Communities and Local Government

Black role models: which messages work?

Testing the impact of role models' messages for Black boys and Black young men: research to inform the REACH role model programme

www.communities.gov.uk
community, opportunity, prosperity

Communities and Local Government

Black role models: which messages work?

Testing the impact of role models' messages for Black boys and Black young men: research to inform the REACH role model programme

Professor Dominic Abrams
Dr Tirza Leader
&
Professor Adam Rutland
Centre for the Study of Group Processes

Department of Psychology
University of Kent, UK

July 2009
Department for Communities and Local Government

Acknowledgements

This project was completed as a result of the substantial effort and contribution from a number of colleagues at the Centre for the Study of Group Processes. In particularly we wish to thank Alison Benbow who was the main research assistant, Letitia Slabu, Brian Spisak who helped compile the final reports, Hazel Wardrop, Hannah Swift, Tiina Eilola, Francis Samra, Reeshma Hajii, Sarah Fitzroy, Manuela Thomae, Karen Milne-Skillman, Vegelis Chaikalis, Nanette Bech-Nielsen, Rob Foels, and Meghan MacNamara, all of whom helped with data collection and coding. We thank Rachel Calogero, Lizanne Allcock and Charlotte Church for reading drafts and assisting with practical and financial arrangements during the project. We are also grateful to Stella Yarrow, Jessica Vince, Michael Simpson and Jenan Hasan from Communities and Local Government for their thoughtful and detailed comments throughout the project; and to Ken Barnes from the REACH Role Model Working Group for insights into how the REACH programme is being developed. We also thank Dr Peter Bibby from the University of Nottingham for his contribution to decisions about how best to present the statistical evidence.

Above all, we thank the individuals and organisations who took part in the study.

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily represent those of Communities and Local Government

Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright, 2009

Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with the Crown.

This publication, excluding logos, may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium for research, private study or for internal circulation within an organisation. This is subject to it being reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the publication specified.

Any other use of the contents of this publication would require a copyright licence. Please apply for a Click-Use Licence for core material at www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/system/online/pLogin.asp, or by writing to the Office of Public Sector Information, Information Policy Team, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU

e-mail: licensing@opsi.gov.uk

If you require this publication in an alternative format please email alternativeformats@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Communities and Local Government Publications
PO Box 236
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7NB
Tel: 0300 123 1124
Fax: 0300 123 1125
Email: communities@capita.co.uk
Online via the Communities and Local Government website: www.communities.gov.uk

75% recycled
This is printed on
75% recycled paper

July 2009

Reference Number: OG ACST 05992

ISBN: 978-1-4098-1573-0

Contents

The report in brief **5**

Section 1 Background and objectives **12**

Introduction 12

Key objectives 13

Project design 14

Section 2 Key findings **17**

Black school pupils 17

Black young men 31

Section 3 Conclusions and recommendations **40**

Appendix Role model vignettes **44**

List of figures

1. Percentage of Black boys who accurately recalled role model characteristics after one month 18
2. Perceived similarity of the role models to White men among Black boys (mean responses) 19
3. Black boys' self-image (mean responses) 21
4. Black boys', Black girls' and White boys' interest in careers (mean responses) 23
5. Black boys', Black girls' and White boys' perceived ability to pursue careers (mean responses) 24
6. Black boys' perceptions of others' views towards Black men (mean responses) 26
7. Black boys' perceptions of others' views towards Black men at Time 1 and Time 2 (mean responses) 27
8. Characteristics of role models cited spontaneously by Black boys 28
9. Black boys' reasons for selecting their spontaneously cited role models 29
10. People with whom Black boys compare themselves to evaluate different aspects of their lives 30
11. Black boys' use of news and information sources (mean responses) 31
12. Perceived similarity of the role models to White men among Black young men (mean responses) 32
13. Perception of the likelihood that the role models would invoke fear in others (mean responses) 34

14. Black young men's perceptions of others' views towards Black men (mean responses) 35
15. Characteristics of role models cited spontaneously by Black young men 36
16. Black young men's reasons for selecting their spontaneously cited role models 37
17. People with whom Black young men compare themselves to evaluate different aspects of their lives 38
18. Black young men's use of news and information sources (mean responses) 39

The report in brief

Overall, about 1,200 people took part in this project, including school pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds and Black young men. This report summarises the key findings for Black boys and Black young men, including some comparisons between Black boys, White boys and Black girls. Full technical details are presented in a separate report.[1]

Broad objectives and conclusions

The project aimed to address three key questions:

	Key questions	Broad conclusions
1	*Does hearing about role models have any impact on Black boys and young men?*	**Yes, the role models did have some impact on Black boys confirming the basic premise of the REACH programme that role models can be a positive influence.**
2	*If so, which qualities and messages communicated by role models most effectively reach and inspire them to raise their aspirations and potential to achieve more, as well as challenge negative stereotypes?*	**The project has identified particular types of role models and messages likely to be more appealing and impressive than others. There were also differences in impact between the Black boys and the Black young men.**
3	*Are there any unexpected or unintended negative consequences of these particular messages from role models?*	**Potentially, yes. Findings were positive on the whole, but for some participants there were a few potentially negative consequences of hearing about role models, at least in the context of this experiment.**

The key findings summarised in this report support and expand on the broad conclusions above.

[1] Abrams, D., T. Leader and A. Rutland, *An Experimental Test of the Impact of Black Role Model Messages: Research to inform the REACH role model programme Report* available at www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/research/raceresearchandstatistics

Recommendations

- Overall, the positive effects of the experimental role models and particular messages are evidence for the value of the REACH national role model programme, and for its development and possible expansion. It should be noted that contact with real role models, rather than recordings as used in this project, may have more numerous and greater effects.
- Focusing on concrete material achievements may be a way for role models to reinforce their impact and value to their audience.
- Role models should explicitly ask boys to think about people they know, or have met, who are like the role model. This may encourage the boys to contact these people and follow their example, as well as boosting their self-image.
- Role models should be advised that messages about their achievements and qualities may have a greater impact on Black boys than on Black young men. Role models generally did not have an effect on Black young men, and may have some negative impacts. Different approaches or messages may be required to influence Black young men as positively. However, these would need to be identified and tested.
- Black young men may be more engaged with role models who also provide practical advice on how to access career paths (e.g. contact details for helpful organisations, workshops for gaining job skills); however, this needs to be tested.
- Role models' initial presentations should emphasise particularly memorable messages, such as those about material achievements. Messages are likely to be most effective if refreshed or added to, e.g. by repeating exposure to the role models. However, this has not been tested.
- Black boys' and Black young men's spectrum of career aspirations should be broadened, including showing routes for entering different professions. Role models may be able to help widen career aspirations by highlighting their own chosen career paths.

These and further recommendations, including suggestions for further research, are discussed in more detail at the end of this report.

The project

The project was conducted in late 2008, separately with two age groups: school pupils aged 11-15, and Black young men aged 16-26.[2] Each age group was randomly divided into five groups. To compare the impacts of different messages, four groups each listened to a recording describing one role model. The message depicted the role model using a combination of two types of information:

- type of success: emphasising either material or social–moral success (e.g. helping others); and,
- scale of achievement: emphasising whether the role model had achieved a large or small scale of achievement.

All four combinations of these two factors were tested. Participants then answered questions about their views of that role model. As a comparison for measuring the impact of role models as a whole, the fifth group did not hear about a role model. All five groups answered questions about their self-image, stereotypes about Black men and other groups, their job aspirations, and their own role models. The responses of all five groups were compared with each other.

Pupils who had heard about a role model were asked about them again a month later; it was not possible to revisit the young men.

[2] Half of the Black boys (51 per cent) in this project defined themselves as Black African, 18 per cent as Black Caribbean, and the rest as Mixed White and Black African, Mixed White and Black Caribbean or Black Other. Almost half of the young men in this project (46 per cent) described themselves as Black African, and a quarter (25 per cent) as Black Caribbean; the remainder of the sample classified themselves as Mixed White and Black African, Mixed White and Black Caribbean or Black Other.

Key findings addressing the broad study objectives

1 Does hearing about role models have any impact on Black boys and young men?

Black boys' and Black young men's views of role models. All role models were generally considered to be positive examples of Black men; they were judged to be very happy, likeable, inspirational, interesting, and someone to be proud of. However, neither the Black boys nor the young men thought that the role models were very similar to themselves.

How Black boys and Black young men view themselves. Black boys who heard about a role model viewed themselves as cleverer and more skilful than those who did not hear about a role model, although this did not apply to other qualities such as warmth or successfulness. However, the role models had no effect on the Black young men's views of themselves.

Career aspirations. In general, hearing about a role model had very little effect on Black boys' and Black young men's expectations or aspirations towards specific careers. However, one particular type of role model did have a positive effect (see under question 2 below).

2 Which role model qualities and messages most effectively reach and inspire Black boys and young men to raise their aspirations, as well as challenge negative stereotypes?

Response to specific role models

- The role models who stressed their material success tended to be viewed more positively than those who stressed their social–moral success, by the Black boys and the Black young men.
- Black boys who heard about materialistic role models were more likely to say that they wanted to be like them than those who heard about social–moral role models. However, Black boys were more likely to say that they *could* be like those with a small scale of achievement. Young men were also most likely to want to emulate role models with material success, but unlike Black boys, young men were most likely to say that they *could* be like them.
- Black boys with higher socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to admire a role model who had a large scale of achievement than were other boys.

Career aspirations. Black boys who heard about the materialistic role model with a large scale of achievement (a former soldier) were less averse to becoming a soldier or van driver than others were. However, there were no other significant differences between role models in their effects on career aspirations.

Perceptions of other people's views of the role models. Black boys who heard about role models with social–moral success thought that other people would view them as kinder, but also more pitiable and less clever, skilful and successful than the boys who heard about materialistic role models. Similarly, young men who heard social–moral role models thought that other people would see them as kinder and less disliked, but less popular and competitive, than the men who heard materialistic role models.

Own choice of role model. When asked about their own role models, Black boys who had heard about a materialistic role model were more likely to choose older role models than the other boys. Young men who had heard about a role model with a large scale of achievement were more likely to choose a businessman than the other young men. Young men who heard about any role model were more likely to choose a famous person than those who did not hear about a role model.

Impact over time. After a month, the Black boys' interest in all the role models had decreased. However, those who heard about materialistic role models were more likely to say that they remembered their stories. On the other hand, those who heard about role models who had a large scale of achievement were more likely to remember accurate information about their background compared with other boys.

3 Are there any unexpected or unintended negative consequences of these particular messages from role models?

Perceptions of other people's views of Black men generally. Participants were asked to judge how they thought other people would view Black men on 13 different aspects (e.g. kind, popular, pitiable)[3]. Hearing about a role model affected Black young men's and Black girls' perceptions on a few of these aspects.

Compared with those who did not hear about a role model, young men who heard about any role model thought that other people would view Black men in general as less warm, less clever, less respected and more disliked. Similarly, compared with those who did not hear about a role model, Black girls who had heard about any role model thought that other people would view Black men as less popular and less enviable, but also less disliked.

Among White boys, hearing about a role model had no effect on how they thought others would view Black men generally. Across almost all of the positive aspects (such as warmth or kindness), White boys thought that others would view Black men less positively than Black boys did. However, they also thought that people would respond to Black men less negatively on negative aspects (such as fear), thus having a more neutral perception of others' views overall.

[3] Participants were also asked to judge how they thought other people would view White men on the same 13 aspects. In addition, they were asked how they thought other people would view White women and Black women on a shorter list of five aspects.

Other key findings

How did participants view the role models?

- Black boys with a higher view of their own ability to achieve goals felt more positive towards the role models.
- Black boys with more White friends felt less positively towards the role models than those with fewer White friends.

What were Black boys' and Black young men's career aspirations?

- From a list of 14 careers, Black boys desired most to be an athlete[4], actor or IT specialist and felt that these were the jobs they would be most able to do. They were not very interested in all the other careers listed, and apart from doctor, felt they were not very likely to be able to do them even if they wanted to. They felt least able to become a teacher, van driver or social worker.
- Compared with White boys, Black boys showed a higher degree of interest in and perceived ability to pursue many of the careers listed including actor, athlete, doctor, IT specialist, musician, politician and social worker. Compared with Black girls, Black boys were less interested in becoming an actor, doctor, musician or social worker.
- As with the Black boys, Black young men were most interested in becoming an IT specialist, athlete or actor. They felt most able to become an IT specialist, athlete or shop assistant and were least confident in their ability to be a politician, writer or doctor.

Who did Black boys and young men cite as their own role models?

- Three quarters of the Black boys (76 per cent) and two thirds of the young men (68 per cent) stated that they had a role model. Of those who stated they had a role model, the majority cited someone who was Black (65 per cent of the Black boys and 66 per cent of the young men) or male (97 per cent of both Black boys and young men). However, a quarter of boys (26 per cent) and a sixth of young men (16 per cent) cited a White role model. Many role models (particularly among the boys) were also young and/or famous. Black boys with lower socio-economic backgrounds were particularly likely to choose a Black role model.
- Athletes (especially footballers) were most popular among Black boys, while business people were most popular among Black young men, with athletes second. When asked again a month later, Black boys were more likely to choose a business person (although athletes were still the most popular) and they were less likely than before, to choose an athlete.

[4] "Athlete" is used in this report as a general term for all sports-related people.

- The top reason given by both Black boys and Black young men for admiring their own role model was that they had attained material success (56 per cent and 31 per cent respectively).
- Although around two-thirds of role models cited by Black boys and young men were Black, only around one in ten said that Black ethnicity was a reason for their choice. A role model's kindess or religiosity were among the least common reasons that Black boys gave. Being a leader was the least commonly cited reason among Black young men.

How do Black boys think other people view Black men in general?

- Overall, Black boys thought that other people have positive views of Black men in general. A month later these positive views had increased on a number of dimensions whether or not they had heard about a role model, Black boys thought others would see Black men as warmer, more skilful, more popular, more successful and more admirable than they did when first asked.

Section 1

Background and objectives

Introduction

The REACH programme

Black boys and Black young men in England continue to face serious challenges in every sector of society, from education and employment to involvement with the criminal justice system.

REACH, established in February 2006, is one of a number of project groups set up as successors to the Stephen Lawrence Steering Group and the Race Equality Advisory Panel, to focus on raising the aspirations and achievements of Black boys and young men, enabling them to reach their full potential. It is independent of, but supported by, Communities and Local Government (CLG) and has been driven by a group of 25 people who have direct experience of the realities of young people's lives. In August 2007, REACH reported[5] on the serious barriers Black boys and Black young men face and made five recommendations on how to help overcome these challenges. Recognising the importance of positive, visible Black male role models, one of the recommendations was to introduce a structured national role model programme for Black boys and young Black men.

The national role model programme

The Government's response to the REACH report[6] included a commitment to launch such a programme. In partnership with CLG, REACH ran a nationwide recruitment campaign, resulting in the announcement, in December 2008, of 20 national role models. These Black men were chosen to inspire Black boys and young men to aim higher, challenge their negative portrayal in the media, and help recruit more role models at a local level.

The project

In order to inform the development of communication strategies for the REACH role model programme, CLG wished to build on the lessons outlined in the 2007 literature review entitled *Getting the message across*: *Media campaigns to reduce racial discrimination and prejudice*[7]. This review was commissioned to increase understanding of how to communicate anti-prejudice messages effectively. It found that lessons from social psychology literature could be used to identify promising practice in the design of campaigns, and can help to ensure more effective communications, in particular

[5] The full report can be found at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/reach-report.pdf

[6] The Government's response can be found at: www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/575441.pdf

[7] Getting the message across: Media campaigns to reduce racial discrimination and prejudice www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/doc/623921.doc (full report) or www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/summary1 (summary)

mitigating the risk of creating unintended negative impacts on attitudes. The report provided recommendations on how to design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of awareness campaigns, and included recommendations to test messages with target audiences prior to launching.

Building on these recommendations, CLG commissioned the University of Kent to conduct an experimental research project to explore the potential effectiveness of 'prototypical' role model messages, to identify which have the most positive potential impact, and to identify any potential negative effects or unintended consequences.[8]

The key conclusions of this project were that the messages tested did have some impact on Black boys and Black young men; that particular types of role model messages are likely to make more positive impact than others; and that there were some unexpected effects with potentially negative impact.

These lessons can directly inform the work of the REACH role models and feed into the long-term communication strategy of organisations involved in the delivery of the REACH programme. In addition, they provide insights into some of the more effective ways of challenging stereotypes among Black boys and Black young men that can be used by government and other relevant bodies to help develop policy.

This report summarises the key findings and conclusions of the project. Full technical details are provided in a separate report.[9]

Key objectives

This project aimed to address the following key questions.

Does hearing about role models have any impact on Black boys and young men? It is possible that other forces, ranging from personality to social class, age and cultural factors, may be so powerful that hearing about role models has no effects. This first question simply considers whether hearing about a role model has an effect that is statistically different from not hearing about a role model.

If so, which qualities and messages communicated by role models most effectively reach and inspire them, and challenge negative stereotypes, to raise their aspirations and potential to achieve more? Perhaps some particular types, occupations or achievements of role models are more memorable, impressive or influential than others. Equally, perhaps some are more easily related to Black boys' and Black young men's own experiences, or to people they already know.

[8] This is one study in a programme of research commissioned by CLG to inform the delivery and development of the REACH programme. It is the first report to be published.

[9] Abrams, D., T. Leader and A. Rutland, *An Experimental Test of the Impact of Back Role Model Messages*: *Research to inform the REACH role model programme Report* available at communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/research/raceresearchandstatistics

Are there any unexpected or unintended negative consequences of these particular messages from role models on Black boys and Black young men? A particular concern is whether hearing about a role model might actually have detrimental consequences. For example, it might make someone feel bad about their own under-achievement, or it might put them off the career of the role model, if he is seen to be too dissimilar or unrealistic. The research measured attitudes and perceptions to check whether such effects were happening.

Answers to these questions will help to inform the REACH programme strategy, and also highlight areas where further evidence may be needed.

Project design

The project started with a pilot study in London involving 209 school-aged boys[10] and 14 Black young men during September 2008 which developed and tested different measures and ways of presenting the role models.

The main project was designed to then measure effects of hearing messages from particular types of role models compared with each other type, and compared with not hearing from a role model.

Types of role models and messages

The characteristics of the role models were varied systematically and in a highly controlled manner. Two specific aspects of role model message were emphasised.

First, the role models differed in terms of the relative *scale of their achievements*. They either described themselves as having achieved large levels of success (a *large* scale of achievement) or as having achieved small levels of success (a *small* scale of achievement).

The role models that were presented also differed in the *type of success* they had achieved. They described themselves as having achieved either material success (*materialistic* role model) or success in terms of social and moral respect (*social–moral* role model). The materialistic role model emphasised the attainment of money, cars, or homes, whereas the social–moral role model emphasised giving back to the community and being valued by others.

[10] Sixty-two per cent of the boys who took part in this pilot study were Black.

The research design enabled the testing of different combinations of the scale and type of achievement by presenting participants with one of four different "vignettes": a recording and transcript of a role model with one of four different combinations of messages:

- "I have had a large-scale achievement and attained material success."
- "I have had a large-scale achievement and attained social–moral success."
- "I have had a small-scale achievement and attained material success."
- "I have had a small-scale achievement and attained social–moral success."

See the Appendix for all four role model "vignettes".

Participants

Two groups of participants were recruited to the project: school pupils aged 11-15 and Black young men aged 16-26.

The school pupils were recruited at six London schools chosen because they had relatively large proportions of Black boys. The project was administered within two weeks in November 2008. The Black boys took part during school time, in whole-class sessions, generally alongside other male or female pupils, some of whom were of White or other non-Black ethnicity.

The Black young men were recruited individually, from FE Colleges, Job Centres, support agencies, and leisure centres, and were assessed within a four-week period from November to December 2008.

Methods

Within each age group, participants were randomly assigned to one of five sets. Four groups each listened and read along to a recording of one role model's story. They then answered a series of questions about:

- how much they liked and felt similar to the role model; and
- how much others would describe the role model in terms of potentially stereotypical characteristics.

All five groups of participants were asked to:

- identify the stereotypes they believe others hold about Black men
- describe how they feel about themselves
- name and describe their own personal role models, and
- say which types of careers they aspired to and thought were possible for them

For many questions, participants were asked to rate the role model they heard, or their view of themselves, on various measures using a scale from 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive). Answers were analysed statistically to determine which types and combinations of role model messages were most effective in raising aspirations and improving stereotypes about Black men.

The responses of Black boys were compared with those of White boys and Black girls. These two groups were chosen for analysis because they were the largest discrete groups in the sample.[11]

The school pupils answered a repeat questionnaire a month later (in December 2008) to establish whether any effects had persisted or new effects had emerged. It was not practical to arrange a repeat for the young men.

Confidentiality and debriefing procedures followed ethical principles and guidelines set down by the British Psychological Society.

[11] It was originally intended to include other comparison groups in analyses (e.g. White girls and Asian boys). However, there were not enough participants in these groups to conduct meaningful analyses. Additionally, the category of 'Asian' was too broad to be meaningful as it included individuals from very diverse backgrounds (e.g. Indian, Bangladeshi, Arab, and Chinese).

Section 2

Key findings

This report first describes the key findings from Black schoolboys, including some key comparisons with Black girls and White boys; and then those from Black young men.[12] Findings are only reported where they are statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. Where appropriate, a brief summary of the findings is provided (in italics) at the start of each section heading.

It is important to note that it was not intended to recruit a nationally representative sample of young Black people in England. Rather, the research set out to examine, in depth, differences in the potential impact of specific types of role models and messages in experimental conditions. Findings should therefore not be over-generalised to the national population.

Black school pupils (ages 11 – 15)

A total of 364 Black boys, 239 White boys and 133 Black girls took part in the project. Almost half of all pupils (48 per cent) , and of the Black boys (46 per cent), were from a "blue collar" socio-economic background. Half of the Black boys (51 per cent) defined themselves as Black African, 18 per cent as Black Caribbean, and the rest as Mixed White and Black Caribbean (10 per cent), Mixed White and Black African (10 per cent) or Black Other (11 per cent).[13] The Black boys generally viewed their ethnic identity as being important to them, and they felt committed to it. They primarily had Black friends, followed by White friends, and then friends from other ethnic groups.

Initial perceptions of the role models

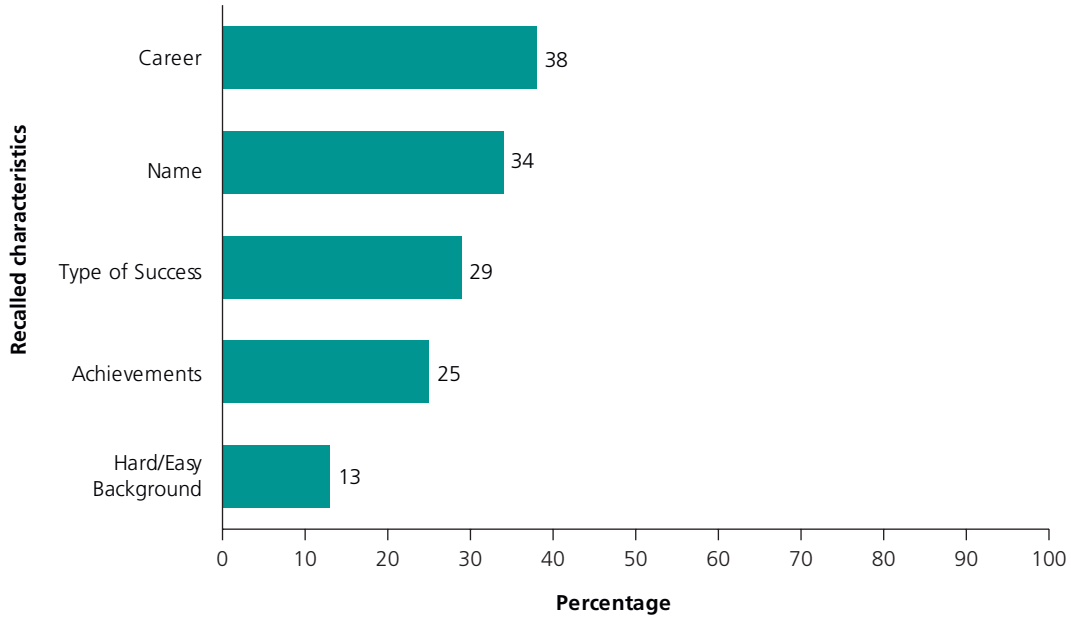
The Black boys accurately detected the scale of achievement that the role model had experienced and the type of success that he had achieved. This confirms that these differences were clear and important enough to make an impression on their perceptions.

One month later, about one third of Black boys recalled at least one detail (such as the name, type of achievement, or occupation) about the role models they had seen (see Figure 1). On the one hand, this indicates the potential limitations of a brief presentation, but on the other hand could be regarded as quite an impressive sign that even such a limited experience sustains some level of impact over a one month period.

[12] This report is also limited to perceptions about Black men and does not describe results for perceptions of Black women or White people. Full details of all findings and statistical analysis are provided in the Technical Report: *An Experimental Test of the Impact of Back Role Model Messages*: www.communities.gov.uk/communities/racecohesionfaith/research/raceresearchandstatistics

[13] To ensure adequate statistical power, participants were assigned into three broader ethnic categories: Black (i.e. Black Caribbean, Black African and Black other, as well as Mixed White and Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black African); White (i.e. White British, White Irish, or White other); and, other ethnic categories (i.e. Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Asian Other, Mixed Other, and Other). Participants with missing data on ethnicity were excluded from the analyses.

Figure 1: Percentage of Black boys who accurately recalled role model characteristics after one month



Base: Black boys who heard a role model and took part in Time 1 and Time 2 (245)

The type of role model they heard affected recall of the role model. Black boys who heard about a materialistic role model remembered them more than those who heard about the social–moral models. This is not surprising, as the Black boys who heard the materialistic role models generally felt much more positively towards them, and reported wanting to be more like them.

Connecting the role models to Black boys' own experience

Black boys want to be most like Black men who have attained success in terms of material goods such as money, cars, and homes, but felt most able to be like those who had a small scale of achievement. It should not be overlooked that these boys believed that role models with small scale achievement and material success were similar to White men.

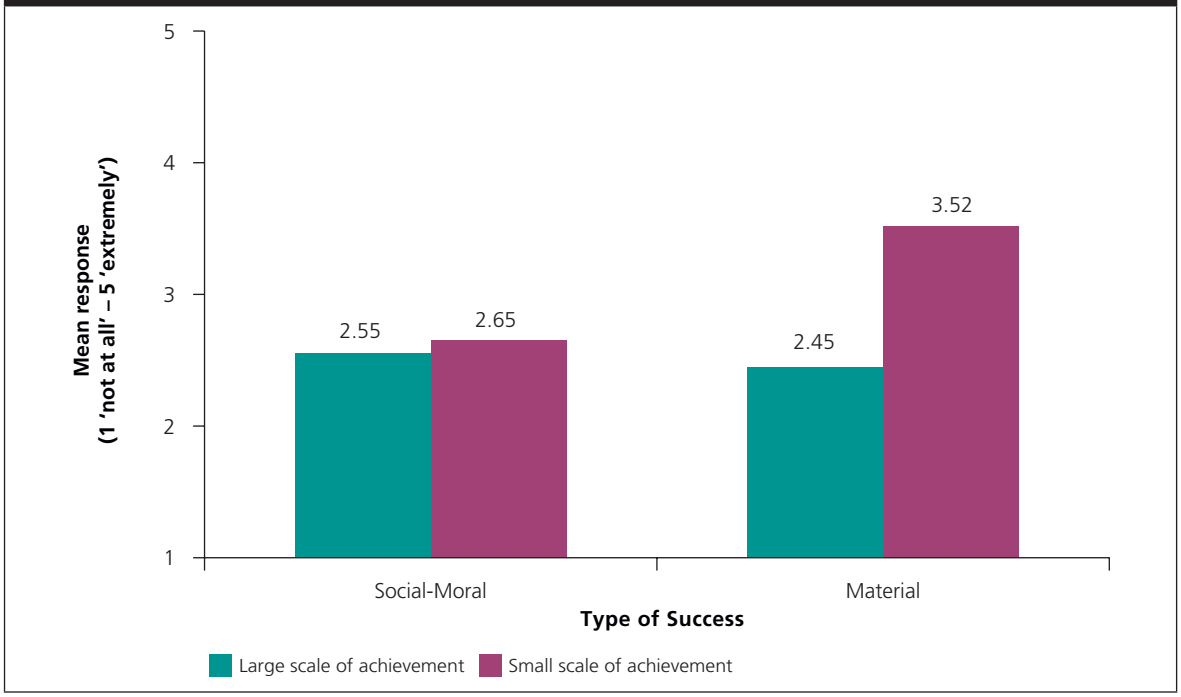
General reactions to role models

All of the role models were generally viewed positively by Black boys who judged them to be very happy, likeable, inspirational, interesting, and someone to be proud of.

The White boys evaluated the role models less positively than the Black boys on almost all of the measures (although not actually negatively on most aspects). The Black girls evaluated the role models roughly as positively as the Black boys on most aspects, but were less likely to want to meet them.

The Black boys did not think that the role models were very similar to themselves (all means were below the midpoint of the scale). This suggests that they did not see the role models as sharing the same background or interests as them. In fact, as seen in Figure 2, the Black boys thought the small scale of achievement, materialistic role model was most similar to White men.

Figure 2: Perceived similarity of the role models to White men among Black boys (mean responses)



The majority of the Black boys had at least heard of someone who matched the description of the role model that they heard about. The materialistic role model who had a small scale of achievement was most likely to match the description of someone that boys had actually met.

The role models were especially well liked and admired by the Black boys who felt more competent about their own abilities. This suggests that those who are already aspirational may be more impressed by the role models. However, Black boys who had more contact with White friends felt less positively toward the role models.

Reactions to specific role models

Black boys who heard about materialistic role models responded more positively than those who heard about the social–moral role models. The materialistic role models were more liked, thought to be happier and more memorable, and thought more as someone to be proud of. Black boys who heard materialistic role models were also more likely to say that they wanted to be like them.

However, it was the role models who had a small scale of achievement who they most strongly believed they *could* emulate, in particular, the materialistic role model who had a small scale of achievement. The Black boys also considered this particular role model to be most similar to White men, suggesting that they are aware of a racial gap in attainment, and that this may motivate their aspirations.

In comparison, Black boys who heard about the role models who had a large scale of achievement, or who defined their success based on what they could give back to others, expressed less desire to be like that role model.

The Black girls also most wanted to emulate the materialistic role model, however, only when the scale of achievement was small. Of the two role models who had a large scale of achievement, more girls wanted to be like the social–moral one than wanted to be like the materialistic one.

Unsurprisingly, ratings of how interesting the role models were, and of willingness to tell others about the role models, reduced during the month after hearing the role model. The reduction was greatest for the materialistic role model who had a small scale of achievement; Black boys who heard about this role model were no longer more likely to tell people about him than those who heard other role models. However, this is probably a consequence of the materialistic role models being rated more highly to begin with.

Do the role models affect how Black boys see themselves?

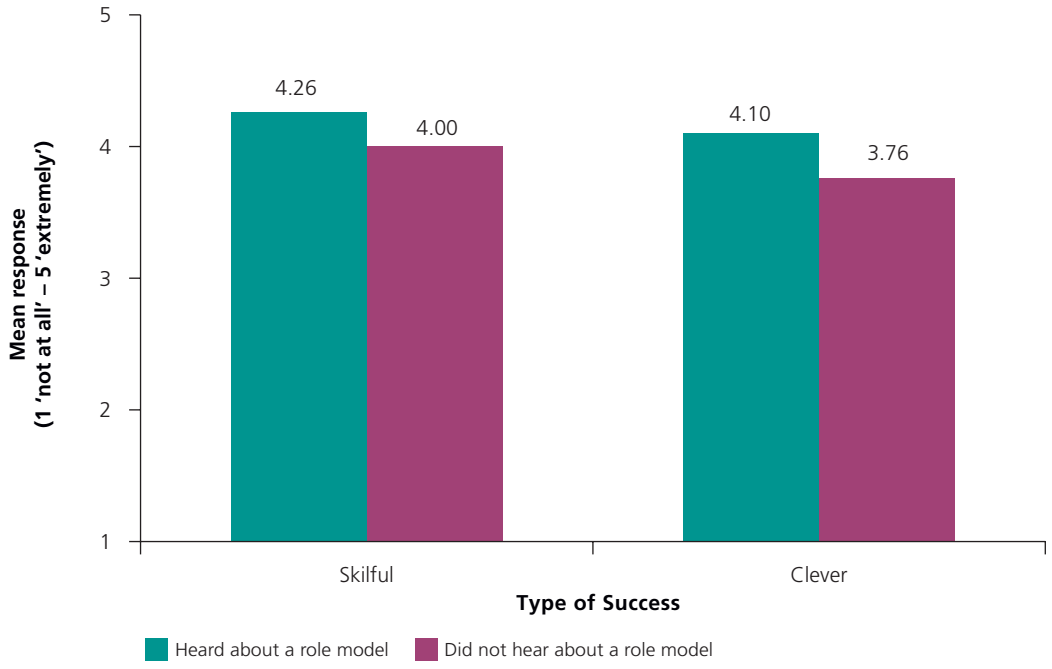
The role models all appeared to improve how the Black boys' viewed themselves in terms of being clever and skilful.

Overall, the Black boys who took part in this project were fairly positive about themselves. Unsurprisingly, those who felt more confident in their skills, and those with higher self-esteem, described themselves as warmer, cleverer, more skilful, more popular, kinder, more successful, and more competitive than other boys. Interestingly, the boys who had more Black friends were even more likely to see themselves as skilful and competitive.

White boys and Black girls were also fairly positive about themselves. However, White boys reported feeling less skilful, popular and successful than Black boys did, while Black girls reported feeling less popular and competitive than Black boys did.

As seen in Figure 3, Black boys who had heard about any of the four role models judged themselves as being more skilful and cleverer than did the boys who had not heard about a role model. However, this did not apply to other qualities such as warmth or successfulness. White boys who heard about a role model judged themselves more skilful and popular than those who did not hear one.

Figure 3: Black boys' self-image (mean responses)



Did the role models affect the career aspirations of Black boys?

Overall the boys aspired to 'glamorous' careers such as athlete or actor, but hearing about one particular role model increased their belief that they could follow that role models' career.

When asked to rate various career options, Black boys expressed the greatest desire to be an athlete, actor or IT specialist, and they felt quite capable of having these careers. In contrast, they were least interested in being a teacher, shop assistant or van driver. They also felt more capable of having careers such as athlete or actor than careers such as shop assistant or van driver. Of all the careers listed, Black boys felt it would be most possible to be an athlete and least possible to become a teacher.

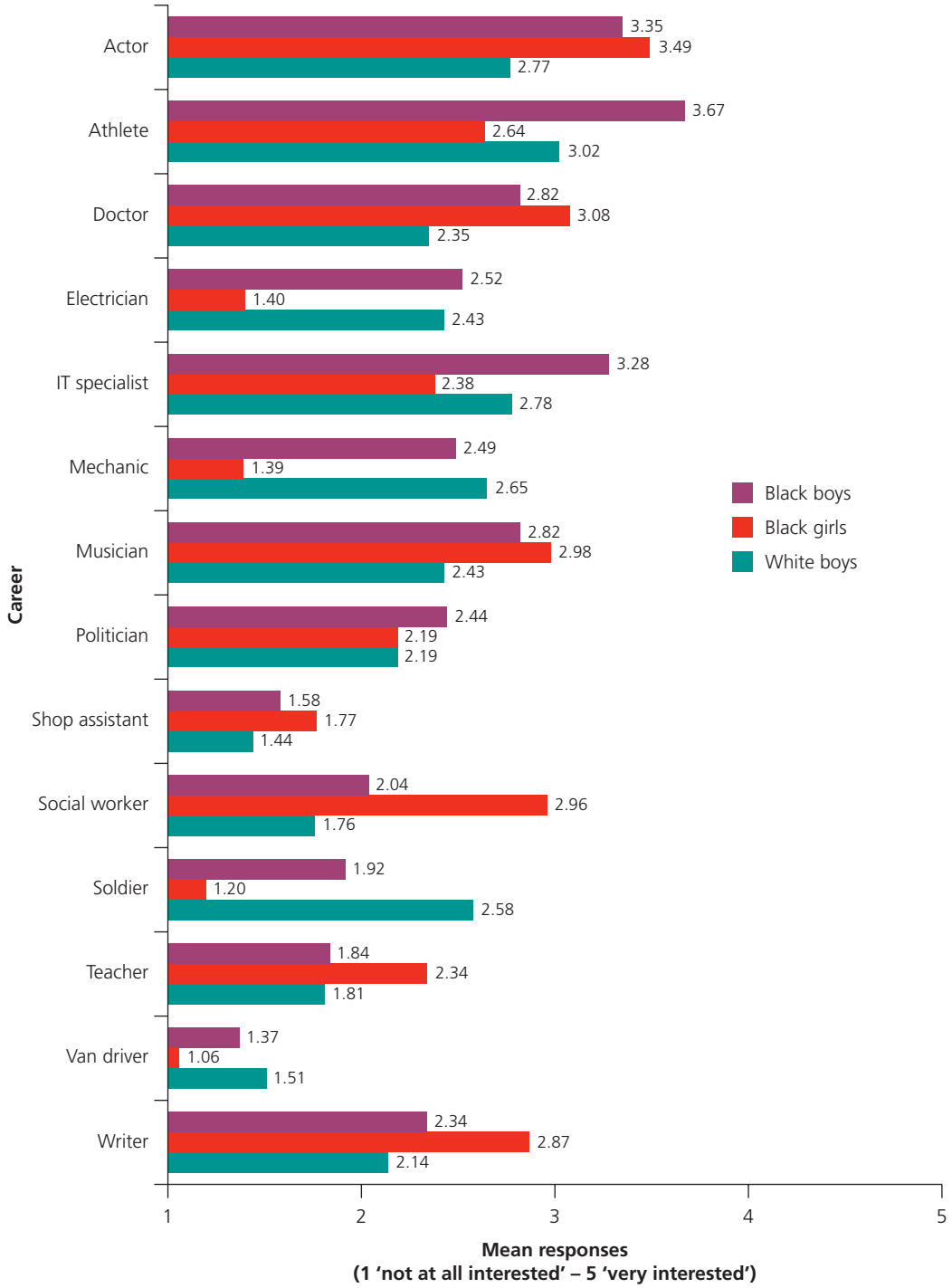
Perhaps not surprisingly, Black boys who felt better about their personal self-worth also felt capable of doing more types of careers than the boys who did not have these characteristics.

The Black boys who heard about the role model who had a large scale of achievement and attained material success were less averse to becoming a soldier or van driver than other boys. This probably reflects the fact that this particular role model had been a soldier before becoming an IT specialist. This finding shows that some aspects of the role model messages can directly affect Black boys' aspirations. It also points to the importance of an individual role model's experiences and actual career.

However, this was only the case for one of the four role models. The role models who described themselves as a doctor, social worker or electrician did not influence Black boys' aspirations to these professions. It is worth noting that 'doctor' was one of only four careers listed that Black boys were fairly confident about pursuing if they wanted to. It is also worth noting that when they were asked a month later what they remembered about the role models, the role models' specific career was the best-remembered characteristic (along with the role model's name).

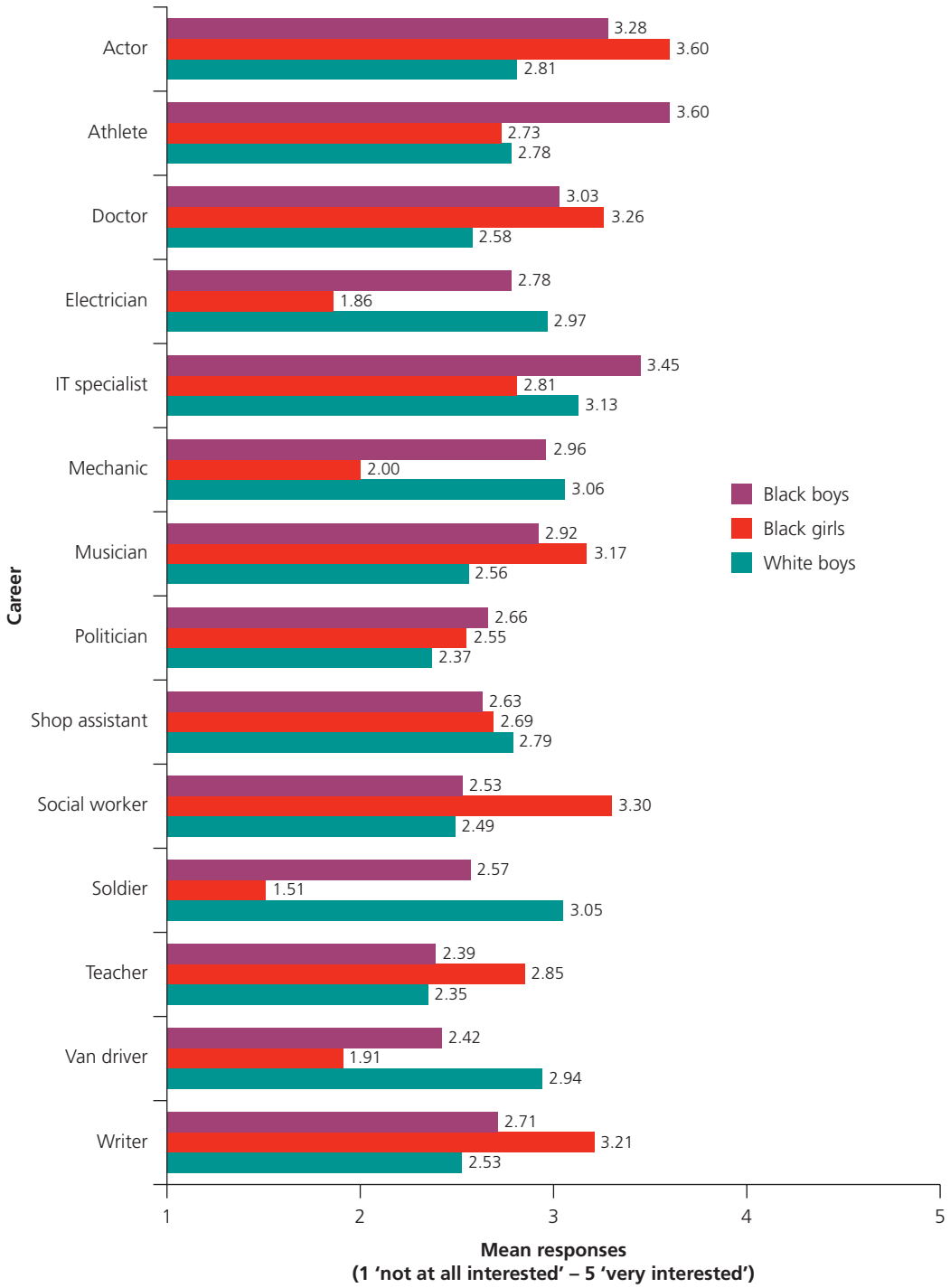
Figures 4 and 5 show how Black boys' interest in, and perceived ability to pursue, careers compared with White boys and Black girls. Black boys expressed a stronger interest in most of the careers listed, including actor, athlete, doctor, IT specialist, musician, politician or social worker than did White boys. Black boys showed less desire, and felt less able, to become a soldier compared with White boys; and less desire than Black girls to become an actor, doctor, musician or social worker.

Figure 4: Black boys', Black girls' and White boys' interest in careers (mean responses)



Base: Black boys (364), Black girls (133) and White boys (239)

Figure 5: Black boys', Black girls' and White boys' perceived ability to pursue careers (mean responses)



Base: Black boys (364), Black girls (133) and White boys (239)

How do Black boys think others would view the role models?

Black boys thought others would view the role models positively. But whereas the materialistic role models were seen as more accomplished, the social–moral role models were seen as more likeable.

Social consensus is a powerful force. If people think others are impressed by someone, or conversely have a low regard for someone, it is difficult to hold or express a contrary view. For this reason it was important to know how Black boys would expect others to view the role models.

Generally, all of the Black boys who heard about a role model believed that other people would view them positively. However, those who heard about materialistic role models thought that others would view them quite differently than those who heard about the social–moral role models, especially if the social–moral role model had a small scale of achievement.

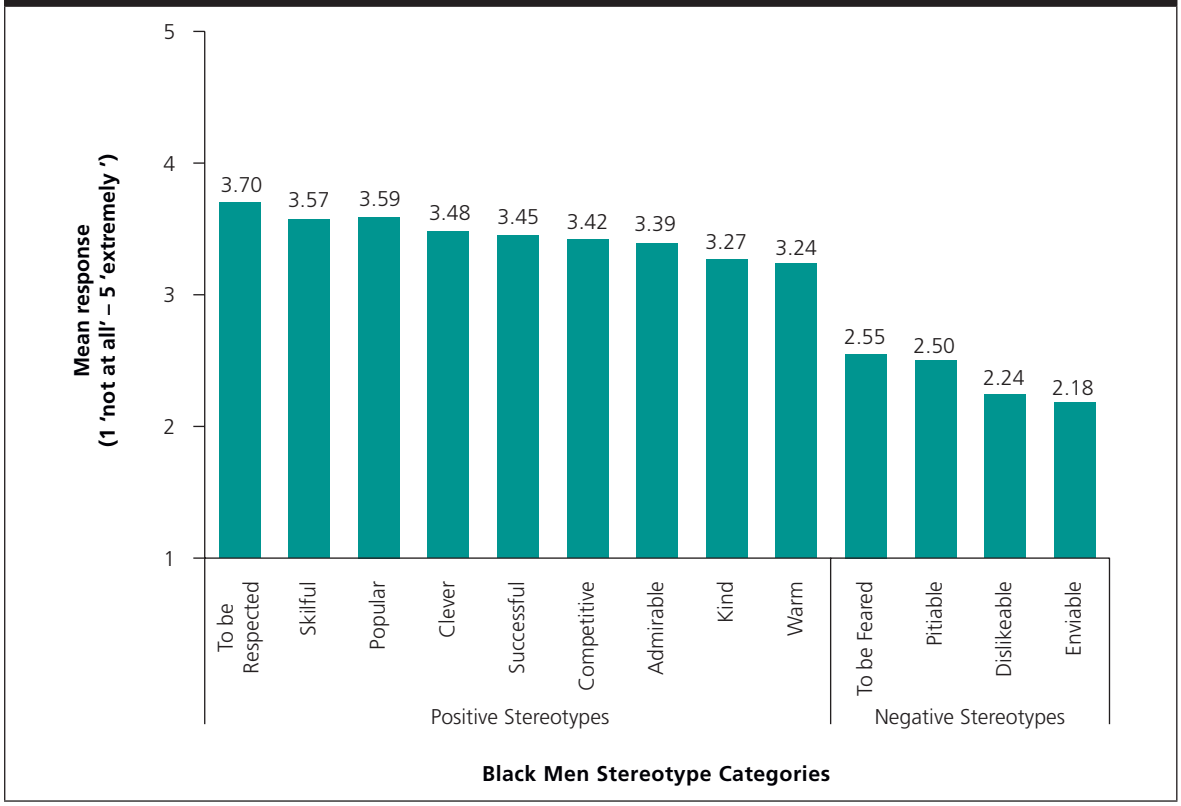
Those who heard about the social–moral role models thought they would be viewed as kinder, but also as more pitiable and less clever, skilled or successful compared to those who heard about the materialistic role models. This is important because social psychological research has shown that these last three dimensions are ones that generally reflect social status and power.

Do the role models affect Black boys' perceptions of how others view Black men in general?

Black boys believed that others would have a positive attitude towards Black men generally. This positive attitude was not changed by hearing a role model.

As seen in Figure 6, the Black boys generally thought that other people tend to view Black men quite favourably.

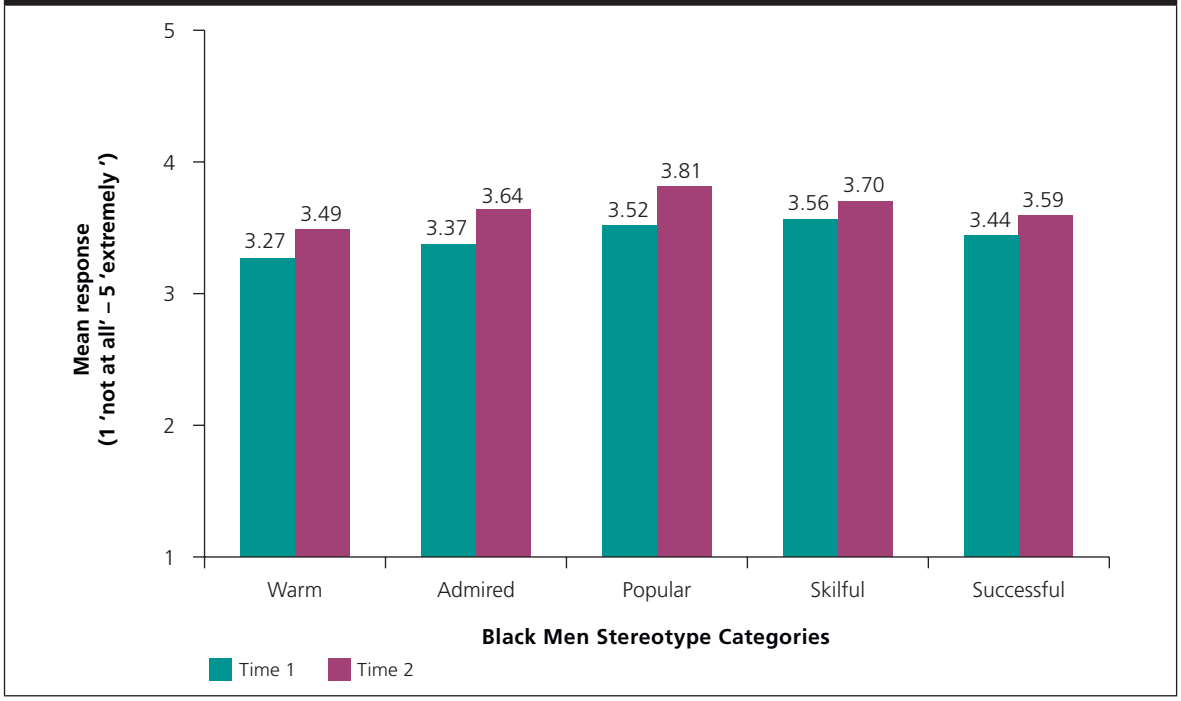
Figure 6: Black boys' perceptions of others' views towards Black men (mean responses)



Black boys who had more Black friends or friends from ethnic groups other than Black or White were especially likely to think that other people tend to view Black men as skilful, admirable, and someone to respect.

As seen in Figure 7, Black boys rated other people's view of Black men's warmth, skill, admirability, popularity and success higher by the second testing than they did at the first testing. It is difficult to be sure why this occurred; it may be because asking the questions the first time drew positive attention to Black males.

Figure 7: Black boys' perceptions of others' views towards Black men at Time 1 and Time 2 (mean responses)



Black girls who heard about a role model tended to think others would see Black men as incomparison less enviable, but also less disliked. In addition, those who heard about a role model with a large scale of achievement tended to believe that Black men would be viewed by others as being less clever, less popular and less successful than those who had not heard about any role model.

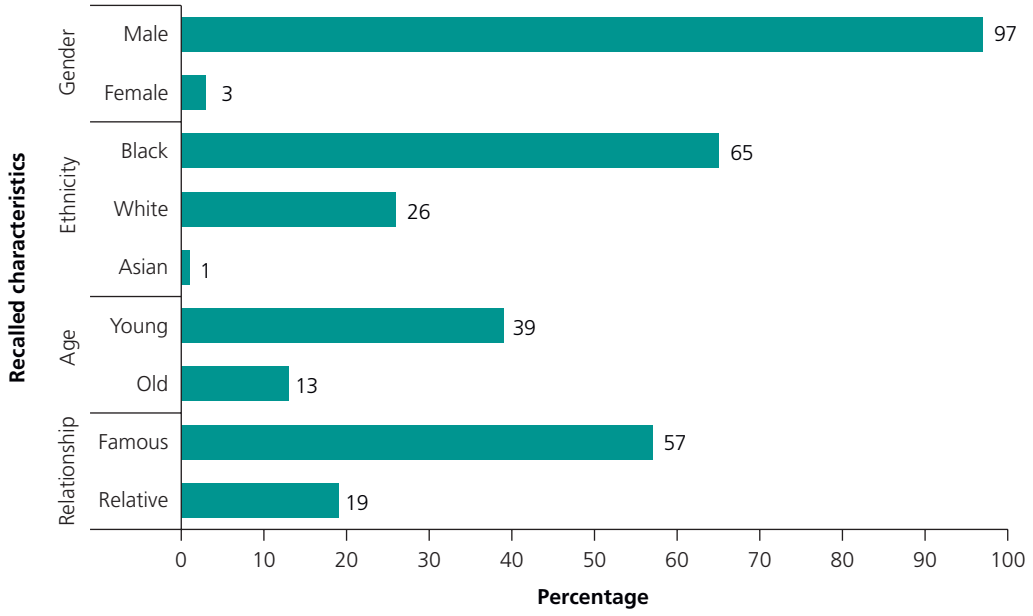
Across almost all of the positive aspects (such as warmth), White boys thought that others would view Black men less positively than Black boys did. On the other hand, White boys thought that people would respond to Black men less negatively on negative aspects (such as fear), thus having a more neutral perception of others' views overall.

Who did Black boys cite as their own role models?

Black boys tended to choose role models who were young, Black, famous and/or male. Sport and business were their most likely careers. Having achieved material success, and generally inspiring the respect of others, were the most common reasons for the choice of role model.

Three-quarters (76 per cent) of Black boys said that they could think of someone that they wanted to be like. As seen in Figure 8, virtually all of these boys (97 per cent) described a role model who was male, and the majority (65 per cent) of their role models were Black. Role models who were not Black were generally chosen because they were a famous example of a person in a career of interest to the boy (e.g. Bill Gates, Chairman of Microsoft).

Figure 8: Characteristics of role models cited spontaneously by Black boys



Base: Black boys who said they had a role model (277)

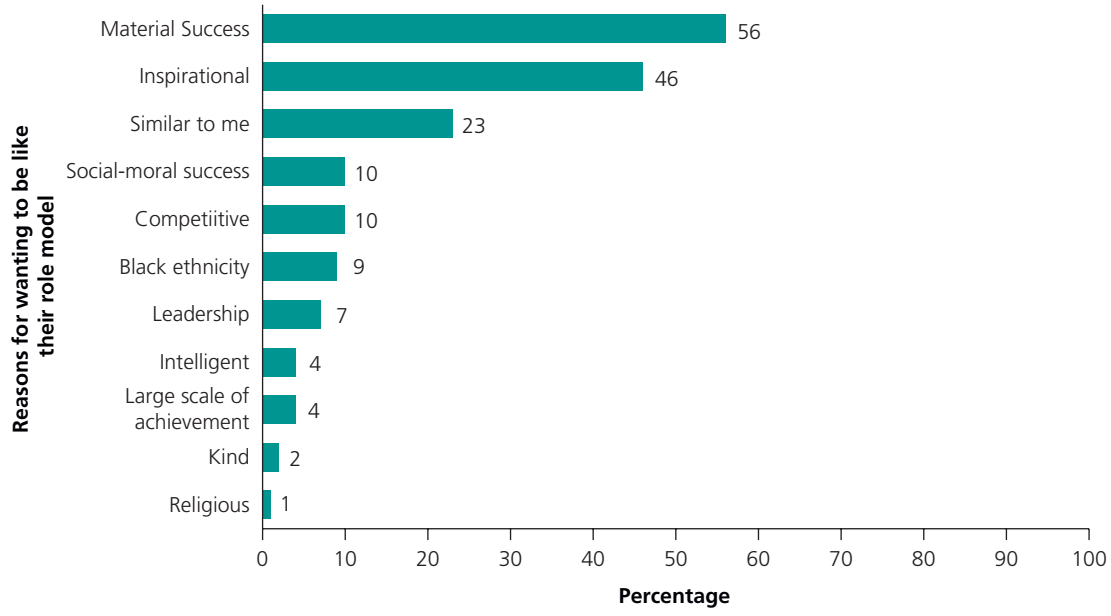
Black girls' and White boys' typical own role models were also young, famous people of their own gender and ethnic group.

As seen in Figure 9, the top three explanations for why Black boys chose their role model were because the role model had achieved material success (56 per cent), they are seen to be generally inspirational (46 per cent), and they saw themselves as being similar to the role model (23 per cent). Material success was also the most common reason given by Black girls and White boys who cited their own role model.

Although the role models spontaneously identified by two-thirds of Black boys (and 59 per cent of Black girls) were Black, only 9 per cent of Black boys (and 4 per cent of Black girls) gave Black ethnicity as a reason for their choice.

It is also noteworthy that very few Black boys chose a role model based on the person's religiousness or kindness. Furthermore, only 4 per cent of the boys chose a role model based on the person's intelligence or because they had a large scale of achievement.

Figure 9: Black boys' reasons for selecting their spontaneously cited role models



Base: Black boys that gave a reason for selecting their spontaneously cited role model (257)

The type of role model the boys had heard about appeared to have little effect on their own choice of role model. Only one significant difference emerged: Black boys who heard about the materialistic role models were more likely to choose an old role model than those who heard social–moral role models.

In addition, Black boys from higher socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to choose a role model who had a large scale achievement. Those from lower socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to choose a Black role model.

Athletes were the most popular role models (40 per cent), followed by businessmen (18 per cent). It is interesting to note that of those who provided a description of what their role model does, 12 per cent of Black boys described their role model as 'president', which in most cases was a direct reference to Barack Obama, elected as President of the United States just before the study period.

Athlete was also the most common career of White boys' role models, while actor was the most common for Black girls.

One month later the pattern of role models named spontaneously by Black boys was very similar, and was not affected by which role model they had seen. When they listed their role model's profession, 19 per cent cited footballers and 10 per cent chose 'president'. However, over this period they became more likely to cite a business person, and less likely to cite an athlete, than at first.

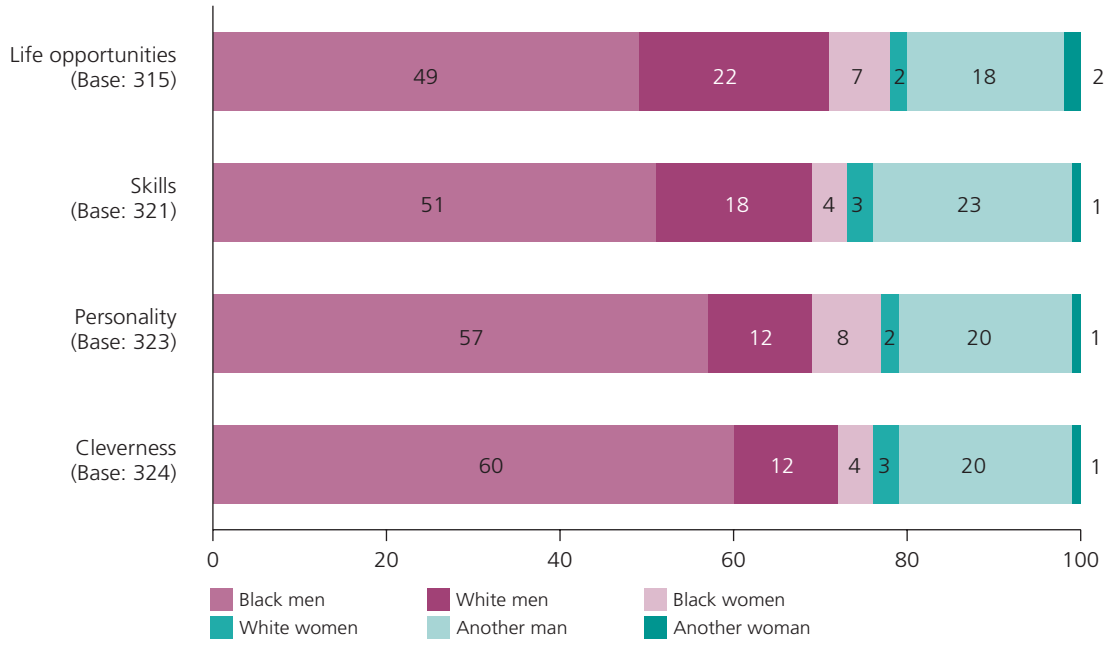
With whom do Black boys compare their own abilities and personality?

Black boys generally compared themselves with Black men, mostly family members and then friends.

When judging their own cleverness, personality, skill, and life opportunities, at least half of the Black boys said they compared themselves with Black men. Nearly a quarter (up to 22 per cent) compared themselves with White men; but very few (at most 8 per cent) compared themselves with Black or White women (see Figure 10). This suggests that Black boys do look to Black men as role models, but a considerable proportion look to others.

It is interesting to note that a much smaller proportion of White boys (at most 11 per cent) said they would compare themselves with Black men than the proportion of Black boys who said they would compare themselves with White men.

Figure 10: People with whom Black boys compare themselves to evaluate different aspects of their lives



Base: Black boys who answered each question

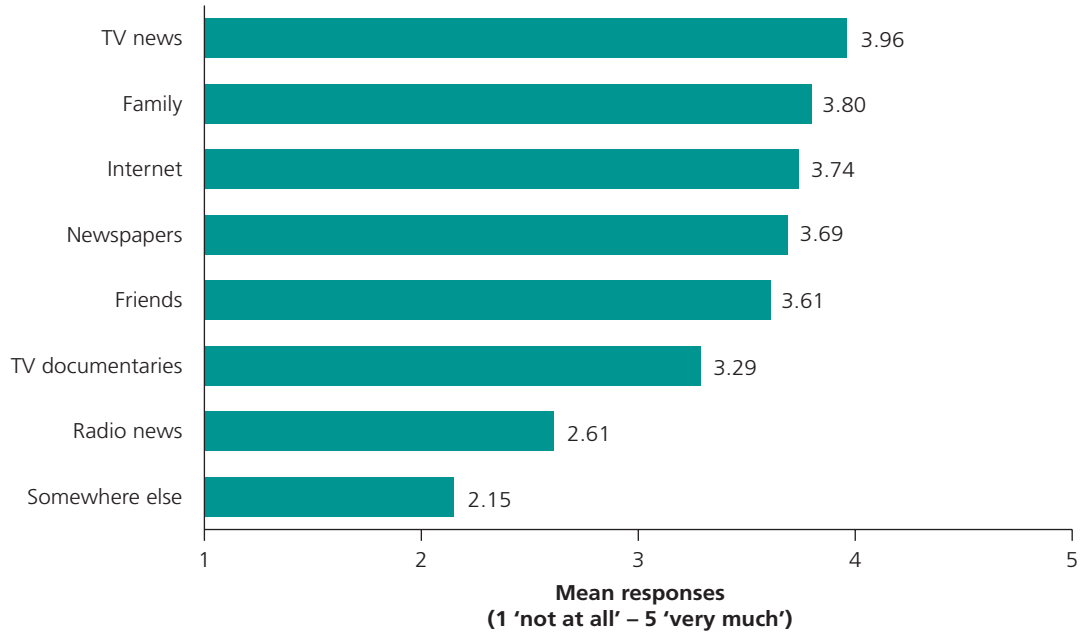
When making these comparisons, Black boys and girls, and White boys, were more likely to compare themselves with other family members and friends than with people at school or from other areas of their lives.

The type of role model that the Black boys heard about did not have any effect on who they reported comparing themselves with.

From where do Black boys get their news and information?

Black boys were most likely to obtain their news and information from television news, family and the internet, and least likely to obtain it from radio news or other places (such as posters). Figure 11 shows the likelihood that Black boys would use various media to find news and information.

Figure 11: Black boys' use of news and information sources (mean responses)



Black young men (ages 16 – 26)

A total of 154 Black young men participated in this project. Almost half (46 per cent) described themselves as Black African, and a quarter (25 per cent) as Black Caribbean; the rest described themselves as Black Other (19 per cent), Mixed White and Black Caribbean (5 per cent) or Mixed White and Black African (5 per cent). The men generally viewed their ethnic identity as being important to them, and they felt committed to it. The men had primarily Black friends, followed by friends from non-White and non-Black ethnic groups, and then White friends.

Initial perceptions of the role models

Unlike Black boys, who appeared more sensitive to the scale of achievement of the role model they heard, in general the Black young men thought whichever role model they heard about had found it fairly difficult to get where they were. However, they did see the role models differently based on the type of success (material versus social–moral) that they had achieved.

Connecting the role models to Black young men's own experience

Consistent with the pattern among Black boys, Black young men viewed material success as the most important outcome for a role model.

General reactions to the role models

In general, the Black young men evaluated all of the role models positively. Most had heard of someone similar to the type of role model they heard about.

Black young men who felt their ethnic identity was less important evaluated the role model as being more similar to White men.

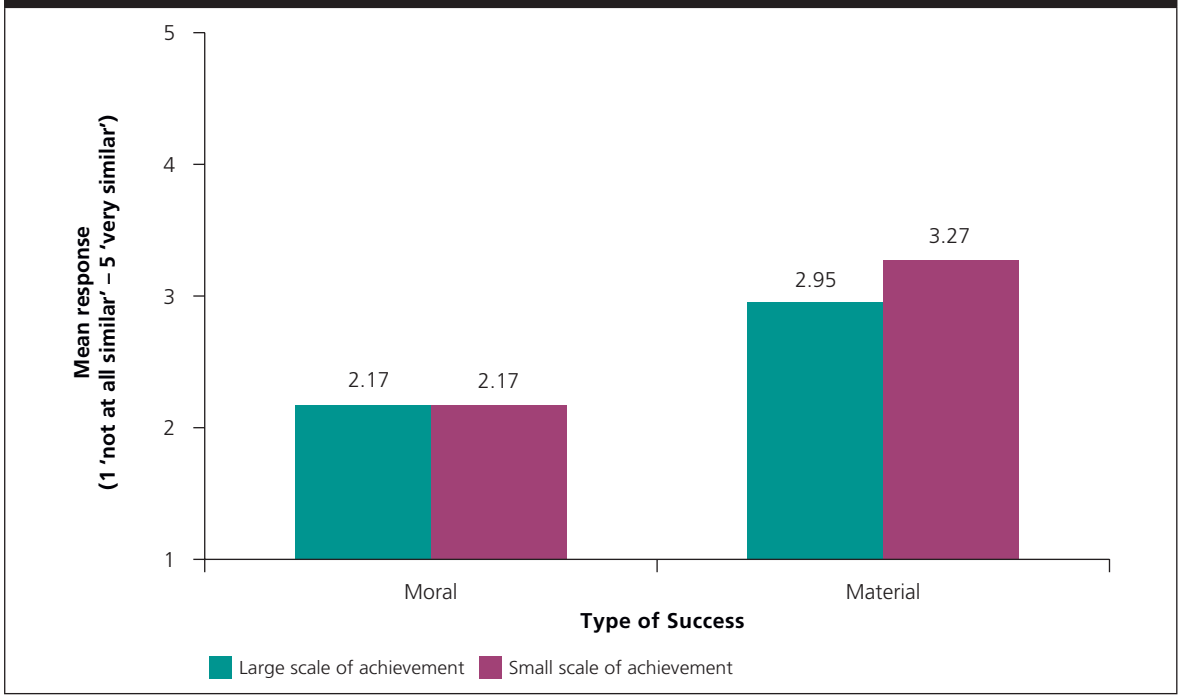
Reactions to specific role models

The young men who heard about a materialistic role model wanted to be like, and believed they could be more like, that role model than did the young men who heard about a social–moral role model.

However, unlike Black boys, Black young men who heard about the role models that had achieved social–moral success were most likely to have actually met someone like that.

It should not be overlooked that Black young men who heard about the materialistic role models evaluated them as being more similar to White men than did those who heard the social–moral role models (see Figure 12).

Figure 12: Perceived similarity of the role models to White men among Black young men (mean responses)



Do the role models affect how Black young men see themselves?

Hearing about a role model had no effect on Black young men's perceptions of themselves.

Overall, Black young men rated themselves fairly positively, and (unlike the Black boys) hearing a role model did not affect this. This suggests that by young adulthood Black men have a more stable perception of themselves, which is less affected by particular social comparisons (i.e. hearing about a role model) than when they are younger.

Did the role models affect the career aspirations of Black young men?

None of the role models influenced the career aspirations of these young men, which were likely to be 'glamorous' careers such as athlete or actor.

Regardless of whether they heard about a role model, Black young men expressed the greatest desire to be an athlete, IT specialist or actor, and they felt most capable of being an IT specialist, athlete or shop assistant. They were least interested in being a soldier, van driver or shop assistant, and felt least capable of being a politician, writer or doctor.

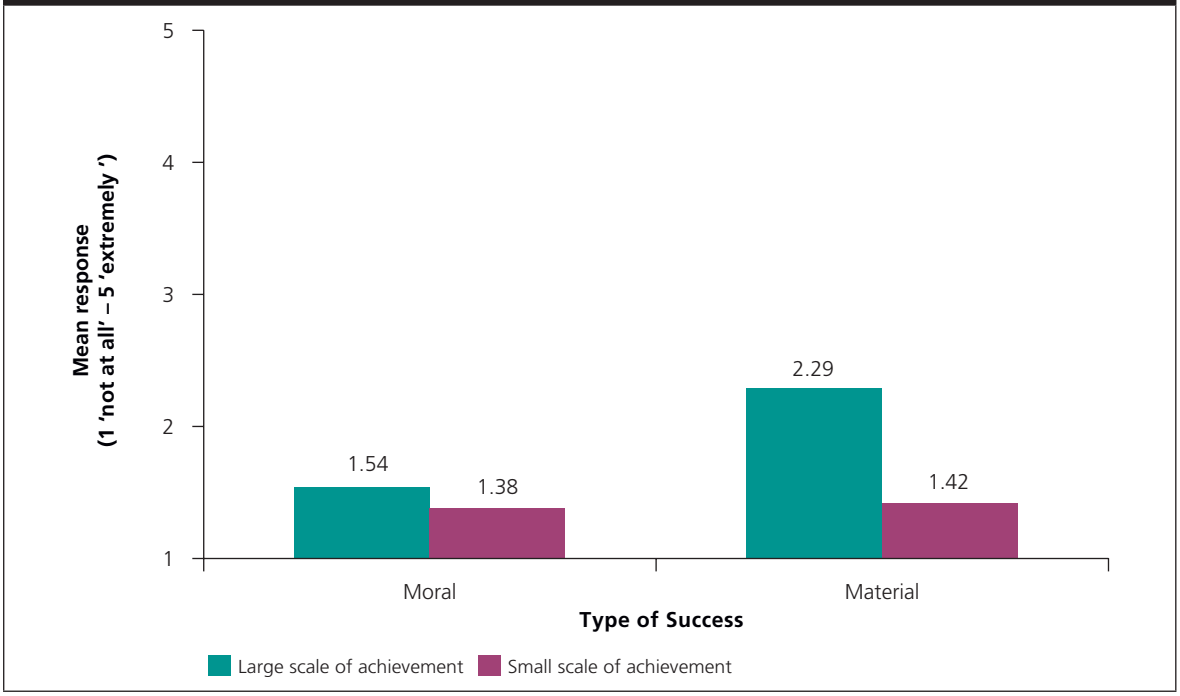
How do Black young men think others would view the role models?

The young men thought others would view the materialistic role models as more competitive, though less likeable, than social–moral role models.

Black young men generally thought that other people would view the role models positively. However, the materialistic role models were perceived as being viewed by others as more popular and competitive, but also less kind and more disliked, than were the social–moral role models.

The materialistic role model who had a large scale of achievement was thought to be more frightening to other people than were the other role models (though still not very frightening; see Figure 13). This may be because the young men believe that a Black man who has worked through great adversity to become very successful may be seen as more threatening to other people.

Figure 13: Perception of the likelihood that the role models would invoke fear in others (mean responses)

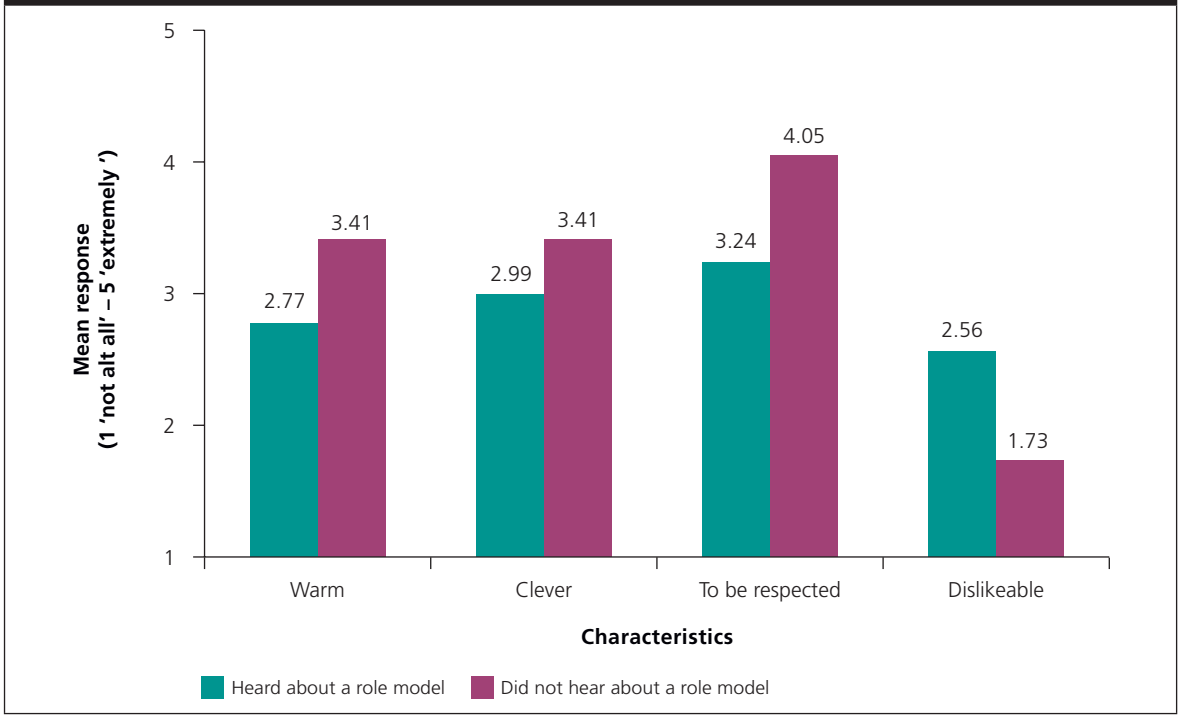


Do the role models affect Black young men's perceptions of how others view Black men in general?

Listening to the role models led young men to believe others held less positive stereotypes of Black men on a number of dimensions.

The Black young men thought that other people tend to view Black men favourably. However, compared with those who did not hear a role model, those who had heard about any role model thought that other people would view Black men less positively on a number of dimensions. Out of thirteen aspects they were asked to evaluate, those who heard about a role model thought that other people would view Black men as less warm, less clever, less respected, and more disliked (see Figure 14). There was no significant effect on any of the other aspects.

Figure 14: Black young men's perceptions of others' views towards Black men (mean responses)



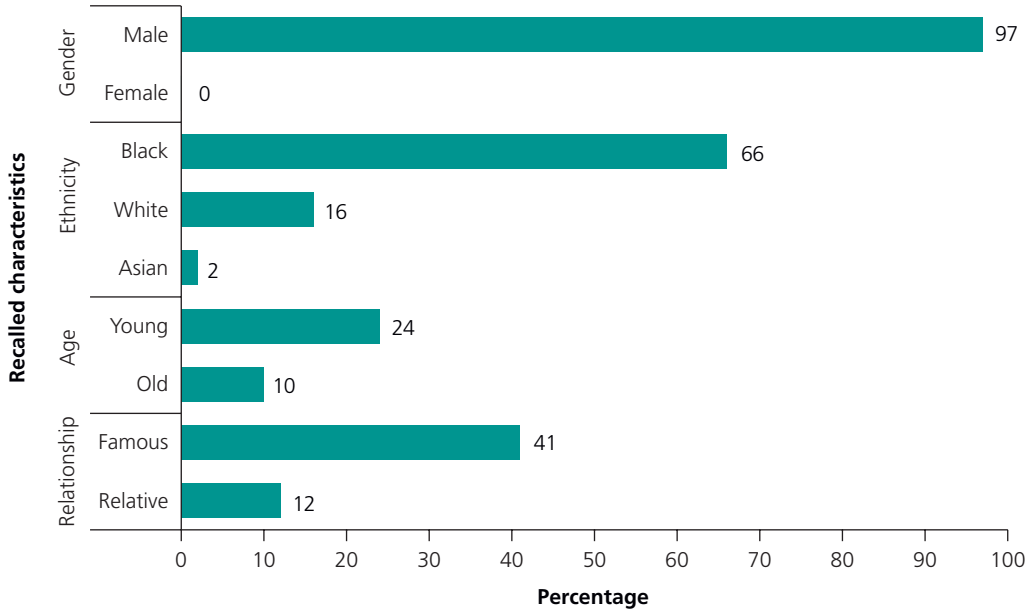
The most likely reason for this effect is that learning about an impressive role model created a contrast against existing stereotypes of Black men, which therefore reminded the participants about these stereotypes. This finding should not be taken to imply that participants themselves agreed with the stereotype, but merely that being presented with a successful role model made them more conscious of it.

Who did Black young men cite as their own role models?

As with Black boys, the typical role model cited by Black young men was Black and/or male. Many also cited role models who were young or famous, chosen most commonly because of their material success and inspirational qualities. However, while athletes were popular, Black young men's role models were more likely to be business people. Those who had heard about a role model were even more likely to cite a famous person.

Overall, 68 per cent of Black young men could think of someone that they wanted to be like. As seen in Figure 15, virtually all of these described a male (97 per cent), and the majority cited a role model who was Black (66 per cent). A substantial proportion also cited role models who were young (24 per cent) or famous (41 per cent).

Figure 15: Characteristics of role models cited spontaneously by Black young men

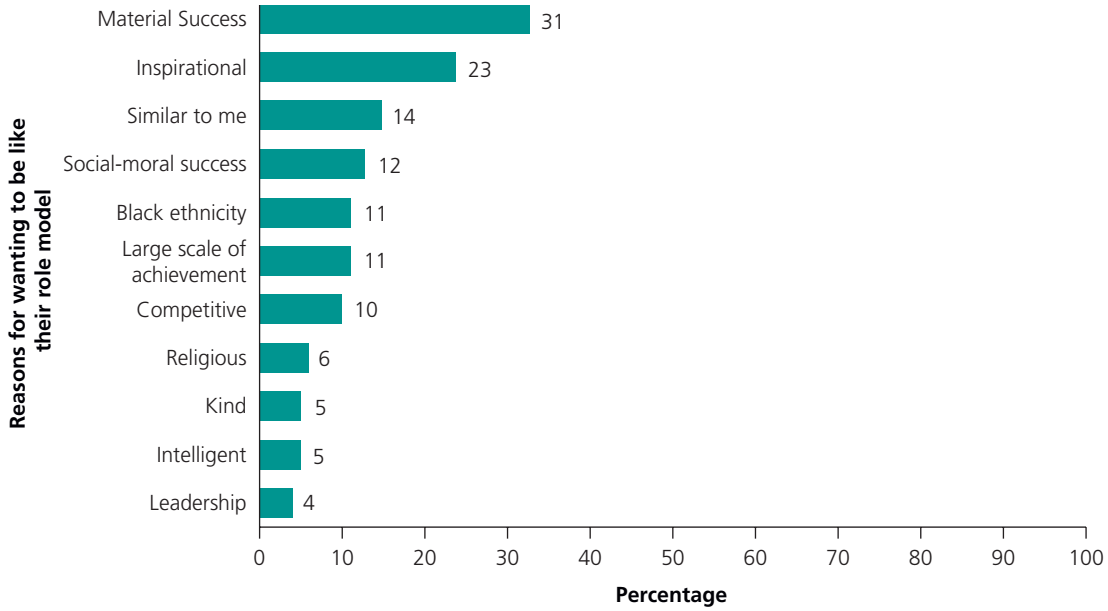


Base: Black young men who said they had a role model (105)

As seen in Figure 16, when asked why they had chosen that particular role model, about a third (31 per cent) gave a reason related to the person's material success, about a quarter (23 per cent) chose their role model based on the person's overall inspirational qualities or ability to inspire respect, and only 14 per cent chose role models because they saw themselves as being similar to the person. These are lower than the respective proportions among Black boys.

As with Black boys, only a few Black young men chose a role model based on the person's religiousness (6 per cent), kindness (5 per cent), intelligence (5 per cent), or leadership (4 per cent).

Figure 16: Black young men's reasons for selecting their spontaneously cited role models



Base: Black young men that gave a reason for selecting their spontaneously cited role model (105)

Hearing about a role model had two meaningful effects. First, Black young men who heard about a role model were more likely to cite a famous person than those who did not listen to a role model. Second, Black young men who heard about a role model with a large scale of achievement were more likely to cite a business person.

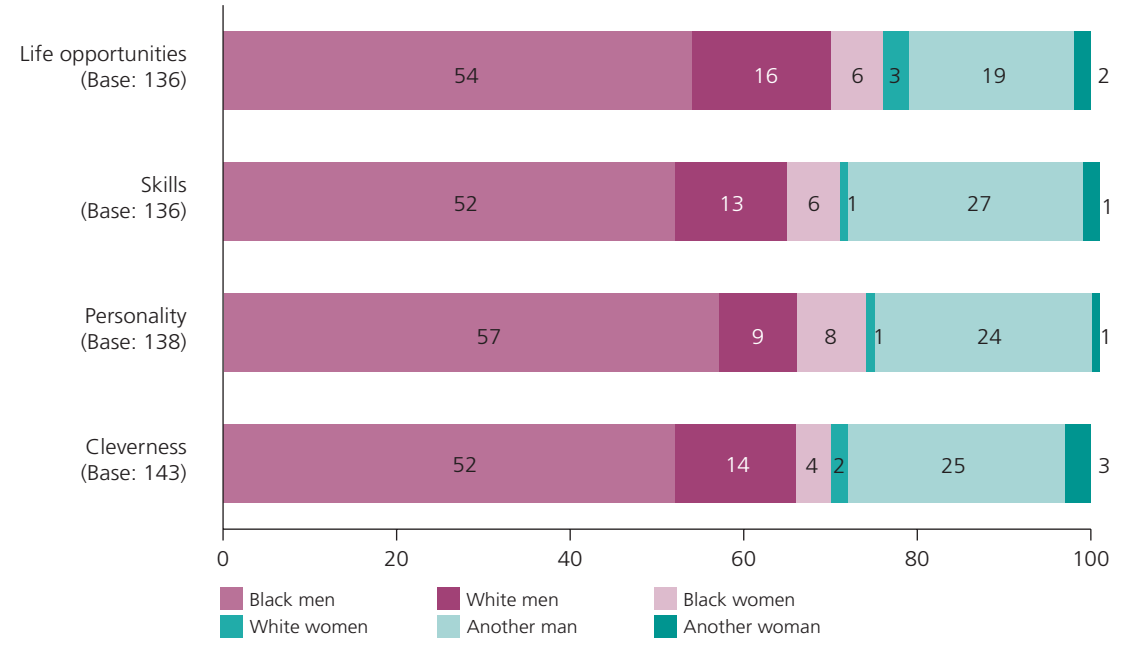
In terms of role models' professions, business people were cited most frequently, followed by athletes and president.

With whom do Black young men compare their own abilities and personality?

Black young men generally compared themselves with other Black men, using friends rather than family members for judging their own skilfulness and personality.

For judging their own cleverness, personality, skill and life opportunities, at least half of the young men compared themselves with other Black men. At most 16 per cent compared themselves to White men and at most 8 per cent compared themselves to Black or White women (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: People with whom Black young men compare themselves to evaluate different apsects of their lives



Base: Black young men who answered each question

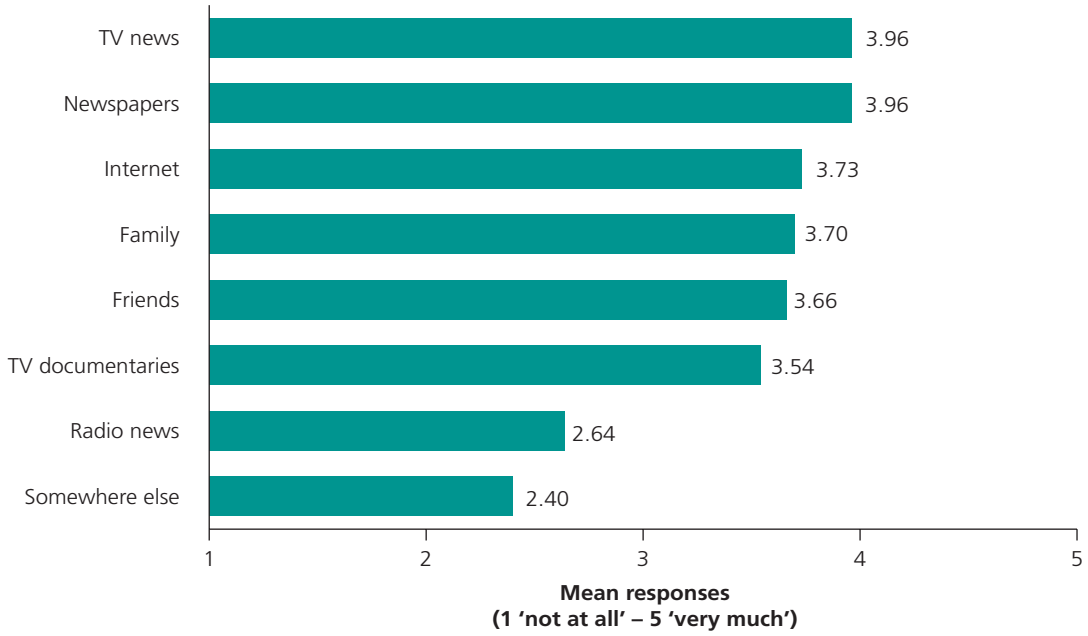
When judging their own cleverness and opportunities available to them, Black young men were as likely to compare themselves with family members as they were with friends. However, when judging their own personality and skilfulness they were more likely to compare themselves with friends than family members.

Which role model the men heard about did not appear to affect which people they compared themselves with.

From where do Black young men get their news and information?

As seen in Figure 18, Black young men were most likely to obtain their news and information from television news and newspapers, but internet, family, friends, and TV documentaries were also fairly important sources of information. Radio news and "other places" (e.g. posters) were the least likely sources.

Figure 18: Black young men's use of news and information sources (mean responses)



How was the project perceived by Black young men?

The project was well received but Black young men wanted more and different types of support.

Debriefing discussions with the Black young men indicated that they found the role models interesting, and valued the aims of the REACH project overall. However, several said that they would find it most useful to be given practical guidance on how to set and achieve career goals.

Section 3

Conclusions and recommendations

Returning to the three key questions driving this experimental study, we reach three broad conclusions.

1. We conclude that the role models did have some impact on Black boys, confirming the basic premise of the REACH programme that role models can be a positive influence.

2. We conclude also that particular types of role models and messages are likely to be more appealing and impressive than others.

3. We note that there were some unexpected, potentially negative consequences of hearing about role models, even in the limited and constrained context of this experiment.

The following recommendations are based on careful and conservative assessment of the statistically reliable findings from this project, and on insights drawn from the substantial preceding pilot work.[14]

- **Role model impact.** It is clear that a role model who describes his achievements in material terms makes a strong positive impression. In general, role models who achieved in a more social–moral domain are viewed as likeable, but this does not appear to translate into being inspiring, or someone the boys or young men want to emulate. Instead, Black boys and young men consistently reported the materialistic role models as being more competent and as someone they would like to emulate.[15] In terms of social psychological theory, this perhaps suggests that materialistic outcomes are more easily identified as attractive or credible (peripheral routes of persuasion) and thus have the most immediate, if not necessarily the deepest impact. Therefore *the REACH role models could include concrete material achievements in their discussions with Black boys and Black young men as a way of reinforcing the 'value' of the role models.*
- **Impact on target groups.** Hearing about role models seems to have different effects for Black boys and Black young men. The evidence shows that the role models have greater potential to influence and inspire Black boys, perhaps

[14] It is important to note that this project was conducted in an experimental situation using recorded role model messages. It is possible that experience with a real life role model would have a stronger and more long-lasting impact.

[15] The effects of *scale* of achievement are not as consistent as those for *type* of success; we do not therefore feel confident enough to make firm recommendations about the scale of achievement dimension.

because their self-concepts are still in a more formative period. Therefore *role models should be advised that their work may have a greater impact on Black boys.* However, debriefing discussions indicated that the Black young men were enthusiastic and positive about the programme as a whole, but would value practical help towards pursuing careers rather than just hearing about role models' experiences. This suggests that REACH role models may want to *include materials with specific practical advice in order to engage Black young men.* However, how best to deploy this approach needs to be tested.

- **Self-image and community role models.** Black boys and young men in this project had very positive self-images[16] and, among Black boys, hearing about the role models positively affected their views of their own cleverness and skilfulness. Also, Black boys and Black young men report having heard of or meeting people similar to the role models. Both of these findings are potentially positive. *The REACH role models could capitalise on these potential benefits, perhaps by explicitly asking Black boys to think about people they know or who have met who are like the role model.* This might encourage them to make contact with these people and follow their example, as well as provide a boost to their self-image.
- **Stereotype reinforcement.** Among Black young men (and Black girls), those who heard about a role model (compared with those who did not) thought that others would view Black men in general as less warm, less clever, less respected and more disliked; Black girls who heard about a role model thought that Black men would be viewed by others as less popular and less enviable (but also less disliked). The most likely reason for this effect is that hearing about an impressive role model created a contrast against existing stereotypes which therefore reminded the participants about that stereotype. In terms of social psychological theory, this is an issue of whether people compare themselves with the 'group prototype' or an 'individual exemplar'[17], and whether they either assimilate to, or contrast themselves with, each. It will be important for the REACH role models to be aware of these effects. There is a risk that young men may be adversely affected by being reminded about negative expectations, in which case this effect needs to be addressed directly. The REACH programme should be careful to show clearly how role models provide examples of how to get past those stereotypes. *We recommend a follow-up experiment to test strategies for countering potential stereotype reinforcement.*

[16] In fact, Black boys had higher levels of self-esteem than White boys.

[17] The 'group prototype' is a psychological image of a typical example of members of the group, whereas the 'individual exemplar' represents a specific instance of a member from that group. In this case, if people compare themselves to a group prototype for Black men (e.g. perceived as low achievers), becoming like a role model may seem impossible. However, if people compare themselves to individual exemplars (e.g., some of whom are low achievers, some of whom are high achievers), then an exemplary role model may simply join this list as a new individual exemplar. People may then be able to use this individual exemplar as a role model when they think about what it means to be a Black man.

- **Effects one month later[18].** After a month, Black boys reported slightly less interest in the role models' stories, and particular details about them were remembered only by about a third or fewer of the boys. Nonetheless, they reported remembering more things about the materialistic role models than the others, confirming that the type of role model does make a difference to how long any effects might last. Although the experimental manipulations were fairly subtle and brief, this highlights that *the initial presentation of a role model should emphasise things that may be more memorable, such as material achievements*. It also suggests that *a brief encounter with a role model is not likely to have a sustained effect*. Role model information is more likely to have a sustained impact if it can be refreshed or added to, e.g. by repeating exposure to the role models; however, this needs to be tested. Also, contact and interaction with real-life role models may be more memorable, with different and more lasting effects.
- **Career aspirations.** The role aspirations of Black boys and Black young men focus mainly on popular roles (actor, athlete) that are rarely achievable for most people. The noticeable exceptions to this are that both groups consistently showed interest in business people and IT careers. Therefore, it is suggested that the REACH role models find ways to *capitalise on these interests by showing routes* for entering achievable professions, like going into business, and also to *broaden Black young people's spectrum of role aspirations beyond those of actors or athletes.*
- **Social comparisons.** It is clear that the role models were more attractive and impressive to the Black male participants than to the others in this project. In terms of social psychological theory, this suggests that the role models were seen to be more prototypical of the Black males' ingroup than the ingroups of other participants (for example, female or White). Social psychological theory also indicates that people are more strongly persuaded by people they view as highly prototypical for their ingroups. This suggests that more could be done to strengthen how prototypical role models are perceived to be. Therefore, further research could be done to establish how to increase the perceived prototypicality of successful Black role models.

[18] Only the school-age group repeated the experimental questions; the young men did not.

- It is worth remembering, however, that there were no negative effects of Black male role models on White boys, and only one on Black girls – for them, it reinforced some negative stereotypes of Black men. Also, spontaneously mentioned role models were generally of the same race and gender as the participant. This means that although the Black role models can potentially have beneficial impacts on Black males, it should not be assumed they will have the same relevance or potential impact on others. Therefore, we recommend that, *if Black male role models are likely to be addressing broader audiences, attention should be paid to ways of connecting to other non-Black and female members of the audience who are present.*
- **Other possible target groups.** If the REACH programme is effective for Black young males, it would be useful to evaluate whether a comparable programme would be effective for other groups that may need similar support and guidance, including White boys and girls, and Black girls. These groups might benefit from additional role models who are more similar in background to themselves. *Where relevant, it would be useful to explore ways to deliver role modelling programmes to additional groups.*
- **Future examination of role models.** Further experimental work is required to test specific dynamics of how to link Black boys' and young men's aspirations to what they see and learn from the role models. These tests were outside the parameters of the present work but we recommend that *further systematic quantitative evaluation and experimentation is conducted to ensure that future development of the REACH programme is as effective as possible, and to learn from the presence or absence of effects of the programme.*

Appendix

Role model vignettes

1. Large scale of achievement, social–moral success

This is Robert's story: I am from a Black family. My father left home when I was about 10 years old and I do think I suffered from not having a male role model. I was trouble in class and a pain to my mum. In school, one thing I was good at was science and it really helped that my teachers often pushed me to keep studying. I worked hard and was able to find work in a hospital. I then trained to become a doctor. The hard work paid off and every move up the ranks taught me more about myself. I learned there are many ways to be successful but the truest and most honest form of respect a person can get is to be valued by other people as you help your community.

2. Large scale of achievement, material success

This is Michael's story: As a kid, we didn't have much money, so I helped my family by doing part-time work after school. I left school and joined the army. I was successful in the army where I was the only Black service man in my unit and was awarded several medals. After the end of my service, I was able to take the skills and hard work that I learned in the army to successfully finish a degree at Uni and became an IT professional, working with computers and computer programmes, in London. Working with computers brings me money that I never would have imagined for myself as a kid. My story shows no matter where you come from, you can succeed and do well for yourself.

3. Small scale of achievement, social–moral success

This is David's story: I'm a Black man and have been lucky to have a good life and a great family. But my school experiences were generally bad. I decided I needed a trade and was interested in becoming an electrician, and in the end I got an apprenticeship. I am now working for an electrical company, as a supervisor, but I'm still carrying on learning by getting more qualifications as an electrician. These experiences that I have gained in life's journey can not be wasted and I feel most serious about sharing my knowledge and life with as many young adults as possible in the hope that they will know that it is never too late to make the right choices in life.

4. Small scale of achievement, material success

This is Steve's story: I am Black and have three brothers and sisters. When I was a kid, we didn't have to worry about money as both my parents had good jobs. If people had low expectations of me, I never allowed them to affect me and I worked hard in school, getting seven GCSEs and three A levels. So I applied to university and got a place to study for a degree. After that I did more training and started working as a social worker. Though parts of this journey may have been hard it is all worth it in the end when I look at my nice car, and the good home that I was able to get for myself.

ISBN 978-1-4098-1573-0

ISBN: 978-1-4098-1573-0