THE IMPACT OF THE MODEL OF BLACK FEMININITY AND MATERNAL ANXIOUS

MOTHER ATTACHMENT TO ADOLESCENT BLACK GIRLS' SELF-ESTEEM

by

Mechell R. Guy

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Community Care and Counseling

Marriage and Family

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APPROVED BY:

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ABSTRACT

This research was designed to explore how the traditional Model of Black Femininity stereotypes portrayal of Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel, and Strong Black Women and maternal anxious mother attachment potentially impacts adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. These constructs are relevant to increasing concerns regarding developing a high level of self-esteem and psychological well-being amongst adolescent Black girls. Two central questions are guided by this study. First, is the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls influenced by negative stereotypes of African American women? Secondly, would the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls correlate with maternal anxious attachment theory? Participants were twelve adolescent Black females ranging in age from 13 to 15 years old in the North Texas region. The group intervention program aimed to help participants understand and improve the factors that influence or contradict positive self-esteem and aids in the stability of ethnic-racial identity of adolescent Black girls. Self-esteem is a critical component of one's self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth. The community-based intervention program is essential to addressing child psychology's mental-health field in the human development of adolescent Black girls' self-esteem and prosocial behaviors related to negative character images of Black femininity and the anxious mother-daughter attachment relationships.

Keywords: Black girls, adolescent, self-esteem, femininity, anxious attachment, stereotypes, intervention

Dedication

I dedicate this writing to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. My life journey has given me strength in a supernatural way of serving others and building the Kingdom of God. I thank Him for my blessings of family, friends, time, talent, knowledge, health, wealth, and most of all, love. My gift of teaching and counseling is forever in the will of God! "When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone had been entrusted with much, even more, will be required" (Luke 12:48 NLT). Thank you, God!

I dedicate this paper to my beloved daughter, Mia, for inspiring me to write my dissertation to benefit Black girls' self-esteem. Mia, I thank you for being my best friend. Without your love, wisdom, support, guidance, influence, encouragement, prayers, and our late-night talks that kept me going, I would not have made it. Your determination and intelligence are contagious. I thank God for you never leaving my side and believing in me. I am so grateful for you.

Finally, I dedicate this paper to all the Black women and girls whom God created in beauty and love; the struggle and magic is real. God loves you!

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List of Abbreviations

Cognitive Therapy (CT)

Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI)

Strong Black Woman (SBW)

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Indeed, adolescence is a perilous time of self-reflection and self-definition (Erikson, 1968; Moshman, 1999; Ward, 2004). Numerous psychologists have consistently marked adolescence as a difficult period in a woman's development. Behind the mask of adolescent Black girls' high self-esteem and ethnic-racial identity emerges socially constructed negative images of Black womanhood as Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel, and Strong Black Woman stereotypes. The impact of the traditional Model of Black Femininity stereotypes on Black adolescent girls' psychological functioning is significant to their self-esteem. It is also a correlation to their highly anxious mother attachment. A research study has associated self-esteem in adolescent females as a predictor of satisfaction with life (Biro et al., 2006).

Historical Background

Throughout U.S. history, the traditional images of Black women portrayed through history, culture, and media are: (a) as highly maternal, family-oriented, and self-sacrificing Mammies; (b) as threatening and argumentative Sapphires, and, (c) as seductive, sexually irresponsible, promiscuous Jezebels (Collins, 1990; Sims-Wood, 1988; Weitz & Gordon, 1993). The Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel images denote the Model of Black Femininity traditional stereotypes of African American women derived from slavery and relate to the negative perceptions in contemporary times (Abdullah, 1998; Mitchell, 1998; West, 1995). Within the past 40 years, Black feminist scholars began to theorize the Strong Black Woman (SBW) as an additional controlling image of Black women (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Hooks, 1981).

The SBW is described as notable, standing up for herself, exhibiting self-reliance, and taking care of others (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2007). Consequently, the internalization of these

images and efforts to invalidate them has been documented to exact a tremendous emotional toll on Black women (Comas-Diaz, & Greene, 1994; Mays & Comas-Dias, 1988). Since the 1970s, Black feminists continue striving to impart knowledge about the struggle to theorize race and gender oppression adequately. Historically, Biro et al. (2006) explained that Black girls consistently report higher levels of self-esteem; however, more recent research has indicated racial disparities in their self-esteem (Phinney et al., 1997). According to Masselink et al. (2018), self-esteem levels tend to decrease in early adolescence and increase in later adolescence.

Social Background

Across the cultural lens, the social aspects of self-esteem have bombarded the mainstream of human development. Self-esteem is defined as the value that one places on oneself and is a primary component of self-concept and identity (Rosenburg, 1965). Several dimensions of well-being relate to self-esteem: this includes psychological well-being, emotional well-being, and physical well-being. Ample research has shown that self-esteem is an essential indicator of one's self-image, and for decades research has documented implications for girls in adolescence. Over half a century ago, Bowlby (1969, 1973) attachment theory demonstrated the quality of parent-child attachment as one of the critical factors associated with children's positive development outcomes (Brumariu, 2015). Attachment theory is the relationship between a child and a parent or caregiver with the purpose to form a safe and secure bond (Bowlby, 1982). The maternal anxious attachment style of parenting is demanding of the child, often blames and criticizes the child, and results in lower self-esteem, increased aggression, and poor parent-child bonding; and often results in children with poor impulse control, anxiety, with little initiative, and lower self-esteem (Ainsworth, 1989).

In comparison, historical, societal images, and expectations of African American women differ from those of white women due to slavery (Bell, 1992; Fordham, 1993; Greene, 1997; West 1995). Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) reported African American women's experiences of bias and discrimination based on their status as both African Americans and women. Erikson (1959) contends that identity formation is the central developmental task of adolescence. According to Orchard and Reynolds (2018), adolescence is a period when negative self-evaluation is significant in increasing academic and social demands; furthermore, they engage in social comparison with their peers and begin to develop and consolidate a sense of self. In the last few years, there has been a growing interest in the adolescent perceived social support which has demonstrated consistent positive associations with their well-being and self-esteem (Gardner & Webb, 2017; Bastaits & Mortelmans, 2016; Causey et al., 2015; Van Dale et al., 2014; Lindsey et al., 2010; Costello et al., 2008).

The majority of research on the Model of Black Femininity stereotypes is insufficient to determine the impact of traditional images on adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. Nevertheless, Bowman and Howard (1985) found that African American adolescents had a greater sense of personal self-efficacy when aware of overcoming racial barriers and strategies. Similarly, Stevenson et al. (1997) found that African American youth who had an increased awareness of racism were better prepared to handle life struggles in racially hostile situations. Meyer (2003) argued that having a knowledge of, and successful adaptation to, their social environment (e.g., microaggressions and oppressive social processes) can play a significant role in Black adolescent well-being. Eromo and Levy (2017) suggested a positive self-view as a treatment for social problems, from academic, occupational, and interpersonal difficulties, to issues of public health, violence, and teenage pregnancy.

Theoretical Background

The theoretical framework for this research is Cognitive Therapy (CT), an approach to how cognitions shape behaviors and emotions (Beck, 1979). Beck's (1979) treatment system makes use of both cognitive and behavioral strategies to effect change. In conceptualizing self-esteem, multiple factors contribute to the development of dysfunctional cognitions, including people's biology and genetic predisposition, life experiences, and accumulation of knowledge and learning (Eromo & Levy, 2017). The exposure to and endorsement of negative images of Black womanhood may affect ethnic-racial identity in adolescent Black girls, which can lead to cognitive impairment, depressive and anxious symptoms, and lower self-esteem. The relevance of skin color from Black children's view concluded in the infamous "Clark Doll" experiment (Clark & Clark, 1947). Similarly, the Clark Doll studies suggested that Black children suffered from low self-esteem as a consequence of internalizing negative stereotypes characteristics of their skin color. As a result, the Black children in the Clark Doll study often chose White dolls as having more positive stereotype characteristics because of their white skin color (Clark & Clark, 1947; Spencer, 2008).

In contrast, over the past few decades, African Americans have made great strides in the United States in influencing African American children's self-perception. White demographics in the U.S. encourages appearances as *light skin, blue eyes, and even blonde hair* are still the preferred skin tone (Parmer et al., 2004; Pickney, 2014). A recent replication of the modern "Clark Doll experiment" studied 50 African American children to examine whether skin tone preferences still exist (Ceacal et al., 2017). In the experiment, participants (five to ten years of age) responded to self-concept questions after viewing pictures of various doll skin tone preferences. Ceacal et al. (2017) hypothesis results indicated a shift in children's preference for

the White doll over the Black doll; therefore, they now have a positive self-concept regarding skin tone. Also, during the 20th century, researchers still struggle to understand the *legacy of the Black self-hatred* theory (Ceacal et al., 2017). The Black self-hatred theory of self-doubt and negative self-images about skin tone results in African American children's internalized oppression (Pyke, 2010). They accept negative stereotypes of influence, self-concept, self-esteem, and identity development (Ceacal et al., 217). However, African American children may still tend to internalize racial oppression regarding fallacy in self-hatred theory and self-image that can foster low self-esteem and other concurring Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th Edition (DSM- 5).

Gender attitudes of young women and girls are often under pressure to conform to stereotypical norms of female subordination, thus restricting their voice, opportunities, and social and sexual decision-making (Kågesten et al., 2016). Moreover, Beck (1997) explained that cognitive distortions begin to shape in childhood and are reflected in people's fundamental beliefs. This makes people predisposed to problems because the processing of thoughts is already biased and distorts cognitions (Beck, 1997). Additionally, Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI) development is a normative developmental task for African American adolescents in the United States (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018).

ERI is the theoretical framework related to understanding and analyzing how negative stereotypes and highly anxious mother's attachment influences or contradicts Black girls' perception of their self-esteem as a strong Black woman. An adolescent with an achieved ethnic identity develops ways of dealing with negative stereotypes and prejudices so that they do not internalize negative self-perceptions and are clear about the meaning of ethnicity for them (Knight, 1993). According to Lam et al. (2017), the beliefs of African American parents may

have an impact on shaping their children's gender role attitudes. However, a meta-analysis suggested that adolescent attitudes were associated more strongly with those of their mothers than their fathers when they encouraged or discouraged their views (Lam et al., 2017).

A study with Black college students, based on the Cross (1978) model, found that the earliest stage of Black identity was associated with low self-esteem (Parham & Helms, 1985). Cross' (1971) model of psychological nigrescence (Negro-to-Black conversion) examined the Black self-actualization process relevant to racial identification attitudes. The study of 166 Black university students' attitudes towards racial identity determined that Black identity was positively related to self-actualization and negatively associated with feelings of inferiority and anxiety.

Empirical research on adolescents' ERI formation represents a necessary developmental process in which ethnicity and race influence normative development and promote positive youth adjustment (Neblett et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2012). In a literature review, the research links between ERI and psychosocial, academic, and health risk outcomes are generally beneficial for African American adolescents' adjustment. For example, a U.S. study of community-based samples of psychosocial outcomes included mental health indicators, such as depressive symptoms, anxiety, and externalizing behaviors as well as self-esteem and psychological well-being (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). The result contributes to positive psychological adjustment.

The primary purpose of this research is to draw attention to the problem of inconsistent theoretical direction on adolescent Black girls' depth of preconceived ideas. Furthermore, to examine the impact of self-esteem as an emerging strong Black woman as it relates to either negative stereotypes of Black femininity and/or maternal anxious mother attachment. Psychological models do not successfully address the complex social contexts and misconceptions in which self-esteem emerges during adolescence.

Problem Statement

The Model of Black Femininity has set the ideal of Black women and girls' self-identity as negative stereotypes and character traits of dominant, rebellious, rude, and aggressive (Stephens & Phillips, 2003). These traditional stereotypical images denote the struggles of race, class, and gender oppression (Collins, 2000), which historically are problematic for Black women and girls. At present, there is insufficient research using the Model of Black Femininity traditional stereotypes, which may affect adolescent Black girls' disapproval or interpretation of the meanings. Consequently, the implications of adolescent Black girls' internalization of negative stereotypes prevent experiencing a higher level of self-esteem. Low levels of self-esteem are linked with unfavorable outcomes, such as depression, substance abuse, and antisocial behavior (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001). During adolescence, an intense developmental stage, risky behaviors and a rapid change in identity formation occur (Kroger, 2004).

It is also critical to address if the maternal anxious mother-daughter attachment relationship impacts adolescent Black girls' perception as an SBW. Further, it has been found that that parents continue to influence self-esteem after the child enters the adolescence stage (Walker & Greene, 1986). Bachman (1970) concluded that parental acceptance, interest, respect, and closeness all positively influence adolescent self-esteem. Yet, the literature on maternal anxious attachment theory is lacking as it relates to adolescent Black girls' self-esteem and whether it is influenced or contradicted by Black mothers' roles. The existing empirical studies indicate that understanding attachment theory's conceptual models is essential in shaping self-esteem in adolescent development.

In America, race influences the experiences and challenges facing Black parents' ability to overcome destructive stereotypes and myths which undermine the confidence and self-esteem

of children and threaten their success and well-being (Hall, 2015). A knowledge gap exists in examining adolescent Black girls' perceptions of Black femininity and the correlation of maternal anxious mother attachment beliefs associated with self-esteem as an SBW. In her revolutionary work, Patricia Hill Collins (2000), author of Black Feminist Thought, revealed that the problem of challenging these "controlling images" of Black womanhood is imperative to the core theme of Black feminist thought. Beck (1979) identified that negative self-evaluation is a critical cognitive bias in an adolescent's development of their sense of "self." Moreover, young women and girls are regularly exposed to messages of presumed gender-appropriate behavior, appearance, and role expectations (Chrisler, 2008).

Lacking empirical research to understanding how the impact of traditional images of Black femininity and anxious mother attachment could reduce the damaging perceptions of adolescent Black girls' self-esteem is problematic. Clinically, adolescent Black girls struggle to bridge the gap between having a positive ethnic-racial identity and a high level of self-esteem as an emerging SBW.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study is to create awareness by using a community-based program to strengthen the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls; subsequently, they can learn more about becoming an SBW to overcome problems with low self-esteem. The goal is to increase an understanding of how young Black girls' ERI in the Black family and culture influences their self-esteem which yields profound effects on beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors (Kurtz-Costes et al., 2019). In other words, rather than Black girls concentrating on their adverse perceptions of negative stereotypes and Black mothers' roles, developing an understanding of these variables will enable them to break down the myths. Negative cognition

about oneself is thought to bias information processing and is automatic, repetitive, and difficult to control (Remue et al., 2014).

Psychoeducational programs will help Black girls embrace their culture and believe in themselves. Curriculum that focuses on strengthening the adolescent's self-esteem through self-identity, self-confidence, and self-determining practices of strong womanhood would benefit adolescent Black girls. Self-esteem, also called self-worth, is the main predictor of high self-esteem during adolescence and adulthood (Biro et al., 2006). Nevertheless, Black girls must develop the ability to engage in self-determination and build resiliency thereby strengthening self-esteem.

Significance of the Study

Today in the United States, Black women and girls are still plagued by negative stereotypical images of Black femininity. Researchers have found distorted images of Black femininity derived from history, including the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire, which are still pervasive in contemporary media outlets that are often viewed by adolescent girls (Muhammad & McArthur, 2015). The literature suggests that adolescent Black girls may be alarmed about the Model of Black Femininity, echoing general oppressive and regressive Black women's images. Research conducted by Downing and Roush (1985) implies that there are models of women and gender identity similar to racial and ethnic identity models that children and adolescents can move from having superficial or naive beliefs regarding gender, gender-role expectations, and gender identity. Nevertheless, they can develop a more sophisticated understanding of the sociopolitical connotations of women and gender (Downing & Roush, 1985; Helms 1990). Some "scholars propose that White and African American females have different gender socialization

experiences and, as a result, they develop clashing ideas and ideals about femininity" according to Muhammad and McArthur (2015, pp. 133-134).

The significance of this study is to work towards counteracting negative perceptions of the Model of Black femininity stereotypes and offer a better understanding of how the images influence and/or contradict adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. Thus, Black girls are likely to value the concepts of self-identity, self-confidence, and self-esteem as an SBW when expressing who they are in a society with peers, parents, and other adults. More importantly, ERI formation is a critical process shaping the lives of Black adolescent girls and can present distinct challenges positioned in society to negotiate ideals of self when presented with false and incomplete images representing Black girlhood (Nunn, 2018). Empirical research suggests that developing gender-specific intervention programs to implement during adolescence aimed at strengthening self-esteem will decrease the many negative consequences associated with low self-esteem among adolescent Black girls (Velez et al., 2019). A group intervention program aimed at promoting positive mental health awareness by improving dissatisfaction with traditional stereotypes of Black women and fostering strong images of Black girls via educational literacy and engaging in fun activities could increase self-esteem. Research suggests the timing of these intervention programs is affected by our knowledge of Black girls' self-esteem development due to the declination in self-esteem happening by late adolescence (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005).

As a result, empowering adolescent Black girls with knowledge indicating they are an SBW redirects girls' self-esteem and general psychological well-being, which is imperative for a positive societal outlook. As indicated by previous studies, negative portrayals often lead to the continuation of stereotypes of African American women in general (Sewell, 2013). Ultimately,

not recognizing Black girls' as an SBW potentially endangers adolescent Black girls to become victims of racism and sexism.

Research Question

Three research questions are designed to examine adolescent Black girls' awareness of the Model of Black Femininity, maternal anxious attachment, and the group intervention program. This is closely associated with psychosocial well-being and measures the predictor of change in their self-esteem effectively.

RQ1: Will the group intervention program lead to a change in adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity?

RQ2: Will the group intervention program improve the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls?

RQ3: Will the group intervention program impact adolescent Black girls and maternal anxious attachment relationships?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses for this study are as follows:

H1: The adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity will not have statistically significant changes after completing the group intervention program, as indicated in their survey responses.

H2: The adolescent Black girls participating in the group intervention program will not have a statistically significant higher level of self-esteem, as indicated in their survey responses.

H3: The adolescent Black girls participating in the group intervention program will not have statistically significant improvement in the maternal anxious attachment relationship, as indicated in their survey responses.

Definitions

1. *Self-esteem* - Self-esteem is defined as the value that one places on one's self and is a primary component of self-concept and identity (Rosenburg, 1965).

2. *Racial/ethnic identity* - A sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares as a common heritage with a particular racial group (Helms, 1990).

3. *Model of Black Femininity* – Traditional gender images of Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire stereotypes about Black women and ethnic identity combined create the Model of Black Femininity (Collins, 2000).

4. *Strong Black Woman* – Strong Black Woman or SBW is described as the persona of Black women being "strong" and conceptualized characteristics as independent, taking care of family and others, hardworking and high achieving, overcoming adversity, and emotionally contained (Nelson et al., 2016).

5. *Maternal Anxious Attachment* – Insecure, anxious, and stressed infant-parent attachment as characterized by high emotions, rejection, abandonment, and distrust in their ability to develop a close relationship describes the maternal anxious attachment (Ainsworth, 1973).

6. *Black and African American* – These terms are interchangeable and relate to various population groups having dark pigmentation of the skin or relating to African-American people ancestors or the Black culture (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2011).

Summary

The literature review reflects that being both female and being Black are daily challenges facing adolescent Black girls effecting racial/ethnic-identity and their self-esteem. The presence of on-going or past exposure to adverse events such as racial oppression and identity crisis is key

to adolescent Black girls' risks of psychological complications. These exposures thereby increase the risk of developing maladaptive disorders specified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) – more specifically, Anxiety and Depressive Disorders.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Being an African American female adolescent growing up in the United States poses multiple challenges and struggles. African American adolescent females are faced with typical adolescent development tasks; but, they must contend with a society that devalues Blacks and women (Hooks, 1981; Reid, 1998). The Institute for Women's Policy Research released *Black Girls in New York City: Untold Strength and Resilience,* which was the first public strength-focused report on African American girls' (Jones-DeWeever, 2009) endurance. Before 2009, most deficit-focused empirical and theoretical sources reinforced a one-dimensional view of African American girls, focusing on the problems and risky behaviors that African American girls posed to society (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Research is limited in addressing the needs of adolescent Black girls' complex ideologies of feminism, race, history, and childhood development, lacking their unique experiences (Jacobs & Davis, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

This literature review aims to adequately provide a contextualized understanding of contributing factors to the adolescent Black girls' struggles and challenges. The main aspects of this research are understanding how the Model of Black Femininity traditional stereotypes (e.g., Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire) and the maternal anxious mother attachment may have a potential impact on adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. The literature is scarce in addressing the gap between these stereotypical images and how African American women and girls are

perceived and treated by others. The review of the literature also demonstrates the need for an intervention program that counteracts the negative images and contributes to strengthening adolescent Black girls' self-esteem, self-identity, and self-confidence while building community-based partnerships.

Feminist developmental framework refers to a set of theories that assume a feminist standpoint and describe how girls' development shaped by social transactions, gender difference socialization, or cognition is psychodynamic (Tolman, Impett, Tracy, & Michael, 2006). Undoubtedly, Tolman et al., (2006) believe one of the most studied conceptualizations in mental health is self-esteem, which may be useful for understanding the totality of a girl's thoughts and emotions regarding oneself during adolescent development. The work at Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development (Brown & Gilligan, 1993: Gilligan et al., 2014) and Stone Center's Relational Theory (Jordan et al., 1991) examines the psychodynamic framework which focuses on girls' development and internalized recognition of themselves as women in their behaviors, thoughts, and feelings, and through other's responses to them. Similarly, cognitive development and perspectives on gender schemas that occur in infancy through adolescence shape girls' many aspects of gender identity, gender role, gender-typed behavior, and gender socialization (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009).

The theoretical and empirical analyses suggest that internalizing traditional stereotypes of Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel, and the latter image of SBW have profound implications for Black women and girls' mental health, relationships, and self-esteem (Jerald et al., 2017). The theoretical approach to adolescents and media effects employing Social Cognitive Theory's conceptualization of observational learning focuses on cognitive and psychological processes as they relate to how media portrayals influence learning and performance of observed behavior

(Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). Another construct of research into social cognitive theory examines the origin, structure, and function of perceived self-efficacy and other socio-cognitive factors in child development (Bandura, 2002). Theorists of social learning, Perry and Bussey (1979), emphasize the observation mechanisms where the child gathers information on how to behave according to gender by observing models and imitating them. Additionally, social cognitive theories give the child a more active part in obtaining and applying gender roles (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

It is vital to offer new models of Black womanhood based on the high levels of media consumption and the personal environmental experiences of adolescent Black girls. The social-cognitive theoretical framework will eliminate the negative images and stigmas of the Model of Black femininity gender behaviors for adolescent Black girls. The current study strives to develop an intervention program utilizing social cognitive theory, which is critical for adolescent Black girls acquiring new knowledge and experiencing new things to make meaning of their world (Harrison, 2017) and influence how they view themselves. The Zimmerman (2013) research study provided conceptual framework for resiliency and other positive factors in young lives to evaluate interventions aimed to enhance promotive factors for healthy adolescent development.

Related Literature

From the 1980s until now, studies examining gender-related constructs in adolescence (e.g., gender identity, gender role attitudes, and gender stereotypes) seem to be less frequent (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). Ruble and Martin (1998) showed that articles on gender-related constructs dropped off after 1985 for all ages combined and, more specifically, for children. The Lerner and Steinberg (2009) articles on gender differences in characteristics traits remained high

and consistent from 1985 to 1993 as it relates to adolescent development. Traditional femininity outlines cultural beliefs that adolescent Black girls may conform to or resist gender ideologies about the roles, personality traits, and behaviors prescribed as normative and expected of them in mainstream America (Parent & Moradi, 2010).

Therefore, it is important to understand that the effects of the traditional Model of Black femininity stereotypes (e.g., Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire) and anxious mother-daughter attachment may influence the adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. These are factors crucial to increase the number of adolescent Black girls who grow up to be strong and resilient women with a healthy sense of self.

Model of Black Femininity

According to Perry and Pauletti (2011), adolescents face several unique developmental challenges, for example, coping with changes in their bodies, controlling their sexual interests, forming new kinds of relationships, and planning their academic and occupational futures. Recent research on the role of gender in adolescent development indicated gender affects how youth manage all these challenges. According to Jacobs (2016), for Black girls, much of their experience around gender identity development is from the lack of agreement between their physical features and the dominant principles of femininity and beauty in the United States. Traditional gender role stereotypes of Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire, and SBW as images of Black womanhood influence adolescent Black girls' perception of womanhood, but those stereotypes are not widely relayed. The possibility that Black family influences of anxious mother attachment contradicts their gender, gender roles, gender identity, and gender stereotypes is not addressed. Despite the diversity in defining gender identity, it refers to masculine and feminine self-definition, self-perception of adherence to gender stereotypes, and internalized social

pressure for conforming to gender stereotypes (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). Given the long history of Black woman's negative images of Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire as the model of femininity stereotypes, the research and studies are still insufficient. There are current potential effects and risks associated with adolescent Black girls' self-identity, gender-identity, racial socialization, and self-esteem (Harrison, 2017).

Most studies examine how Black mothers' roles influence how they socialized Black girls, usually focusing on how they model and teach their daughters strength and caretaking (Beaubouef-Lafontant 2009). Undoubtedly, Black girls will face the challenge of handling the negative stereotypes of Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire that have plagued Black females for centuries due to slavery. A study by Johnson et al., (2016) reported that media often portray African American women as dominant, rebellious, rude, and aggressive and African American women have dealt with several negative images because of the confluence of their gender and race.

Moreover, the literature suggests that stereotypes of Black women are pervasive in U.S. culture. Thomas et al., (2008) believe the stereotypes of African American women are described as negative images; Mammy, a matriarch, domestic worker, and asexual nurturing woman; Sapphire, a nagging, loud, argumentative, and emasculating woman; or Jezebel, a hypersexual, seductive, sexually aggressive woman. The 'Angry Black Woman' mythology is worth mentioning as it assumes all Black women to be irate, irrational, hostile, and negative despite their situations (Ashley, 2014). According to Morgan and Bennett (2006), the media perpetuated the Angry Black women stereotype as "aggressive, unfeminine, undesirable, overbearing, attitudinal, bitter, mean, and hell-raising." The researchers further warrant that the Angry Black Women label affects Black women's self-esteem and how they are viewed by others (Morgan &

Bennett, 2006), which is linked to suppressing anger and minimizing its impact in their lives (Ashley, 2014). The outcomes of this myth, according to Harris et al., (2017) is that "Black females are frequent targets of systemic biases due to the intersectionality of gender and race, subjecting Black females to stereotypes such as being angry, aggressive, or promiscuous" (p. 1). Numerous literatures suggest that these stereotypical myths can be traced back to the outcomes of slavery (Collins, 2000).

Research demonstrates that stereotypes based on race and gender have implications for diagnosis, treatment, and therapeutic outcomes for both Blacks and women (American Psychological Association, 1985; Jackson, 1983; West, 1995). As part of a generalized ideology of domination, these controlling images of Black womanhood symbolizes a significant instrument of power (Patterson, 1982). Data indicate that endorsing the Mammy image of a matriarch is essential because it aims to shape Black women's behavior as mothers (Collins, 2000). The Jezebel stereotype may be internalized by women and girls to view their sexuality as a primary source of self-esteem (West, 1995) and is linked to risky sexual behaviors (Davis & Tucker-Brown 2013; Townsend et al., 2010). The Sapphire stereotype may be internalized by women and girls' perceptions being verbally and physically aggressive (West, 2012). The images Sapphire and Jezebel represent disagree with the submissive conservative norms of mainstream femininity (Collins, 2000). Moreover, Gillum (2002) reported that Black men continue to support the Jezebel and Sapphire stereotypes that contribute to negative interactions and conflict between Black men and women. Gillum (2002) also shows that Black men who endorse these traditional stereotypes are more likely to participate in intimate partner violence and justify violence against women.

The concepts of the Super-woman and a related construct, the SBW (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003), were developed (Beaubouef-Lafontant, 2007; Woods-Giscombe & Lobel, 2008) to counteract negative stereotypes and highlight positive attributes of African American women (Johnson et al., 2016). Black women often applaud the SBW characteristics for emphasizing positive features of Black womanhood in contrast to those of Jezebel and Sapphire, and the SBW image also has detrimental consequences for Black women's health (Jerald et al., 2017). For example, Black women dedicated to endorsing the SBW image tend to report more emotional avoidance or suppression, engage in binge eating, and have a higher risk for depression and anxiety (Harrington et al., 2010). The SBW was created to benefit White slave owners who believed that Black women were superior in physical and psychological strength compared to White women (Harris-Perry, 2011) and therefore, could more easily withstand pain and harsh conditions (Anyiwo et al., 2018). Similarly, researchers have implied that strength forms a significant part of the identity of Black women (Littlefield, 2004: Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996). Nelson et al., (2016) found in a qualitative study of 30 Black women that strength has been perceived as a culturally specific coping mechanism critical for the survival of African lineage women.

The concept of Womanism is a framework for social change perspective to improve and advance the social conditions of the world by dialogue, inspiration, and the unique experiences of Black girls' daily lives (Phillips, 2006). The use of the Womanist concept suggests creating a more positive imagery of Black women and girls in the media to advance social change ideology. It is important to note that adolescents are affected by popular culture and tailor their fashion, style, slang, hip-hop music, or images from contemporary media outlets (Muhammad & McArthur, 2015). It has been documented that the possible connection between Black

adolescent's TV use and their gender beliefs is complicated both by the type of diverse Black-oriented TV programs consumed and by the nature of the gender stereotype (Brown & Pardun, 2004; Ward et al., 2010). Consequently, research has indicated that gender ideologies vary across cultural and ethnic groups (Rempala et al., 2014; Vespa, 2009).

Barrie et al., (2016) examined how those stereotypes have been found to affect African American adolescent girls' process the complexities of identity development and discover "who they are" within the societal context of gender and race. Furthermore, media images characterized by stereotypes of African American women have a profound impact on how they conceptualize their identity as Black women, which can shape their self-expectations (Barrie et al., 2016). The extent to which the endorsement of stereotypes negatively affects African American youth is clearly articulated in the literature. The effects range across different domains including risky behavior, poor racial identity development, low self-esteem, lack of self-efficacy, as well as poor academic and psychological outcomes (Chavous et al., 2003; Taylor & Walton, 2011; Townsend et al., 2010).

There is another contributing factor for adolescent Black girls that endorses more positive Afrocentric values and racial identity that tends to demonstrate stronger levels of self-esteem (Barrie et al., 2016). Parham (2009) proposed to shape the Black experience using the Afrocentric principles described as interconnectedness, strength in collectivity, self-knowledge (know thyself), and spirit-ness as critical components for developing Black girls' self-esteem. Research is beginning to explore how these roles for African American girls influence identity development. However, more is needed on girls' perceptions of these images as a contextual layer of identity development. Erikson (1959) describes identity as a response to the question, "Who am I"; in other words, identity means an integrated and interconnected sense of self that

endures and progresses as we age. In Eriksonian tradition, identity was defined as a self-theory (Berzonsky, 2011). As much research indicates, achieved identity is a significant predictor of well-being in adolescence and early adulthood (Klym & Cieciuch, 2015).

The literature captures the complexity and the impact that racial stereotypes have on African American adolescent girls. Within North America, expectations for masculinity include being self-reliant, assertive, and dominant, whereas expectations for femininity include being passive, nurturing, and modest (Levant et al., 2007). In contrast, Watson and Hunter (2016) recognized the SBW stereotype as a central aspect of African American womanhood. The SBW is consistently described as a 'schema' that suggests an exclusive set of cognitive and behavioral expectations for African American women: notably standing up for oneself, exhibiting self-reliance, and taking care of others (Beaubouef-Lafontant, 2007). Abrams et al., (2014) believe that the SBW construct is universal in Black culture. The authors noted that socialized beliefs require Black women to assume multiple roles; for example, financial providers, caregivers, and possess the ability to support their families independently (Abrams et al., 2014).

Additionally, it is believed SBW should, at all costs, continue to be strong even in the existence of severe pain and fear (Beaubouef-Lafontant, 2007). An SBW's opposition to vulnerability and reluctance to ask for help often forces her to deal with the stress and hassles of daily life in seclusion (Black & Peacock, 2011). According to Abrams et al. (2014), the contextual factors related to the SBW schema include a legacy of racial and gender stereotyping or oppressions, teachings from foremothers, a personal history of disappointment, maltreatment or abuse, and spiritual values. Anyiwo et al., (2018) studied a total of 121 self-identified adolescent Black's correlation between SBW characters and their viewing of 29 popular television shows. The results showed adolescent Blacks endorse viewing SBW women on

television as emotionally strong, independent, and self-sacrificing. Additionally, the study

focused on how adolescent developed gender role ideologies may stem from parents, other

prominent adults, and dominant mainstream media messages (Anyiwo et al., 2018).

Although many forces contribute to an adolescent's awareness of these images, including

parental and peer models (Witt, 2000), the mass media and television are likely to be prominent

contributors for several reasons (Ward et al., 2016). The media's utilization levels among Black

American adolescents are very high, and data indicate an average of 4.5 more hours of media

daily than among White youth (Rideout et al., 2011). According to Greenwood and Lippman

(2010) and Signorielli (2001), the mass media are known for their limited portrayals of

femininity. Harrington et al., (2010) compared male and female TV characters and reported

female characters are less dominant, more emotional, less technical, more nurturing, and less

often shown engaged in paid labor. Their appearance is emphasized more and is often sexually

objectified (Harrington et al., 2010). Additionally, the media is known to feature stereotypical

portrayals of African Americans, for example, in music videos as sexual objects (Ward et al.,

2013), particularly in rap and R&B videos (Aubrey & Frisby, 2011; Turner, 2011). Tyree (2011)

revealed that many stereotypical portrayals of Black women with angry facial expressions are

shown on reality TV, as well as argumentative and confrontational behaviors.

Black-oriented magazines portray Black women as independent, dominant, and having

authority over men (Baker, 2005). The research demonstrates that the media continue to feature

hostile and undermining representations of Black women, endorsing the Sapphire stereotype, and

highly sexualized depictions of Black women in music videos, confirming the Jezebel stereotype

(Jerald et al., 2017). A study of Black or African American undergraduates by Jerald et al. (2017)

expands the knowledge base on media roles in shaping Black students' notion of femininity and

ethnic identity roles as protective factors. However, other research confirms that mainstream media is overloaded with content that promotes traditional femininity ideologies and stereotypes about Black women. Past research demonstrated that exposure to this content influences Black student's gender beliefs (Ward et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, girls and young women are regularly exposed to messages of presumed gender-appropriate behavior, appearance, and role expectations. Stanton et al. (2017) found the extent to which the adolescent Black girls have exposure to the SBW ideal is positively correlated to Black self-care in magazines and blogs to change their perception and behavior. Chrisler (2008) reported that such subtle forms of sexism (e.g., cultural, institutional, and interpersonal) could affect their physical safety and economic security (Gamst et al., 2011).

Identity formation is an essential lifelong process that begins in childhood and becomes particularly important during adolescence, even though it continues throughout the lifespan (Klym & Cieciuch, 2015). Mahalik et al. (2005) revealed that gender role norms offer women and men guidance about how they are theoretically to act, think, and feel, as well as restrict them from certain behaviors that are known as "off-limits." Attempts to conform to gender role expectations lead some women to experience gender role strain (Levant & Philpot, 2002) and role overload (Hochschild, 1989). For example, Basow and Rubin (1999) showed that African American women's socioeconomic conditions implied they take roles and behaviors of both masculine and feminine schemas. Conversely, Lerner and Steinberg (2009) studied the effects of gender development in adolescents and how it had been primarily restricted to European American samples of middle-class adolescents. Few's (2007) critique in her article that White female researchers conducted traditional studies about the experiences of White women, yet those studies were often generalized to speak for all womanhood. This critique by Black feminist

theorist is important as it shows White writers presumes to communicate about race as mutual experiences among all women.

A study by Johnson et al. (2016) reported the development and validation of the African America Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) as a measure of how African American women change their self-presentations to adapt with the perceived demands of their social surroundings. As a result, the awareness of shifting behavior reflects attentiveness to a need to alter wearing a façade and various aspects of their self-image in response to the demands of a particular context (Johnson et al., 2016). A present study conducted by Gamst et al. (2020) examined the "shifting" effects of 366 African American women's acculturation on their perceived race-related stressors resulted in increased levels. Gamst et al. (2020) stated that "shifting defined as the alteration of one's cultural self-portrayal in response to perceived social demands" (p. 2). To fully explain shifting is viewed as certain behaviors allow African American women to cope with racialized contexts perceived as racist and oppressive (Johnson, 2016; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Some psychiatric studies indicate that African Americans confronting race-related stressors is linked with major depressive disorder, panic disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder (Chou et al., 2012) and understanding of race-related stressors can decrease these mental health outcomes (Gamst et al., 2020).

It is also essential to consider the African American culture in examining the influences of adolescent Black girls' self-identity and self-esteem. Culture has been conceptualized as a set of beliefs, values, and practices shared by a group of people who organize daily life and persist with adaptions over time (Marsden & Swingle, 1994). There are several contextual factors, such as historical events or changes in widely accepted social norms, which influence the passage of culture between generations. Despite these other factors, the family context, particularly

parenting, is the primary mechanism through which cultural beliefs and values are passed down to the next generation (Ramirez et al., 2017).

Racial/Ethnic Identity and Moral Socialization

Empirical data suggests that ethnic identity may function in comparable ways for media influences. One important factor related to this study is that the effects of ethnic identity and media consumption do not affect all individuals equally (Jerald et al., 2017). Phinney and Alipuria (1996) define ethnic identity "includes feelings of ethnic belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, and positive attitudes toward one's ethnic group" (p. 142). According to Sellers et al. (1998), ethnic identity is different from African American racial identity, a concept that is theorized as both the significance and meaning African Americans attribute specifically to their racial group membership. More recent research about stereotypes as it relates to Black women find that both younger and older Black women who feel positively about themselves promote the Jezebel stereotype less than women who feel negatively about themselves (Brown et al., 2013). It appears likely that ethnic identity and media use could moderate adolescent Black girls' effects of negative stereotypes about Black women. Past research demonstrates that ethnic identity protects African Americans from adverse outcomes in several domains. Blacks who possess a strong ethnic identity are protected from the negative effect of racial discrimination on psychological wellbeing (Sellers et al., 2006), on academic achievement (Rollock, 2007), and risk on behavior (Brook & Pahl, 2005).

Quantitative studies suggest that racial identity is formed before gender identity in African American women; however, girls and young women in the study could articulate how race and gender influenced their perceptions of themselves (Jones-Thomas et al., 2011). As a collective group, Black adolescent girls have been mainly overlooked in much of the research

literature which often directs their attention toward their Black male counterparts (Rollock, 2007). Therefore, it is essential in reviewing the literature to briefly discuss the effects of racial and moral socialization on Black girls' self-esteem.

Researchers Mandara et al. (2010) found that the racial socialization practices of African American mothers with their daughters include higher expectations, increased responsibilities, and extra demands than their sons. Collectively, studies suggest that the experience of race influences parenting practices and youth outcomes (Bibbs, 2017). Therefore, racial socialization processes have been linked to several important youth outcomes. In their survey study of 115 Black, middle school youth, 62% of whom were girls Constantine and Blackmon (2002) found a link between messages of racial pride and higher self-esteem amongst youth. In another small study by Jones-Thomas et al. (2011), they interviewed 17 Black girls aged 15-22 to understand how categories of gender and race influenced their phenomenological experience. They found that their participants were forming an identity that integrated race and gender, were sensitive to White beauty standards portrayed in the media, and were viewed as being a Black female as a source of inner strength (Jones-Thomas et al., 2011). In Bibbs (2017) study, they reported drawing on this strength as they discussed breaking stereotypes and implementing agency through self-determining practices. Furthermore, Bibbs' (2017) study suggests that preparation for the race is not sufficient for girls; instead, they would benefit from socialization practices that integrate gender and race. Relatively, Hughes et al. (2006) sought to understand how African American parents sustain children's high self-esteem and equip them to understand racial barriers in the United States.

Related to societal norms in the United States, racial and ethnic identity are manifested in very conscious ways and submerged in cultural traditions and values through the religious,

familial, neighborhood, and educational communities; and, they encourage a positive sense of ethnic identity and self-confidence (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Therefore, adolescent Black girls must often filter Black ethnic identity through adverse treatment and media messages received from others because of race and ethnicity (Riff et al., 2019). By comparison, White adolescent girls manifest ethnic and racial identity in mostly unconscious ways through their behaviors, values, beliefs, and assumptions (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999). Healthy self-esteem in African American girls and Latinas is linked to a strong ethnic identity (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990; Phinney & Chavira, 1992).

Adolescence and Self-Esteem

Jones (1989) concluded that Black adolescents share similar traits with all adolescents, but because of life and environmental circumstances, they also possess exclusive characteristics. Current theories of adolescent Black girls' psychological development rarely reflect the experiences of this population of girls and are more focused on high-risk behavior. If adolescence is when one establishes a sense of identity, which according to Erikson (1968) is based on one's ethnicity and gender formation, then developing an identity that combines a healthy sense of one's Blackness and femaleness is complicated (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996). Myers (1989) implied that Black female adolescents are often ignored or invisible; and, their strengths and problems receive minimal attention. More specifically, Hagen et al. (2004) explained that ethnic minority adolescents remain overrepresented in studies of risk and underrepresented in research on normative development. Thus, a greater understanding of adolescent Black girls' identity development processes would help strengthen their self-esteem and mental health as adult women.

The majority of research on gender and the impact of racial stereotypes has focused on adult Black women. There are insufficient studies that consider endorsing feminine stereotypes among Black girls related to their self-esteem, and even less attention toward identifying factors that may help buffer the adverse effects. The literature review shows that African American people have been portrayed by categories of stereotypes that include lazy, violent, hostile, hypersexual, and unintelligent (Gordon, 2016), focusing on these areas. Taylor and Walton (2011) found the degree to which the endorsing stereotypes negatively affects African American youth is clearly articulated in the literature. The effects across a range of domains include risky sexual behavior, poor racial identity development, low self-esteem, lack of self-efficacy, and poor academic and psychological outcomes (Taylor & Walton, 2011; Townsend et al., 2010). Given the effect stereotypes and stereotypical beliefs have on the identity development of Black adolescent girls' self-esteem, it is imperative to understand the endorsement and internalization related to their psychological well-being and perceived stress.

Self-esteem is one of the oldest conceptions in psychology and is among the top three covariates occurring in personality and social psychology research (Eromo & Levy, 2017). Several studies have reasoned that for both Black and White girls, social support from one's peers and family is essential for the successful transition through adolescence (Adams, 2010). Over the past two decades, at least one assumption is generally accepted, both in popular and scientific literature: Blacks are more likely to have lower self-esteem than Whites (Rosenberg & Simmons, 1971). Nevertheless, the critical factor is how Black children perceive their feelings about being Black; an individual develops an overall evaluative view of the self, which is referred to as personal self-esteem (Porter & Washington, 1979). Research findings in a study examining Black children indicated that the typical Black child spends their informative years in

mostly a Black world; thus, the Black child compares themselves on a personal level to other

Black children, not other White children (Porter & Washington, 1979). The confrontation with

the white world occurs for most black children after the establishment of their self-esteem has

been founded by their experience within the black environment (Rosenberg, 1965; Rosenberg &

Simmons, 1971; McCarthy & Yancy 1971). This historical, theoretical approach has been used

to explain the numerous literature findings that Blacks do not feel lower personal self-esteem

than Whites (Porter & Washington, 1979). More recent studies on Black adolescent's self-esteem

being higher than whites clearly derives from this contextual theory. However, there are

variations in racial and personal self-esteem that should be investigated with careful attention to

specific situations, mainly with adolescent Black girls.

The task of sustaining high and stable self-esteem appears particularly challenging for

girls during early adolescence. Concerns with peer acceptance and physical attractiveness,

sensitivity to the environmental effects of school change, and conflicting social role expectations

add complexity to girls' task of self-development (Harter, 1990). According to Carlson et al.,

(2000), studies of early adolescent White populations consistently report lower and more

unstable self-esteem among girls compared to boys. Self-esteem is conceptualized as the overall

evaluation of one's worth or value (Rosenberg, 1965) and of the self-concept that consists of

positive and negative appraisals (Rosenberg, 1986). Due to the role of self-esteem in positive

youth development, most research has examined it as an outcome variable or a correlation of

psychosocial outcomes.

> Crocker and Wolfe's (2001) equated self-esteem with total judgments of self-worth and
> suggested that self-esteem differs depending on the source of one's self-esteem. The self-
> esteem theory relied on three assumptions: First, a person or group's source of self-
> esteem may vary; it may be grounded on approval, appearance, God's love, family
> support, school competency, competition, or virtue. Second, self-esteem relies on these
> sources and the specific environment; thus, self-esteem is not necessarily a steady trait.

Third, self-esteem will covary with the identified source of self-esteem. The self-worth theory explained Black high self-esteem as being based on 'God's love,' as an intractable and invincible source." In contrast, explanations for White low self-esteem are presented as dependence on peer approval, family support, academics, or appearance; this there self-esteem is more vulnerable and less stable (p. 594).

It is necessary for both Black and White girls to have support from one's peers and family to successfully transition through adolescence (Adams, 2010). Therefore, Jones-Thomas et al., (2011) agree that in order to comprehend the experience and racial identity development of Black adolescents, it is critical to understand the combining of race and gender, or gendered racial identity development. The results suggest that ethnic identity and self-esteem function as essential links in how social support reduces internalization symptoms in African American youth (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2007).

According to an article by Porter & Washington (1979), in a study of Black children, self-image gave momentum to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, which emphasized that racial segregation of Black children had the potential to harm their self-esteem. Research on ethnic identity utilizing quantitative and psychoanalytic techniques, rather than participant observation, began to shift from European immigrants to Blacks (Ponterotto, & Park-Taylor, 2007). The research tradition on Black self-esteem has continuity with the literature on the personality patterns of other ethnic groups (Porter & Washington, 1979). However, there are fewer direct measures of racial self-esteem than of personal self-esteem. Direct measures of racial self-esteem, which ask the respondent to indicate racial identification and preference, have been employed with children (Ponterotto, & Park-Taylor, 2007). Porter and Washington (1979) contend that racial self-esteem refers to how the individual feels about themself as Black, i.e., about his or her group identity. Also, personal self-esteem means esteem for one's individuality regardless of the racial group—how one feels about the self in a broad sense (Porter &

Washington, 1979). Furthermore, Buckley and Carter (2005) contend that Black girls are more likely to feel positive about themselves when they respond objectively to their dominant racial group.

The review of the research literature has implications that dominant racial group membership and high levels of self-esteem in adolescent Black girls are two distinct, although often interrelated, concepts (Porter, 1971). Although Black people often report high levels of self-esteem, Buckley and Carter (2005) implied that racial dominant group membership alone does not account for adolescent Black girls' self-esteem levels. Instead, it is critical to how they identify with being Black and their beliefs and attitude towards their racial group. Nevertheless, Buckley and Carter's (2005) further implications revealed that flexible gender role behaviors connected to higher self-esteem for adolescent Black girls, conversely, adopting a stereotypical feminine gender role reported lower self-esteem.

In a study, Santor, Messervey, and Kusumakar (2000) examined the social pressure between adolescents' self-esteem and gender conformity as it relates to them behaving in a precise manner. Besides, to behave in gender-typed ways might pose a racial concern for adolescents' self-esteem regardless of the level to which race is a central part of identity (Santor et al., 2000). In contrast, Skinner et al.'s (2018) study results find on average many African American adolescents reported high levels of racial centrality; however, the race may replace gender in shaping some identity processes. Several studies of children find that Black males have lower personal self-esteem than Black females (Jones, 1989). Part of the problem of research in this area results from the inconsistent theoretical direction. Psychological models do not successfully address the complex social contexts and misconceptions in which self-esteem emerges.

Attachment Theory

According to attachment theory, internal cognitive models of the self and the quality of relationships with significant others developed during infancy and early childhood, remain essential throughout the lifespan, organizing, and guiding social behavior (Bowlby, 1973). Attachment theory has traditionally been concerned with the affectional bond that exists between infants and caregivers, typically the mother. However, it has been recognized that attachment extends beyond infancy and the mother-child dyad (Rice, 1990). Adolescents and young adults have multiple attachment figures (Ducharme, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2002). Undoubtedly, many reasons contribute to a feeling of positive self-esteem in early adolescents (aged 12-15) and late adolescents (aged 16-18) as it relates to both their perceptions of their family environment and their levels of attachment with their parent (Harvey & Byrd, 1998). In a review of the literature relevant to the parent-child relationship, Rice (1990) concluded that the value of parent-adolescent relationships is arguably the most critical factor in the development of adolescent self-esteem.

In the past several decades, infant and child research has considerably supported the importance of early attachment experience (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980, & 1982). Briefly stated, Bowlby's theory conceptualized infant-mother attachment as a primary instinct, separate from other physiological needs, and serving the purpose of continuing proximity to a caregiver. Bowlby (1980) reported that children generate 'internal working models of attachment' that influence their attachment-seeking behaviors. During childhood, these models actively and continuously are constructed by the child. Bowlby (1988) found that primary attachment continues to be an active phenomenon well beyond age six. Toward the end of adolescence,

however, they tend to become stable and serve as a template for later attachments throughout the life cycle.

Ainsworth (1978) and her colleagues developed a system for identifying and describing individual differences in attachment among mother-infant dyads. Ainsworth et al. (1978) found that infants differed when being left alone by their mothers and how they handled the stress in a strange situation. Furthermore, the securely attached children are subdued or distressed in their mother's absence but are relieved and quickly soothed when she returns. The remaining infants coped in different ways which were labeled as insecurely attached (Ainsworth, 1973). The anxious-ambivalent infant protested and cried when their mother left, but they acknowledged their mother's return and sought to be held and continued to be angry when she tried to calm them. The avoidant infant is undisturbed by their mother's departure and disinterested when she returned but did not seek physical cuddling and appeared to be prematurely self-reliant (Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998); these same patterns are evident in an adolescent.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) found that during adolescence, teenagers' use of parents as a secure base during times of difficulty or failure may provide clues to the quality of communication in parent-adolescent relationships. A previous study suggested that young women reporting secure attachment to mother at adolescence also report higher self-esteem and lower depressive symptoms relative to the ambivalent and avoidant attachment (Salzman, 1996). The contrasts are significantly different between secure and ambivalent attachment. According to Ainsworth (1979), ambivalent attachment seems to be associated, at least in adolescence, with specific psychopathology markers. Because of the "push-pull" behavior characteristic of ambivalent attachment, young women seem particularly vulnerable to difficulty meeting the adolescent challenges of individuation and identity formation (Salzman, 1996). Attachment

theory of ambivalent attachment is reactive to stress, and hypervigilant attachment figures tend to hinder the autonomy and self-confidence of the child (Kobak & Sceery, 1988).

Cooper et al. (1998) reported in a study that Black and White anxious adolescents were prone to lower levels of self-concepts and the highest levels of symptomatology (primarily hostility and depression) and problem behaviors. They further suggested that attachment processes operate across gender and racial groups and significant developmental periods within adolescence (Cooper et al., 1998). Empirically, what has been well established is the association between low self-esteem and externalizing problems, which may be explained in different ways (Donnellan et al., 2005). Adolescents have developed mental images of self and others in attachment relationships with their parents that form both individual and social functioning, self-esteem and cognitive distortions, and parental monitoring (de Vries, et al., 2016).

Daughters and Maternal Anxious Attachment

Historically, a Black mother's reliance on family, extended family, religion, and the Black community contributes to self-actualization and ideal of mothering. There is a lack of literature to examine Black women in the context of motherhood and how the exploitation of Black women impacts the parent-child relationship (Lawson, 2000). Little research exists to date, focusing on factors interfering with adolescent Black girls developing and maintaining a healthy image of womanhood. Gillum (2007) reported that research documented images of prevailing negative feminine stereotypes, including that of ugly mammies, sexual temptresses, and bonds that hold the family together. Also, the negative feminine stereotype of the emasculating matriarch is internalized by adolescent Black girls and has an impact on their lives and relationships (Gillum, 2007). More importantly, the power of stereotypes influences information processing and subsequently affects perceptions and personal interactions (Hamilton & Sherman,

2014) despite parental endorsements. Scholars theorized about the power of stereotypes; however, they believe Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire's potential view as negative images about African American women may be accurate (Hamilton & Sherman, 2014). Thus, a better understanding of how anxious Black mothers respond to the traditional model of Black femininity as Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire stereotypes influences their adolescent daughter's self-esteem. Collins (2005) review of the stigmas, myths, and views of Black motherhood are defined by Black women's roles in White and African American families during slavery. For example, the Mammy image of a faithful domestic worker devoted to caring, loving, and mothering her White children as her own. Conversely, when the Mammy image is at her own home, she is viewed as the dominant matriarch, aggressive, and raises "unnaturally superior" daughters (Collin, 2005). These roles influenced Black women's experiences as mothers and when faced with oppression, contributed to their relationships with their own Black children (Collins, 2005).

There is an overall lack of literature related to African Americans focusing on the relationships between parenting and adolescent functioning (Bean et al., 2002). Similarly, there are limited findings examining the impact of parenting on the development of self-esteem among African American adolescents (McLoyd et al., 2000). Taylor's (2000) study found that the mother's acceptance and support were positively associated with self-esteem. In contrast, strict behavioral control was not significantly related to the self-esteem of African American adolescents. The influence of maternal anxious attachment on self-esteem among Black girls has been minimally researched. According to Bean et al., (2003), numerous studies have examined the relationships between parenting and adolescent self-esteem among European American adolescents, which contrasts the limited findings for adolescent Black girls' self-esteem.

Nevertheless, the research findings indicate that adolescent-parent relationships do go through extensive transformations during adolescence, and parents view adolescence as the most challenging and problematic stage of childrearing (Smetana et al., 2006). The relationship processes in attachment theory propose that individual differences in levels of both attachment avoidance and anxiety predict an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in contexts that trigger attachment concerns (Campbell & Marshall, 2011).

Everet et al., (2016) found that the mother-daughter bond is a complex, diverse, lifelong, and intimate connection that significantly affects all phases of development. Furthermore, the authors suggest that it starts with infancy and childhood when the daughter completely depends upon the mother for nurturance and care, and adolescence is when the daughter's emerging independence and search for her own identity shows the emotional intensity of a mother-daughter bond (Everet et al., 2016). Only a few studies explore Black daughters' perception of their mothers' influence on self-esteem, coping, and resilience. Black women raise their daughters within a historical, social, political, and psychological context that cannot ignore the effects of racial and gender oppression (Collins, 2000). For Black women, gender is as significant as race in identity development, therefore, Collins (1991) suggests "using Black feminist thought process mirrors Black women's reality, honors their identity, and privileges their voice" (p. 54).

Furthermore, in the Black community, family always included "othermothers" described as women who assist "bloodmothers" by distributing mothering responsibilities with extended family and fictive kin (Collins, 1948, p. 120). In her book, Collins (1991) referenced the sex-role socialization process from a psychoanalytic perspective in which Black girls establish and embrace feminine identities as a connection to their bloodmothers, othermothers, extended

family members, and fictive kin. Additionally, Black daughters must learn how to identify early with a range of Black womanhood models, which can lead to a better sense of empowerment (p. 54).

In environments of adversity, resilience, coping, and self-esteem developed within the mother-daughter relationship can be helpful. Given the increasing numbers of Black, single-family households, we must learn more about how Black mothers shape the sense of self in their daughters (Everet et al., 2016). These can explain anxious mother attachment and the impact on adolescent Black girls. Anxious childrearing, defined as the use of controlling behaviors by mothers due to their worrying, can promote a focus on the negative consequences and pose a threat to the child (Affrunti & Woodruff-Borden, 2017). However, Kertz et al., (2008) finds results are also positive regarding maternal anxiety. The results indicate that it does not necessarily lead to poor child outcomes; however, maternal parenting behaviors are more predictive of child outcomes than anxiety alone. Another critical finding is that children of anxious parents are at an increased risk of developing an anxiety disorder (Affrunti et al., 2017). In recent research, anxious mothers have been characterized as showing affectionless control while interacting with their children (Kertz et al., 2008). Messer and Beidel (1994) conducted a study with older anxious children who discovered a pattern of intrusiveness and an overcontrolling nature, which depicted their families as promoting less independence than did non-anxious children. Another study showed that during parent-child interactions of anxious mothers granted less autonomy, they showed less warmth and positivity, and were catastrophized and criticized more than non-anxious mothers (Whaley et al., 1999).

Black mothers who engaged in anxious childrearing may likely suggest to their daughters the negative consequences of racial gender identity compared to traditional femininity

stereotypes. However, the lack of research on anxious Black mother influences on their adolescent daughter's gender identity was not supported. Stassart et al., (2017) believes gender role theory leads to the development of personality characteristics that girls learn to be emotional, gentle, passive, and understanding, consistent with feminine traits. Minuchin's (1985) family systems theory argues that socialization can be described as an interaction between parents' attempts to control their children and children's attempts to assert their own will on the environment. Nonetheless, cognitive and environmental factors contribute to this notion that adolescent Black girls' responses to their anxious mothers predict influences associated with feminine traits.

A more recent study found that African American girls reported higher levels of monitoring and behavioral control by their mothers (Mandara & Pikes, 2008; Wood et al., 2007). In contrast, Zimmerman (1995) argued that African American mothers viewed girls as strong, independent, trusted, and able to go on with their lives. Several studies have found that maternal support is more crucial to self-esteem (Burke & Weir, 1978; Hoffman et al., 1988; Kon & Losenkov, 1978; O'Donnell, 1976). Research conducted by Hill et al., (2005) on African American families has stressed the effects of minority status, economic stress, and kinship networks on parenting morals and practices. Historically, the lack of resources and support has required African American women to take on different responsibilities to provide for their families and communities, even at the expense of their own needs and psychological well-being (Beaubouef-Lafontant, 2007; Woods-Giscombe, 2010).

Independence is especially valued in the United States, and mothers' encouragement of girls' independence tends to vary by race (Ridolfo et al., 2013). However, some studies show that parents of White girls are more protective of young adolescent females (Avison &

McAlpine, 1992). In contrast, Black girls' parents are more encouraging of their independence

(Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). According to Kerrigan et al., (2007), a study revealed that

African American adolescent girls admire their mothers and grandmothers for independence and

emotional strength. Furthermore, African American mothers may emphasize independence,

confidence, and strength as relevant when confronted with adversity, which is similar to the

SBW concept as a protective function against the negative effects of racism and limited

resources (Abrams et al., 2014). The African American girls' perception of maternal

encouragement of independence and strength predict higher self-esteem (Ridolfo et al., 2013)

and may be the reason why African American females consistently report higher self-esteem

than members of other racial, ethnic groups (Twenge & Crocker, 2002). The SBW concept is

seen as an influential gender image, which emphasizes independence, confidence, resisting

vulnerability, and obligation to help others (Abrams et al., 2014; Collins, 2005). It is important to

examine the parenting styles as it relates to the mother-daughter relationships in African

American populations. Prior work has suggested that African American parents use a more

authoritarian parenting style characterized by high levels of control compared to Caucasian

parents (Smetana & Daddis, 2002). Although this parenting style has been associated with

childhood problems in Caucasian families, this has not been supported in work with African

American families (Baumrind, 1972; Peters, 1988; McLeod et al., 1994). Instead, it has been

suggested that this behavior might serve as a protective factor in African American families

where there may be more environmental stressors (Lamborn et al., 1996). Traditionally, Black

family's protective factors are developed from the mentality of 'what happens in the family stays

in the family.' More research is needed to examine the relationship between anxious maternal

attachment in African American populations.

Empirical findings suggest the quality of mother-adolescent relationships emerged as a robust predictor of adolescents' psychological functioning—a finding in accord with numerous existing studies of African American adolescents (Cooper & McLoyd, 2011). Darling and Steinberg (1993) claim that parenting styles influence the effects of parenting behavior and that the link between racial barrier socialization and adolescent functioning was conditional on both the affective quality of mother-adolescent relationships and adolescent gender. In particular, the researchers found a consistent pattern among girls indicating that increased racial barrier socialization messages conveyed in the context of less positive mother-adolescent relationships predicted lower depressive symptomatology and higher self-esteem (Cooper & McLoyd, 2011). Recent studies have supported claims that girls' outcomes may be more strongly associated with maternal racial socialization (Hughes et al., 2006). The maternal racial socialization is vital among girls their relationships and kinship support in Black family functioning and childbearing.

The literature provides evidence that mothers play an influential role in adolescent girls' development of healthy self-esteem. Black daughters report receiving greater encouragement of independence from their mothers than White daughters, and their Black mothers report holding higher academic aspirations for their daughters than White mothers. Ridolfo et al., (2013) states that the quality of Black mothers' relationships with their daughters and Black mothers' extended encouragement of their daughter's independence partially accounts for race distinctions found in girl's problem-solving ability, and to a smaller level, self-esteem. Also, while mothering appears to be an essential factor for adolescent girls' self-evaluations, a good deal of the variance between racial groups is left unexplained for self-esteem. Mothers are just one force in adolescent girls' lives. It is necessary to examine socialization within a full social context, including fathers, extended family, peers, and media, particularly when it comes to girls' self-

evaluations. The consistent findings in the literature suggest that self-esteem results from

relationships with others (Sroufe, 2002; Thompson, 2006). More specifically, the individuals

with low self-esteem are likely to have controlling mothers and unsupportive fathers (Keizer et

al., 2019).

Future research should explore how adolescents and Black girls, in particular, benefit

from a healthy of their "self" or personhood. Mothers of Black daughters may have altered their

mothering behaviors in response to education, income, incarcerations, single parenting, and other

cultural changes (Ridolfo et al., 2013). Although it is possible that having a healthy sense of

"self" in youth may not translate into future educational or economic success, there may still be

ways that having a healthy sense of "self" in adolescence is specifically vital for Black girls'

futures (Ridolfo et al., 2013). There is ample evidence to support a relationship between an

individual's representation of attachment anxiety, avoidance, and internalization of problems

(Cooper et al., 1998). However, research directly examining the role of attachment in the

intergenerational transmission of internalizing symptoms during adolescence is scarce. Research

supports the notion that attachment, established in early childhood, influences peer relationships

of all ages and affects self-esteem and parenting practices (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby & Base,

1988).

Although adolescence is a time of expanding social roles, both mother and father

continue to be essential attachment figures (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2010). Empirical research

supported the continued importance of parental attachment for adolescent psychological health.

Many studies have demonstrated that adolescents' attachment to their parents is related to their

self-esteem (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2010). However, few studies have specifically investigated

paternal and maternal attachment on adolescent psychological health (e.g., self-esteem,

depression, and life satisfaction). Parental support and encouragement of autonomy are considered vital resources for adolescents to navigate through this challenging developmental period (Grolnick et al., 1997). Allen (2008) suggested that adolescence is also a transitional period for the attachment system. Although parents continue to act as a secure base in times of stress, there is a changing balance between attachment and exploratory behavior (Allen 2008). Furthermore, Heinonen et al., (2003) maintain that the view of a primary source of self-esteem varies, according to theories and definitions of self-esteem, especially the ideal self as a person's representation of what he/she wants to be or feels that he/she should be. Empirical findings have supported that parenting, especially in childhood, is of primary importance. Harter (1999) reported that during childhood, the parents' hopes and aspirations usually form the basis for ideal self-representation and the major source of self-esteem.

According to Howard and Ryan (2017), the tween years become an important time for Black youth to build a racial identity and view of oneself as a Black person. A few developmental theories suggest that during the tween years of preadolescence and early adolescence, Black children's racial development involves a move from parents' perspectives on race to their ethnic self-concepts and a validation of their own beliefs (Howard & Ryan, 2017). Theorists assert that in order for African American young women to be healthy, they have to recognize both the prevalence and reality of racism and sexism in their lives, or the 'double jeopardy' status, and that identity development occurs in light of racism and sexism (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996).

Bowlby (1973) argued that adult anxiety is grounded in childhood experiences that leave a child uncertain of having a protective figure in times of trouble. These adults reported experiencing criticism and rejection during childhood and also perceived feeling threatened with

abandonment and unavailability. According to Bowlby (1973), another pathway for anxiety can develop among children living with overprotective and controlling parents or in combinations of overprotectiveness and rejection from different parents. Studies influenced by attachment theory have emphasized the association between insecure attachment styles and self-esteem in adolescence. Attachment refers to the inbuilt ability of humans to form bonds of affection and love toward significant others (Bowlby, 1969/82).

Summary

The greatest challenge for adolescent Black girls in society is to convey ideals of self when presented with false and incomplete images characterizing Black girlhood. Researchers have found distorted images of Black femininity stereotypes derived from history, including the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire which are still pervasive in mainstream America and current media representations viewed by adolescent Black girls (Gibson, 2016). Research studies that that examine non-traditional methods for helping adolescent Black girls deconstruct and challenge stereotypical and dominant messages about the underrepresented lives of young females are limited (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2012).

The overall research implies that anxious persons strive for closeness but have problems establishing these relationships because negative self-perceptions and fear of rejection influence how Black mothers provide social support to their daughters (Green et al., 2007). Black feminist literature argued that Black mothers, to prepare their daughters for the oppressions they are expected to encounter later in life, instill in their daughters to be strong, self-reliant, independent, and goal oriented (Ridolfo et al., 2013).

In sum, the literature indicates a gap in knowledge of understanding and examining how gender-specific ideologies may have a link between the negative character images and their

powerful influences on adolescent Black girls' self-esteem, and particularly stimuli of anxious mother attachment strain on the mother-daughter relationship.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The construct for the study, the Model of Black Femininity, examines the negative stereotype characteristics to determine if it is a predictor that directly correlated with Black girls' self-esteem. There is limited data that addresses the potential effect of the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire's negative stereotypes on adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. The purpose of this quantitative study is to create awareness by using a community-based program to strengthen the self-esteem of young Black girls; subsequently, they can learn more about becoming an SBW to overcome problems with low self-esteem. Phinney and Ong (2007) contend that the self-concept of African American girls is influenced by attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs concerning their racial-ethnic group. SBW identity continuously aids in resilience as a response to Black women's and girls' cultural physical and psychological coping mechanisms (Abrams et al, 2019).

This study explored whether the six-hour group intervention program, You Grow Girl, will improve these factors that influence adolescent Black girls' higher levels of self-esteem and aid in the stability of racial self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth. This researcher is hopeful that this research will provide Black girls' awareness of individual self-worth during any given phase of adolescence, thereby consistently gaining a higher level of self-esteem. In the final section, the statistical results used to test the null hypotheses in the study is shared.

Design

In the research, a quasi-experiment was conducted using a single group of twelve Black female adolescent participants who each completed pretest and posttest surveys. Following the

pretest surveys, a Cognitive Therapy (CT) group intervention training program, *You Can Grow Girl,* was implemented. Subsequently, posttest surveys determined the positive or negative changes in the participates perception of their self-esteem. The pretest and posttest design was the most appropriate choice for this type of research study. This research design measured the effectiveness of the group intervention program.

The study measured the levels of self-esteem for adolescent Black girls' perception of negative stereotypes. The Cognitive Therapy (CT) training program was used to effect changes in how negative cognitions shape their behaviors and emotions (Beck, 1979). The outcome of this research was designed to help develop a healthy level of self-esteem in adolescent Black girls through their psychosocial well-being, as indicated in their pretest and posttest survey responses.

Research Questions

Three research questions were proposed and statistical hypotheses were developed to assess each individual question. Each research question focused on an individual area of interest and tested independently.

RQ1: Will the group intervention program lead to a change in adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity?

RQ2: Will the group intervention program improve the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls?

RQ3: Will the group intervention program impact adolescent Black girls and maternal anxious mother attachment relationship?

Hypothesis

H1: The adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity will reflect a statistically significant change after completing the group intervention program, as indicated in their survey responses.

H2: The adolescent Black girls participating in the group intervention program will have a statistically significant higher level of self-esteem, as indicated in their survey responses.

H3: The adolescent Black girls participating in the group intervention program will have a statistically significant improvement in the maternal anxious attachment relationship, as indicated in their survey responses.

Participants and Settings

A small group of twelve adolescent Black females participated in a six-hour group intervention program and responded to three pretest and posttest surveys. The criteria for the study participants was: adolescent Black females, ages between 13 to 15 years of age, able to speak, read, and write English. The study was conducted in an online format via the Zoom video conferencing in an office located in Texas. Providing an online format increased the participant's willingness to participant due to the global pandemic restrictions. Youth and Family Counseling Agency (YFC) is the pseudonym given to the location to protect participants' confidentiality and anonymity. YFC was chosen as the original location because of its counseling referrals to offer youth and family counseling services in the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) area. The demographic population location is predominately Black and African American in Duncanville (34.9%), DeSoto (68.3%), and Cedar Hill, Texas (53.92%) ethnic groups in the area (U. S. Census Bureau, 2019). However, the online method involved participants from multiple regions of DFW who volunteered for the study.

This study explored the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls' self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth as it relates to negative stereotypes of Black femininity and the anxious mother-daughter attachment relationship. This research determined if the group intervention program helped to form the racial self-identity of adolescent Black girls' needed to acquire and have a better-quality of mental health, behaviors, and emotional well-being.

Instrumentation

The standard three instruments used for measuring the variables in this quantitative research study were self-reported scales that have documentation of validity and reliability coefficients included: (1) the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (see Appendix F), (2) the African American Women's Shifting Scale (see Appendix H), and (3) the Experiences in Close Relationships (see Appendix I).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE). Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) is a 10-item self-report and unidimensional measure of global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1979). Permission is not required to use this instrument. RSE consists of 10 brief statements using a four-point Likert-like scale, ranging from 1 "Strongly Agree" to 4 "Strongly Disagree". The scale has demonstrated excellent internal consistency (0.92) and test-retest reliability of 0.85 and 0.88. Thus, it has demonstrated good reliability and validity across a large number of different sample groups. The example wording for this construct is, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and "At times I think I am no good at all." Scores for the RSE range from 0 to 30. The scale has been validated for use with male and female adolescent, adult, and elderly populations, the RSE is a widely used self-esteem instrument (Hagborg, 1993). Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was selected for this study because it is widely used in self-esteem research among diverse populations. A study by Gaylord-Harden et al. suggested that ethnic identity and self-esteem

function as important links in how social support reduces internalization symptoms in African American youth (2007). RSE's vast popularity as a self-esteem measurement is also an important part of self-efficacy, self-identity, and self-concept formation (Rosenberg, 1965).

African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS). The African American Women's Shifting Scale is a 13-item scale to measure shifting or self-altering strategies among African American women (Johnson et al., 2016). Permission was granted for use this scale (see Appendix G). The AAWSS is a self-report and consists of *true* or *false* statements. It measures three factors labeled: (1) Strong Black Woman; (2) Awareness of Shifting Behavior; and (3) Sensitivity to the Perceptions of Black Women. The SBW construct reinforces an attitude held by some African American women who feel they must manage all challenges and demonstrate strength in the face of adversity without showing weakness (Abrams et al., 2014; Harrington et al., 2010). The SBW construct reflects positive attributes of African American Women. An example of the wording for this construct is "I feel pressure to prove to Black friends and family that I am a strong Black woman." The Awareness of Shifting Behavior construct reflects attentiveness to a need to alter various aspects of their self-image in response to a particular context's demands. The example wording for this construct is "I am different at school than at home." The Sensitivity of the Perception of Black Women construct reflects one's own home community some African American women feel the demands to identify with the dominant society in terms of speech, dress, and behavior. The example wording for this construct is "I feel the need to change my image as a Black woman." Support for the development and construct validity of the AAWSS was obtained in the present study.

The African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) was selected for this study to measure stereotype concerns that often portray African American women characteristics as

dominant, loud, seductive, and rude. Stephens and Phillips (2003) described three stereotypes of the traditional Model of Black Femininity as a Mammy image of a nurturing woman, Sapphire image of an argumentative and loud woman, and a Jezebel image of a highly sexual woman. However, to counteract these negative stereotypes, the Strong Black Women's image featured the positive attributes of African American women is likely shifting behaviors of self-image (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003).

Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR). The Experiences in Close Relationships is a 36-item self-reporting questionnaire to measure adult attachment (Brennan et al., 1998). Permission is not required to use this instrument. Respondents use a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 "Disagree Strongly" to 7 "Agree Strongly" to respond to the items. Point 4 on the scale is *neutral/mixed*. Of the 36 items, 9 are reverse keyed (8 items from the Avoidance subscale and 1 item from the Anxiety subscale). The results of the factor analysis by Brennan et al. (1998) identified two continuous attachment dimensions labeled Anxiety (18 items) and Avoidance (18 items). The higher scores on the Anxiety and Avoidant subscales indicate higher levels of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. The example wording for Anxiety questions is "My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away" and "I prefer to not show others how I feel deep down." These items are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 7 "Strongly Agree". The response set factors one for the ECR instrument showed high reliability (Lopez et al., 2001: Vogel & Wei, 2005; Fraley et al., 2000). The test-retest had Cronbach alpha rating of .93 for the Anxiety scale and .95 for the Avoidance scale. ERC was selected for this study to measure the level of attachment anxiety for the impact on maternal anxious mother attachment.

Procedures

All students who attend Liberty University and who conduct a research study must obtain approval from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) before starting the study. Therefore, the initial process was to obtain approval from IRB to conduct the study. Once the approval letter was received, the recruiting process began (see Appendix A). Upon approval, the YFC agency's database was assessed to identify potential participants. First, previous or current clients were eliminated to avoid potential conflict of interest as the researcher is a Licensed Professional Counselor at the agency. Second, a list of the population of interest was identified using the following characteristics:

1. Black females;

2. Email address;

3. Phone number;

4. Date of birth range between the years 2005 – 2007.

Next, a simple random sample method was selected and met the conditions of this study's criteria. A simple random sampling method without any identifying information ensured anonymity of all participants. Warner (2013) concluded that in a simple random sample, the sample members are selected from the population using methods that should give every member of the population an equal chance of being included. A column of random numbers was generated next to each of the participants who met the criteria and then randomly selected twenty-five participants based on the random numbers that ended in one arbitrarily chosen value. The participants were chosen using a simple random sample technique. A sample was selected from that population using simple random sampling or other sampling methods (Cozby, 2004).

The recruitment method was a recruitment flyer (see Appendix D) sent to potential participants and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to their email address. Participants and their

parent(s)/caregiver(s) indicated an interest in volunteering for the study who were then instructed to respond to the email, thereby notifying the researcher and researcher's assistant. The recruitment flyer informed the potential participants of the 24-48 hour timeframe for the research assistant to make contact with them for an initial screening for the study.

The research assistant called the potential participants between 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm. In that initial screening, the research assistant read from a prepared script and recruited participants on behalf of the researcher. This screening informed the participants and their parent(s)/ guardian(s) the study details while also answering questions, explaining parental consent, and providing additional information about qualifications required to involve the pretest and posttest survey process in the study. Participants and their parents(s)/guardian(s): (1) answered a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) that verified and confirmed participant's age; (2) confirmed participants met eligible qualifications to have age-appropriate cognition and no known learning disabilities; (3) confirmed the participants can speak, read, and write English; and (4) signed parental consent forms with the participant attesting to their agreement to engage in the study.

If the participant was not eligible, the participant was thanked and informed that they did not meet the qualifications to participate in the study per the recruitment flyer and parent consent form. Participants who met the eligibility requirements were then provided with information including the parent consent form (see Appendix B) which were sent to the participant's email address immediately after the initial screening by the research assistant. The participant and parent(s)/caregiver(s) were instructed to DocuSign electronically, including their printed name, signature, date, and then asked to forward the attached documents to the same email. Subsequently, the first fifteen eligible volunteers who met all the qualifications and completed

the parental consent forms and returned by email to the research assistant were accepted and enrolled in the study. All participants who completed the study received a $15 Visa gift card as appreciation for their time and full participation.

This single group intervention study was conducted on June 20th and June 27th via Zoom video conference in two 3-hour increments. The *You Can Grow Girl* group intervention training (see Appendix E) was designed, developed, and facilitated by the researcher to improve the factors that influence adolescent Black girls' healthy self-esteem and aid in the stability of racial self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth. The study aimed to determine the efficacy of a community-based intervention program for the targeted population who may be at a higher risk of developing lower self-esteem levels and related behavioral problems. Participants engaged in group discussions, interactive activities, and lecture lessons, and practiced strategies and techniques designed to address healthier self-esteem with the following topics:

<u>Module 1</u>: Know Thyself – This module helped participants to know each other by introductions to learn more about themselves and others.

<u>Module 2</u>: Mirror, Mirror – In this module, participants were taught and encouraged to recognize the concept of self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth.

<u>Module 3</u>: Who Am I – This module was more psychoeducational in nature and educated participants on racial and social stereotypes. Participants developed strategies and techniques that increased and promoted a healthier self-esteem.

<u>Module 4</u>: A Healthy Mind, Body, & Soul – The participants were taught to emphasize the importance of mental and physical health to manage stress and adverse thoughts during this module. Participants practiced relaxation and breathing techniques, guided imagery, and coping skills to use for triggers.

Module 5: I Believe - Adopting a roadmap for gender identity and race identity in their future as a Strong Black Woman was the focus of this module.

Module 6: Old Me, New Me – Participants completed the course and celebrated "Transformation Day."

You Can Grow Girl program was conducted as two-day training sessions facilitated in a group online format for two three-hour classes. The 12 participants attended the first group in a 3-hour class on Saturday, from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm and completed the three pretest survey responses before the training. One week after the first group training, participants attended the second group 3-hour class on a Saturday from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm and completed the three posttest survey responses after training. Immediately before and after both training sessions, the research assistant electronically sent the pretest and posttest surveys to the participant's email address, and completed the following survey responses:

1. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) survey was estimated to take about two minutes to complete;

2. The African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) survey was estimated to take about two minutes complete; and

3. The Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) survey was estimated to take about five minutes to complete.

Participants were instructed to send their electronic survey responses to the research assistant's email address to collect the data. The researcher did not collect any identifying information through the surveys to ensure confidentiality during the data collection. The research assistant coded each participants survey. The research assistant collected the survey responses to ensure that all data was stripped of identifiers before the researcher received it via email to avoid

possible conflict of interest. The method to collect the survey responses provided accurate, authentic answers from each participant, and ensured the results remained anonymous. The research assistant assigned lottery codes and maintained the confidentiality of participant survey responses, which was only known to the research assistant(s) and the participant. The assigned codes and instructions were sent by the research assistant to the participants with the pretest and posttest surveys to their email address.

A list of codes is stored on a separate password-locked folder provided by the research assistant and concealed participants' identities. The study's data is stored on a password-locked computer, and access only granted to the researcher. All electronic records will be deleted after three years. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed within the group setting. Although discouraged, other group participants may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group. The records of this study are private. Data collected as part of this study may be shared for future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from the participants is shared, any information that could identify a participant, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared. If a participant had chosen to withdraw from the study, their responses from the survey was not recorded or included in the study. The study's pretest and posttest survey results were compared to determine the impact or lack of impact on participants' self-esteem after attending the group intervention program as it is related to the negative stereotypes of the Model of Black Femininity and the anxious mother-daughter attachment relationships.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this quasi-experimental design determined the causality of an intervention with the target population (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). A pretest/posttest survey was used to measure a single group design method. The statistical power of a controlled pretest-

posttest design was used in this study because it can separate causal factors hypothesized to be at work (Oakes & Feldman, 2001). The dependent variable in this study was the *You Can Grow Girl* group intervention program and the independent variables were the Model of Black Femininity, maternal anxious mother attachment, and self-esteem. The targeted population in this study were adolescent Black girls ranging between ages 13 to 15 years old. The instruments used for pretest-posttest surveys were the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the African American Women's Shifting Scale, and the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale.

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test design compared the sum of ranks across groups (Warner, 2013). The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used in this study because there are two nominal variables and one measurement variable (McDonald, 2009). One of the nominal variables has only two values, such as "before" and "after," and the other nominal variable often represents individuals (McDonald, 2009). The individuals in this study consisted of a single group of twelve participants and compared their pretest and posttest survey results before and after treatment. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to identify differences in responses for the single group study to compare pretest and posttest survey results. The analysis of data from the comparison of pretest and posttest survey responses examined whether the group intervention program impacted the participants' self-esteem, perception of Black femininity, and mother-daughter attachment relationship.

The Wilcoxon is the nonparametric equivalent of the paired t-test and is suitable for analyzing if the distribution of differences between pairs severely non-normally distributed data (Warner, 2013). The number of participants (N=12) and the data analysis did not show a normal distribution approach initiated in the selection of a nonparametric test. The scores were converted to ranks by performing a nonparametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Descriptive statistics were

used and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was done to analyze the data. The Wilcoxon signed-rank

test approach compared the differences between the pretest-posttest responses used on each

instrument. The results determined no statistically significant changes exist in adolescent Black

girl's self-esteem, perception of the Model of Black Femininity, or maternal anxious mother

attachment following administration of group intervention.

In summary, the scientific evidence shows that the development of self-esteem across the

life span changes from childhood to old (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005). This study was

designed to address the development of self-esteem for adolescent Black girls early in the phase

of identity awareness. The stakeholders are community-based programs, school counselors and

educators, and clinical mental health professionals offering support and help for teenage Black

girls encountering issues related to racial identity, self-worth, and self-confidence in building

strength and resiliency.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose for this study is to determine the impact of the Model of Black Femininity

and maternal anxious mother attachment to adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. Pretest and

posttest surveys to measure participants perception. The objective of this analysis was to

determine the effectiveness of a group intervention program for variable predicted of adolescent

Black girl's self-esteem. Self-esteem is a strong indicator of life satisfaction in adolescent

females (Biro, et al., 2006). Outcomes of the study can aid in understanding the impact of the

Model of Black Femininity and maternal anxious mother attachment to adolescent Black girls'

self-esteem. The researcher facilitated the virtual group intervention program. Before and after

the intervention program, the same three surveys were administered to each respondent to collect

changes in their perceptions and attitudes in these three areas. Respondent's changes to overall scores in three areas were evaluated, as well as changes that occurred in individual question across all respondents. Non-parametric statistical tests were used to test each hypothesis and determine whether the intervention group had positive or negative effects on each area of interest.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Three research questions were proposed and statistical hypotheses were developed to assess each individual question. Each research question focused on an individual area of interest and tested independently.

RQ1: Will the group intervention program lead to a change in adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity?

> **H1:** The adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity will reflect a statistically significant change after completing the group intervention program, as indicated in their survey responses.

RQ2: Will the group intervention program improve the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls?

> **H2:** The adolescent Black girls participating in the group intervention program will reflect a statistically significant higher level of self-esteem, as indicated in their survey responses.

RQ3: Will the group intervention program impact adolescent Black girls and maternal anxious mother attachment relationship?

> **H3:** The adolescent Black girls participating in the group intervention program will reflect a statistically significant improvement in the maternal anxious attachment relationship, as indicated in their survey responses.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for each participant's responses included the following data. In total, each participant accomplished the following tasks in completeness:

1. Pretest Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) survey

2. Pretest African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) survey

3. Pretest Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) survey

4. *You Can Grow Girl* (6-hour group intervention program)

5. Posttest Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) survey

6. Posttest African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) survey

7. Posttest Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ERC) survey

The African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) survey consists of 10 True and False questions with a given value of 1 for "True" and 2 for "False." Scores for each Respondent were averaged over all 10 questions. The Rosenburg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) survey contains 10 questions with a four-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "Strongly Agree" and 4 represents "Strongly Disagree." Scores, ranging from 1 to 4, were obtained for each respondent by averaging responses over all 10 questions. The Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR) survey contained 36 questions on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 7 represents "Strongly Agree." Scores, ranging 1 to 7, were obtained for each respondent by averaging responses over all 36 questions.

Table 1. Summary statistics for scores from each survey, pre and post intervention course.

Survey	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Pre RSE	2.141	2.200	0.423	1.500	2.900
Pre AAWSS	1.583	1.600	0.276	1.100	2.000
Pre ECR	4.111	4.000	0.517	3.500	5.389
Post RSE	2.283	2.400	0.419	1.600	2.900
Post AAWSS	1.550	1.600	0.271	1.100	1.900
Post ECR	3.949	3.875	0.559	2.916	4.833

Scores from each pretest and posttest survey among the 12 respondents are shown in Table 1. Scores from the RSE survey ranged from 1.500 to 2.900 prior to the course, with an average of 2.141. After the course, scores ranged from 1.600 to 2.900, with an average score of 2.283. Prior to the intervention course, scores from the AAWSS survey ranged between 1.100 and 2.000, with an average score of 1.583. After the course, scores ranged from 1.100 to 1.900 with an average score of 1.550. Finally, the average score from the ECR survey was 4.111 with scores ranging between 3.500 and 5.389 between the 12 respondents. The average score posttest increased to 3.949 with scores ranging between 2.916 and 4.833.

Because the same participants and survey were used before and after taking the intervention course, answers to each question and scores to each survey could be compared directly for each participant. The difference in pretest and posttest course scores was calculated as

$$Difference = Score_{post} - Score_{pre}$$

where $Scorep_{post}$ is the score for a respondent after taking the course and $Score_{pre}$ is the score prior to taking the course. Summary statistics for these differences in survey scores are shown for each survey in Table 2. Correlations in score differences across the three surveys are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Summary statistics for difference in Pre and Post course surveys.

Survey	Avg. # of Answer Increases	Avg. # of Answer Decreases	Mean Difference	SD Difference	Min Difference	Max Difference
RSE			0.141	0.246	-0.300	0.600
AAWSS			-0.033	0.155	-0.300	0.300
ECR			-0.162	0.501	-1.555	0.361

The average difference in post and pre-courses scores from the average score difference on the RSE survey was 0.141, with score differences ranging between -0.300 and 0.600. Thus, the average score shifted slightly in the direction of "Agree" after the intervention course.

The AAWSS survey was -0.033 with score differences ranging from -0.300 to 0.300. This indicates that on average, participates chose slightly more "Trues" on the post-course survey than on the pre-course survey. Finally, the average score differences from the ECR survey were -0.162 with differences ranging between -1.555 and 0.361. The negative average difference indicates that opinions shifted towards "Disagree" on average after the course was taken.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation among variables.

Survey	RSE	AAWSS	ECR
RSE	-	-0.269	-0.102
AAWSS		-	-0.078
ECR			-

Pearson correlations between the three measurements difference between the pre and post course surveys are shown in Table 3. No two variables have high levels of correlation.

Results

Each hypothesis was evaluated by comparing responses before and after the group intervention program was taken. Due to the number of respondents being too small to achieve asymptotical normality of the sampling distribution, non-parametric statistical tests were used to test each hypothesis. This eliminated the need for normality in the observations. Prior to statistical tests, overall summary statistics of each survey score are provided to demonstrate the distribution of each survey scores. While hypothesis testing was performed independently for each research question, correlation among survey scores is shown to evaluate dependence among the three areas of interest.

Hypothesis 1:

Research question one focused on whether the group intervention program lead to a change in adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity. This perception was based on scores from the African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) survey. The null hypothesis associated with this is that adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity will not have statistically significant changes after completing the group intervention program, as indicated by their survey responses. This means that there is no statistical evidence that scores calculated between post-course survey and the pre-course survey will be different from 0. The alternative hypothesis is that the location shift of difference in scores is different from zero.

Table 4. Results from Wilcoxon signed-rank test comparing perception of the Model of Black Femininity for adolescent Black girls before and after the course.

Test-Statistic	p-value	Lower 95% C.I.	Upper 95% C.I.	Median
30	0.4024	-0.100	0.199	0.099

Table 4 contains information from the statistical test used to test the null hypothesis. This includes the test statistic, associated p-value, the 95% confidence interval for the median difference in score, and the estimate of the true median difference. The p-value from the test was 0.4024, indicating no statistical evidence that the true median difference in scores from the AAWSS before and after taking the intervention course are different than 0. The 95% confidence interval for the median score difference is (-0.100, 0.199). There is no statistical evidence that the median scores changed on the AAWSS after taking the intervention course, and thus, adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity did not change.

Hypothesis 2:

Research Question two focused on whether the group intervention program improved the self-esteem of adolescent Black girls. Participant self-esteem is based on scores from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) survey. The null hypothesis associated with this is that adolescent

Black girls' self-esteem will not have statistically significant changes after completing the group intervention program, as indicated in from their survey responses. This means that there is no statistical evidence that median scores between the post-course survey and the pre-course survey will be different from 0. The alternative hypothesis is that the location shift of difference in scores is different from zero.

Table 5. Results from Wilcoxon signed-rank test comparing self-esteem of adolescent Black girls before and after the course.

Test-Statistic	p-value	Lower 95% C.I.	Upper 95% C.I.	Median
10.5	0.080	-0.350	0.015	-0.141

Table 5 contains information from the statistical test used to test the null hypothesis. This includes the test statistic, associated p-value, the 95% confidence interval for the median difference in score, and the estimate of the true median difference. The *p*-value from the test was 0.080, indicating no statistical evidence that the true median difference in scores from the RSE before and after taking the intervention course are different than 0. The 95% confidence interval for the median score difference is (-0.350, 0.015). There is no statistical evidence that the median scores changed on the RSE after taking the intervention course, and thus, that adolescent Black girls' self-esteem was not different after the course.

Hypothesis 3:

The final research question focused on whether the group intervention program impacts adolescent Black girls and the maternal anxious mother attachment relationship. The maternal anxious mother attachment relationship is based on scores from the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) survey. The null hypothesis associated with this is that adolescent Black girls' maternal anxious mother attachment relationship will not be statistically significantly different after completing the group intervention program, as indicated in from their survey responses. This means that there is no statistical evidence that the median score as calculated

between the post-course survey and the pre-course survey will be different from 0. The

alternative hypothesis is that the location shift of difference in scores is different from zero.

Table 6. Results from Wilcoxon signed-rank test comparing maternal anxious attachment relationship for adolescent Black girls before and after the course.

Test-Statistic	p-value	Lower 95% C.I.	Upper 95% C.I.	Median
41	0.4765	-0.138	0.597	0.073

Table 6 contains information from the statistical test used to test the null hypothesis. This

includes the test statistic, associated p-value, the 95% confidence interval for the median

difference in score, and the estimate of the true median difference. The *p*-value from the test was

0.4765, indicating no statistical evidence that the true median difference in scores from the ECR

before and after to taking the intervention course are different than 0. The 95% confidence

interval for the median score difference is (-0.138, 0.597). There is no statistical evidence that

the median scores changed on the ECR after taking the intervention course, and thus, that

adolescent Black girls' maternal anxious mother attachment relationship was not affected by

taking the course.

Summary

The purpose of these results was to analyze the effects of an intervention program on

adolescent Black girls in several areas of focus. A sample of 25 participants was selected using

random sampling, of which 12 girls responded and participated. Pre-course surveys were applied

to each participant of varying lengths, recording responses in areas of perception of the Model of

Black Femininity, maternal anxious attachment relationship, and self-esteem. Respondents then

participated in an intervention course and repeated the same surveys to gauge changes to their

responses in each area. Results indicated that survey responses were not statistically different for

any survey. In all surveys, some respondents had either higher, or lower scores than their original

responses. However, there was no statistical evidence that the median response changed. Thus,

the group intervention course had no significant effect on perception of the impact of the Model of Black Femininity and maternal anxious attachment relationship to adolescent Black girls' self-esteem.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

This quantitative study explored whether the six-hour group intervention program had an impact on adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity, maternal anxious attachment relationship, and self-esteem. In this chapter, a discussion section presented the summary of findings related to reviewing the literature to analyze the three research questions, hypotheses, and the results of this study. The limitations of the current study examined ways to improve and extend the research study. It investigated how adolescent Black girls' perception of Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel, SBW images, and the anxious attachment of Black mothers impacts their self-esteem.

Discussion

The purpose and reason for this quantitative study are to determine the impact of the Model of Black Femininity and maternal anxious mother attachment to adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. Pretest and posttest surveys were administered to measure participants' perceptions in the study. Data was collected electronically for the pretest and posttest surveys, which consisted of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS), and Experiences in Close Relationships (ERC). The survey responses were uploaded in SPSS using the analysis of the Wilcoxon signed-rank to test the results of the research questions and hypothesis to analyze the outcomes.

It is essential to offer a brief discussion about the participants in this study, which may contribute to the results. The study advertised a group intervention program conducted online to counteract the current climate in the United States. These are unprecedented times due to the pandemic that happened before the study began. There are strict guidelines by State and local officials that implemented restrictions for sheltering in place and required social distancing due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. After recruitment, only a total of twelve participants consented and volunteered for this research. The participants who completed the review were four 13-year-olds, four 14-year-olds, and four 15-year-olds. All participants self-reported living with their mother since birth.

Much of the literature shows research being more than ten years old and founded on traditional stereotypes of Black femininity during a time of harmful racial identity for women and girls. It is comparable to the current study; the negative character images of Black womanhood presently could have an impact on adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. Extensive research studies have reported higher self-esteem scores with Black girls than the White, Asian, and Hispanic girls' populations. Other studies have found that self-esteem affects girls from various racial-ethnic groups differently. A study by the American Association of University Women and Greenberg-Lake Analysis Group (1991) surveyed elementary to high school girls and boys and found a significant decline in girls' self-esteem. Additionally, the research suggested that femininity consistently linked to low self-esteem and a decrease in adolescent girls' self-esteem, which means more research on gender-role identity is needed.

This study's independent variable is the six-hour group intervention program entitled, *You Can Grow Girl*. Using this group intervention program, the insight and analysis created an awareness of responses to racial and gender stereotypes, bias, and maltreatment of

adolescent Black girls. A benefit of a small group of participants is that using small homogeneous groups is a more appropriate model when discussing sensitive topics (Trepagnier, 2017). The intervention program focused on adolescent Black girls' racial perception of Black femininity stereotypes and, therefore, relied upon a context of safety. Thus, the small group of twelve participants was preferred for this study to survey the experiences and perceptions of adolescent Black girls and their shared experiences on the sensitive variables.

The results of this study's null hypothesis are discussed and outcomes of the three research questions revealed:

Hypothesis 1 findings related to whether the group intervention program led to a change in adolescent Black girls' perception of the Model of Black Femininity. The scores to determine perceptions of Black femininity were obtained from the AAWSS survey responses. Although there was variance in the pretest and posttest responses, it was not significant enough to conclude that the Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel stereotypes discussed during the intervention program had an impact on influencing the adolescent Black girls' perception of the negative character images. The results suggest the p-value from the test was 0.4024, indicating no statistical evidence that the actual median difference in scores from the AAWSS before and after taking the intervention course is different than 0. The 95% confidence interval for the median score difference is (-0.100, 0.119). Results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test comparing the Model of Black Femininity before and after the course shown in Table 4.

Hypothesis 2 outcomes focused on whether the group intervention program improved adolescent Black girls' self-esteem based on scores from the RSE survey. Although there were variances in the pretest and posttest responses, they were not significant enough to conclude that the group intervention impacted the adolescent Black girls' self-esteem. The results suggest *the*

p-value from the test was 0.080, indicating no statistical evidence that the actual median difference in scores from the RSE before and after taking the intervention course is different than 0. The 95% confidence interval for the median score difference is (-0.350, 0.015). Results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test comparing self-esteem before and after the course shown in Table 5.

Hypothesis 3 looked for outcomes related to whether the group intervention program impacts adolescent Black girls and maternal anxious mother attachment based on scores from the ECR survey. Although there was a variance in the pretest and posttest responses, it was not significant enough to conclude that the group intervention had an impact on influencing the anxious mother-daughter attachment relationship. The results suggest *the p*-value from the test was 0.47265, indicating no statistical evidence that the actual median difference in scores from the ECR before and after taking the intervention course is different than 0. The 95% confidence interval for the median score difference is (-0.138, 0.597). The Wilcoxon signed-rank test results comparing anxious mother-daughter attachment before and after the course shown in Table 6.

This discussion will further review the literature and outcomes of the *You Can Grow Girl* group intervention program. Although the responses to the data collected were unknown to the researcher, it appeared that participants openly and honestly shared their perceptions and experiences in the small group format. The researcher sensed, given the age range of the participants, that a few were unaware of the idea of traditional negative stereotypes of Black femininity. In an article, Meslec and Curseu (2013) establish that small groups can also offer a high-performing level of cognitive diversity and collective performance when there is a balance between cognitive differences and similarities in groups.

Furthermore, the researcher that provided the study was a Black woman and it appeared especially important to the young participants' engagement in asking for clarification about

Black females' portrayal and even sharing personal stories during the activities. The participants deemed that the researcher was comfortable, friendly, relatable, and that she was able to participate in all the group activities and discussions. Becoming both a participant and the facilitator allowed the researcher to disclose personal experiences when appropriate. In this way, the researcher hoped to ensure that the participants would cooperate in interactions and be a dynamic group, which would enhance the data by producing significantly meaningful responses, which occurred during several activities throughout the group intervention course.

In the introduction, participants were asked to create a one-minute personal billboard. Participants were instructed to look in the "self" mirror to help understand self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth. The participants responded by sharing their names, ages, character traits, strengths, and how they feel about themselves. Similarly, conversations about their strengths and abilities included sports, dancing, cheerleading, and creative writing. When asked about how they were feelings overall, especially during this time of crisis in our nation, they responded with feeling bored, confused, tired, happy, and loved.

Module 1 is "Know Thyself," and centered around Carl Rogers' (1959) self-concept. The researcher facilitated a lesson and discussion about their perception of self-concept related to self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth. Participants identified character traits and how the opinions of others (negative and positive), influence their environment. Participants played a game titled "Self-Esteem and Knowing Your Self-Worth". The objective was to understand how other people influenced their perception by completing an activity to explore what they "like, accept, approve, and value" about themselves.

In Module 2, "Mirror, Mirror," the unique concept of self was explored, and the participants responded to questions about the Ideal Self, Self-Image, and Self-Esteem.

Participants described their relationship with their mothers as: "good, okay, strict, controlling, we get along, she takes care of me, she is great, I love her, and helpful." The participants had favorable responses to thoughts about themself and what their mother thought about them. The majority of the reactions were *Black is beautiful*. There were three unfavorable responses to this discussion, indicating low self-esteem. A participant commented, "I don't like myself because I don't have any friends; my mother thinks I am smart, but I'm not, and I don't like the way I look." The researcher observed most participants responded to having a positive self.

Module 3, "Who Am I," focused on racial and social stereotypes. The researcher facilitated a lesson and discussion about Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire. A current example used the picture of the Black woman on "Aunt Jemima" syrup, a character image of the Mammy stereotype. The researcher found it interesting how participants shared experiences related to racial identity. One participant (age 15) commented, "My 'old' Black teacher called me a 'Jezebel' one time and said to stop talking to boys about sex, but I didn't know what she was saying about me." It was noted that most participants made references to playing a lot of video games in their downtime and were unaware of these stereotypes. The researcher observed the participants fully engaged when learning where negative thoughts come from and what triggers them. All twelve participants agreed with the flight, fight, or freeze responses when there is a perceived threat or fear, and several participants shared personal experiences involving home or school. The researcher also facilitated a lesson on a Cognitive Therapy (CT) model using Beck's (1976) three levels of cognitions linking core beliefs, dysfunctional assumptions, and negative automatic thoughts to foster open-minded patterns of thinking. Throughout this lesson, the girls asked several questions for clarity, provided examples, and commented on other participants'

responses. The interaction among the group members while providing feedback was a shared positive learning experience about their coping strategies and techniques.

Module 4, "A Healthy Mind, Body, & Soul," emphasized ways to manage mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health. The researcher observed how the group reacted to a participant's comment about herself, "I believe in God, but I have been in counseling for depression." The researcher noticed that the group was silent and allowed time for a discussion to think about what was said. One participant responded by saying, "God will help you." A few participants briefly commented about their Christian worldview and belief in God. Afterward, the researcher taught a lesson and discussion about practicing relaxation, deep breathing techniques, guided imagery, and coping skills. Participants were asked to download the Calming and Virtual Hope Box applications on their electronic devices. The researcher demonstrated how to use the apps, and the participants practiced deep diaphragmatic breathing techniques.

In Module 5, "I Believe," was a discussion about their perception of being Black girls and how they viewed themselves. Participants were introduced to the SBW concept to affirm strength, resiliency, beauty, and positive images of Black femininity. A discussion was facilitated about their perception of their relationship with their mother.

Also, there was a discussion about other strong Black females in today's mainstream media, such as Michelle Obama, Beyoncé, Lizzo, and Serena Williams. Participants shared stories of their personal experience and knowledge of being a strong Black girl. Participants were engaged in writing exercises on "How I View Myself" fill-in the blanks. Each participant shared their view of self and how being an SBW can impact their future.

In the final module, "Old Me, New Me," participants watched a video, *Living Your Best Life and Feeling Great* which advised them on how to practice *Mindfulness* and affirmations.

The video featured adolescent transformations of both girls and boys from negative to positive cognitions about themselves. No observations were made on how the participants reacted to the video. Participants were instructed to take notes for their future references.

Upon reading the scripture, Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV), "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" a discussion was led to solicit affirmations for their future spiritual references. Additionally, the scripture was read in Psalm 139:14 (NIV), "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well" led to a discussion on how they are fearfully and wonderfully made and able to spiritually transform old ways of negative thinking to new positive thinking. Participants practiced strategies for automatic thought stopping, thereby becoming "old me to new me." Four participants gave very emotional feedback on what they learned about Who am I? (e.g., I am fearfully and wonderfully made) and Why Am I Here? (e.g., God has a plan for me).

In conclusion, the group intervention program was completed in full. In the analysis, it was determined that some respondents had both higher and lower scores in all surveys as compared to their pre-test responses. Pearson's correlation tested the RSE, AAWSS, and ECR survey's statistical differences before and after estimated that no two variables had high levels of variance. Consequently, no statistical evidence emerged that the median response changed. The results of the single group intervention course had no significant effect on the perception of the impact of the Model of Black Femininity and maternal anxious attachment relationship to adolescent Black girls' self-esteem.

Implications

This section addresses the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. Recommendations are included for stakeholders and also provides insight into a Christian worldview interpretation of the findings.

Theoretical

The implication for understanding Black mother-daughter relationships is a psychoanalytic approach. Reid (1982) states that the psychoanalytic theory examines the roles of parents in the establishing Black girls' personality and social behavior. The theory argues that girls' identities with mothers and adult female role models establish that the development of feminine behavior is central in the socialization process. Black mothers' roles and nurturing personalities are widely seen as influential figures in the local Black churches and communities. Black mothers expect their daughters to have the essential survival skills of working hard, pursuing education, and taking responsibility for their families and communities (Collins, 2005). In contrast, Black mothers encourage their daughters to learn survival skills to confront situations detrimental to their emotional well-being. Recently, Epstein et al., (2017) set up a groundbreaking study that assessed the "adultification" for Black girls 5-14 years old. The data showed that adults perceive Black girls as "less innocent and more adult-like than their white peers" (p. 1), which may contribute to disparities in education, law enforcement, and leadership or mentorship opportunities. It was further revealed that compared to White girls, the same age, "Black girls need less nurturing and protection, need to be supported and comforted less, need to be more independent, need to know more about sex and adult topics" (Epstein et al., 2017, p. 1).

Empirical

The empirical implications of this study's findings were based on literature that is more than ten years old. The consequences of the limited empirical research on the developmental

impact of adolescent Black girls' racial identity is dangerous for the future. Implications for adolescent well-being demonstrated in a study by Shucksmith et al., (1995) showed that problems with adolescent-parent relations are linked to poor psychological outcomes during adolescence. The perception of family dynamics differs between adolescents and their parents, even with them living in the same household (Rask et al., 2003).

Barber et al., (2003) examined 608 adolescent African American females living in urban areas. The findings of that study indicated that these adolescents are at an increased risk for adverse adjustment outcomes related to the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship and the possible mediator as self-esteem between parent-adolescent relationship and adolescent psychological functioning. On the other hand, several risk factors are often encountered by African American females as they progress through adolescence into adulthood, which may not be experienced by other ethnic groups (Belgrave et al., 2000).

There are several implications for adolescent Black girls' self-esteem related to identity. According to Collins (2000), the devaluation of Black girls' identity is termed *a triple threat* meaning the joining of race, gender, and lower socioeconomic status. Historically, being devalued and labeled *a triple threat* further complicates identity development for adolescent Black girls (Collins, 2000). The triple threat for young Black girls is during the crucial time of identity formation, and identity exploration, which is challenged with continuous changes and is a life-long process (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966). Erikson's (1968) psychosocial approach to identity emphasized the crucial role of people in understanding and supporting the lives of adolescents, thus helping to shape their identity. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1988) is a developmental contextualized theory on adolescent identity formation influenced by the proposed bond between the mother-daughter relationship. The research shows that adolescent

girls are searching for a sense of security and protection from their parents or caregivers. Empirical evidence for studies investigating the identity formation process of a close relationship with parents resulting in emotional autonomy and secure attachment is limited.

Practical

The practical implications of finding that adolescent Black females learn protective factors that can minimize risk factors associated with feminine ideologies, mother-daughter relationships, and self-esteem. This study enabled clinicians to evaluate a new community and school-based intervention training program focused on self-esteem, which applies research into clinical practices. Also, this research is successfully used for school counselors and educators to refer to culturally diverse schools and communities with disadvantaged minority girls. The information collected by this present research documented the development of an intervention training program which originated from a behavioral health perspective and, evaluated the data which contributed new information to the field promoting mental health awareness as self-esteem continues to decline during adolescence for Black females.

The stakeholders for this study promote resiliency for the adolescent Black female population. Resilience and strength are especially needed for teenage Black girls facing the context of significant challenges to "adaptation or development" (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Counselors can learn how to handle issues of historical race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity when it involves an adolescent Black girl client. It is important for counselor to know, train, and understand the Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI) theory and evidence-based practices to meet the unique needs of young Black girl clients coping with ethnic-racial identity formation.

In a study, Belgrave et al. (2000) assessed the impact of an intervention program intended to increase African American adolescent girls' self-esteem and positive feelings, improve ethnic

identity and values, and strengthen both masculine and feminine beliefs to promote resiliency. The *You Can Grow Girl* group intervention program focused on factors that may damage adolescent Black girls' psychological growth and lead to risky behaviors. The intervention program is also practical for group therapy in school and counseling settings. The community-based group intervention program is gender-specific to bring awareness to young Black girls. The program's goal is to develop a sense of identity (Model of Black Femininity) to seek out views of relationships and connection with their mothers (Maternal Anxious Mother Attachment) and help internalize their high self-confidence, self-worth, and self-esteem.

Christian Worldview

Throughout history, Black people have traditionally identified their religious beliefs as Christians who believe in God and therefore, Black teenagers have followed this worldview primarily because it is the only identification of "faith" that they know (Dean, 2010). Black females have joined Christian and African traditions, scriptures, and rituals that demonstrate the powerful role of the Black church and the Civil Rights movement (Pratt-Clarke, 2012). Christian communities of faith are expected to nurture Black youths in Christian spirituality grounded in hope (Parker, 2003).

The Biblical scriptures teach ways adolescent Black girls can overcome difficulties caused by racial and social disparities. A Christian worldview aids in adolescent girls' values, beliefs, and ideology of self and family. In contrast, the researcher does not state that all adolescent Black girls have a Christian worldview, attend the Black church, or believe in God.

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

The results highlight several significant limitations of the current study, which should be noted. First, the research on Black femininity, Black adolescent girls, Black mother-daughter

attachment relationship, and intervention study's related to these variables in this current study were limited in empirical research and studies that is more than 10 years old.

Second, as with many correlational studies, the data did not establish a causal relationship between the variables. The outcome of this research indicated that survey responses were not statistically different for any surveys. A limitation should be considered regarding the reliance on electronic self-report surveys from respondents 13 to 15 years old. In all surveys, it was found that respondents had both higher and lower scores than in their pre-test responses. In contrast, it is possible, for example, that adolescent Black girls who endorse traditional gender stereotypes of Black femininity are drawn to the detrimental character images that reflect and support their existing beliefs.

Third, the findings are drawn from a limited age range of participants between 13 to 15 years old. Research involving an younger population could determine if or when the socialization and perception of negative character images and stereotypes begin. A limitation in this study were the age range of participants between 13 to 15 years old. Research starting at pre-adolescent age would be important given today's climate of race and gender to bring awareness earlier of Black history, culture, and ethnic-racial identity. More research is needed to examine the understanding of traditional stereotypes of Black femininity with a more inclusive population. Additionally, research involving a younger population could produce valuable information as well since acculturation begins in younger aged children.

Fourth, there was no statistical evidence that the median survey responses changed due to the limited number of participants. Because of the small group size ($N=12$), the number of respondents could not achieve asymptotical normality of the sampling distribution and non-

parametric statistical tests are used to test each hypothesis. It is important to consider the small effect size in context to adolescent Black girls.

The study's final limitation is that the six-hour group intervention program was redesigned to facilitate an online method due to the global pandemic. Participants reported attending school in various districts in the DFW area. However, schools closed, and participants sheltered in place beginning in March 2020. During the two days using the Zoom video conferencing method, the participants experienced audio and video problems with weak connections at times. There were numerous distractions with participants including others being present in the location, non-participants talking on video, and audio problems that did not promote an organized environment for the study.

In contrast, participants' age range created a balance within the group, and participants were able to form a connection with each other. Participants demonstrated courtesies, a well-modulated tone, and polite mannerisms when presenting the information. Participants in the study were observed as engaged in activities, sharing examples of personal experiences, and communicating by giving open and honest feedback during the course.

Also, the online method of facilitating the group intervention program also presented some limitations for the researcher. Fortunately, the researcher managed to facilitate the two-day group intervention program despite the complications. The researcher observed the group dynamics and adjusted the facilitation style to optimize the best learning environment for each participant.

In sum, it is important to consider that the online method was not conducive to a single group intervention program, the age range of participants, or administering the electronic pretest and post-test surveys. Participants encountered problems via the internet connection. Moreover,

participants were faced with distractions in their environment and were unable to stay connected and engaged during the entirety of the course. Therefore, the intervention course had no significant effect on the perception of the impact of the Model of Black Femininity and maternal anxious attachment on adolescent Black girls' self-esteem.

Future Research Recommendations

It is recommended that this study's results be replicated with a larger sample size to establish more confidence in the content validity and reliability of the present findings to practice future recommendations. Clearly, due to the number of respondents being small to achieve asymptotical normality of the sampling distribution, non-parametric statistical tests are used to test each hypothesis. The consequences of the strict guidelines of the global pandemic, sheltering in place, and social distancing since March 2020, thereby facilitated the *You Can Grow Girl* program using Zoom, and was probably not the best method for a six-hour course. Future research that compares using an online video conferencing method versus an in-person method of facilitating a small group of adolescent girls could be an interesting study.

Future studies, perhaps with longitudinal designs, could yield support for the causal inferences suggested in this study, which could explain stereotypes of the Model of Black femininity, anxious mother-daughter attachment, and adolescent Black girls' self-esteem and profound impact to their psychological functioning. A further future research implication is to use a control and experimental group. The study could have the experimental group use the You Can Grow Girl group intervention program and track the results longitudinally. A pre-adolescent response may significantly impact understanding and awareness of Black history, culture, and identity formation earlier in age. The finding of this study suggests that a larger sample size of Black girls can support the effects of the group intervention program. It is possible that with a

younger population, different results could also be achieved due to the younger age that girls are becoming acculturated.

In the future, the recommendation is to access participants' confidential background information from parent consent. To determine household income (i.e., indicate a number for income range low, medium, or high), dwelling status (i.e., house, apartment, duplex), and family living in the household (i.e., single, two parents, or caregiver). It could be beneficial to investigate if these factors contributed to the results of the study.

A future recommendation is to retest and administer the surveys to the twelve participants in six months to a year. Amid today's crisis, the racial protest, disparities, and adverse perception of Black people are severely highlighted in the mainstream media. Black girls, as we advance, awareness of racial injustice and insensitivity to negative character images of Black Americans may be the catalyst in the future to rewrite the script of Blacks' racial identity formation. This could trigger Black girls' cognitions and socialization when they become more aware of the subtle ways in which damaging images affect Black femininity. In sum, the vital information presented in this study could inform and help mental health professionals gain valuable psychological interventions to ultimately improve the quality of life and satisfaction for adolescent Black girls.

Summary

The current study expands our knowledge of adolescent Black girls' perception of culturally specific femininity as it relates to Black womanhood's negative stereotypes. Additionally, due to the current racist practices and historical slavery, the global pandemic, and the economic decline, Black women and girls' gender roles, attitudes, and behaviors are impacted. Empirically, it is crucial to identify factors that may be associated with unfavorable

psychological outcomes for adolescent Black girls in the nation's crisis with racial turmoil and Black people's maltreatment. This study's findings examined the developmental phase of adolescence and the vast importance of favorable psychological outcomes for Black girls. Nevertheless, given that adolescence is an essential time of physical, mental health change, and identity formation (Piper, 1995), it is also a period when adolescent girls are liable to suffer (Showalter, 1985).

In conclusion, the findings of the study's recommendation for further research is to investigate the impact of adolescent Black girls' perception of the negative character images associated with Black femininity and the potential shifts in racial self-identity, self-esteem, and self-worth that could occur in the future. The information collected in this present research will document the development of a new group intervention program that can help contribute valuable psychological and psychosocial information to the field of community care and counseling. Thus, promoting a greater understanding of adolescent Black girls' identity development process to strengthen their self-esteem and mental-health factors as adult women.

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Appendix A
Institutional Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 14, 2020

Mechell Guy
Deborah Braboy

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY19-20-218 The Impact of the Model of Black Femininity and Maternal Anxious Mother Attachment to Adolescent Black Girls' Self-Esteem

Dear Mechell Guy, Deborah Braboy:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the date of the IRB meeting at which the protocol was approved: May 14, 2020. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make modifications in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update submission to the IRB. These submissions can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B
Parent Consent

Title of the Project: The Impact of the Model of Black Femininity and Maternal
Anxious Mother Attachment to Adolescent Black Girls'
Self-Esteem

Principal Researcher: Mechell R. Guy, LPC-S
██████████████████████████████████

Co-Researcher(s):   ███████████████████
Research Assistant(s)

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be an adolescent Black female in the age range of 13 to 15 years old. Participants are required to have age appropriate cognition and no known learning disabilities and be able to speak, read, and write English. Participants will be asked to complete three surveys and participant in a group intervention training program. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire consent form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your child to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to understand the harm of negative stereotypes of Black women to see if adolescent Black girls' self-esteem and behavior is impacted. Another factor is the adolescent Black girls' relationship with daughter-mother anxious attachment as it relates to being a Black female. This study is important to the field of mental-health of child psychology in the human development of adolescent Black girls' positive self-esteem.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I would ask her to do the following things:

- Participate will take about ten minutes to complete three self-reported surveys which will be sent to their email address. The following surveys are: (1) the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) estimated to take 2 minutes, (2) the African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS) estimated to take 2 minutes, and (3) the Experience in Close Relationship (ECR-S) estimated to take 5 minutes to complete. The three pretest and posttest surveys responses will be collected after participating in *You Can Grow Girl*, a group intervention training program.

- Participate in the *You Can Grow Girl* group intervention training program which is instructor-led by the researcher. The group intervention program is developed and designed to help participants understand the importance of having a healthy self-esteem. The *You Can Grow Girl* group intervention program will focus on improving the factors

that influence adolescent Black girls' healthier self-esteem and aid in the stability of racial self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth. The *You Can Grow Girl* will address the development of adolescent Black girls' awareness of the Model of Black Femininity and the anxious mother-daughter attachment to apply strategies and techniques to build a higher level of self-esteem as strengthen their identity of a Strong Black Woman. Your child will be asked to participate in a total of six-hours of group intervention training. The group intervention training will be conducted in an online format via video conferencing using the Zoom platform. The first week the class will be one day for 3-hours on a Saturday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm and then on the second week the class will be one day for 3-hours on the following Saturday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The online group intervention training program will include interactive activities, group discussions, lecture lessons as well as practice strategies and techniques to have a healthy self-esteem.

Participants will engage in discussions and activities designed to address their self-esteem with the following topics:

Module 1: Know Thyself - The participants will get to know each other by Billboard introductions to learn more about themselves and others.

Module 2: Mirror, Mirror - To help participants understand the concept of self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth.

Module 3: Who Am I - To educate participants on racial and social stereotypes and the importance of developing strategies and techniques to increase and build a healthier self-esteem.

Module 4: A Healthy Mind, Body, & Soul - To emphasize the importance of mental and physical health to manage stress and adverse thoughts. Practice relaxation and breathing techniques, guided imagery, and coping skills.

Module 5: I Believe - To help participants build a roadmap to their future as a Strong Black Woman.

Module 6: Old Me, New Me - Transformation Day

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

The *You Can Grow Girl* group intervention study could be beneficial as a community-based program which is essential to the mental-health field of child psychology in the human development of adolescent higher level of self-esteem. The study could benefit participants and other adolescent Black female's prosocial behavior related to a greater awareness of the negative stereotype portrayal in the Model of Black Femininity and anxious mother-daughter attachment aimed to increase their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-worth.

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your child would encounter in everyday life. I am the principal researcher in this study, a Licensed Professional Counselor, and a mandatory reporter for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others. This study will involve teaching a lecture related to mental health problems, therapy techniques, and strategies during which I may become privy to information that triggers the mandatory reporting requirements.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Data collected as part of this study may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from the participants is shared, any information that could identify a participant, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared. Participants' survey responses will be anonymous to the researcher, which means I will not be able to link your child's survey responses to her identity. Participant survey responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes, which will only be known to the research assistant and the participant. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in a group setting. While discouraged, other participants of the group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will participants be compensated for being part of this study?

Participants will receive a $15 Visa gift card as appreciation for their time and participation in this study.

What conflicts of interest exist in this study?

The researcher serves as a Licensed Professional Counselor at ███████████████████ ████████████████. To limit potential or perceived conflicts the survey responses will be anonymous to the researcher, a research assistant will ensure that all data is stripped of identifiers before the researcher receives it. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to allow your child to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to allow your child to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your or her current or future relations with ██████████ ██████████████████████, ████████████, or Mechell R. Guy, LPC. If you decide to allow your child to participate, she is free to not answer any questions at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from this study? If you choose to withdraw your child from the study, her survey responses will not be recorded or included in the study. If you choose to withdraw your child from the group intervention training program the data will not be destroyed, but your child's contributions to the group intervention training program will not be included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about this study?

The researcher conducting this study is Mechell R. Guy and research assistant(s) is ██ ████████████████████. The researcher's faculty chair for this study is ████████████ and her contact email is ████████. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact ████████████ via email at ████████ or ████████████.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, ████████████.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your child to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my child to participate in the study.

_____
Printed Child's Name

_____
Parent's Signature   Date

_____
Minor's Signature   Date

Appendix C
Demographic Questionnaire

1. Are you/is your child between the ages of 13 and 15?

Yes or No

2. Are you/is your child Black or African-American?

Yes or No

3. Are you/is your child a female?

Yes or No

Appendix D
Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

You Can Grow Girl Program
A Study For Adolescent Black Girls' Self-Esteem

- Are you a Black female?

- Can you speak, write, and read English?

- Are you between the age range of 13 to 15 years-old?

- Do you have age-appropriate cognition (thinking) and no known learning disabilities?

If you answered **yes** to all of these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a group study intervention training program called *You Can Grow Girl*!

The purpose of this research study is to help adolescent Black girls have healthier self-esteem to embrace their culture and believe in themselves. The *You Can Grow Girl* is an instructor-led group intervention training program to focus on a participants' self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth as it relates to the negative stereotypes of Black women and the mother-daughter relationship. Black girls must develop the ability to engage in self-determination practices to strengthen their self-esteem. Participants will also receive a $15 Visa gift card as appreciation for their time and full participation in the study.

The study group is being conducted using an online format via video conference on the Zoom platform. Participants will be asked to participate in a series of pre-surveys and post-surveys which is estimated to take 10 minutes. The *You Can Grow Girl* program will be facilitated-led and divided into two days for 3-hours each day online. To participate, contact the researcher, Mechell Guy by sending an email notifying her that you are interested and would like to volunteer to ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ within the next 24 – 48 hours. The study will be conducted between the timeframe of May 2020 and June 2020.

Mechell Guy, a graduate student in the School of Behavioral Sciences as part of the requirements for a Doctoral Degree in Community Care and Counseling at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ for more information.

Liberty University IRB – 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515

Appendix E
You Can Grow Girl Group Intervention Program

Brief Description:

This intervention program will focus on improving the factors that influence adolescent Black girls' higher levels of self-esteem and aid in the stability of racial self-identity, self-confidence, and self-worth. This community-based program is essential to the mental-health field of child psychology in the human development of adolescent Black girls' self-esteem and prosocial behavior related to negative femininity stereotypes and anxious mother-daughter attachment.

Total time for training: 6 hours (including breaks)

Week 1 - Topics for three hours training:
- o Introduction
- o Know Thyself
- o Mirror, Mirror
- o Who Am I

Week 2 – Topics for three hours training:
- o A Healthy Mind, Body, & Soul
- o I Believe
- o Old Me, New Me

Room setting: U-shape seating arrangement or online format video conferencing

Learning Outcomes:

After this lesson, the participants will be able to:

1. Describe an understanding of positive self-esteem and how it develops
2. Increase participants' awareness of how low self-esteem is related to mental health problems
3. Identify and reinforce the effects of the cognitive model on self-esteem
4. Practice applying techniques and strategies to build a higher level of self-esteem

Spreadsheet:

Below is the training outline for week one and two lessons.

Program Exceptions for Online Format:

If group intervention program is facilitated via online format the exercises/activities will be modified to exclude materials. The participants will be instructed to verbally complete the exercises/activities as well as emailed pre-work via handouts one-day before the start of class.

Lesson 1

Time Allotted	Teaching Strategy	Resources Needed and Comments related to using them	Rationale & LO linkage
5 minutes	<u>Brief Storytelling Introduction</u>: The Instructor will introduce the program, *You Can Grow Girl,* and show the Learning Outcomes for participants to review.	LCD projector and laptop for PowerPoint to show slides and learning outcomes	The Instructor will open the class by using a short story about the real experience of an adolescent Black girl's journey to overcome negative thoughts of self to reach a higher level of self-esteem. Storytelling will capture the participant's interest and help them to have a clear idea and example to introduce the topic briefly. To address learning outcomes 1-4.
60 minutes	<u>Know Thyself:</u> This activity is for participants to get to know each other. The participant will create their personal walking Billboard for introductions and learn more about their self-concept and others. Write on a flip chart or whiteboard: Carl Rogers (1959) defined *self-concept* as the organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself. Instruct participants to include what they feel or believe in their positive character traits and qualities on their billboard.	Materials needed for activity: 22"x14" White poster boards, per participants Colored markers and pencils Colored yarns Stencils (letters, designs, and borders)	Each participant will introduce themselves by walking around in the middle of the u-shape setting to allow others to read their billboard with their positive character traits and qualities. Afterward, participants will share their name and one interesting fact about themselves on their billboard.

		One-hole punch	Participants will have recognition and acceptance of the importance of self-concept.
		If online format, participants will not be divided into groups. This will be an individual activity and instructor will facilitate a discussion.	This will address learning outcome 1.
10 minutes	<u>Mirror, Mirror</u> This exercise and structured experience will help participants begin to define and understand the concept of self-esteem. Write on a flip chart or whiteboard: Carl Rogers (1959) defined *self-esteem* is what "YOU" think about yourself. Instruct participants to look in the mirror and then have the group to say together: "Mirror, Mirror on the wall, I think I am a ____ Black girl?" Participants will insert what their positive and negative perceptions, feelings, thoughts, or reactions they have about themselves as a Black girl while looking in the mirror. Participants will write in their notebook to log their experience.	PowerPoint slides to show content, activities, and exercises Materials needed: Small hand-held mirror for each participant, pens, notebook, and table/desk to write ideas **If online format, participants will not be divided into groups. This will be an individual activity and instructor will facilitate the discussion.**	This planned experience is for participants to discuss their perceptions, feelings, thoughts, or reactions to the concept of self-esteem. Participants will have openness and self-disclosure about their childhood interactions with their mothers to form their self-esteem. This will address learning outcome 1.
5 minutes	<u>Break</u>		

60 minutes	<u>Lecture</u>: The Instructor will give a research-based lecture.
	
	This lecture is to educate participants about the perceptions of Black femininity and negative stereotypes. The goal is to help participants understand what they think and their interpretation of Black femininity and how perceptions of these negative stereotypes impact their self-esteem.
	
	Facilitate lesson:
	The Cognitive Therapy (CT) model is the way in which we think about situations and the interpretation of these thoughts is processed. Beck's (1976) three levels of cognitive model:
	  1. Core beliefs
	  2. Dysfunctional assumptions
	  3. Negative automatic thoughts
	
	The Instructor will then teach strategies and techniques of the CT model and how to apply the learning to help participants build a higher level of self-esteem.
	
	Creating a cycle of low self-esteem can cause negative life experiences and mental health problems.
	  1. Negative thinking patterns – I am what the negative stereotypes say I am." Consistently thinking negatively about yourself can lead to mental health problems, for example, depression or anxiety.
	  2. The results of low self-esteem can stop you from believing in yourself (skills, abilities, images) and can lead to sadness, anger, frustration, mood swings, withdraw social contact, and depression when it is consistent
		PowerPoint slides to show content, activities, and exercises	The lecture will increase the participant's acquisition of knowledge of facts, concepts, and principles of first understanding self-esteem. Participants will then identify the effect of the cognitive model reactions. Lastly, teaching the cycle of low self-esteem as it relates to mental health problems.
			
			To address learning outcomes 2-3.

	it makes it hard to try new things or complete schoolwork, to name a few.
	
	Source:
	The cognitive triad of negative core beliefs from Beck (1976) and how it relates to:
	   o The self
	   o The world/others
	   o The future		

40 minutes	<u>Who Am I</u> Teach-back Activity: The Instructor will direct class to break into five small groups with three participants in each group. The teach-back activity is to educate participants about the perceptions of Black femininity and negative stereotypes. This activity will provide participants with a peer-to-peer understanding to address the impact of what they think and their interpretation of these messages. Instructions: Then, each group will teach-back how they would apply the strategies and techniques of the CT model and how to apply the learning to help participants build a higher level of self-esteem. The group will divide flip chart paper in half and on one side label "Perceptions" and the other side label "Strategies" and then list their responses. The Instructor will be walking around observing how participants are developing the applied skills and listening for any areas where the group(s) appear to need help in resolving any issues or clarification of activity. Additionally, the group participants can raise their hands if they need any input or help. **Questions to Answer in Teach-Backs and Chart Responses**	Materials needed: Flip Charts with paper or whiteboards and magic markers **If online format, participants will not be divided into groups. This will be an individual activity and instructor will facilitate the discussion.**	The teach-back activity will aid in the participant's development of applied skills and will also serve as ideal enactment of behavior for applying strategies and techniques. This section is intended for a collaborative and problem-solving approach for analysis and evaluation of the lecture information. The Instructor will summarize the key ideas from the lesson and tie-back to the lecture and learning outcomes. To address learning outcomes 3-4.

	• "What are some thoughts about being a Black girl?" • "What difficulties (frustrations) do you encounter as a Black girl?" • "What are some strategies or techniques you plan to practice?"		
40 minutes	<u>A Healthy Mind, Body, & Soul:</u> This exercise and structured experience on how to build a healthy higher level of self-esteem and coping skills. Instructor use videos as a guide and then ask participants to teach and practice calming techniques (deep breathing, guided imagery, and yoga for relaxation). ***Question for Structured Experience*** Take a moment to think about the importance of mental and physical health to manage stress and challenge negative thoughts about yourself. Ask yourself, "Who Am I? jot down ten descriptive words to describe whom you are by completing the statement, "I am _____." Participants will summarize feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and reactions. The Instructor will ask if participants would like to voluntarily share their "I am" statements with the group.	PowerPoint slides to show content, activities, and exercises Materials needed for exercise: White-board, magic markers, eraser, paper, pens, and table/desk to write ideas **If online format, participants will not be divided into groups. This will be an individual activity and instructor will facilitate the discussion.**	This planned experience is for participants to discuss their perceptions, feelings, thoughts, or reactions to building a higher level of self-esteem and coping skills. This exercise will enhance the thinking skills of the participants by focusing on integrating their personal experiences and the group's interactions to convey empathy and a multicultural perspective and show how the class can connect to the topic. To address learning outcomes 1-4.
10 minutes	<u>Break</u>		
60 minutes	<u>I Believe</u> This activity is for participants to help build a higher level of their self-esteem. Participants will learn to challenge and change their negative beliefs about	PowerPoint slides to show content, activities, and exercises	The activity will aid in the participant's development of applied skills and will also serve as ideal

	themselves. Participants will discuss how they plan to utilize and practice different techniques to have a higher level of self-esteem.
	
	Instruction: Each participant will help each other outline their body silhouette by laying down on paper and having another participant to trace their full body with a marker and then cut-out their life-size body image poster. Each participant will design, decorate, and write their plan for building a higher level of self-esteem from the list to determine "What I Can Do to Build My Self-Esteem" on their life-size body image poster.
	
	List to Build A Higher Level of Self-Esteem:
	
	  1. Hobbies
	  2. Exercise
	  3. Sleep
	  4. Do activities that you enjoy
	  5. Physical and mental health
	  6. Make healthy food choices
	  7. Talking to others and daily affirmations
	  8. Be assertive, Be happy
	  9. Set positive goals and outcomes
	  10. Believe in yourself and challenge negative beliefs
		Materials needed for activity:
		White butcher paper to cut-out life-size posters, per participants
		
		Colored markers and pencils
		
		Stencils (letters, designs, and borders)
		
		If online format, participants will not be divided into groups. This will be an individual activity and instructor will facilitate the discussion.
			enactment of behavior for applying strategies and techniques.
			This section is intended for a collaborative and problem-solving approach for analysis and evaluation of the lecture information.
			
			The Instructor will summarize the key ideas from the lesson and tie-back to the lecture and learning outcomes.
			
			To address learning outcomes 2-4.

30 minutes	<u>Wrap-Up</u>: Instructor-led interactive question-and-answer period for participants to thoughtfully reflect on one's actions, including the assumptions and feelings associated with those actions. *Questions for Reflection* Let us think for a moment about your perception, feelings, thoughts, and reactions to the concept of self-esteem.	PowerPoint slides to show content, activities, and exercises Materials needed for exercise: White-board, magic markers,	The Instructor will briefly close the class by summing up with a reflective practice to help participants' retention of the lesson. The reflection questions will provide a logical conclusion and help

	• Did anyone have any prior knowledge of the concept you learned? • If so, what helped you learn and apply this concept? • If not, what information in the lesson helped you learn this concept?	eraser, paper, pens, and table/desk to write ideas **If online format, participants will not be divided into groups. This will be an individual activity and instructor will facilitate the discussion.**	participants to individually make a commitment to applying the cognitive model using to increase the higher level of self-esteem and to overcome challenges of negative feelings, thoughts, and reactions to low self-esteem. To address learning outcomes 1-4.
40 minutes	<u>Old Me, New Me</u> Transformation Day! *Facilitate lesson*: Participants will shift from the old negative way of thinking to a new positive way of thinking. Participants will verbalize their understanding of how to apply the cognitive model to overcome negative thoughts and feelings. Declaration: "I Believe in my future self, and I Am Black Girl Magic."	PowerPoint slides to show content, activities, and exercises	The activity will provide a logical conclusion and help participants to individually make a commitment to applying the cognitive model using to increase the higher level of self-esteem and to overcome challenges of negative feelings, thoughts, and reactions to low self-esteem.

Appendix F
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Appendix G
African American Women's Shifting Scale (AAWSS)

███████

IMPORTANT: Permission for African American Shifting Scale (AAWSS)

Mechell.

Feel free to use the AAWSS for research purposes, Attached is a new "shifting" study from our lab you may find of interest.

Good luck with your during these difficult times.

Best,

████████████

Appendix H
African American Women's Shifting Scale

Appendix I
Experiences in Close Relationships

Removed to comply with copyright.