014
Date
PARENTING:
WHAT’S IT LIKE FOR BLACK FATHERS WITH NONRESIDENT CHILDREN?

By

Katrina Ann Romaine Akande

Dr. Claudia J. Heath
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Ronald J. Werner-Wilson
Director of Graduate Studies

05/07/2014
Date
DEDICATION

Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows,

it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass.

When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their

imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.

Excerpt-*Native Son*
by Ralph Ellison, 1952

This dissertation is dedicated to the Black fathers residing in Kentucky and other states

who have shared their experiences of coparenting nonresident children. I especially want

to dedicate my dissertation to Steven Anderson for being the face of this study.

This is also dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Ms. Lillian Wright, my aunt,

Geneva Lewis, my uncles, Leroy Blake and James “Bill” Spain, and my cousin, First

Sergeant Tyra Coleman...Gone, but not forgotten!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of my dissertation is not my journey alone. I would first like to thank my family for their love and support throughout the years. A special thank you goes to my daughter, Nia, for your patience. To my parents and grandparents, Teddy and Frances Taylor and George and Arizona White, you have supported me emotionally and financially. To my loving sister, Che Taylor, I appreciate your love and support. To my aunts, Carolyn Moore, Catherine Brown, Beatrice Graves, and Patricia Ann Walker, thank you for taking care of Nia while I studied. To my beautiful aunt Stella Mae Miller, thank you for the encouraging words and long hours of helping me check my data. To my uncles, George White, Henry White, and Calvin White, I appreciate your love and support and encouraging words. To the world’s best cousins, Derrick White, Eric Reed, Jada Griggs, Jerome White, Jane Lewis, Joyce White, Keith and Nicole Mason, Kim and Eric Whitlock, Kendra Newby, Leonard Underwood, Lorenzo Moore, Marcus White, Robert Walker, Robin Miller, and Shelby White, I cannot thank you enough for your love and support. I appreciate the last minute runs to pick-up Nia from school, the encouraging words, and the countless other gestures of love. I also want to thank Ms. Lillian Sue Roach who I affectionately call, Grandma Sue. I love you to the moon and back. Thank you for your prayers and encouraging conversations.

Next, I would like to thank my friends for their love and support, dinners, and being there through my frustrations and triumphs: Byron Moran, Caroline dela Rosa, Camille Watson, Denise Holland, Fred Moton, Latisha Nesbitt, Melissa Saulnerond, Derrick Givens, Erskine Clinton, Chief Kenton T. Buckner, Lorenzo Fields, Pam Ellison, Rhonda Gummer. I would also like to thank my friends Drs. Dwayne and Felicia Mack
for their prayers and support.

I would like to give a special acknowledgement to my NCFR mentors, Dr. Wayne Blake, Dr. Curtis Fox, Dr. Tammy Henderson, Dr. Gladys Hildreth, and Dr. Roudi Roy. Thank you for your friendship and mentorship. A debt of appreciation is also owed to two special mentors: Dr. Diane Loeffler at the University of Kentucky for her mentorship and Dr. Rod K. Brunson at Rutgers University for his friendship, mentorship, and “tough love”.

I am indebted to my committee members and faculty in the Department of Family Sciences. My dissertation advisor, Dr. Claudia J. Heath has been instrumental in my success. I would like to thank you for your guidance and patience throughout the years. My committee members, Dr. Gregory Brock, Dr. Sonja Feist-Price, Dr. Cid Srinivasin, and Dr. Nathan Wood have provided invaluable instruction, feedback, and support. To the Family Science faculty, Dr. Robert Flashman, Dr. Jason Hans, Dr. Hyungsoo Kim, Dr. Donna Smith, Dr. Diana Haleman, Dr. Amy Hosier, and Dr. Ron Werner-Wilson, each of you have played an instrumental role in my success.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues for their friendship and support: Dr. Theresa Botts, Dr. Ahlishia Shipley, Dr. Martie, Gillen, Dr. Alice Koech, Dr. Varu Kankipati, Dr. Judy Van de Venne, Janet Hill, Charlene Harris, Alisha Rorer, Mark Mains, and Cheryl Ramey. You have all had a hand in my success. Thank you for making my time and UK memorable. Alisha, Cheryl, and Charlene, remember that this race is not finished by the swift or the strong, but those who stay on the path and endure to the end. I am praying for your endurance!
Table of Contents

Acknowledgement ................................................................................................................................................iii
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................................x
List of Figures ..................................................................................................................................................xi
Chapter 1: Introduction ......................................................................................................................................1
  Manuscript 1 ..................................................................................................................................................2
  Manuscript 2 ..................................................................................................................................................2
  Manuscript 3 ..................................................................................................................................................3
  Description of Key Concepts ......................................................................................................................4
  Coparenting Support .....................................................................................................................................5
  Maternal Gatekeeping .................................................................................................................................5
  Father Involvement ......................................................................................................................................6
  Paternal Stressors ..........................................................................................................................................7
  Chapters .........................................................................................................................................................7

Chapter 2: Assessing Cross-cultural Adaptation and Reliability of the Everyday Stressors
  Index-Minority Nonresident Father Version (ESI-MNF) .............................................................................10
  Life Stressors and Nonresident Black Fathers ............................................................................................11
  Statement of the Problem .............................................................................................................................11
  Everyday Stressors Index .............................................................................................................................13
  Methodology ................................................................................................................................................14
    Procedures ..................................................................................................................................................14
    Sample ......................................................................................................................................................15
  Measurement for ESI-MNF .........................................................................................................................17
  Analysis and Results ....................................................................................................................................19
    Derivation of the ESI-MNF .......................................................................................................................19
    Measurement for ESI-MNF-PSS ................................................................................................................21
  Derivation of the ESI-MNF-PSS ..................................................................................................................22
  Discussion ....................................................................................................................................................23
    Implications and Limitations .....................................................................................................................25
Chapter 3: The Mediating Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping on Nonresident Fathers’ Paternal Stressors

Statement of the Problem

Theoretical Framework of Interdependence and Conflict within the Coparental System

The Present Study

Conceptual Model of Paternal Stressors with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator

Methodology

Respondents

Recruitment

Survey Design and Administration

Measures

Exogenous Variables

Mediating Variable

Outcome/Dependent Variable

Data Analysis and Results

Direct Effects of the Paternal Stressors Model for Fathers Parenting with One Mother

Mediating Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping Behaviors in the Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers

Indirect Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping Behaviors in the Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers

Discussion

Conclusion

Study Limitations and Future Directions

Chapter 4: Modeling Nonresident Black Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator

Statement of the Problem

Maternal Gatekeeping

Factors Related to Coparental Support

Theoretical Perspective

Family Systems Framework

Conflict Framework
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Models of Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as Mediator</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample and Interview Procedures</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Characteristics</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Design and Administration</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey Completion</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessments and Measures</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exogenous Variables</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Variable</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome/Dependent Variable</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Effects for Fathers Parenting with One Mother</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Effects for Fathers Parenting with One Mother</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Effects for Fathers Parenting with Two Mothers</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Effects for Fathers Parenting with Two Mothers</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Effects without Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Limitations and Future Suggestions</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Summary</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions of This Study</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

Table 2.0 Demographic Characteristics of Sample Characteristics (N=105) ............... 16

Table 2.1 Principal Component Loading and Cronbach’s Alphas for ESI-MNF (N=105) ................................................................. 18

Table 2.1 (Continued): Principal Component Loading and Cronbach’s Alphas for ESI-MNF ........................................................................................................ 19

Table 2.2 Principal Component Loadings and Cronbach’s Alphas for ESI-MNF-PSS ... 23

Table 2.3 Comparison of Role Function Stressors Indicator Loadings ...................... 25

Table 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Nonresident Black Fathers ..................... 39

Table 3.2 Summary of Effects for the Reduced Form of the Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers ................................................................. 50

Table 3.3 R-square Measures for the Reduced Form of the Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers ................................................................. 54

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics on Nonresident Black Fathers by Number of Mother with Whom Each Coparents ................................................................. 74

Table 4.2 Summary of Effects for the Reduced Form of the Father Involvement Model with One Mother ................................................................. 87

Table 4.3 Summary of Effects for Reduced Form of the Father Involvement Model with Two Mothers ................................................................. 91

Table 4.4 R-square Measures for the Reduced Form of the Father Involvement Model for Nonresident Black Fathers ................................................................. 96
List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Model of Paternal Stressors of Nonresident Black Fathers ....... 37

Figure 3.2: Empirical Model of Paternal Stressors of Nonresident Black Fathers......... 47

Figure 4.1: Theoretical Model of Father Involvement for Fathers Parenting with One
   Mother............................................................................................................................... 67

Figure 4.2: Theoretical Model of Father Involvement for Fathers Parenting with Two
   Mother............................................................................................................................... 68

Figure 4.3: Full Model 1, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with One
   Mother............................................................................................................................... 83

Figure 4.4: Full Model 2, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with Two
   Mothers ............................................................................................................................. 84

Figure 4.5: Reduced Model 1, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with One
   Mother............................................................................................................................... 88

Figure 4.6: Reduced Model 2, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with Two
   Mothers ............................................................................................................................. 92
Chapter 1: Introduction

The demands on fathers to be more involved with their children have steadily been increasing since the 1970s. However, fathers have received less attention in the social science literature compared to mothers. This difference is evident regarding the parenting practices of ethnic minority fathers such as nonresident Black fathers. More studies are needed that investigate the parenting practices and concerns of Black fathers who share childrearing responsibilities while residing away from their children. The social science literature is devoid of studies that represent a wide range of Black fathers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, especially nonresident Black fathers (Blake & Darling, 1994; Gordon, Gordon, & Nembhard, 1994; Lawson & Thompson, 1999; Reynolds, 2009). For several decades, scholars such as Blake and Darling (1994) and Reynolds (2009) have expressed the need for research studies that examine variables pertaining to the family issues of nonresident Black fathers such as coparenting, gender relations, and parenting stress. Additionally, Black fathers are often compared to their European American counterparts. Family scholars have emphasized that the experiences of Black men are vastly different from their peers (Blakely & Darling, 1994; Nobles, 1978; Vlahov & Galea, 2002). Therefore, this study will explore factors that influence father involvement and paternal stressors for nonresident Black fathers without comparing them to other cultural groups of fathers.

The aim of the study is to address four primary research goals which include 1) test the cross-cultural validation of instruments that measure nonresident fathering behaviors, 2) develop and test an empirical model of paternal stressors with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator, 3) develop and test an empirical model that accounts for
nonresident Black fathers who share parenting responsibilities with one mother and those who share parenting responsibilities with two mothers, and 4) develop and test an empirical model of father involvement with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator. This dissertation is presented in a three manuscript-style format with the intent to address each research goal.

**Manuscript 1**

The first manuscript is titled, *Assessing Cross-cultural Adaptation and Reliability of the Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father Version (ESI-MNF)*. The aim of the first manuscript is to assess the cross-cultural adaptation and reliability of a modified Everyday Stressors Index. Using a sample of 105 nonresident Black fathers, the *Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father Version (ESI-MNF)* was developed to include items that measure aspects of ethnic minority stressors and characteristics of nonresident fathering. Principle components analysis was the method of data reduction. Cronbach’s alpha was used as the measure of internal consistency for the *ESI-MNF*. The results indicate that the *ESI-MNF* was reliable for this sample of nonresident fathers. In addition, a paternal stressors subscale emerged that indicated specific areas of stress for nonresident Black fathers. The subscale is titled, *Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father-Paternal Stressors Subscale (ESI-MNF-PSS)*.

**Manuscript 2**

The second manuscript is titled, *The Mediating Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping on Nonresident Fathers’ Paternal Stressors*. The goal of the this manuscript is to model the effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and
coparenting support on their perceived paternal stressors; while testing the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping. The sample consists of 80 nonresident Black fathers who report parenting with one mother. Using path analysis, this study examined the following questions:

1. Do maternal gatekeeping behaviors mediate the direct effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and/or coparenting support on nonresident Black fathers’ perceived paternal stressors?

2. Do the indirect effects of the coparenting relationship and/or the indirect effects of coparenting support diminish or reinforce the direct effect of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on nonresident Black fathers’ perceived paternal stressors?

The second manuscript tests the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping on the relationship between fathers’ perceived coparenting and three dimensions of paternal stressors: child behavior concerns, difficulties with mothers, and role function concerns. This manuscript offers insight about how maternal gatekeeping intervenes between coparenting variables and measures of paternal stressors. The results indicate that cooperative coparenting is statistically significant in decreasing paternal stressors when maternal gatekeeping behaviors are perceived as hostile for the sample of nonresident Black fathers.

**Manuscript 3**

The final manuscript is titled, *Modeling Nonresident Black Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator*. The purpose of the third manuscript is to model the effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of coparenting support and
the coparenting relationship on their perceived father involvement; while testing the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping. Using a mixed methods design, I collected data from 105 nonresident Black fathers. Path analysis was employed to test two models of father involvement that address the following research goals:

1. Demonstrate the importance of collecting data from nonresident Black fathers relative to the mothers with whom parenting responsibilities are shared.
2. Model the effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on nonresident fathers’ involvement with their children.
3. Develop father involvement models that take into account fathers with multiple sets of nonresidential children.

The first model predicts the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping when parenting with one mother; while, the second model predicts the effects of maternal gatekeeping when parenting with two mothers. This manuscript provides insight regarding the importance of collecting data from nonresident fathers relative to the mothers with whom parenting responsibilities are shared. For the sample of fathers with multiple sets of nonresident children, the results indicate that the dimensions of father involvement may be different when parenting with the first mother and when parenting with the second mother.

**Description of Key Concepts**

Based on the literature and theoretical framework, this study uses coparenting relationship and coparenting support as independent variables, maternal gatekeeping as an intervening variable, and father involvement as the dependent variable to test the empirical model for the second manuscript titled, *The Mediating Effects of Maternal*
Gatekeeping on Nonresident Fathers’ Paternal Stressors. The model for the third manuscript is similar, but uses paternal stressors as the dependent variable to test the empirical models for the manuscript titled, Modeling Nonresident Black Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator. A description of the variables incorporated in the empirical models is provided for use throughout the study.

Coparenting Support

Coparenting has been defined as the extent to which former partners (i.e., divorced or separated) function as a cooperative versus antagonist team in coordinating childrearing responsibilities (Belsky, Crnic & Gable, 1985). Parents who develop cooperative relationships have many advantages. Visher and Visher (1989) explained that cooperative parental relationships can reduce loyalty conflicts that children may experience during divorce and separation and reduce power struggles between households. Former partners who have a cooperative relationship tend to serve as a resource for each other through coparenting support (Arditti & Kelly, 1994). Parents experience cooperative coparenting support when they work together to raise their children. On the other hand, antagonistic coparenting occurs when parents have opposing beliefs and values that interfere with childrearing goals.

Maternal Gatekeeping

Allen and Hawkins (1999) defined maternal gatekeeping as “a collection of beliefs and behaviors that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work by limiting men’s opportunities for learning and growing through caring for home and children” (p. 200). Cannon and colleagues (2008) described two aspects of maternal gatekeeping. The first aspect includes inhibitory gatekeeping
behaviors. Inhibitory behaviors such as a mother’s lack of relinquishment of primary childrearing responsibilities or her criticism of the father’s parenting behaviors discourage father involvement (Cannon et al., 2008). The second aspect consists of facilitative gatekeeping behaviors. Facilitative gatekeeping behaviors encompass a mother’s willingness to encourage the father as he develops a relationship with the child and her willingness to develop opportunities to enhance his childrearing skills (Cannon et al., 2008).

**Father Involvement**

Father involvement is a multidimensional construct that has not clearly been defined in the literature. As the ideal of fatherhood changes, previous scholars have attempted to adequately measure both the quantity and quality of father involvement (McBride, Brown, Bost, Shin, et al., 2005; Hawkins, Bradford, Palkovitz, Christiansen, Day, & Call, 2002; Juby, Billette, Laplante, & Bourdais, 2007). Doherty, Kouneski, and Erickson (1998) explain that society has shifted the expectations of the traditional fathering role to one that requires fathers to be more active in multiple aspects of childrearing. As a result of this role transition, Hawkins and colleagues (2002) contend that previous research on father involvement has specifically measured the construct in the context of time and observable events. However, scholars should surpass constricted interest in the temporal components of the father-child relationship by extending the concept of father involvement with dimensions such as discipline and teaching responsibility, school encouragement, mother support, and reading and homework support (Hawkins, Bradford, Palkovitz, Christiansen, Day, & Call, 2002). In this study,
father involvement is explored as multidimensional construct to investigate father-child interactions.

**Paternal Stressors**

Parenting stress has been linked to the difficulties of parents to manage childrearing tasks (Abidin, 1995; Crnic & Low, 2002). Negotiating childrearing responsibilities for nonresident children is stressful for fathers. For a nonresident father, childrearing responsibilities must be coordinated with his children’s mother (Easterbrooks, Barrett, Brady, & Davis, 2007). Conditions that influence paternal stress include conflict with mothers in the form of limited childrearing decision-making opportunities, reduced father-child contact over time, and sporadic visitation (Juby, Billette, Laplante, & Le Bourdais, 2007; Easterbrook, Barrett, Brady, & Davis, 2007; Lawson & Thompson, 1999; Maldonado, 2005; Seltzer, 1991).

**Chapters**

The manuscripts are presented in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Chapter 2 presents the first manuscript titled, *Assessing Cross-cultural Adaptation and Reliability of the Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father Version (ESI-MNF)*. The social science literature lacks studies that assess the validation of parenting instruments that have been tested with samples of fathers; especially nonresident minority fathers. Historically, parenting instruments have been developed to measure attitudes, behaviors, and concerns of motherhood rather than fatherhood. To address the gap in the literature, this study modified the *Everyday Stressors Index* by including indicators of distress that are relevant to being a nonresident minority father such as job discrimination and concerns of another male in the role of father figure.
Chapter 3 presents the manuscript, *The Mediating Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping on Nonresident Fathers’ Paternal Stressors*. The goal of the second chapter is to provide an empirical model of paternal stressors with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator. Most of the maternal gatekeeping literature focuses on the influence of maternal attitudes and beliefs on the behaviors of European American fathers. Additionally, there is a plethora of research studies that have investigated the parenting stress of mothers rather than fathers. Scholars from across disciplines have called for more studies that investigate the parenting stress of fathers. This study provides an alternative cultural approach to understanding parenting stress by taking into account the mediating role of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on their paternal stressors.

The manuscript, *Modeling Nonresident Black Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator* is presented in Chapter 4. The fourth chapter provides empirical models that account for nonresident Black fathers who share parenting responsibilities with one mother and those who share parenting responsibilities with two mothers. Past scholars have emphasized that most fatherhood studies do not consider fathers who have multiple sets of nonresident children. This study used principal components analysis as a method of dimensionality reduction for father involvement. For fathers parenting with a first and second mother, the results of the analysis demonstrate that the dimensions of father involvement are different for each set of nonresident children. This study provided insight about modeling the fathering behaviors of nonresident fathers who parent with one mother and those who parent with two mothers.
The fifth chapter is divided into four sections: contributions, results, limitations, and future research. The contribution section highlights the four primary research goals of this study. The results section provides the primary findings of each manuscript. The limitations section describes how study constraints affect generalizability. The final section describes the culturally sensitive recruitment strategies implemented in this study and recommendations for future studies to incorporate those strategies.
Chapter 2: Assessing Cross-cultural Adaptation and Reliability of the Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father Version (ESI-MNF)

Although research in the area of fatherhood is increasing, Pleck (2012) emphasizes that fathers still receive less attention in social science research compared to mothers. This difference is evident regarding parenting and psychological distress. Previous scholars have emphasized that more research studies have been conducted in the area of maternal psychological distress, but fewer studies explore the relationship between psychological distress and father involvement, especially for nonresident Black fathers (Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Matthews, & Carrano, 2007; Hammen, 2005; McKelvey, et al., 2009). As indicated in the literature, parental stress is a multifaceted concept that includes parents’ satisfaction with and adaptation to their children’s characteristics such as behavior and temperament (Judge, 2003). Other factors associated with parental stress include parents’ emotional resources and their ability to adjust to their parental role and their children’s developmental processes across time (Crnic & Low, 2002; Judge, 2003). In addition to these factors, parenting stress for nonresident Black fathers maybe compounded further by socioeconomic stressors. Stressor pileup such as conflicts with their children’s mothers, coping with racism and discrimination, perceived hopelessness, and urbanicity are life experiences that can affect the level of parental engagement of nonresident Black fathers (Anderson, Kohler, & Letiecq, 2005; Crnic & Low, 2002; Davis, Caldwell, Clark, & Davis, 2009; McCubbin, Joy, Cauble, Comeau, Patterson, & Needle, 1980; Vlahov & Galea, 2002).
Life Stressors and Nonresident Black Fathers

As suggested in the social science literature, some Black fathers are disproportionately affected by life stressors such as economic disadvantages, encounters with racism and discrimination, living in socially disadvantaged environments, reduced employment opportunities even with no arrest record, and unstable romantic relationships (Blake & Darling, 1994; Carter & Reynolds, 2011; Cross & Slater, 2000; Roy, 2004; Welch, 2003; Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2006). Coles (2009) explained that the aforementioned adverse experiences can exacerbate the stress of Black fathers. Stress in nonresident Black fathers is also associated with depressive symptoms that can impede father involvement. For fathers who experience depressive symptoms, decrease father involvement occurs in the form of reduced closeness, less contact with their children, and reduced child monitoring; especially among sons (Davis, Caldwell, Clark, & Davis, 2009; Paulson, Dauber, & Leiferman, 2006; Paulson, Keefe, & Leiferman, 2009). An important objective of fatherhood research is to investigate everyday stressors that impede a father’s involvement in the lives of his children. Hammen (2005) emphasized that stressors must be understood within the context of one’s life circumstances. Understanding how everyday stressors affect father involvement for nonresident Black fathers contributes to the emerging knowledge of parenting across cultural groups.

Statement of the Problem

To better understand the relationship between everyday stressors and father involvement, further research is necessary. Scholars from across disciplines have called for more studies that investigate the intersection of fatherhood and psychological distress (Bronte-Tinkew, Moore, Matthews, & Carrano, 2007; Hammen, 2005; Davis, Caldwell,
Clark, & Davis, 2009; McKelvey et al., 2009; Paulson, 2010). Yet, there are three primary dilemmas that exist for scholars investigating the relationship between everyday stressors and father involvement outcomes. First, there is a plethora of studies that investigate parenting distress with samples of women (Hammen, 2005). Historically, studies regarding the psychological distress of parents have overwhelmingly explored maternal depression and its effects on child outcomes while underemphasizing outcomes related to the psychological distress of fathers (Kane & Garber, 2004; Paulson, 2010; Phares, 1992; Phares, Fields, Kamboukos, & Lopez, 2005; Wilson & Durbin, 2010).

Second, there is a paucity of parenting instruments that have been tested and validated with samples of fathers (Mckelvey, Whiteside-Mansell, Faldowski, Sheres, Ayoub & Hart, 2009). Most instruments measuring parenting issues have been used to investigate various aspects of motherhood rather than fatherhood (McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002; Mckelvey, Whiteside-Mansell, Faldowski, Sheres, Ayoub & Hart, 2009). Lastly, few inventories regarding fatherhood and stress have been tested for cross-cultural adaptation and validation (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990). When considering instruments for assessing stress and parenting by fathers, scholars need to consider stress within the context of ethnic-related sources of stress (Carter & Reynolds, 2011; Hammen, 2005).

To address aforementioned dilemmas, the present study tests the cross-cultural adaptation and reliability of a modified Everyday Stressors Index (ESI) for minority nonresident fathers. The modified ESI includes items that measure ethnic-related sources of stress such as job discrimination and police racial profiling and nonresident fathering stressors such as another man in the role of father to one’s children. The social science literature indicates that nonresident Black fathers have higher rates of daily stressors
compared to their Caucasian peers (Bronte, et al., 2007; Davis, Caldwell, Clark, & Davis, 2009; Carter & Reynolds, 2011; Roy, 1999; Welch, 2003). The researchers selected a sample of nonresident Black fathers to test the internal consistency of a culturally adapted version of the ESI titled, Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father version.

**Everyday Stressors Index**

There are various indices that exist which measure parenting stress. However, many do not have indicators that measure the daily stressors relative to being a nonresident Black father. One example is Abidin’s (1995) Parenting Stress Index (PSI). The PSI is widely used to assess parenting stress in research studies and clinical environments (Abidin, 1990; Eyberg, Boggs, & Rodrigues, 1992; McBride, 1989).

However, the PSI does not provide indicators that measure stressors outside of the parent-child system. The index was designed to measure the overall parenting stress based on the parent’s characteristics, a parent’s interactions with his or her child, and the child’s behavior characteristics.

Within the context of fathering and daily stressors, Hall’s (1990) Everyday Stressors Index (ESI) offers an understanding about areas of stress such as financial concerns, interpersonal conflicts, parenting worries, and role functioning that may be stressful for nonresident fathers. Hall designed the ESI as a modified version of the Daily Hassles Scale (Kanner, Coyne, Schaeffer, & Lazarus, 1981). The Daily Hassles Scale (DHS) consists of 117 items that were designed to measure daily hassles that individuals encounter within their environment such as misplacing and losing things, not enough time with family, and concerns with pollution. Hall selected 20 items from the DHS to assess stressors of low income mothers with young children. Pollock, Amankwaa, and
Amankwaa (2005) later modified the ESI to measure the stressors of first-time fathers with young infants and newborns. In this study, I modified the ESI to provide more inclusive measures of stressors related to being an ethnic-minority father and nonresidential father.

Hall reported a Cronbach’s alphas of .83 (Hall, Williams, & Greenberg, 1985), .80 (Hall, 1987) and .85 (Hall, 1990) with samples of mothers with young children. A cumulative ESI score was derived by summing the responses, with total scores ranging from zero to 60. Pollock, Amankwaa, and Amankwaa (2005) reported an alpha level of .78 with a sample of first-time fathers.

**Methodology**

**Procedures**

The principal investigator (PI) recruited 105 nonresident Black fathers from two Combined Statistical Areas (CSA) in Kentucky and a contiguous county in Indiana: Lexington-Fayette-Frankfort-Richmond, KY CSA and the Louisville-Elizabethtown-Scottsburg, KY-IN CSA. To recruit a diverse sample of nonresident Black fathers, the PI used a street outreach approach to gain access and build rapport. A street outreach approach is used in the field of public health to engage hard to reach populations in their community. This approach is appropriate to recruit participants such as those from the Black community who may remain distrustful of researchers due to the lingering effect of the U.S. Public Health Services’ Tuskegee Syphilis Study and other studies (Freimuth, Quinn, Thomas, Cole, Zook, & Duncan, 2001; Swanson & Ward, 1995). Some members of the Black community may have misinformation regarding the Tuskegee Syphilis Study such as the participants were purposely injected with syphilis or hold beliefs that Blacks
will be exploited in research studies (Freimuth, Quinn, Thomas, Cole, Zook, & Duncan, 2001). The street outreach approach includes engaging Black fathers where they live and “hang out”. For example, the PI attended community events, spent time in barbershops, and walked neighborhoods to disseminate flyers.

The PI also reserved computer labs at local churches and community centers to ensure that participants who did not have access to a computer or who were not commuter literate could participate in the study. Public service announcements were made by local radio stations regarding the computer lab dates and times. In addition, flyers were disseminated to locations such as hair salons, liquor stores, neighborhood grocery stores, and neighborhood retail stores. In addition, computer stations were setup at local barbershops. The PI was on-site to assist participants with instructions and questions. The questionnaire was administered to participants who were not computer literate and those who reported being fatigued.

Sample

The sample consisted of 107 Black nonresident fathers who reported their ethnicity as African Americans (88%), African Blacks (9%), and some other Black ethnicity (3%) (see Table 2.0). The sample age range was from 20 through 59 years. Although the sample was somewhat diverse in reference to educational levels, 40% had attempted college, and 37% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. The annual income range was from less than $10,000 through more than $150,000. The majority of the sample (45.2%) had never been married, 20.6% were currently married, and the remaining 33.6% were currently divorced.
## Table 2.0  Demographic Characteristics of Sample Characteristics (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Black</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Black</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Trade School</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $59,999</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 to $69,999</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 to $89,999</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$149,999</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000-$199,999</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Measurement for ESI-MNF**

The original ESI used a 4-point scale ranging from *not at all bothered* to *bothered a great deal*. The modified scale used a 6-point Likert-type scale with items coded as 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=very often, and 6=always. These response options were selected to allow for greater variation among the alternative responses.

Pollock, Amankwa, and Amankwa (2005) made modest modifications to the ESI to assess the stress of first-time fathers during the postpartum period. Those modifications included changing the words *child(ren)* and *child (ren)'s* to *child* and replacing *school* with *day-care/child-care facility*.

In the development of a modified ESI inventory titled, *Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Fathers version (ESI-MNF)*, the goal was to improve the psychometric quality for the study of fathers; especially nonresident Black fathers (McKelvey et al., 2009; Roggman, Fitzgerald, Bradley, Raike, 2002). Modifications to create the ESI-MNF included adding items 9, 11, and 13 which are indicators of perceived *job discrimination, housing discrimination, and police racial profiling* (see Table 2.1).
Table 2.1 Principal Component Loading and Cronbach’s Alphas for ESI-MNF (N=105)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 1: Financial Concerns (α = .86)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Please select how often you are concerned about each statement:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4: Having enough money to entertain your children when they are in your care?</td>
<td>0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3: Having enough money to pay all your living expenses?</td>
<td>0.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: Not enough money for basic needs such as clothing, housing, and food.</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5: Owing money.</td>
<td>0.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10: Problems with housing.</td>
<td>0.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6: Problems with transportation</td>
<td>0.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 2: Interpersonal Conflict (α = .78)</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16: Problems getting along with your family.</td>
<td>0.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15: Problems with friends.</td>
<td>0.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11: Problems with housing discrimination.</td>
<td>0.637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12: Feeling safe in your neighborhood.</td>
<td>0.632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14: Problems with neighbors.</td>
<td>0.612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13: Problems with racial profiling by police.</td>
<td>0.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 3: Employment Concerns (α = .73)</strong>&lt;br&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9: Problems with job discrimination.</td>
<td>0.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7: Problems with your job.</td>
<td>0.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8: Problems with not having a job.</td>
<td>0.595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 4: Family Health Concerns (α = .78)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Concerns about the health of family members; not including your children.</td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18: Caring for family members other than your children.</td>
<td>0.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 5: Children’s Behavior Concerns (α = .74)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Concerns about how your children are doing in school.</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21: Problems with your children’s behavior.</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25: Concerns about your children misbehaving.</td>
<td>0.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20: Concerns about how your children are doing in school.</td>
<td>0.457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.1 (Continued): Principal Component Loading and Cronbach’s Alphas for ESI-MNF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 6: Difficulties with Children’s Mother (α = .80)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22: Difficulties with your children’s mother.</td>
<td>0.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24: Problems with your children’s mother saying negative things about you to your children.</td>
<td>0.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23: Disagreement with your children’s mother over disciplining of your children.</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19: Disagreement with your children’s mother over their education (study habits, grades, or behavior problems).</td>
<td>0.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Component 7: Role Function Concerns (α = .77)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28: Concerns about your children knowing that they are important to you.</td>
<td>0.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26: Concerns about your children seeing you as nurturing and supportive.</td>
<td>0.769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27: Concerns about another man in the role of father to your children.</td>
<td>0.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29: Problems with having time to do activities with your children.</td>
<td>0.587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Analysis and Results**

**Derivation of the ESI-MNF**

Principal component analysis (PCA) was the selected dimension reduction method for deriving the Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresidential Father version from the original ESI. Prior to conducting PCA, three criteria were used to assess the suitability for factor analysis of the 29 items measuring fathers’ concerns with everyday stressors. First, the Kaiser criterion was used to retain the components with eigenvalues greater than 1.00 (Kaiser, 1960). Second, the Kaiser-Olkin-Meyers Measure of Sample Adequacy (KMO) was used to determine if the data would factor well based on
correlations and partial correlations of the indicators measuring fathers’ concerns with everyday stressors. Factor analysis is appropriate when KMO values are above .50 (Cerny, & Kaiser, 1977; Kaiser, 1970). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion of .78 indicated an adequate sample size for principal component analysis.

Lastly, the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was conducted to test the null hypothesis: the variables are not correlated in the population. Significant test results indicate correlation of variables measuring fathers’ perceived everyday stressors and that data are suitable for factoring (Bartlett, 1950). The Barlett’s Test of Sphericity had a significant alpha level ($\chi^2 (406) = 1561.952, p < .001$). Standards for instrument reliability were assessed using Cronbach’s (1951) alpha coefficient rating of .80 - 1.00 (exemplary reliability), .70 - .79 (extensive reliability), .60 - .69 (moderate reliability), and < .60 (minimal reliability).

Two solutions were analyzed using a varimax rotation of the components loading matrix. The initial varimax rotation consisted of 8 components which explained 70% of the variance. All items had a component loading of at least .40. Component 9 only contained item 1: Having too many responsibilities. This item was removed from the analysis.

The final principal component analysis was conducted excluding item 1. Seven components explained 68% of the variance. Four of Hall’s (1990) original dimensions emerged during the data reduction. However, Pollock, Amankwaa, and Amankwaa’s (2005) dimension of role functions is more appropriate than Hall’s role overload. The dimensions included employment concerns ($\alpha = .73$), financial concerns ($\alpha = .86$), interpersonal conflict ($\alpha = .78$), and role function concerns ($\alpha = .77$). Hall’s parenting
worries did not emerge as a dimension. In addition, four new dimensions emerged: 
difficulties with children’s mother \((\alpha = .80)\), children’s behavior concerns \((\alpha = .74)\), and 
family health concerns \((\alpha = .78)\).

Among indicators added to the ESI-MNF, each item loaded on the appropriate 
dimension. For example, item 4: Having enough money to entertain your children when 
they are in your care, loaded under the dimension labeled as financial concerns. In 
addition, the dimension labeled as interpersonal conflict contains item 11: problems with 
housing discrimination and item 13: problems with police racial profiling. The 
components matrix for the final solutions is listed in Table 2.1.

**Measurement for ESI-MNF-PSS**

In the development of the ESI-MNF-PSS, items 4, 19, and 24 were added to 
measure a father’s perceived stressors related to having enough money to entertain his 
children when they are in his care, disagreements with his children’s mother regarding 
the children’s education, and mothers making negative comments about the father to his 
children. The wording for item 23 was changed from disagreement with others over 
discipline of your child(ren) to disagreements with your children’s mother over 
disciplining of your children. In addition, nonresident fathers who helped to pilot the 
modified instrument recommended the inclusion of items 26 and 27 to measure fathering 
stressors regarding a father’s concern about his children seeing him as nurturing and 
supportive and concern about another man being in the role of father to his children. 
Similar to Pollock, Amankwaa, and Amankwaa (2005), the word father was replaced 
with mother in item 22.
Derivation of the ESI-MNF-PSS

Principal component analysis was also conducted on 11 parenting indicators to determine the feasibility of an everyday paternal stressors subscale for minority nonresident fathers (ESI-MNF-PSS). The KMO measure of sample adequacy was .79. The Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 (55) = 445.379$, $p < .001$). These criteria indicated that principal component analysis was appropriate.

Using a varimax rotation, one solution produced three components with the same paternal stressor indicators as the ESI-MNF. Sixty-five percent of the variance was explained by the components. Three dimensions emerged regarding everyday paternal stressors: difficulties with children’s mother ($\alpha = .80$), children’s behavior concerns ($\alpha = .74$), and role function concerns ($\alpha = .77$), No further analyses were conducted. The components loading matrix is listed in Table 2.2.
Table 2.2 Principal Component Loadings and Cronbach’s Alphas for ESI-MNF-PSS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Component 1: Difficulties with Children's Mother ($\alpha=.80$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q22:</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>Difficulties with your children’s mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24:</td>
<td>0.770</td>
<td>Problems with your children’s mother saying negative things about you to your children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagreement with your children’s mother over disciplining of your children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23:</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>Disagreement with your children’s mother over their education (study habits, grades, or behavior problems).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19:</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>Disagreement with your children’s mother over their education (study habits, grades, or behavior problems).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Component 2: Role Function ($\alpha=.77$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Component 2: Role Function ($\alpha=.77$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q28:</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>Concerns about your children knowing that they are important to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26:</td>
<td>0.829</td>
<td>Concerns about your children seeing you as nurturing and supportive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29:</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>Problems with having time to do activities with your children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27:</td>
<td>0.557</td>
<td>Concerns about another man in the role of father to your children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Component 3: Concerns with Children’s Behavior ($\alpha=.74$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
<th>Component 3: Concerns with Children’s Behavior ($\alpha=.74$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q21:</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>Problems with your children’s behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25:</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>Concerns about your children misbehaving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20:</td>
<td>0.570</td>
<td>Concerns about how your children are doing in school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The modification to Hall’s Everyday Stressors Inventory (ESI) includes items that measure ethnic group-related sources of stress and attributes of fatherhood. The Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father version (ESI-MNF) distinguishes seven distinct dimensions of life stressors for nonresident Black fathers: financial concerns, interpersonal conflict, employment concerns, family health concerns, children’s behavior concerns, difficulties with children’s mother, and role function concerns. The emergence of four new stress dimensions indicates that nonresident Black fathers and
other fathers may have specific life stressors that impede father involvement. The new four stress dimensions are children’s behavior concerns, difficulties with children’s mother, and family health concerns. In addition, the paternal stressors subscale (ESI-MNF-PSS) distinguishes three dimensions of life stressors that are specific to parenting: children’s behavior concerns, difficulties with children's mothers, and role function concerns.

Most importantly, I demonstrate the importance of including indicators measuring ethnic-related sources of stress and fathering-related stressors. Table 2.3 depicts the differences between indicator loadings regarding the dimension of role function for first-time fathers during the postpartum period and nonresident Black fathers (Akande & Heath, 2013; Pollock, Amankwa, & Amankwa, 2005). In both studies, fathers report that not having enough time is a stressor. For fathers parenting during the postpartum period, their role function stressors are from having too many responsibilities and the health concerns of their children and family members. In contrast, the indicators measuring the role function stressors for nonresident Black fathers indicate that stress occurs regarding their children perceiving that their father views them as important, their children seeing their father as nurturing and supportive, and concerns of another man being in the role of father to their children.

Last, Table 2.1 demonstrates that the ethnic minority stressors relevant to being a Black man emerged within the dimension of interpersonal conflict (see Component 2). These ethnic-related stressors include problems with housing discrimination and police racial profiling. The indicator feeling safe in your neighborhood could also be an ethnic-related source of stress.
Table 2.3 Comparison of Role Function Stressors Indicator Loadings

---

**First-time Fathers during the Postpartum Period**

*Role Function Stressors*
- Not having enough time to do the things you want to do.
- Having too many responsibilities.
- Concerns about your child's health.
- Concerns about the health of family members (not including your child).

Pollock, Amankwaa, and Amankwaa (2005)

**Nonresident Black Fathers**

*Role Function Stressors*
- Problems with having time to do activities with your children.
- Concerns about your children knowing that they are important to you.
- Concerns about your children seeing you as nurturing and supportive.
- Concerns about another man in the role of father to your children.

Akande and Heath (2013)

---

**Implications and Limitations**

I offer researchers an additional instrument that has been tested with a sample of ethnic minority fathers with nonresident children. Still, the sample size (n=105) is small and limits generalizability of the results. I trust that future researchers will continue to test both instruments with larger samples of ethnic-minority fathers from diverse backgrounds. Cautious interpretation of preliminary results obtained from a one-time assessment of stress is also warranted. Future studies should use the ESI-MNF and its paternal stressor subscale, ESI-MNF-PSS, longitudinally as the effects of stress change over time along with an individual’s personal circumstances.
Becoming a father is a life changing process for many men (Easterbrooks, Barrett, Brady, & Davis, 2007). Coltrane (2004) defined fatherhood as a biological and social connection that occurs between a father and his biological child. Fatherhood also encompasses the social expectations placed upon men regarding their duties and responsibilities within a family system. The term fathering links behaviors of fathers with the interactions between men and their children (Coltrane, 2004). Fathering also includes a wide range of behaviors such as providing emotional support, engaging in activities with their children, transferring intergenerational values and beliefs, and meeting the basic needs of children such as food and shelter (Palkovitz & Palm, 2009). A large portion of research regarding fatherhood focuses on the impact of fathering behaviors on the well-being of children (e.g., Amato and Rivera, 1999; Bronte-Tinkew, Scott, Lilja, 2010; Cabrera, Tamis-LeMonda, Bradley, Hofferth, & Lamb, 2000; Lamb, 2004; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2003; Stolz, Barber, & Olsen, 2005).

Tach, Mincy, and Edin (2010) emphasized that father-child interactions do not occur independently of the relationship between a father and his child’s mother. This argument is prominent in the literature pertaining to nonresident fathers. For nonresident fathers, the coordination of childrearing responsibilities is linked to the coparenting relationship with their children’s mothers and also judicial rulings. Historically, judicial rulings related to residential custody have favored mothers over fathers (Cooksey & Fondell, 1996; Maldonado, 2005). Maldonado (2005) found that gender biases exist
within the judicial system that disproportionately award residential custody to mothers even when both parents are deemed fit to parent. Nonresident fathers may perceive judicial rulings as giving mothers more control over access to their children and inhibiting their childrearing decision-making. As a result, nonresident fathers are likely to perceive mothers’ influence and control over interactions with their children as maternal gatekeeping behaviors (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). The process of fathering becomes a complex task when nonresident fathers perceive their children’s mothers as controlling access to their children through restrictive maternal gatekeeping behaviors.

Scholars contend that maternal gatekeeping behaviors are embedded within the coparenting system (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; De Luccie, 1995; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride, Brown, Bost, Shin, Vaughn, & Korth, 2005; Puhlman & Pasley, 2013). Maternal gatekeeping behaviors are rooted in the distribution of power within the family structure that enable mothers to regulate father involvement based on their evaluation of the attitudes, behaviors, and caretaking abilities of fathers (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Cowan, 1987; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; Kranichfeld, 1987; Puhlman & Pasley, 2013). These findings suggest that maternal gatekeeping behaviors can contribute to the parenting stress of nonresident fathers as childrearing responsibilities are negotiated with their children’s mothers.

Parenting stress has been attributed to the difficulties of parents to manage parenting tasks associated with the care of children (Abidin, 1995; Crnic & Low, 2002). Negotiating childrearing responsibilities for nonresident children is stressful for fathers. These fathers acquire access to their children and receive information about their children through interactions with their children’s mothers (Easterbrooks, Barrett, Brady, & Davis,
Few studies explore the relationship between maternal gatekeeping and the parenting stress of nonresident fathers. The goal of the present study is to test a paternal stress model by examining the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on the relationship between the coparenting relationship and coparenting support and paternal stressors using a sample of Black fathers with nonresident children. Previous studies have focused on the mediating role of maternal gatekeeping in relation to the fathering behaviors of European American married and nonmarried fathers (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, & Sokolowski, 2008; De Luccie, 1995; Schoppe-Sullivan, Brown, Cannon, & Mangelsdorf, 2008). This study provides an alternative cultural approach to understanding paternal stressors by taking into account the mediating effect of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on their paternal stressors.

**Statement of the Problem**

Not residing with their children can be stressful for nonresident Black fathers as they attempt to adjust to challenges within the coparenting system such as diminished or limited childrearing decision-making responsibilities, limited visitations, and adjusting to rules regarding boundaries related to separate households and intimate relationships (Madden-Derdich & Leonard, 2000; Seltzer, 1991; Willis, 2000). Emery and Dillion (1994) attributed the increase in boundary conflict between parents to intense and painful emotions, parental power struggles, limited communication, and differentiating childrearing practices and concerns. The aforementioned challenges can exacerbate the parenting stress of nonresident Black fathers especially when childrearing responsibilities
are viewed as being regulated by their children’s mothers in the form maternal
gatekeeping.

Participants in the present study indicated that nonresident Black fathers have
limited childrearing decision-making power compared to residential mothers.
Kranichfeld’s (1987) explanation of family power helps to define this issue. Childrearing
decision-making power within the coparenting system is the capacity of nonresident
fathers to have mutual influence alongside the resident mother. Many fathers expressed
concerns regarding power differentials that occur with Black fathers who share
childrearing responsibilities with Black mothers. A few fathers provided insightful
perspectives about these power differentials. Respondents’ names have been replaced
with pseudonyms.

Roy:

…Black women have more power in the family because they have
had to have it. They do it in the absence of Black men. We as
Black men struggle with that because we know that it is not
supposed to be that way. But as Black men, until we take full
responsibility for our absence and our role, things will not change.
When we take full responsibility, Black women will relinquish that
power. I think they want to. There are cases where Black women
have had control for so long that they are not willing to relinquish
it. When the two come together and she is a millennium woman
and she is an “I don’t need you woman”. I think that does
something to our ego and that creates an issue in the relationship with her and it spill over to your parenting relationship.

Theodore:

...Black women being in control of the family gives a man an easy way out. They begin to feel like that she has control; that is what women do. He often gives up and tries not to work things out. On the other end, what’s the word I’m looking for? On the other end, Black men become expendable. She’s like what do I need you for? Economics also plays a part. Black men are not the primary bread winners. A lot of Black men feel out of control because they are not able to succeed like them. Some men that I know leave relationships because they feel like they are not as good as the women. They don’t feel empowered. The pressure of society is: a man should do this or that. Men know when they are not succeeding or reaching that point. Black men do not have an outline of what a man is supposed to do or what a man is supposed to do to be a father other than bring your money home. This starts trouble in the relationship.

The Black male-female relationship concerns of these fathers have been well documented in the social science literature. For several decades, scholars who have studied gender relations in the Black community have conveyed that there is discord regarding Black gender relations (Cazenave, 1983; Cole & Guy-Sheftall, 2003; Franklin,
1984; Hooks et al., 1995; King & Allen, 2009). Former *Essences Magazine* editor, Elise Washington (1999) put emphasis on Black men and women being at war with each other in *Uncivil War: The Struggle between Black Men and Women*. Hence, fatherhood scholars should presume that tensions between Black men and women carry over into the coparenting relationship and impact the paternal stress of nonresident Black fathers. There is a lack of empirical inquiry that investigates paternal distress associated with maternal gatekeeping behaviors as perceived by fathers; especially nonresident Black fathers.

This is an important and timely topic since Black children are more likely to live in fatherless households compared to children from other cultural groups. Kreider and Ellis (2011) reported in the *Current Populations Report* that approximately 47% of Black children under 18 lived with their mother only, in the 1991 compared to 16% of White children and 29% of Hispanic children. In 2009, the number of Black children residing in a mother only household increased to 50%. It is important to understand the coparenting challenges that exist between nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers as parental discord can impact the well-being of Black children (Clarke, 2008; Cummings & Davis, 2002; Emery, 1992).

**Theoretical Framework of Interdependence and Conflict within the Coparental System**

Emile Durkheim’s (1964) concept of organic solidarity can be used to conceptualize the interdependence that occurs within the coparental system of nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers. Durkheim used the term organic solidarity to explain the interdependence that occurs from one individual to another when
a division of labor exists (Edles & Appelrouth, 2005). Through interdependence a system of cooperative association develops (Edles & Appelrouth, 2005). Solidarity emerges in the form of coparenting support when nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers cultivate their differences and recognize that each is contributing for the good of their children.

Furthermore, independence emerges when the division of labor is voluntary and is appropriate for the individual. When the division of labor is not appropriate, the individual may become distressed over a specific activity. For example, paternal distress may arise when the childrearing decision-making responsibilities between a nonresident Black father and his children’s mother become imbalanced and he feels a lack of control. Durkheim recognized that problems arise when individuals are forced or pushed to an extreme regarding a specific position within the division of labor (Edles & Appelrouth, 2005). If nonresident Black fathers notice that their authority to make childrearing decisions is being diminished by their children’s mothers, they may perceive these behaviors as antagonistic maternal gatekeeping behaviors.

Furthermore, the work of Parson (1951) and Durkheim (1964) can be used to understand coparenting support through the process of parental solidarity that occurs within a coparental system. Parental solidarity is defined as the extent to which concerns for the children prevail over the individual interest of the parents when parental conflict such as antagonistic gatekeeping behaviors arises (Edles & Appelrouth, 2005; Parsons, 1951). Moreover, parental solidarity is a function of mutual respect and a positive contribution to the attainment of childrearing goals and responsibilities that occur between parents (Edles & Appelrouth, 2005; Parsons, 1951). Parental solidarity within
the coparental system is distinguished by the following qualities: 1) parents who remain connected to each other through their children, 2) parents who depend on each other to rear their children, 3) parents who may have differential beliefs and values about childrearing, but attempt to organize the totality of their beliefs and values to collectively rear their children, and 4) parents who function under a collective belief system toward childrearing rather than distinct individual belief systems toward childrearing to minimize parental conflict.

On the other hand, distress within the coparental system arises when nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers lack solidarity. Parents who lack solidarity will have more distress in the form of parental conflict. In contrast with organic solidarity, conflict occurs when individuals are motivated by self-interest rather than a collective interest. Coparenting disagreements arises when nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers have opposing interests, values, or goals relative to childrearing. Within a coparental system, opposing childrearing goals and an imbalance of power regarding childrearing decisions creates a hostile coparenting system. When resident mothers have more childrearing decision-making power than nonresident fathers, an imbalance of power exists between parents. Resident mothers with more childrearing decision-making opportunities may exhibit inhibitory maternal gatekeeping behaviors that contribute to the parenting stress of nonresident fathers (Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, & Sokolowski, 2008).

Assumptions regarding coparenting and the absence of parental solidarity are 1) parental conflict occurs when parents are not collectively united regarding childrearing efforts, 2) parental conflict emerges when parents have problems that stem from their
previous intimate relationship, and 3) parental conflict emerges when parents have problems that impede their current relationship. To diminish distress related to maternal gatekeeping behaviors, nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers must cooperate to build equilibrium within their separate family systems (Ihinger-Tallman, Pasley, Buecher 1995). Equilibrium occurs in the form of coparenting support when both parents provide resources (i.e., emotional and financial) to care for their children (Willis, 2000), develop cooperative attitudes and behaviors regarding childrearing decisions (Seltzer, 1998), and facilitate mutual respect for the other parent (Arditti & Kelly, 1994). This process helps nonresident Black fathers perceive their children’s mothers as supporting their father involvement; thus, paternal stressors are diminished when maternal gatekeeping behaviors are perceived as facilitative.

The Present Study

The seminal work of scholars such as Allen and Hawkins (1999), De Luccie (1995), and Fagan and Barnett (2003) provide the momentum for other scholars to test the relationships between maternal gatekeeping and fathering indicators that measure fathers’ behaviors relative to being absent or present in the lives of their children. Most of the maternal gatekeeping literature focuses on the influence of maternal attitudes and beliefs on the behaviors of European American fathers (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Cannon, Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Brown, & Sokolowski, 2008; Moore, 2012). Research studies that investigate maternal gatekeeping from the perspective of ethnic minority fathers are scarce. This study builds on the existing maternal gatekeeping literature by testing a model of paternal stressors with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator using a sample of nonresident Black fathers. In addition to the maternal gatekeeping literature, I
also draw from the coparenting literature to examine factors that can influence paternal stressors of nonresident Black fathers such as their perceptions of the coparenting relationship and support from mothers.

**Conceptual Model of Paternal Stressors with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator**

As presented earlier, factors that are likely to influence nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of maternal gatekeeping include coparenting support, limited childrearing decision-making power, attributes associated with Black male-female relationship discord, and parental power struggles. These factors influence the coparenting relationship between nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers and how fathers perceive coparenting support from mothers. Based on the literature and theoretical framework, this study uses coparenting relationship and coparenting support as independent variables, maternal gatekeeping as a mediating variable, and paternal stressors as the dependent variable to address the following research questions:

1. Do maternal gatekeeping behaviors mediate the direct effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and/or coparenting support on nonresident Black fathers’ perceived paternal stressors?

2. Do the indirect effects of the coparenting relationship and/or the indirect effects of coparenting support decrease or increase the direct effect of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on nonresident Black fathers’ perceived paternal stressors?

The conceptual model derived from the literature is depicted in Figure 3.1. Paths a and d indicate that fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support, respectively, each can have a direct effect on their paternal stressors. The conceptual model presumes that the effects of the coparenting relationship and
coparenting support on nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of paternal stressors are mediated by maternal gatekeeping behaviors; therefore, paths a and d are expected to drop out or be weakened by the inclusion of maternal gatekeeping behaviors in the model. Paths b and c indicate that fathers’ perception of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support, respectively, each can have a direct effect on maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Path e indicates that fathers’ perceptions of maternal gatekeeping behaviors have a direct effect on their paternal stressors. Also represented by paths b and c through e are any indirect effects of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support, respectively, that reinforce or offset the direct effects of their perceptions of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on nonresident Black fathers’ paternal stressors.
Figure 3.1: Conceptual Model of Paternal Stressors of Nonresident Black Fathers
Methodology

Respondents

The sample was recruited from two cities in Kentucky with the highest Black populations: Lexington and Louisville. The total Black population for Kentucky is approximately eight percent. Fourteen percent of Blacks reside in Lexington while 22% reside in Louisville (U.S. Census, 2010). Respondents in this study, met the following five criteria: 1) a Black father, 2) the biological father of a nonresident child between the ages 2 and 17, 3) coparenting a child or children with only one mother, 4) residing within the Combined Statistical Areas (CSA) of Lexington-Fayette-Frankfort-Richmond, Kentucky or Louisville-Elizabethtown-Scottsburg, Kentucky-Indiana CSA, and 5) be willing to complete a web-based questionnaire.

This sample consists of 80 Black nonresident fathers coparenting one or more children ages 2 through 17 with one mother. The fathers reported their ethnicity as African Americans (89%), African Blacks (9%), or other Black ethnicity (3%). The age range of fathers in the sample was from 20 through 59 years. Five percent of the fathers had at least a high school education, 40% had attempted a college education, and 46% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. The annual income range was from less than $10,000 through more than $199,999. Sample characteristics are presented in Table 3.1.
Table 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Nonresident Black Fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Trade School</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td></td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 to $19,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $29,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 to $39,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $59,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 to $69,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 to $79,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 to $89,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$149,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000-$199,999</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recruitment

Past research indicates that members of cultural communities such as Blacks can be difficult to locate and recruit into research studies (Swanson & Ward, 1995; Zaslavsky, Zaborski, & Cleary, 2002). Challenges associated with recruiting respondents from the Black community are related to the remaining effects of the involuntary sterilization of Black women and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study (Friemuth, Quinn, Thomas, Cole, Zook, & Duncan, 2001; Wisdom, Neighbors, Williams, Havstad, & Tilley, 2002; Volscho, 2010). To recruit nonresident Black fathers, the principal investigator (PI) used a street outreach approach to gain access to the Black community. A street outreach approach is often used in public health research to gain access and build rapport with minority groups. To build rapport with potential study participants, the PI discussed recruitment strategies with local clergy, Black barbers, and members of Black civil and social organizations such as Black fraternities and sororities, motorcycle clubs, and the Urban League. The PI walked neighborhoods to disseminate study information and build community trust.

Recruitment information was also disseminated to gatekeepers. Community gatekeepers emailed study information to their listservs. In addition, study flyers were posted in venues that are frequented by Black men such as barbershops, churches, local bars and night clubs, and neighborhood stores. The PI created public service announcements, detailing the significance of the study, that were played on local radio stations.
Survey Design and Administration

This study used a web-based questionnaire designed to measure nonresident Black fathers’ perception of the coparenting relationship, coparenting support, maternal gatekeeping behaviors, and paternal stressors. The questionnaire was designed using the Qualtrics web-based tool. A web-based questionnaire provided several ways to improve data quality and respondents’ participation (van Gelder, Bretveld, & Roeleveld, 2010). First, data quality was improved with computer prompts. Respondents were prompted when an answer was incomplete. Second, Qualtrics provided email reminders for surveys that were not completed. This design also enabled respondents to maintain partial anonymity as some respondents did not feel comfortable being interviewed or being seen by the researchers, thus, some respondents completed the web-based questionnaire in a private location that was comfortable to them and at their own pace. Last, once identified by the respondent, the mother’s name was automatically inserted into the wording of questions pertaining to the mother. This approach helped to personalize the questions. For example, respondents were asked, “How often does Monica go out of her way to help you with changes to the visitation schedule?”

Respondents who had computer and email access were sent a link to the web-based questionnaire. To assist respondents who did not have computer access or computer literacy skills, the PI arranged dates and times for respondents to complete the web-based questionnaire at community locations with free computer access such as churches, community centers, and public libraries. Local radio stations made public service announcements about scheduled dates and times, one week before and the day of the event.
The PI also setup laptop stations at local Black barbershops. The barbershops were a cultural institution that has an important role within the social network of Black men. It is a place where Black men exchange ideas on a range of issues such as familial relationships, politics, racism, sports, and other current events (Brunson, 2005; Franklin, 1985; Hess et al., 2007). These facilities are also ideal for respondents with limited transportation. The PI was on-site at all locations to assist respondents with questions and to administer the online questionnaire to those with limited computer literacy.

Respondents who completed the questionnaire by email entered their address in a separated survey window to receive a $5 gift card. The gift cards could be used at local grocery stores, retail stores, or restaurants. Those who completed the questionnaire at barbershops and other community locations were given gift cards onsite.

**Measures**

This study used four validated indices to test nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support on their perceived father involvement while testing the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping (see Appendix A for complete list of indices). Each original index was based on either a 4-point point Likert-type scale or a 5-point Likert scale with different category labels. Dissimilar response category labels can confuse respondents. Therefore, response options for each scale were coded as $6=always$, $5=very often$, $4=often$, $3=sometimes$, $2=rarely$, and $1=never$. A 6-point Likert-type scale was selected to eliminate the opportunity for respondents to select a midpoint. Chomeya (2010) emphasized that a midpoint allows respondents to not express their true choice and remain neutral.
Exogenous Variables

Fathers’ perceived coparenting relationship (Coparenting Relationship). Five indicators were adapted, with permission, from the Fragile Families Survey (2003) to measure fathers’ perceived coparenting relationship. Sample indicators included: *In the past 12 months, how often have you loaned each other money, helped each other solve a problem related to the children, or helped each other solve a personal problem.* Reliability was acceptable for this sample of nonresidential Black fathers ($\alpha = .77$). A complete list of items measuring the coparenting relationship is attached in Appendix A1.

Fathers perceived coparenting support (Coparenting Support). Ahrons’ (1981) coparental support scale was modified to measure nonresident Black fathers’ perceived coparenting support. The original scale measures the degree to which a former spouse is supportive, accommodating, and understanding during parenting interactions. Raley, Mattingly, and Bianchi (2006) indicate that using four out of the six items available on the subscale provides a better indication of parental support from a former spouse.

Similar to former spouses, nonresident Black fathers have similar parenting dynamics such as not parenting with the mother within the same residence and scheduling child visitation. Therefore, I used the same four items as Raley, Mattingly, and Bianchi (2006). The word *former spouse* was replaced with the mother’s name. Sample indicators include: when you need help regarding your children, how often do you seek it from (mother’s name), and how often would you say that (mother’s name) is helpful regarding the children? Regarding the last question, I changed the word *resourceful* to *helpful.* In addition, I added the question: *How often is (mother’s name) supportive of your needs as a father not living with his children?* The four indicators on
the original coparenting support scale had an alpha level of .86 (Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006). The Cronbach’s alpha level for the modified scale was .80. Appendix A2 contains a complete list of the items measuring fathers’ perceived coparenting support.

**Mediating Variable**

*Fathers’ perceived maternal gatekeeping behaviors (Maternal Gatekeeping).* A questionnaire created by Fagan and Barnett (2003) was used to measure fathers’ perceived maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Fagan and Barnett developed the instrument to assess the degree to which mothers limit fathers’ access to their children. The questionnaire contains nine items that address a mother’s preference for carrying out a range of child care tasks instead of permitting the father to carry out the task. Permission was obtained from Jay Fagan (personal communication, September 17, 2010) to adapt the scale. I replaced the statement *…I think I am the one to make the decision, not their father. (Father Figure)* with *…I think (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make that decision, not me.* Sample indicators include: if a decision has to be made about which TV shows my children should watch, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make that decision, and not me and if a decision has to be made about who my children will play with (or spend time with), I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make that decision, not me. Using a sample of mothers who reported their gatekeeping behaviors toward nonresident and resident fathers, Fagan and Barnett (2003) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .93. In the present study, the Cronbach’s alpha level was .95 for nonresident Black fathers. The nine items measuring maternal gatekeeping are attached in Appendix A3.
Outcome/Dependent Variable

Fathers’ perceived paternal stressors (*dimensions of children’s behavior concerns, difficulties with mothers, and role function concerns*). A subscale of a modified version of Hall’s (1987) Everyday Stressors Index (ESI) was used to measure fathers’ perceived paternal stressors. The ESI is a 20-item questionnaire that was originally designed to measure the everyday stressors of mothers with young children such as employment problems, financial concerns, interpersonal conflict, parenting worries, and role overload. However, Pollock, Amankwaa, and Amankwaa (2005) adapted the instrument to measure the everyday stressors of first-time fathers during the postpartum period.

The modified index, Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father (ESI-MNF) version was developed to provide more inclusive measures of daily stressors related to being a Black father with nonresident children (Akande & Heath, 2013). This study used the ESI-MNF subscale titled, Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father-Paternal Stressors Subscale (ESI-MNF-PSS). The ESI-MNF-PSS offers indicators that include paternal stressors of nonresident fathers. Respondents were asked to select how often they were concerned about statements such as concerns with disagreement with your children's mother over their education (study habits, grades, or behavior problems), concerns about another man in the role of father to your children, and problems with your children's mother saying negative things about you to your children (Akande & Heath, 2013). Hall and colleagues reported a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient range of 0.80 to 0.85 for the original scale’s five dimensions (Hall, 1988; Hall, 1990; Hall, Williams, & Greenberg, 1985). The ESI-MNF-PSS has three dimensions of paternal
stressors with acceptable alpha levels: children’s behavior concerns ($\alpha = .74$), difficulties with children’s mother ($\alpha = .80$), and role function concerns ($\alpha = .77$). Appendix A5 contains a list of the items measuring fathers’ perceived paternal stressors.

**Data Analysis and Results**

To test the research questions, path analysis was conducted using AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012). The full Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers was tested to determine the statistically significant paths of exogenous variables (Coparenting Relationship and Coparenting Support) on the outcome variables (dimensions of Paternal Stressors) while testing the mediating effects of the intervening variable (Maternal Gatekeeping).
Figure 3.2: Empirical Model of Paternal Stressors of Nonresident Black Fathers

\[ \chi^2 = 6.386 \]
\[ df = 6; p = .381 \]
\[ CFI = .996 \]
\[ RMSEA = .029 \]
Direct Effects of the Paternal Stressors Model for Fathers Parenting with One Mother

Direct, indirect, and total effects for the paternal stressors model are reported in Table 3.2. The coparenting relationship and coparenting support were statistically correlated ($r = .57$, $p < .001$). This positive association implies that nonresident Black fathers who perceive the relationship quality with their children’s mother as high also perceive high levels of coparenting support and, likewise, low levels of relationship quality with their children’s mother is correlated with low levels of coparenting support.

For this sample of nonresident Black fathers parenting with one mother, the path from the coparenting relationship to maternal gatekeeping is negative ($\beta = -.252$, $p < .05$). Fathers’ perceived high levels of the coparenting relationship are associated with perceptions of low levels of maternal gatekeeping behavior (see Figure 3.2). Similarly, a negative direct path exist between fathers’ perceived coparenting support and maternal gatekeeping behavior ($\beta = -.250$, $p < .05$). Father’ perceived high levels of coparenting support are associated with perceptions of low levels of maternal gatekeeping behavior.

Regarding paternal stressors, the path between coparenting support and the paternal stressors dimension of difficulties with their children’s mother is negative and strong ($\beta = -.479$, $p < .001$). Fathers’ high levels of perceived coparenting support are associated with low levels of paternal stress in the form of difficulties with their children’s mothers. When fathers perceive mothers as helpful, this decreases difficulties with the mother regarding the mother making negative comments about the father, disciplining the children, and children’s education. Additionally, positive direct paths exist between fathers’ perceptions of maternal gatekeeping behavior and their perceived
paternal stressor dimensions of children’s behavior concerns and role function concerns. Nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of high levels of maternal gatekeeping behavior are associated with concerns about their children’s behavior ($\beta = .245, p < .001$) and role function concerns ($\beta = .275, p < .001$). When fathers perceive mothers as controlling parenting decisions, this increases concerns regarding problems with their children’s behaviors. Likewise, when fathers perceive mothers as controlling parenting decisions, this increases the fathers’ role function concerns. This is consistent with the first assumption about coparenting in the absence of parental solidarity. Conflict in the form of antagonistic gatekeeping behaviors indicates that nonresident Black fathers have increased concerns about their children’s behaviors when they do not share cooperative coparenting behaviors with their children’s mothers.
Table 3.2 Summary of Effects for the Reduced Form of the Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinant</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting</td>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>-0.252</td>
<td>-0.252</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>-0.250</td>
<td>-0.250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting</td>
<td>Children’s Behavior Concerns</td>
<td>-0.062</td>
<td>-0.062</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting</td>
<td>Role Function Concerns</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Children’s Behavior Concerns</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td>-0.061</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Role Function Concerns</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td>-0.069</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Difficulties with Children’s Mother</td>
<td>-0.479</td>
<td>-0.479</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Children’s Behavior Concerns</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td>0.245</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Role Function Concerns</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td>0.275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mediating Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping Behaviors in the Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers

Indirect effects for the paternal stressors model are reported for fathers parenting with one mother (see Table 3.2). With respect to the research questions, the results indicate that, for this sample of nonresident Black fathers’ maternal gatekeeping behaviors have a mediating effect between perceptions of the coparenting relationship and two of the three dimensions of parental stressors (children’s behavior concerns and role function concerns) and maternal gatekeeping behaviors have a mediating effect between coparenting support and the same two dimensions of parental stressors (children’s behavior concerns and role function concerns). Maternal gatekeeping behaviors do not have a mediating effect between the coparenting relationship and difficulties with the mother or between coparenting support and difficulties with the mother. The mediating effect is identified by the lack of statistically significant direct paths from the coparenting relationship to two of the three dimensions of parental stressors and from coparenting support to two of the three dimensions of parental stressors when maternal gatekeeping behaviors are included in the model and have statically significant paths to those same two of the three dimensions.

Indirect Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping Behaviors in the Paternal Stressors Model for Nonresident Black Fathers

The indirect effects of the coparenting relationship and the indirect effects of coparenting support reduce the direct effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on two of the three perceived paternal stressors for nonresident Black fathers (children’s behavior concerns and role function concerns). All indirect effects of the coparenting relationship
and coparenting support on paternal stressors when maternal gatekeeping behaviors are present are negative; thereby, reducing the positive effects of maternal gatekeeping on children’s behavior concerns and role function concerns. Fathers’ perceptions of high levels of the coparenting relationship ($\beta = -.06$) and high levels of coparenting support ($\beta = -.06$) decrease children’s behavior concerns otherwise present through maternal gatekeeping behavior (see Table 3). Similarly, fathers’ perceptions of a high levels of the coparenting relationship ($\beta = -.07$) and high levels of coparenting support ($\beta = -.07$) reduces role function concerns otherwise present though maternal gatekeeping behavior. When fathers have positive perceptions of coparenting with their children’s mothers, there are fewer concerns about their children’s behaviors and their fathering role even in the presence of maternal gatekeeping behaviors that indicate control of parental decision making.

For this sample of nonresident Black fathers, the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors are minimized when the relationships with their children’s mothers are good and their children’s mothers are perceived as supportive. Additionally, the negative direct relationship between coparenting support and difficulties with the mother reinforces the finding that perceived high levels of coparenting support relate to fewer disagreements with the mother. These findings are consistent with those scholars who found that cooperative coparenting reduces hostile feelings and parental power struggles (Arditti & Kelly, 1994; Masheter, 1991; Visher & Visher, 1989). From a family systems perspective, the results indicate that cooperative coparenting and encouraging mother support assist in diminishing nonresident Black fathers’ role function concerns. Cooperative coparenting contributes to nonresident Black fathers’ ability to meet their
parental role expectations (Burr, Leigh, Day & Constantine, 1979; White and Klein, 2008).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) fit criteria used to evaluate the final, reduced model, indicate good model fit. The Chi-square test is not statistically significant, the CFI is greater than .95 (Bentler & Dudgeon, 1996), and the RMSEA is less than .05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Loehlin, 1992). Figure 3.2 provides the standardized Beta coefficients for statistically significant paths as well as fit indices for the model. This model provides a good fit to the sample data: $\chi^2 (6) = 6.39; p < .08; \chi^2/df = 1.06; CFI = .996; RMSEA = .029$.

Also reported are the R-square statistics for each path. Since path analysis is a series of regressions equations, the R-square statistics provide meaningful measures of percent of variance explained by each equation. The R-square statistic for each of the simultaneous equations in the model is reported in Table 3.3 to provide the measure of fit for each equation in the model. In the final, reduced model, 20% of the variation in maternal gatekeeping behavior is explained by the direct effects of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support. Six percent of the variation in the parental stressors dimension of children’s behavior concerns is explained by the indirect effects of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support, combined with the direct effects of maternal gatekeeping. Twenty-three percent of the variation in the paternal stressors dimension of difficulties with mother is explained by the direct effect of coparenting support. Eight percent of the variation in the dimension role function concerns is explained by the indirect effects of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support, along with the direct effect of maternal gatekeeping.
This study contributes to the maternal gatekeeping literature in several ways. First, I developed and tested an empirical model of the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping between coparenting variables and paternal stressors. Second, I tested the empirical model with data from a sample of fathers who have been underrepresented in studies regarding maternal gatekeeping (i.e., nonresident Black fathers). Third, I have provided empirical evidence that cooperative coparenting may diminish the negative effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on the paternal stressors of nonresident Black fathers.

Nonresident Black fathers and the mothers of their children may have unequal childrearing decision-making power and lingering issues in their postparenting relationship that contribute to fathers’ negative perceptions of maternal gatekeeping. These negative maternal gatekeeping perceptions have negative direct effects on paternal stressors for this sample of nonresident Black fathers. Despite these negative maternal gatekeeping perceptions and the positive direct effects of maternal gatekeeping on child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Explained Variance (R²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Variable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome Variables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Behavior Concerns</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with Mothers</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Function Concerns</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
behavior concerns and role function concerns, the effects of maternal gatekeeping can be reduced by a good coparenting relationship and high levels of coparenting support from the mother. Based on the indicators measuring paternal stressors, cooperative coparenting diminished nonresident Black fathers’ perceived paternal stressors relative to children’s behavior concerns, difficulties with mothers, and their children seeing them as nurturing and supportive in the presence of perceived negative maternal gatekeeping behaviors.

The theoretical framework presented, suggests that nonresident Black fathers and the mothers of their children possess parental solidarity in the form of coparenting relationship and coparenting support which assist in putting the children’s needs over their personal interest when parental conflict in the form of maternal gatekeeping arises (Edles & Appelrouth, 2005; Parsons, 1951). For this sample of nonresident Black fathers, the results indicate that cooperative coparenting is statistically significant in decreasing the paternal stressors when the mother’s gatekeeping behaviors are perceived as hostile. Other studies have found that the lack of parental solidarity in the form of coparenting conflict increases paternal distress for nonresident Black fathers. For example, Lawson and Thompson (1999) reported that paternal stress in the form of visitation conflict with mothers increased the likelihood of nonresident Black fathers’ to consider relinquishing their fathering role to avoid parental conflict. Still, our findings suggest that when mothers encourage nonresident Black fathers to develop a relationship with their children and support opportunities for fathers to share childrearing decision-making power, paternal stressors decrease even when negative direct effects of maternal gatekeeping are present. These findings are similar to Cannon and colleagues (2008) who found that cooperative coparenting behaviors occurs when mothers reassure fathers regarding the
importance of their father involvement and provide opportunities for fathers to develop childrearing skills.

**Conclusion**

The implications of these results could be strengthened with more studies that investigate the strategies of nonresident Black fathers who have successfully matriculated through the process of sharing childrearing responsibilities with resident mothers in the presences of maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Black children are more likely to be raised in fatherless homes compared to their peers from other ethnic groups (Kreider & Ellis, 2011). Results from other studies have shown that nonresident fathers’ involvement with their children significantly decreases over the children’s lives (Fagan & Palkovitz, 2007; Lerman & Sorensen, 2000). Therefore, it is also important to examine the risk and resiliency factors of nonresident Black fathers who coparent with resident mothers.

I recommend that scholars consider a culturally sensitive approach to studying maternal gatekeeping behaviors by adopting this paternal stressors model with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator for future research with nonresident fathers from various cultural groups. A culturally sensitive approach lends itself to understanding culturally embedded influences that can affect the quality of coparenting, such as gender relationship discord among Black men and Black women, and contribute to the gatekeeping behaviors of mothers. Additionally, scholars can better conceptualize fathers’ perceptions of antagonistic or facilitative maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Based on the literature presented, it would be reasonable to expect that nonresident Black fathers perceive maternal gatekeeping behaviors as antagonistic when parenting with Black mothers. This assumption influenced the development of the conceptual model that
tests the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors; while also considering nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of coparenting and paternal stressors.

**Study Limitations and Future Directions**

Generalizability is limited due to the small sample size and limited geographic area from which the sample was generated. Additionally, the nonresident Black fathers in this study were coparenting their child or children with only one mother. While this initial model is not generalizable to nonresident Black fathers coparenting with more than one mother, the empirical model provides insights regarding the effects of coparenting on paternal stressors when maternal gatekeeping is included as a mediator. I encourage future scholars to duplicate the study with larger samples of nonresident fathers from other cultural groups.

I also recommend that scholars consider other paternal stressors of nonresident fathers such as acculturation and interethnic parenting that relate to maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Fathering includes a wide range of beliefs that vary across cultures. Future research should address how cultural elements influence the relationship between maternal gatekeeping behaviors and paternal stressors. This will bring about insightful information about parental characteristics that influence maternal gatekeeping behaviors and paternal stressors.

Copyright © Katrina A. R. Akande 2014
Chapter 4: Modeling Nonresident Black Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator

The term nonresident Black father often invokes the image of a father who has limited or no presence in the lives of his children. Ralph Ellison (1952) provides a candid illustration that expresses how nonresident Black fathers in this study think others perceive them:

I am invisible. Misunderstood, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination, indeed, everything and anything except me…That invisibility to which I refer occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality (p. 8).

Some past studies have investigated nonresident Black fathers in terms of being deficient or absent (Reynolds, 2009). There is a plethora of social science studies that have investigated attributes of Black fatherhood such as incarcerated, missing, and unemployed or underemployed (Blake and Darling, 1994; Coles & Green, 2009; Gordon, Gordon, & Nembhard, 1994; Moynihan, 1965). Investigating the aforementioned attributes does have merit as some Black fathers do face social barriers that hinder their involvement in the lives of their children. However, there is more to learn about nonresident Black fathers. For decades, scholars have criticized the way Black fathers are
either ignored or portrayed in the social science literature (McAdoo & McAdoo, 1998; Reynolds, 2009).

The present study investigates the parenting experiences of nonresident Black fathers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This study builds on the recommendations of previous scholars who suggested that alternative aspects of the social experiences of Black fathers and their family functioning be explored within the literature (McAdoo & McAdoo, 1997; Peters, 1974; Staples, 1971). Staples (1971) appealed for a more fruitful approach to investigating various aspects of Black family functioning across social classes.

Regarding Black family functioning, nonresident Black fathers by definition have one or more children (under the age of 18) and their children do not permanently reside with them. However, the term nonresident father has negative connotations for fathers in this study. Interestingly, fathers in the study indicated that the term nonresident father suggests that such fathers do not share any type of living arrangement with their children; which may not always be the case. As an alternative, the fathers in this study suggested that researchers should use the lingo not living with their children 24/7 when referring to nonresident fathers. This lingo symbolizes that although nonresident Black fathers do not live with their children 24/7, their children may have a pattern of staying with their fathers.

To illustrate these patterns, some fathers provided a variety of examples such as my children stay with me on weekends, every other week, or in the summer. Several fathers emphasized that their children have the same comforts in their home as their mother’s such as a bedroom, clothes, and toys. Other fathers with multiple sets of
nonresident children explained that they have never resided in the same household with one set of children. However, their second set of nonresident children stay with them on the weekends or bi-weekly. The cultural meaning of nonresidential fathering can be complex.

In addition, this group of fathers confronts unique challenges regarding the quality of the Black male-Black female relationship. From a sociocultural perspective, the relationship between some Black fathers and the Black mothers of their children has been turbulent. Past scholars have suggested that feelings of antagonism are interwoven in stereotypical cultural messages such as *Black women have too much control over the family* and *Black women have to learn to take care of themselves due to the lack of Black men who can support a family* (Cazenave, 1983; Franklin, 1984; Staples, 1970).

The parenting perspectives of nonresident Black fathers are shaped by their social and cultural worlds. Any effort to understand the fathering practices of nonresident Black fathers should recognize cultural context. To gain a better understanding of the fathering functions and patterns of nonresident Black fathers, it is best to study these fathers without comparing them to their peers from other ethnic groups (Connor & White, 2006; Blake and Darling, 1994; Peters, 1974).

**Statement of the Problem**

This study builds on existing research that investigates the effects of maternal gatekeeping on father involvement (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Fagan & Barnett, 2003; McBride, Brown, Bost, Shin, Vaughn, & Korth, 2005). Previous studies have explored maternal gatekeeping from the perspective of coparenting among cohabitating, divorced, and married parents who were primarily European American. More studies are
warranted that explore maternal gatekeeping between ethnic-minority parents. Furthermore, this study collected parenting data directly from the fathers. Some past studies have collected information about nonresident fathers from their children and their children’s mothers (Fagan & Barnet, 2003; Sobolewski & King, 2005). The parenting perception of a nonresident father reflects the reality of how he views the effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on his involvement with his children. Lastly, this study also collected parenting data from nonresident Black fathers based on the relative mother with whom the father was parenting. Few studies collect fatherhood data based on parenting information relative to the number of mothers with whom the father parents his children. By collecting parenting data relative to subsets of mothers, researchers can identify and model father involvement when some nonresident fathers share children with multiple mothers.

**Literature Review**

The coparental relationship can be impeded by child custody arrangements. Judicial rulings related to residential custody have historically favored mothers over fathers (Seltzer, 1991; Maldonado, 2005). When mothers are the primary residential parent they may have exclusive childrearing rights regarding education, medical, and religious decisions (Maldonado, 2005). Therefore, nonresident Black fathers have limited childrearing decision-making opportunities compared to their children’s mothers. These conditions may create barriers that lead to antagonistic coparenting between nonresident Black fathers and the mothers with whom they share childrearing responsibilities.
Fathers who do not reside with their children encounter limited childrearing decision-making opportunities, reduced father-child contact over time, and sporadic visitations (Judy, Billette, Laplante, & Le Bourdais, 2007; Maldonado, 2005; Seltzer, 1991). For many nonresident fathers, access to their children and information regarding their children are facilitated through interactions with their children’s mothers (Easterbrooks, Barrett, Brady, & Davis, 2007). Allen and Hawkins (1999) have identified mother-controlled access to children as maternal gatekeeping. As a result of this process, the coparental relationship will more likely be antagonistic when mothers have higher levels of parental control regarding childrearing decisions-making opportunities compared to fathers. Nonresident Black fathers may perceive the imbalance of childrearing decision-making opportunities as mothers inhibiting access to their children.

**Maternal Gatekeeping**

When mothers have more childrearing decision making opportunities, they can impede father involvement through maternal gatekeeping behaviors. In addition, maternal gatekeeping behaviors can hinder the efforts of a cooperative coparental relationship (Cannon et al., 2008). Allen and Hawkins (1999) suggested that maternal gatekeeping has the ability to impede father involvement when mothers attempt to block childrearing responsibilities of fathers or when mothers are not supportive of the fathering role.

Allen and Hawkins (1999) defined maternal gatekeeping as “a collection of beliefs and behaviors that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work by limiting men’s opportunities for learning and growing through caring for home and children” (p. 200). As fathers attempt to define nonresident parental boundaries, their level of commitment and involvement has been shown to be influenced
by gatekeeping behaviors of their children’s mothers (McBride, et al., 2005; Rane & McBride 2000). In addition, McBride et al. (2005) reported that maternal gatekeeping has an influence over fathering behavior. Maternal influences include mothers’ attitudes and beliefs about fathering such as a father’s lack of parenting knowledge (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; McBride et al, 2005; McBride & Rane, 1997; McBride, 1990). Furthermore, maternal gatekeeping is associated with the reluctance of some mothers to relinquish a portion of their childrearing responsibilities (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). Allen and Hawkins (1999) argued that although mothers may desire shared parental responsibilities, they may be deterred by the idea of collaborative childrearing.

**Factors Related to Coparental Support**

Successful coparenting is a result of parents working together as a team to meet childrearing responsibilities (Stright & Bales, 2003). Belsky, Crnic, and Gable (1985) defined coparenting as the “extent to which former spouses function as a cooperative versus antagonist team in rearing their children” (p. 629). Cooperative parenting yields advantages such as children experience a decrease in parental loyalty conflict and a decrease in parental power struggles (Visher & Visher, 1989). Prior research indicates that cooperative attitudes include benefits such as parents become a resource for each other (e.g., emotional support) and the diminishment of hostile feelings that one parent may harbor toward the other (Arditti & Kelly, 1994; Visher & Visher, 1989).

On the other hand, antagonist coparenting is associated with high levels of tension, hostility, and conflict between parents (Arditti & Kelly, 1994; Baum, 2004). Parents who have an antagonistic relationship may not be able to engage in candid dialogue that could repair their tense relationship. Von Glinow and colleagues (2003)
explained that productive communication is situated in conversations that focus on finding solutions to negative “personal feelings such as criticism or interpersonal concerns” (p. 579). The authors indicated three underlining assumptions regarding productive communication: ability to talk, willingness to talk, and relationship-restoring effectiveness of talk. Parents who have difficulty expressing animosity related to separations or childrearing concerns may not be willing to discuss these issues and may continue to harbor negative emotions toward the other parent. Arditti and Kelly (1994) emphasized that parents who communicate about a variety of issues (e.g., child-related or other) are more likely to have cooperative coparenting relationships compared to parents who do not discuss various issues.

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical underpinnings of the family systems framework and the conflict framework provide insight about the interactions that occur within the coparental system of nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers. These theories provide a theoretical lens through which family scholars can predict under what circumstances particular coparenting behaviors or outcomes will occur. A family systems framework helps to explain interactions within the coparental system while a conflict framework provides insight about under what conditions the coparental system will become antagonist or cooperative.

Family Systems Framework

According to Parsons (1951) a “system is a concept that refers to both a complex of interdependencies between parts, components, and processes that involves discernible regularities of relationship, and to a similar type of interdependency between such a
complex and its surrounding environment “ (p.458). Nonresident Black fathers and the mothers of their biological children are components of a coparental system that is held together by interdependence and mutual influence among members (Whitechurch & Constantine, 1993). Therefore, the parenting decisions of mothers will have some type of influence on nonresident Black fathers’ involvement with their children (Whitechurch & Constantine, 1993). For example, both parents must establish rules regarding coparenting authority and boundaries (Madden-Derdich & Leonard, 2000; Madden-Derdich, Leonard, & Christopher, 1999). When parents do not agree on the established rules, the coparenting system will be disrupted. Additionally, nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers may have the additional task of reorganizing the couple relationship away from intimacy and towards a coparental relationship that only includes childrearing responsibilities. This process could create a coparenting system where parents exhibit behaviors such as tension and hostility toward each other.

**Conflict Framework**

Conflict theory provides a useful framework for understanding parenting interactions such as disagreements, disputes, and hostilities (White & Klein, 2008). Sprey (1979) defined the process of conflict as “a confrontation between individuals or groups, over scarce resources, controversial means, incompatible goals, or combinations of these” (p. 134). Interactions between nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers may occur in the form of conflict when they cannot develop consensus regarding opposing goals or beliefs about childrearing responsibilities (Sprey, 1979). To minimize conflict, nonresident Black fathers must utilize the technique of negotiation with their children’s mothers.
Negotiation occurs when nonresident Black fathers state their goals and use their resources to persuade their children’s mothers to move toward specific childrearing goals (White and Klein, 2008). However, conflict will emerge when negotiation between parents fails. Parents who cannot discuss and find solutions to childrearing responsibilities will continue to have opposing goals. Lack of effective communication and negotiation will diminish the quality of relationship between nonresident Black fathers and the mothers of their children. Nonresident Black fathers who are able to negotiated childrearing responsibilities will identify cooperative coparenting with their children’s mothers as facilitative maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Antagonistic coparenting will exist between nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers when child related issues and the parental relationship quality leads to parental conflict. Nonresident black fathers may perceive mothers’ unwillingness to compromise as antagonistic maternal gatekeeping behaviors.
Figure 4.1: Theoretical Model of Father Involvement for Fathers Parenting with One Mother
Figure 4.2: Theoretical Model of Father Involvement for Fathers Parenting with Two Mothers
Models of Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as Mediator

The aim of the study is to model the effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support on their perceived father involvement; while testing the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping. This study addresses three primary research goals. The first goal is to demonstrate the importance of collecting data from nonresident Black fathers relative to the mothers with whom parenting responsibilities are shared. The second goal is to model the effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on nonresident fathers’ involvement with their children. The final goal is to develop father involvement models that take into account fathers with multiple sets of nonresidential children.

Based on the literature, the two main independent variables in this study are coparenting support and the coparenting relationship. A family systems framework suggests that a coparenting relationship exists between nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers where both parents have influence over childrearing responsibilities (Whitechurch & Constantine, 1993). Sharing childrearing responsibilities occurs in the form of father involvement. For nonresident Black fathers, father involvement is often facilitated by the gatekeeping behaviors of their children’s mothers. Maternal gatekeeping can interfere between the coparenting relationship and father involvement. When maternal gatekeeping behaviors impede father involvement, nonresident Black fathers may also perceive these behaviors as interceding between mothers’ coparenting support and their father involvement.
The theoretical model for fathers parenting with one mother, illustrates that nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of coparenting support and the coparenting relationship affects their father involvement through maternal gatekeeping behaviors (see Figure 4.1). In this model, I also illustrate the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors between the demographic variables: whether the father married the mother and whether the father is employed fulltime and the outcome variable: father involvement. The model incorporates selected demographic variables as independent variables. A prediction of a family systems framework is that whether the father was married to mother would have an effect on nonresident Black fathers’ involvement with their children.

Intuitively, differences should exist regarding father involvement for fathers who married the mother compared to fathers who never married the mother. For example, fathers who married the mothers of their children had a type of interdependence that may differ from fathers who may have fathered a child through a friendship, a one night stand, or short-term relationship. The underlying assumption is that through interdependence, married parents share mutual resources and common goals to build a family life that revolves around careers, childrearing, health, intimacy, and family financial goals (White & Klein, 2002). Regarding whether the father is employed full-time, Hofferth and Casper (2007) explained that full-time employment may increase father-child contact, but it can also decrease father-child contact when fathers have less flexible work schedules.

The second theoretical model takes into account the mediating maternal gatekeeping effects for nonresident Black fathers parenting with two mothers (see Figure 4.2). The model illustrates that parenting with two mothers occurs simultaneously. Black
fathers with two sets of nonresident children have to negotiate childrearing responsibilities with two mothers. Additionally, the gatekeeping effects between two mothers can have various behavior combinations of antagonism and cooperation. This model was developed to simultaneously test the effects of nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of parenting factors on perceived father involvement through the maternal gatekeeping behaviors of two mothers with whom they share children.

**Methodology**

**Sample and Interview Procedures**

The data were gathered from two Combined Statistical Areas (CSA) in Kentucky and a part of Indiana: Lexington-Fayette-Frankfort-Richmond, KY CSA and the Louisville-Elizabethtown-Scottsburg, KY-IN CSA. The researchers recruited 107 nonresident Black fathers who completed an online questionnaire regarding their parenting experiences. Consistent with other studies, recruiting a cohort of Black men was challenging (Wisdom, Neighbors, Williams, Haystad, & Tilley 2002; Yunju, Mason, Youngmi, Clancy, & Sherraden, 2013).

To participate in the study, participants had to meet four main criteria: 1) be a Black father where Black was defined as being American Black, African Black, Afro-Arab Black, Caribbean Black, Hispanic Black, or other Black ethnicity; 2) be the biological father of at least one child who is between the ages of 2 and 17; 3) be a father who does not reside with the child 24/7, and 4) be willing to complete an online survey.

**Recruitment**

To recruit a diverse sample of Black fathers, the principle investigator (PI) partnered with faith-based organizations, fraternities, and social groups (e.g., Masons
and 100 Black Men of Louisville). The PI also employed a street outreach strategy to engage Black fathers where they hang out and live. The PI attended community events, spent time in barbershops, and walked neighborhoods to disseminate recruitment information. In addition, the PI arranged interviews with local newspapers, Kentucky Educational Television (KET), and urban radio stations.

The PI also designed a study website. The study website contained information such as an overview of the study, the KET parenting interview segment, and a study registration web form. The study website link was emailed to gatekeepers with access to Black fathers and included a brief study description. Gatekeepers forwarded the email link to assist with reaching potential study participants. The study description was also posted on the Facebook statuses of gatekeepers and members of their personal and professional networks.

Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of 107 Black nonresident fathers who reported their ethnicity as African Americans (88%), African Blacks (9%), and other Black ethnicity (3%). The sample age range was from 20 through 59 years. Twenty-three percent of the fathers had at least a high school education, 40% had attempted a college education, and 37% had a bachelor’s degree or higher. The annual income range was from less than $10,000 through more than $150,000. The majority of the sample (69.5%) was employed full-time, while 10% were employed part-time, 12% were unemployed, and 5% were disabled.

The sample was divided into two subgroups: fathers who reported currently parenting with one mother and fathers who reported currently parenting with two mothers.
(see Table 4.1). Eighty nonresident Black fathers reported information regarding parenting with one mother (n = 80 mothers) while 27 nonresident Black fathers reported information about parenting with two mothers (n = 54 mothers). The sample characteristics for fathers parenting with one and fathers parenting with two mothers are presented in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics on Nonresident Black Fathers by Number of Mother with Whom Each Coparents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N Parenting with One Mother</th>
<th>N Parenting with Two Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Trade School</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/Professional</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women with whom share biological children</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>81.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether married Mother</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether married 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Mother</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether married 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Mother</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 (Continued): Demographic Characteristics of Nonresident Fathers by Number of Mothers with Whom Each Coparents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N Parenting with One Mother</th>
<th>N Parenting with Two Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Employment Status</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full-time</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Employed Full-time</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $10,000</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 to $19,999</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $29,999</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 to $39,999</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $59,999</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 to $69,999</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 to $89,999</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000-$149,999</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000-$199,999</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey Design and Administration

Participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire designed to measure father’s perception of father involvement, coparenting conflict, coparenting support, current coparenting relationship, and maternal gatekeeping. The questionnaire was designed within the Qualtrics system to assist with collecting fatherhood data from Black fathers with biological children by multiple mothers. Because it is important to collect coparenting data relative to each mother, the Qualtrics system is an efficient way to keep track of questions related to a specific mother with whom the father is parenting. The relevant mother’s name was inserted into each question pertaining to mothers. For example, fathers were asked, “How often is Judy helpful with changes to the visitation schedule?” and “Judy and I have difficulty discussing financial matters involving the children.” The insertion of the appropriate mother’s name helped fathers recognize to whom the question referred; thereby, reducing confusion regarding the relevant mother.

Participants who had computer and email access were sent the online questionnaire. To assist participants who did not have computer access or literacy skills, the PI arranged dates and times for participants to complete the online survey at community locations that had computer rooms such as churches, community centers, and public libraries. Local radio stations made PSAs regarding scheduled dates and times the week before and the day of the event.

The PI also set up laptop stations at local barbershops. Similar to the Black church, the Black barbershop is a place where Black men interact regardless of class, education, or occupation (Brunson, 2006; Franklin, 1985; Hess et al., 2007). These facilities were also ideal for participants with limited transportation. The PI was on-site at all locations
to assist participants with questions and to administer the online questionnaire to those with limited computer literacy.

Survey Completion

There were 129 attempts to complete the online survey. However, some participants did not complete their survey prior to the survey link expiration. Second links to the survey had to be emailed to replace the incomplete and expired surveys. In addition, some participants used a different email address to complete the second survey (e.g., work versus personal email). There were a total of 107 completed, non-duplicate surveys. Participants who completed the survey via email entered their address in a separated survey window to receive a $5 gift card for a local restaurant. Gift cards were given onsite to participants who completed the survey at barbershops and other community locations.

Assessments and Measures

This study used four validated indices to test nonresident Black fathers’ perceptions of the coparenting relationship and coparenting support on their perceived father involvement while testing the mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping (see Appendix A for complete list of measures). Each of the five indices used either a 4-point point Likert-type scale or a 5-point Likert scale. Dissimilar response options can confuse participants. Therefore, response options for each scale were coded as 6=always, 5=very often, 4=often, 3=sometimes, 2=rarely, and 1=never.

As suggested by Chomeya (2010) when comparing the difficulty level of decision making relative to answering an item, a 6-point Likert-type scale was selected to eliminate the opportunity for participants to select a midpoint. Using a 6-point Likert-
type scale provides participants with six distinct choices from always through never rather than four distinct choices and a midpoint of Likert’s 5-point scale. Chomeya (2010) emphasized that a midpoint allows participants to not express their true choice and remain neutral.

**Exogenous Variables**

*Whether employed full-time.* This single-item indicator assessed whether or not a respondent was employed full-time or not employed full-time. Respondents’ responses were coded as 1=employed full-time and 0=not employed full-time.

*Whether married mother.* This one-item indicator measured whether the respondent was ever married to the relevant mother. Responses were coded as 1=married the mother and 0=never married the mother.

*Father’s perception of the coparenting relationship (Coparenting Relationship).* Arditti and Kelly (1994) suggested that parents who communicate regarding a diverse issues (e.g., child-related or other) are more likely to have cooperative coparenting relationships compared to parents who do not discuss various issues. Five indicators were adapted from the Fragile Families Survey (2003) to measure the current coparenting relationship. Sample indicators included: *In the past 12 months, how often have you…loaned each other money, helped each other solve a problem related to the children, and helped each other solve a personal problem.* (see Appendix A1). Reliability was acceptable for fathers who reported parenting with one mother (α = .77). Cronbach’s alpha was .93 (first mother) and .88 (second mother) for fathers who reported parenting with two mothers.
Father’s perception of coparenting support (Coparenting Support). A four-item coparenting support scale developed by Ahrons (1981) was modified to measure coparenting support. Raley, Mattingly, and Bianchi (2006) indicated that using four of the six indicators available on the subscale provides a better indication of parental support. The original scale measured respondents’ perceptions of the degree to which their former spouse was supportive, accommodating, and understanding during parenting interactions. The scale was modified to measure perceptions of coparenting support between a nonresident Black father and the relevant mother of his biological children. In the online questionnaire, the word former spouse was replaced with the relevant mother’s name.

Sample indicators include: when (relevant mother’s name) needs to make changes to the visitation arrangements, how often do you go out of your way to help her and how often would you say that (relevant mother’s name) is a helpful regarding the children? Regarding the last question, the word resourceful was changed to helpful. In addition, I added the question: how often is (relevant mother’s name) supportive of your needs as a father not living with his children? The complete list of indicators is presented in Appendix A2. The four indicators on the original coparenting support scale had an alpha level of .86 (Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha was acceptable for fathers who reported parenting with one mother ($\alpha = .80$) and fathers who reported parenting with two mothers ($\alpha = .85$ and .88 relative the first and second mother).
Mediating Variable

Maternal gatekeeping was measured using a survey instrument created by Fagan and Barnett (2003). Fagan and Barnett developed the survey to assess the degree to which mothers limit fathers’ access to their children. The instrument contained nine indicators that measure fathers’ perceptions of mothers’ preferences for carrying out an array of child care tasks rather than permitting the father to carry out the tasks (Fagan & Barnett, 2003). Sample indicators included: “If my child(ren) need to be disciplined, I feel that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to discipline them, and not me.” and “If a choice has to be made about what clothing my child(ren) will wear, I think (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make that decision, not me.” Fagan and Barnett (2003) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .93 with a sample of mothers who answered gatekeeping questions pertaining to nonresident and resident fathers. In this study, Cronbach’s alpha was .95 for fathers who reported parenting with one mother. For fathers who were parenting with two mothers, Cronbach’s alpha was .96 for the first mother and .97 for the second mother. Appendix A3 contains the complete list of items measuring maternal gatekeeping.

Outcome/Dependent Variable

The Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI) was used to measure father involvement (Hawkins et al., 2007). The IFI questionnaire was administered to provide baseline information about fathers’ perception of the type of father involvement that occurs with their children. Dimensions of father involvement on the original IFI included discipline and teaching \((\alpha = .85)\), school encouragement \((\alpha = .82)\), mother support \((\alpha = .87)\), providing \((\alpha = .69)\), time and talking together \((\alpha = .80)\), praise and affection \((\alpha = .80)\),
developing talents and future concerns (α = .75), reading and homework support (α = .83), and attentiveness (α = .69).

Twenty-two indicators were selected to measure father involvement among nonresident Black fathers using a modified online IFI titled, the Inventory of Father Involvement-Online Nonresident Father version (IFI-ONF). On the IFI-ONF, respondents were asked to rate their perception of how well they performed certain parenting task in the past 12 months. Sample indicators included: *Please rate how often you think you have done each of the items with your children by (relevant mother’s name) attended events your children participate in (sports, school, church events), set rules and limits for your children’s behavior, and cooperated with your children’s mother in the rearing of your children.* The indicators measuring father involvement are listed in Appendix A5.

During the analysis, I employed principle component analysis (PCA) as the dimensionality technique for the IFI-ONF. Item 10: *Being a pal or friend to your children* was deleted to improve reliability of the inventory. Father involvement was different for each model. In full Model 1 and full Model 2, I used the appropriate father involvement dimensions (see Figures 3 and 4). Four dimensions emerged for both groups of fathers with acceptable reliability. *Teaching responsibility* (α = .94), *childrearing cooperation* (α = .82), *praise and encouragement* (α = .87), and *mother support* (α = .72) emerged for fathers parenting with one mother. Regarding fathers who reported parenting with two mothers, the dimensionality for the first mother included *praise and encouragement* (α = .93), *teaching responsibility* (α = .93), *mother support* (α = .76), and *attentiveness* (α = .73). For the second mother, the following dimensions emerged *teaching responsibility*
(α = .93), praise and encouragement (α = .93), childrearing cooperation (α = .79), and mother support (α = .77). The items measuring the dimensions of father involvement relative to parenting with mothers are listed in Tables Appendices A6, A7, and A8.
Figure 4.3: Full Model 1, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with One Mother
Figure 4.4: Full Model 2, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with Two Mothers
Analysis

The analysis tests two empirical models of father involvement for nonresident Black fathers. Full Model 1 illustrates parenting and father involvement for fathers parenting with one mother. For full Model 1, 80 fathers reported parenting with one mother and provided coparenting information relative to 80 mothers (see Figure 4.3). Full Model 2 demonstrates parenting and father involvement for fathers parenting with two mothers. For the full Model 2, 27 fathers reported parenting with two mothers and provided coparenting information relative to 54 mothers (see Figure 4.4).

With regard to the dependent variable in each model, dimensions of father involvement are different for nonresident fathers parenting with one mother and those parenting with two mothers. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was employed as the method of dimensionality reduction for the modified IFI-ONF. For fathers who reported parenting with one mother, the dimensions of father involvement included: childrearing cooperation, mother support, praise and encouragement, and teaching responsible behavior (see Figures 4.3). Regarding fathers parenting with two mothers, the dimensions of father involvement varied between the first mother (i.e., attentiveness, mother support, praise and encouragement, and teaching responsible behavior) and the second mother (i.e., attentiveness, childrearing cooperation, mother support, and teaching responsibility). The empirical model for fathers parenting with two mothers was developed to illustrate the simultaneous parenting relationship that occurs when parenting with multifertility partners (see Figure 4.4).
Results

Direct Effects for Fathers Parenting with One Mother

Direct, indirect, and total effects for the father involvement model are reported in Table 4.2. For nonresident Black fathers parenting with one mother, full-time employment (β = .343, p<.05) has a positive direct effect on the father involvement dimension of childrearing cooperation (see Figure 4.5). A strong correlation exists between fathers’ perceptions of coparenting support and the coparenting relationship with the mother (r =.57). For this sample of nonresident Black fathers, the path from coparenting support to maternal gatekeeping is negative(β = -.250, p < .05). Fathers’ low perceptions of coparenting support are associated with high perceptions of maternal gatekeeping. Similarly, a negative path exist between the coparenting relationship and maternal gatekeeping, thus, perceived low levels of the coparenting relationship (β = -.252, p ≤ .001) are associated with perceived high levels of maternal gatekeeping behaviors.

Alternatively, nonresident Black fathers’ positive perceptions of the coparenting relationship increase father involvement in the form of mother support (β = .358, p ≤ .001). Maternal gatekeeping negatively affects all the dimensions of father involvement. For nonresident Black fathers, maternal gatekeeping directly decreases childrearing cooperation (β = -.424, p ≤ .001), mother support (β = -.333, p ≤ .001), praise and encouragement of their children (β = -.253, p < .05), and teaching their children responsible behaviors (β = -.455, p ≤ .001).
Table 4.2 Summary of Effects for the Reduced Form of the Father Involvement Model with One Mother

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinant</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Causal Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation</td>
<td>0.343</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>-0.250</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Mother Support</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Praise and Encouragement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support</td>
<td>Teaching Responsibility</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Relationship</td>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>-0.252</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Relationship</td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Relationship</td>
<td>Mother Support</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Relationship</td>
<td>Praise and Encouragement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Relationship</td>
<td>Teaching Responsibility</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation</td>
<td>-0.424</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Mother Support</td>
<td>-0.333</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Praise and Encouragement</td>
<td>-0.253</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Teaching Responsibility</td>
<td>-0.455</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.5: Reduced Model 1, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with One Mother

\[ \chi^2 = 7.98 \]

\[ df = 13; \ p = .845 \]

\[ CFI = 1.00 \]

\[ RMSEA = .00 \]
Indirect Effects for Fathers Parenting with One Mother

Indirect effects for the father involvement model are reported for fathers parenting with one mother (see Table 4.2). Fathers’ perception of coparenting support and the coparenting relationship have a positive indirect effect on the father involvement dimensions of childrearing cooperation ($\beta = .106$), mother support ($\beta = .083$), praise and encouragement ($\beta = .063$), and teaching responsible behavior ($\beta = .114$) through maternal gatekeeping. This indicates that positive aspects of coparenting support on the father involvement of nonresident Black fathers exist through the mediating variable of maternal gatekeeping. Also, the perception of the coparenting relationship between nonresident Black fathers and their children’s mothers directly increases their father involvement in the form of support for the mother. The direct and indirect effects of the coparenting relationship make the total effect on mother support stronger ($\beta = .442$).

Direct Effects for Fathers Parenting with Two Mothers

Direct, indirect, and total effects for the father involvement model are reported in Table 4.3. For nonresident Black fathers parenting with two mothers, positive perceptions of coparenting support have a positive direct effect on their support for the first mother ($\beta = .727, p \leq .001$). Alternatively, father’s full-time employment has a negative direct effect on support for the first mother ($\beta = -.336, p \leq .01$). Fathers’ perception of the first mother’ maternal gatekeeping behaviors has negative direct effects on the father involvement dimensions of attentiveness ($\beta = -.482, p \leq .001$) and teaching responsible behaviors ($\beta = -.388, p \leq .05$).

Regarding the second mother, fathers’ full-time employment has a positive direct effect on their father involvement in the form of attentiveness ($\beta = .354, p \leq .001$).
nonresident Black fathers parenting with two mothers, their perception of coparenting support is correlated with their perception of the coparenting relationship. Fathers’ positive perceptions of the second mother’s coparenting support directly increases father involvement in the form of attentiveness ($\beta = .268, p \leq .05$). Similarly, fathers’ positive perceptions of the coparenting relationship with the second mother directly increased their childrearing cooperation ($\beta = .474, p \leq .001$) and mother support ($\beta = .517, p \leq .001$). Alternatively, nonresident Black father’s marital status to the second mother decreases their father involvement in the form of attentiveness ($\beta = -.294, p \leq .01$). Lastly, fathers’ perceptions of the second mother’s maternal gatekeeping behaviors decreases childrearing cooperation ($\beta = -.266, p \leq .01$).
Table 4.3 Summary of Effects for Reduced Form of the Father Involvement Model with Two Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinant</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Direct</th>
<th>Indirect</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Mother Support 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Mother Support 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-0.336</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>Attentiveness 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.354</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Attentiveness 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.268</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-0.566</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Support 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.150</td>
<td>0.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-0.266</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Relationship 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coparenting Relationship 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Mother Support 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.517</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status to 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Mother</td>
<td>Attentiveness 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-0.294</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Teaching Responsibility 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-0.388</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Attentiveness 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-0.482</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> denotes first and second mother, respectfully.
Figure 4.6: Reduced Model 2, Father Involvement Model for Fathers Parenting with Two Mothers

χ²=63.61

df=62 p=.417

CFI=.98

RMSEA=.033
Indirect Effects for Fathers Parenting with Two Mothers

Indirect effects of the father involvement model for nonresident Black fathers parenting with two mothers are reported in Table 4.3. Fathers’ perceptions of the second mother’s coparenting support increases their father involvement through maternal gatekeeping (see Figure 4.6). This indicates that a nonresident father’s positive perception of the second mother's support regarding his father involvement increases his cooperation with childrearing responsibilities ($\beta = .150, p \leq .001$) in the presence of negative maternal gatekeeping behaviors.

Direct Effects without Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator

Appendix B illustrates a comparison of reduced Models 1 and 2 without maternal gatekeeping as a mediator. Model 1b indicates that the direct effects of full-time employment do not change when maternal gatekeeping is not present (see Figure B1). Obviously, when maternal gatekeeping is not included in the model, the negative indirect effects between coparenting support and father involvement are removed. Therefore, coparenting support has a positive direct effect on father involvement in the form of mother support ($\beta = .20$). Similarly, the coparenting relationship no longer has a negative indirect effect on father involvement when gatekeeping behaviors are not present. The positive direct effect of the coparenting relationship on mother support slightly decreases ($\beta = .36$ to .31). In the absence of maternal gatekeeping behaviors, whether married the mother becomes statistically significant. Whether married the mother decrease father involvement in the form of mother support ($\beta = -.18$).

Model 2b indicates the direct effects of the independent variables on father involvement when maternal gatekeeping is absent (see Figure B2). For fathers parenting
with two mothers, coparenting support with the first mother continues to have a strong
direct effect on mother support as well as the father involvement dimension of teaching
responsible behaviors (β = .45). Additionally, the maternal gatekeeping behaviors of the
first mother no longer have a negative direct effect on father involvement in the form of
attentiveness and teaching responsible behaviors. The direct effects of whether employed
full-time on mother support remain unchanged. However, the direct effect of whether
employed full-time on attentiveness 2 has disappeared. In addition, the positive direct
effect of coparenting support with the second mother on attentiveness decreases (β = .27
to .19). The negative indirect effect of coparenting support on childrearing cooperation is
removed when maternal gatekeeping behaviors is not included. Furthermore, the positive
direct effect of coparenting relationship on childrearing cooperation increases (β = .47 to .52). The direct effect of whether married the second mother on attentiveness increases,
slightly (β = .29 to .32).

For each model, path analysis was conducted using AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012)
to test the statistically significant paths of exogenous variables (coparenting support,
coparenting relationship, whether married the relevant mother, and whether employed
full-time) on the outcome variables (attentiveness, childrearing cooperation, mother
support, praise and encouragement, and teaching responsible behaviors) through an
mediating variable (maternal gatekeeping). I report indices with Figures 4.5 and 4.6 to
verify that the data fit the models. The indices for reduced Model 1 indicate a good fit;
The Chi-square test is not statistically significant, the CFI is greater than .95 (Bentler &
Dudgeon, 1996), and the RMSEA is less than .05 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993;
Loehlin, 1992). Reduced Model 2 also has a not statistically significant $\chi^2$, with a CFI greater than .95, and RMESA less than .05.

Since path analysis is a series of regressions equations, the R-square statistics provide meaningful measures of fit (see Table 4.4). In the final, reduced Model 1, 30% of the variation in the dimension child rearing cooperation is explained, respectively, by the direct effects of whether father is employed full-time and maternal gatekeeping behaviors, along with the indirect effects of coparenting support and the coparenting relationship. The three remaining dimensions of father involvement, praise and encouragement and teaching responsible behaviors, each have 6% and 21% variation explained, respectively, by the direct effect of maternal gatekeeping behaviors and the indirect effects of coparenting support and the coparenting relationship. Mother support has 33% of variation explained by the direct effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors and the indirect effects of coparenting support and the coparenting relationship.

The final, reduced Model 2 includes R-square statistics for parenting with two mothers. Regarding the first mother, 64% of the variation in mother support is explained by the direct effects of coparenting support and whether the father is employed full-time. The remaining father involvement dimensions of attentiveness and teaching responsible behavior each have 23% and 15% variation, respectively, explained by the direct effect of maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Regarding the second mother, 28% of the variation in the father involvement dimension of attentiveness is explained by the direct effects of whether the father is employed full-time, coparenting support, and whether the father married the second mother. The father involvement dimension of childrearing cooperation has 37% of variation explained by the direct effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors.
behaviors, the coparenting relationship, and the indirect effects of coparenting support.

Mother support has 33% of variation explained by the direct effects of the coparenting relationship.

Table 4.4 R-square Measures for the Reduced Form of the Father Involvement Model for Nonresident Black Fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Explained Variance</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(R²)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>One Mother</td>
<td>First Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Variable</td>
<td>Maternal Gatekeeping</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome Variables</td>
<td>Attentiveness</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Childrearing Cooperation</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother Support</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praise and Encouragement</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Responsible Behaviors</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In full Model 2, I tested whether the maternal gatekeeping error terms were correlated for both mothers. The assumption was that the gatekeeping behaviors of both mothers may influence the relationship between the coparenting measures and the dimensions of father involvement through maternal gatekeeping. Theoretically, a father who is parenting with multifertility partners may encounter gatekeeping behaviors from both mothers when coordinating activities for children residing in separate households. Correlating the error terms between mothers’ gatekeeping did not prove to be statistically significant for this sample of nonresident Black fathers.
Discussion

This study accounts for Black fathers who have more than one set of nonresident children (Manning, Stewart, & Smock, 2001). Many past studies have collected fathering data without asking parenting questions relative to the number of mothers with whom fathers share children. Collecting parenting data relative to the mother with whom the father shares children enables scholars to identify and model father involvement when some nonresident fathers share children with multiple mothers. By including data on fathers with multiple sets of nonresident children, findings from this study indicate that scholars should develop models that can compare father involvement for nonresident fathers parenting not only with one mother, but those who are parenting with two or more mothers. Including a model designed for fathers with multiple sets of nonresident children helps to illustrate the simultaneous mediating effects of both mothers’ maternal gatekeeping behaviors.

Additionally, modeling nonresident Black fathers’ perceived coparenting with two mothers illustrates that some variables may have simultaneous effects on father involvement for each sets of nonresident children. For example, reduced Model 2 indicates that whether nonresident Black fathers are employed full-time has a direct effect on perceived father involvement with their children by the first and second mother (see Figure 4.6). Whether these fathers are employed full-time directly effects their involvement with the first set of nonresident children in the form of decreased mother support. Alternatively, the direct effect on involvement with their second set of children occurs in the form of increased attentiveness to their children.
These findings are consistent with Hofferth and Casper (2007) description of the different effects of full-time employment on father involvement. Reduced Model 2 also helps to demonstrate that whether employed full-time may have different outcomes for fathers parenting with one mother compared to those parenting with two mothers. For example, full-time employment may enable fathers to more easily participate in childrearing cooperation when they have flexible work schedules and parenting responsibilities for only one set of nonresident children. However, full-time employment may be more problematic for fathers with multiple sets of nonresident children. For these fathers, whether employed full-time may decrease support for the first mother when work schedules are not flexible.

Without reduced Model 2, I could not demonstrate that the dimensions of father involvement may be different for each set of nonresident children. Father involvement occurs in the forms of attentiveness, mother support, praise and encouragement, and teaching responsible behaviors when parenting with the first mother. On the other hand, father involvement takes place in the form of attentiveness, childrearing responsibilities, mother support, and teaching responsible behaviors when parenting with the second mother.

The results also indicate that fathers’ perceptions of maternal gatekeeping have mediating effects on their father involvement (McBride et al., 2005). Baron and Kenny (1986) emphasize that mediation occurs when the independent variable has a reduced direct effect on the outcome variable in the presence of the mediating variable. Model 2b proves that in the absences of maternal gatekeeping, perceived coparenting support and the perceived coparenting relationship only have direct effects on father involvement in
the form of mother support (see Appendix B). Model 2b demonstrates that the indirect paths that occurred regarding coparenting support with the second mother and childrearing cooperation is removed when maternal gatekeeping is not present.

Interestingly, Table 4.2 indicates that positive mediating indirect paths exist when maternal gatekeeping behaviors mediate between fathers’ perceived coparenting support and the coparenting relationship and the dimensions of father involvement when parenting with one mother. Similarly, Table 4.3 illustrates that positive mediating indirect paths of maternal gatekeeping are present when fathers parent with a second mother. These findings are consistent with other scholars’ findings that cooperative parenting behaviors such as facilitative gatekeeping diminishes negative perceptions of coparenting support which leads to positive father involvement outcomes (Ardditi & Kelly, 1997; Van Egeren, 2001). Van Egeren and Hawkins’ (2004) explanation of coparenting support equates to fathers’ perceiving positive mediating effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors as facilitating their ability to accomplish parenting goals through father involvement. As Von Glinow, Shapiro, and Brett (2003) suggest, nonresident fathers and their children’s mothers may have dialogues that focus on positive solutions to parenting. Other explanations of fathers’ positive perceptions of maternal gatekeeping may include motivation, parenting skills, and self-determination (Parke, 2002).

In presenting two empirical models of father involvement with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator, I suggest that future scholars test the models with larger samples of Black fathers with nonresident children and include fathers with multiple sets of nonresident children. Larger sample sizes will help future scholars detect variations in perceived coparenting behaviors and maternal gatekeeping. As I mentioned in the
introduction, some Black nonresident fathers who parent with Black mothers may perceive high levels of maternal gatekeeping that are culturally embedded through socioeconomic conditions and stereotypes. Puhlman and Pasley (2013) emphasize that future scholars must address behavior variations that constitute maternal gatekeeping. One important dimension that Puhlman and Pasley identified is control.

I concur with Puhlman and Pasley (2013) and other scholars who found that control is an important factor that helps explain gatekeeping behaviors of mothers (Nelson, Clampet-Lundquist & Edin, 2002; Tamis-LeMonda & McFadden, 2010). Residential mothers have more parental decision-making power and control over the father-child relationship compared to nonresident Black fathers. Fathers in this study provided the following examples of maternal gatekeeping (pseudonyms are used for all mothers’ names):

Torrey:
Sherrie has refused to let me see the children since I have moved back from New York City. She does not encourage interaction or communication between me and the children. She is controlling of my time and at times how I parent.

Fred:
Mother’s sometimes don't understand when to turn a son over for the guidance of a father.

Rodney:
I really go along with Laila on practically everything. She has the best issues for our child. I am open towards her religion, but she is not open to
mine. Laila is Muslim and I am not. I have learned not to take small things and make them big. I accept that. I wish she would allow him to fellowship with me as well.

Scotty:

My child's mother has three other kids and my daughter is my only child.

Her mother thinks it’s ok that my child does things that her other children do such as Facebook, cell phones, etc.

These examples illustrate that mothers’ gatekeeping behaviors in the form of control occur under various circumstances. However, I cannot determine the rationale for the gatekeeping behaviors. Future research should attempt to determine factors that influence negative and positive gatekeeping behaviors such as quality of the father-mother relationship and fathers’ life circumstances that could diminish gatekeeping (e.g., mother perceives father as an adequate parent) and those that increase gatekeeping such as fathers’ neighborhoods (e.g., high crime) and the influence of maternal grandparents (e.g., mother is influenced by her parents perception of the father). To obtain a better understanding of these perceptions, I recommend that in the future, scholars develop measures to collect data from both nonresident fathers and their children’s mothers. These measures should incorporate Puhlman and Pasley’s (2013) conceptualization of maternal gatekeeping with the models presented. Puhlman and Pasley recommended using dimensions of maternal gatekeeping behaviors which include *control, encouragement, and discouragement.*
Future longitudinal studies should be designed to explain how maternal
gatekeeping behaviors change overtime. One participant implied that his responses
would have been different based on the temporal aspect of parenting.

Tammy and I have grown over the years. We’ve went through many
issues. I've went through the child support issues. I've went through the
issues of seeing and calling our daughter more often. We've done all that.
Not saying that we are both out of the disagreement phase but we've
grown … If I would have been asked these questions some years ago
when we were going through a lot of turmoil, these questions would have
definitely been answered differently.

**Study Limitations and Future Suggestions**

Access to Black fathers can be difficult. Future scholars should utilize cultural
institutions such as the Black barbershop to recruit a diverse sample of fathers. As an
important community institution, the Black barbershop is seldom utilized in social
science literature for its role in facilitating social bonds. The Black barbershop is a place
where Black men exchange ideas on a wide range of issues such as familial relationships,
politics, racism, sports, and other current events. Similar to the Black church, the Black
barbershop is a place where Black men interact regardless of class, education, or
occupation (Brunson, 2006; Franklin, 1985; Hess et al., 2007).

Previous research also indicates that ethnic minorities distrust researchers
(Alvidrez & Arean, 2002; Jones, Steeves, & Williams, 2009). Nonresident Black fathers who
were recruited initially perceived that the results would be presented in a way that
perpetuated negative stereotypes of Black fathers. Potential participants were also cautious
about providing personal information. The best way to address these barriers is to provide potential participants with sample study questions and describe how the results can inform best practices regarding coparenting and improve child outcomes. In addition, scholars have to describe the procedures for keeping the personal data of participants confidential. Most importantly, scholars have to convey a genuine concern for the importance of Black fatherhood studies in social science research.

Recruitment strategies for the present study provided a sample of nonresident Black fathers from various backgrounds (i.e., age and income). Nevertheless, barriers to a hard to reach ethnic minority population such as Black fathers reduce the ability of scholars to collect large sample sizes. A small nonprobability sample can limit the ability to generalize and detect differences between the subgroups of nonresident Black fathers. Small samples are also problematic because missing data can limit the number of variables for data analysis. Additionally, the results indicate that perceptions of coparenting differ between nonresident Black fathers parenting with one mother and those parenting with two mothers. However, the data does not reflect changes in fathers’ coparenting perceptions over time. Future studies need culturally sensitive recruitment strategies to collect data from larger samples of nonresident Black fathers longitudinally. Studies designed to collect longitudinal data can help identify patterns of change in nonresident Black fathers’ coparenting perspectives.
Chapter 5: Summary

As discussed in the methodology section, Black men are members of a cultural group that is not easily accessed by many researchers. Byrd and colleagues (2011) reported that Black men want to participate in research studies, but still continue to be underrepresented in most studies. The recruitment strategies of this study demonstrate how to gain access to Black men. I worked with community gatekeepers and local radio stations to help locate participants and disseminate the study criteria.

I also made the study accessible to participants by securing computer laboratories at community locations such as local churches, community centers, and libraries that were accessible to the sample. In addition, I setup laptop stations inside local Black barbershops to reach nonresident Black fathers from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The Black barbershop is often underutilized in the field of family science. As described by Brunson (2005) and other scholars the Black barbershop is a cultural institution that is a social network for many Black men.

Contributions of This Study

The manuscripts presented in this dissertation make contributions through four primary research goals which include 1) test the cross-cultural validation of instruments that measure nonresident fathering behaviors, 2) develop and test an empirical model of paternal stressors with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator, 3) develop and test empirical models that accounts for nonresident Black fathers who share parenting responsibilities with one mother and those who share parenting responsibilities with two mothers, and 4) develop and test empirical models of father involvement with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator.
Results

The first manuscript titled, *Assessing Cross-cultural Adaptation and Reliability of the Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father Version (ESI-MNF)*, was derived from Hall’s (1990) *Everyday Stressor index* to include ethnic-related stressors of nonresident fathers such as job discrimination and police racial profiling. The ESI-MNF also includes stressors specific to a nonresident father such as concerns about another man in the role of father to one’s children. Another insightful finding is the emergence of new dimensions of daily stressors: *difficulties with children’s mothers, child behavior concerns, and family health concerns*. In addition, the 11 parenting indicators were tested for the feasibility of a paternal stressors subscale. The data analysis indicates that the paternal stressor subscale (ESI-MNF-PSS) is also a reliable instrument. The ESI-MNF and the ESI-MNF-PSS have been tested and validated with a sample of nonresident fathers who have been underrepresented in the social science literature.

The second manuscript titled, *The Mediating Effects of Maternal Gatekeeping on Nonresident Fathers’ Paternal Stressors*, provides an empirical model of paternal stressors with maternal gatekeeping as a mediator. The results indicate that cooperative coparenting is statistically significant in decreasing paternal stressors when maternal gatekeeping behaviors are perceived as hostile for the sample of nonresident Black fathers. Conversely, scholars such as Lawson and Thompson (1999) found that antagonistic coparenting increases paternal distress in the form of visitation conflict when nonresident Black fathers perceive maternal gatekeeping as hostile. The authors found that nonresident Black fathers considered relinquishing their fathering role to avoid conflict with their children’s mothers. The results of this also study indicate that mothers’
behaviors have direct effects on nonresident Black fathers’ perceived paternal stressors. When these fathers perceive resident mothers as encouraging their childrearing responsibilities, they have less paternal stress regarding their children’s behaviors and role functions.

The final manuscript titled, *Modeling Nonresident Black Father Involvement with Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator*, provides an empirical model that accounts for nonresident Black fathers who share parenting responsibilities with one mother and those who share parenting responsibilities with two mothers. Manning, Stewart, and Smock (2001) emphasized that most fatherhood studies do not consider fathers who have multiple sets of nonresident children. Collecting parenting data relative to the mother with whom a father shares a child or children will assist scholars with testing empirical models of fathering behaviors for fathers who share children with multiple mothers.

The results indicate that the dimensions of father involvement may be different for each set of nonresident children for this sample of fathers. For example, father involvement occurs in the forms of *attentiveness, mother support, praise and encouragement, and teaching responsible behaviors* when parenting with the first mother. On the other hand, father involvement takes place in the form of *attentiveness, childrearing responsibilities, mother support, and teaching responsible behaviors* when parenting with the second mother. Without collecting data relative to the mother, I could not demonstrate this variation in father involvement.

The results also show that maternal gatekeeping behaviors mediate the relationship between the independent variables (i.e., coparenting relationship and coparenting support) and the dependent variable (i.e., father involvement) for fathers
parenting with one mother and those parenting with two mothers. For fathers who
reported parenting with one mother, their perceived coparenting relationship and
perceived coparenting support increase their father involvement when maternal
gatekeeping behaviors are present. When this sample of fathers perceive coparenting with
mothers as positive, their father involvement increases in the form of childrearing
cooperation, mother support, praise and encouragement and teaching responsible
behaviors even in the presence of negative maternal gatekeeping behaviors. Similarly,
when fathers who parent with two mothers perceive the second mother as supportive,
their father involvement increases in the form of childrearing cooperation when maternal
gatekeeping behaviors are present. These findings indicate that cooperative coparenting
reduces the negative effects of maternal gatekeeping behaviors on nonresident Black
fathers’ involvement with their children when parenting with one mother or when
parenting with a second mother.

Limitations

This study has limitations. Generalizability to other groups of nonresident black
fathers is limited due to the small sample size and the geographical location from which
the sample was generated. The sample consisted of nonresident Black fathers who were
either coparenting with one mother or coparenting with two mothers. The initial models
cannot be generalized to fathers coparenting with more than two mothers. However, the
results are relevant and useful. The empirical models provide insight about the effects of
coparenting on father involvement and on paternal stressors when maternal gatekeeping
is included as a mediator. Cautious interpretation of preliminary results obtained from a
one-time assessment of stress is also warranted. Future studies should use the ESI-MNF
and its paternal stressor subscale (ESI-MNF-PSS) longitudinally as the effects of stress change over time along with a father’s personal circumstances.

**Future Research**

This study used a street outreach approach to build rapport with members of the Black community and to gain access to Black fathers. Additionally, Black barbershops were utilized to address three recruitment goals: 1) to disseminate information to Black fathers from diverse backgrounds, 2) to decrease the recruitment barrier regarding members of the Black community being reluctant to participate in research studies by providing a familiar setting to complete the questionnaire, and 3) to provide computer access to Black fathers with limited transportation.

Future studies should incorporate a similar culturally sensitive recruitment strategy to collect data from larger samples of nonresident Black fathers. These studies should also be designed to collect longitudinal data that can identify patterns of change in nonresident Black fathers’ coparenting perspectives and fathering behaviors. A culturally sensitive research approach also helps scholars to develop and adapted questionnaires that include measures of ethnic-related sources of stress and fathering behaviors for fathers from diverse cultural groups. For example, the ESI-MNF demonstrates that ethnic minority stressors relevant to being a Black man emerged within the dimension of interpersonal conflict. These ethnic-related stressors included problems such as housing discrimination and police racial profiling. I recommend that future scholars use the ESI-MNF and the ESI-MNF-PSS to develop and test alternative models of fathering behaviors, maternal gatekeeping behaviors, and paternal stressors that provide insights about the parenting practices of nonresident fathers.
Appendices

Appendix A1
Indicators from the Fragile Families Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Measuring the Coparenting Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Visited with friends or family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gone out to a movie, sporting event, or some other entertainment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Helped each other solve a personal problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helped each other solve a problem related to the children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Loaned each other money?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response choices: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3= sometimes, 4=often, 5=very often, and 6=always
Appendix A2
Ahrons Coparental Support Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Measuring Coparenting Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When you need help regarding the children, how often do you seek it from (relevant mother’s name)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How often would you say that (relevant mother’s name) is helpful regarding your children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When (relevant mother’s name) needs to make changes to the visitation arrangement, how often do you go out of your way to help her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How often does (relevant mother’s name) go out of her way to help you with changes to the visitation arrangements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How often is (relevant mother’s name) supportive of your needs as a father not living with his children?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response options: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=very often, and 6=always
Appendix A3
Fagan and Barnett’s Maternal Gatekeeping Scale

Items Measuring Maternal Gatekeeping

1. If my children need to be disciplined, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to discipline them, and not me.
2. If a choice has to be made about what clothing my children will wear, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make that decision, not me.
3. If someone needs to talk with my children’s teacher, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to do it, and not me.
4. If my children’s feelings are hurt, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one who should comfort them, and not me.
5. If my children have to go to the doctor, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to take them, and not me.
6. If a decision has to be made about who my children will play with (or spend time with), I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make that decision, not me.
7. If a decision has to be made for my children, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make it, and not me.
8. If an adult needs to talk to my children about their behavior, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to do the talking, and not me.
9. If a decision has to be made about which TV shows my children should watch, I think that (relevant mother’s name) believes that she is the one to make that decision, and not me.

Response options: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often, 5=very often, and 6=always
Appendix A4
Everyday Stressors Index-Minority Nonresident Father-Paternal Stressors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Measuring Paternal Stressors with Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Children's Behavior Concerns*

1. Problems with your children’s behavior.
2. Concerns about your children misbehaving.
3. Concerns about how your children are doing in school.

*Difficulties with Children’s Mother*

4. Difficulties with your children’s mother.
5. Problems with your children’s mother saying negative things about you to your children.
6. Disagreement with your children’s mother over disciplining of your children.
7. Disagreement with your children’s mother over their education (study habits, grades, or behavior problems).

*Role Overload Concerns*

8. Concerns about your children knowing that they are important to you.
9. Concerns about your children seeing you as nurturing and supportive.
10. Problems with having time to do activities with your children.
11. Concerns about another man in the role of father to your children.

Response options: 1=never, 2=rarely, 3= sometimes, 4=often, 5=very often, and 6=always
Appendix A5

Inventory of Father Involvement-Online Nonresident Father version (IFI-ONF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items Measuring Father Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attended events your children participate in (sports, school, church events).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Encouraged your children to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Providing your children’s basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, and health care)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Praising your children for being good or doing the right thing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Given your children’s mother encouragement and emotional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Being involved in the daily or regular routine of taking care of your children’s basic needs or activities (feeding, driving them places, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Let your children know that their mother is an important and special person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Praised your children for something they have done well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Encouraged your children to succeed in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Been a pal or friend to your children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Encouraged your children to do their homework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Told your children that you love them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Spent time just talking with your children when they want to talk about something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Cooperated with your children’s mother in the rearing of your children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Taught your children to follow rules at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Disciplined your children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Planned for your children’s future (education, training).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Encouraged your children to develop their talents (music, athletics, art, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Spent time with your children doing things they like to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Encouraged your children to do their chores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Set rules and limits for your children’s behavior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Response choices: 1=always, 2=very often, 3=often, 4=sometimes, 5=rarely, and 6=never
Appendix A6

Indicators Measuring the IFI-ONF Dimensionality for One Mother

Teaching Responsible Behaviors ($\alpha = .94$)

21. Encouraged your children to do their chores.
18. Planned for your children’s future (education, training).
22. Set rules and limits for your children’s behavior.
16. Taught your children to follow rules at school
15. Cooperated with your children’s mother in the rearing of your children.
14. Spent time just talking with your children when they want to talk about Something.
19. Encouraged your children to develop their talents (music, athletics, art, etc.).
20. Spent time with your children doing things they like to do.
11. Encouraging your children to do their homework.
17. Disciplined your children.

Childrearing Cooperation ($\alpha = .83$)

6. Being involved in the daily or regular routine of taking care of your children’s basic needs or activities (feeding, driving them places, etc.).
1. Attended events your children participate in (sports, school, church events).
3. Providing your children’s basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, and health care).
2. Encouraged your children to read.

Praise and Encouragement ($\alpha = .87$)

12. Told your children that you love them.
4. Praising your children for being good or doing the right thing.
9. Encouraged your children to succeed in school.
8. Praised your children for something they have done well.

Mother Support ($\alpha = .72$)

5. Given your children’s mother encouragement and emotional support.
7. Let your children know that their mother is an important and special person.

Response choices: 1=always, 2=very often, 3=often, 4=sometimes, 5=rarely, and 6=never
Appendix A7

Indicators Measuring the IFI-ONF Dimensionality for the First Mother

Praise and Encouragement (α = .93)

3. Providing your children’s basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, and health care).
8. Praised your children for something they have done well.
4. Praising your children for being good or doing the right thing.
9. Encouraged your children to succeed in school.
16. Taught your children to follow rules at school.
12. Told your children that you love them.

Teaching Responsible Behaviors (α = .93)

22. Set rules and limits for your children’s behavior.
14. Spent time just talking with your children when they want to talk about something.
18. Planned for your children’s future (education, training).
19. Encouraged your children to develop their talents (music, athletics, art, etc.).
20. Spent time with your children doing things they like to do.
17. Disciplined your children.
21. Encouraged your children to do their chores.

Mother Support (α = .76)

5. Given your children’s mother encouragement and emotional support.
15. Cooperated with your children’s mother in the rearing of your children.
7. Let your children know that their mother is an important and special person.

Attentiveness (α = .73)

1. Attended events your children participate in (sports, school, church events).
2. Encouraged your children to read.

Response choices: 1=always, 2=very often, 3=often, 4=sometimes, 5=rarely, and 6=never
Appendix A8

Indicators Measuring the IFI-ONF Dimensionality for the Second Mother

Teaching Responsible Behaviors ($\alpha = .98$)

4. Praising your children for being good or doing the right thing.
3. Providing your children’s basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, and health care).
8. Praised your children for something they have done well.
9. Encouraged your children to succeed in school.
19. Encouraged your children to develop their talents (music, athletics, art, etc.).
12. Told your children that you love them.
22. Set rules and limits for your children’s behavior.
17. Disciplined your children.
2. Encouraged your children to read.
11. Encouraging your children to do their homework.
14. Spent time just talking with your children when they want to talk about something.
21. Encouraged your children to do their chores.

Attentiveness ($\alpha = .90$)

16. Taught your children to follow rules at school.
1. Attended events your children participate in (sports, school, church events).

Childrearing Cooperation ($\alpha = .90$)

15. Cooperated with your children’s mother in the rearing of your children.
6. Being involved in the daily or regular routine of taking care of your children’s basic needs or activities (feeding, driving them places, etc.).
20. Spent time with your children doing things they like to do.

Mother Support ($\alpha = .87$)

5. Given your children’s mother encouragement and emotional support.
7. Let your children know that their mother is an important and special person.

Response choices: 1=always, 2=very often, 3= often, 4=sometimes, 5=rarely, and 6=never
Appendix B

Models without Maternal Gatekeeping as a Mediator

Figure B1: Model 1b, Father Involvement Model for One Mother without Maternal Gatekeeping
Figure B2: Model 2b, Father Involvement Model for Two Mother without Maternal Gatekeeping
Appendix C

Recruitment Postcard

Black fathers live apart from their children for various reasons such as relocation, divorce, and different types of relationship break-ups. In some research studies, information about Black fathers who live apart from their children has been provided by the mothers of their children. Relying on mothers to describe father involvement does not create a clear picture of the parenting experiences of Black fathers. More needs to be known about the experiences of Black fathers who live apart from their children. It’s time for Black fathers to tell their own story.

You may be eligible to participate if:

● You are a Black father living in Kentucky.

● You have children between the ages of 2 to 17 and at least one of your children who is between the ages of 2 and 17 does not live in your home.

● You are willing to complete an online survey.

Research investigator: Katrina Taylor Akande (Ph.D candidate)
Email: Katrina.Akande@uky.edu - Phone: (859) 544-9194
Website: www.wix.com/katrinaakande/blackfathers
References


Huang, C. C. (2009). Mothers’ reports of nonresident fathers’ involvement with their children: Revisiting the relationship between child support payment and visitation. *Family Relations, 58(1)*, 54-64.


VITA

EDUCATION

Graduate Certificate in Applied Statistics, University of Kentucky
M.A.; Eastern Kentucky University; 2002
B.S.; Eastern Kentucky University; 1993

REFEREEED PUBLICATIONS


PEER-REVIEWED BOOK CHAPTERS


SELECTED EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS:


NATIONAL CONFERENCES (*Indicates presenter)

