

Introduction

In this qualitative study, qualities of strong Black families were examined. The purpose of this study was to include a more ethnically and racially diverse sample of strong religious families in the United States. Little research has been conducted to look at the strengths and challenges of strong Black families. Examining the success of such families may help families of all races and ethnicities learn skills, qualities, and attitudes that can make successful and strong families.

Research Questions

1. What are the specific strengths of strong Black families and how do those strengths impact the success of the family?
2. What are the challenges facing strong Black families and how do they work to overcome or cope with those difficulties?

Methods

34 Black couples with strong, successful marriages living in the United States were interviewed for this study. Semi-structured, in-person interviews were conducted, lasting an average of 2 hours with each family. Interviewees were a husband and wife and some interviews also included children still living in the home. The interviews were transcribed and then open-coded for common themes.

Findings

Findings included a variety of unique strengths these strong Black families possess as well as challenges they face. There were 15 themes found during the coding process. Here we focus on five prominent and powerful themes: 1) creating a strong marital relationship, 2) positive and cheerful living, 3) relying on divine help, 4) setting an example, and 5) the word of God and scripture.



Strong Marital Relationship

- Respect
- Service
- Relying on spouse
- Shared commitment/equally yoked

“You need to be the Eve for your Adam. That every Eve has her Adam and you need to be the Eve your Adam needs. I’m the Eve my Adam needs right now. This is the Eve my Adam needs.”



Positive/Cheerful Living

- Humor
- Accepting/not judging others
- Growth mindset
- Gratitude

“[J]ust ease up, live, don’t take yourself so seriously, and just know that you’re gonna make mistakes. But you’re gonna live, and you’re gonna get up and you keep on going.”



Rely on Divine Help

- Deferring approach – giving it all to God
- Collaborative approach – teamwork with God

“I know there is someone there to get me through this, you know, the Lord’s gonna bring me through this. I don’t know how, but he’s gonna bring me through, and that’s what I depend on.”



Set an Example

- Represent something beyond themselves
- Hopes that others will see God through them

“[S]ometimes, we...are going to be the only Bible that some people will see or read... They’re gonna watch me and how I carry myself and how I live my life, and how I deal with things in my life, and my life can hopefully be a testimony to somebody else, and hopefully, they can come into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ...”



The Word of God

- Know passages by heart
- Study sacred texts regularly

“She died of Alzheimer’s ... before she died, she was visiting here she had her bible like this, upside down, even though her mind was gone it was so much a part of her, she had her bible upside down. ‘What are you doing?’ ‘Reading the bible.’”