

11-12-2025

Brotherhood: Black Male Perception on the Impact of Mentorship

Berinda Hollis-Sapp
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Health

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Berinda Hollis-Sapp

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Brittany Peters, Committee Chairperson, Social Work Faculty

Dr. Emmett Roberts, Committee Member, Social Work Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2025

Abstract

Brotherhood: Black Male Perception on the Impact of Mentorship

by

Berinda Hollis-Sapp

MSW, Valdosta State University, 2018

BSW, Troy University, 2007

Project submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Social Work

Walden University

November 2025

Abstract

During the adolescent stage of development, identity is a foundational aspect of one's development, and its absence leads to a negative outcome, characterized by role confusion. Positive interventions are necessary to develop a strong sense of self. The purpose of this generic qualitative project was to explore the perspectives of black males and the impact of mentorship on their identity during adolescence. The theoretical framework chosen for this study was Erikson's identity versus role confusion, the fifth stage of his psychosocial development theory. Based on this concept, the research supported the idea that adolescent Black males should participate in culturally responsive mentoring programs and form supportive relationships to help them achieve at a higher standard. Semi-structured interviews with 10 former mentees who are now adults were used to collect data. The mentees were interviewed via Zoom to gather feedback on the research question. The data included information about how they defined mentoring, how the program influenced their sense of identity, and their perceptions of the program's structure. The data were analyzed using the first cycle and vivo coding, maintaining consistency with the interviewees' language and revealing their common, firsthand themes. These seven common themes were (a) provided academic support, discipline, and accountability, (b) identity, (c) father figures, (d) consistency, (e) representation matters, (f) brotherhood, and (g) providing life skills. Implications for positive social change may develop as social workers use the results of this study as a resource to engage, advocate, and empower at-risk Black male youth.

Brotherhood: Black Male Perception on the Impact of Mentorship

by

Berinda Hollis-Sapp

MSW, Valdosta State University, 2018

BSW, Troy University, 2007

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Social Work

Walden University

November 2025

Dedication

I dedicate this capstone project to the women who inspired me to obtain my doctorate: Dr. Paulette Dilworth, Dr. Felicia Hilson, and Dr. Yulanda Williams. You inspired me to join this elite club of Black women. All of you are part of the reason why I explored this topic, and I will forever be grateful for your wisdom. I also dedicate this to my mother, Nancy Hollis, my aunt Mollie Reynolds, and all the other ladies I call auntie, cousin, sister, Soror, and friend. Thank you for uplifting me and providing a safe space for my development into the woman I am today. Additionally, I dedicate this to the little Black boys in rural and urban communities, hoping they will find hope despite the adversities they face.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank God for keeping me focused and giving me the strength and determination to complete this qualitative capstone. I would also like to thank Dr. Brittany Peters and Dr. Emmett R. Roberts, Jr., for their guidance throughout this journey. I appreciate the prayers, support, and encouraging words from my husband, Lydell Sapp; my daughter, Marley; my son, Jalen; my nephews, Caleb, Joshua and Deigo; my niece Izbella; my brother Del, my sister Olesha, my sister Cassandra and my sorority sisters of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, especially the Omega Zeta Zeta chapter. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the young Black males in my life who inspired this study, those who continue to explore their identities in this society. I extend a special thank you to Curterious Grubbs and Chike Nwakamma for all your help and to the brothers of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated. I could not have completed this project without your willingness to share your perspectives during this research.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
Section 1: Foundation of the Study and Literature Review	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Purpose Statement and Research Question.....	5
Key Terms.....	6
Nature of Doctoral Project.....	8
Significance of Research.....	9
Theoretical Framework.....	10
Values and Ethics.....	12
Review of Professional and Academic Literature	12
Identity Consciousness.....	14
Historical Perspective of Black Males.....	16
Black Lives Matter.....	19
Media	20
Systemic Criminal Injustice.....	22
Black Males in School Settings	23
Behavioral and Emotional Development.....	27
Mental Health.....	29
Public Health.....	30
Black Male Mentoring Relationship.....	31
Natural and Formal Mentoring	33

Summary	34
Section 2: Research Design and Data Collection	36
Participants Selection.....	38
Recruitment and Data Collection.....	39
Instrumentation	39
Trustworthiness.....	42
Ethical Procedures	42
Summary	43
Section 3: Presentation of the Findings	45
Data Analysis Techniques.....	46
Findings.....	48
Theme 1: Academic Support, Discipline, and Accountability	50
Theme 2: Father Figures	51
Theme 3: Consistent Meetings.....	51
Theme 4: Representation Matters	52
Theme 5: Importance of Brotherhood.....	53
Theme 6: Perception of Identity	54
Theme 7: Provided Life Skills	55
Summary.....	55
Section 4: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Social	
Change	59
Application to Professional Ethics in Social Work Practice.....	59

Recommendations for Social Work Practice	61
Recommendation 1	62
Recommendation 2	62
Strengths and Limitations	64
Limitations	65
Recommendations for Future Research.....	67
Dissemination of Findings	68
Implications for Social Change.....	69
Summary.....	69
References.....	72
Appendix A: Interview Questions Guide for Mentees	99

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Characteristics and Demographics 48

Table 2. Overview of Codes, Categories, and Themes..... 49

Section 1: Foundation of the Study and Literature Review

Black male identity in the United States is a complex concept shaped by historical, social, and cultural factors and systems (Johnson, 2024). According to Johnson (2024), Black males comprise roughly 12% of the U.S. male population (Korhonen, 2023) and 48% (19.5 million) of the total Black population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Johnson (2024) stated, “Black men have forged ways to demonstrate resilience and assert their sense of masculinity in a country that has historically sought to dehumanize them and eradicate their manhood” (p.75). For over 25 years, Black males in the United States have experienced systemic biases resulting in disadvantages at a higher rate than other ethnic groups in America (Robins, 2021).

Erikson (1968) expounded on his fifth stage of development, identity vs role confusion, that Black males' identities are also impacted by social expectations and stereotypes. The identity versus role confusion stage occurs during adolescence, when youth are focused on their identities, who they are and who they will become (van Doeselaar et al., 2018). Furthermore, the lack of understanding of the dynamics of the impact of trauma in shaping Black males' identity is because the trauma and the presentation of themselves in society are not well documented (Bailey et al., 2021). As stated by High (2022), “It is quite challenging, if not impossible, to understand the life trajectories and experiences of Black men without considering the impact of the systems we live within” (p.48).

To support a healthier adjustment to discriminatory societal perceptions, which can lead to negative self-identities, youth need to develop positive relationships to protect

themselves from discrimination and negative societal perceptions, thereby increasing their self-esteem (Metzger et al., 2021; Okeke-Adeyanju et al., 2014). Racial discrimination impacts children and families directly and indirectly throughout their lifespan and creates negative social perceptions, leading to decreased self-concept (Murray et al., 2018; Walker, 2020). Jackson et al. (2021) discussed the impact of negative narratives about Black males on their academic outcomes within school climates. Societal perceptions increase their negative self-esteem (Metzger et al., 2021; Okeke-Adeyanju et al., 2014).

Hence, it appears difficult for Black male youth to develop a positive personal self-concept when faced with societal racial trauma. Black male student' behaviors are often more harshly perceived than those of their white counterparts, and they encounter not only academic consequences but also a negative impact on their self-esteem and identity. Research on Black male adolescents shows that mentoring is a practical approach to prevent adverse outcomes stemming from negative social perceptions. (Johnson, 2024; Dubois, 2021; Ladkind et al., 2015; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). In this qualitative study, I explored perceptions of mentorship's impact on the identity of Black adult males aged 12-17.

Problem Statement

The problem I explored in this qualitative study was Black males' perspectives on identity development and the cultural influences shaping them within the mentor–mentee relationship (Dove, 2022). Black male youth often lack access to community-based mentoring programs that target their adolescent identity development (Keller et al., 2019;

Rogers, 2023; Sanchez et al., 2017). In 2014, President Obama launched the "My Brother's Keeper" initiative to develop partnerships with businesses and nonprofits to address disparities in the Black and Latino communities. The six milestones are Entering School Ready to Learn, Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade, Graduating from High School, Completing Post-Secondary Education or Training, Ensuring All Youth are Out of School and Employed, and All Youth Remain Safe from Violent Crime (Obama Foundation, 2023).

This initiative was also supported by Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated, and other Divine Nine Greek Organizations, which offer mentoring programs that promote identity development (Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., n.d.). The goal of these mentoring groups was to help prepare young men and women for a successful transition into adulthood. More research has focused on mentoring programs; however, there is a need for further research on mentoring programs founded by Black males and established to serve Black adolescent males. Most youth served by mentoring interventions are youth of color; little is known about the role of mentoring programs in specific cultural populations (Sánchez et al., 2017).

In addition, there is a lack of research on methods to support Black males in achieving academic success (Jackson et al., 2021). Black male adolescents' endorsement of being Black as a central part of their identity and having a keen sense of belonging to other Black people in their school or community were positive predictors of their efficacy (Ellis et al., 2018). Jackson et al. (2021) discussed the impact of negative narratives about Black males on their academic outcomes within school climates. To support a healthier

adjustment to discriminatory societal perceptions, which can lead to negative self-identities, youth need to develop positive relationships to protect themselves from discrimination and negative societal perceptions, thereby increasing their self-esteem (Metzger et al., 2021; Okeke-Adeyanju et al., 2014).

Black male student' behaviors are often more harshly perceived than those of their white counterparts, and they encounter not only academic consequences but also a negative impact on their self-esteem and identity. It appears difficult for Black male youth to develop a positive personal self-concept when faced with societal racial trauma. There is a need to explore the influence that mentoring has on the lives of Black male youth and their identity development. According to Brown (2017), mentoring programs helped connect Black youth with positive role models.

These mentoring programs are designed to challenge negative societal and media portrayals of Black males. Black male youth are learning from social media that others view their skin as dangerous, terrifying, and experience implicit racism daily (Pervine et al, 2022, as cited in Parks et al, 2022). Studies have shown that Black male youth benefit from supportive mentoring relationships that foster positive development and interactions within their communities as they transition to adulthood (MENTOR Canada, 2020). Relationships can promote clarity in self-concept, and healthy maturation has a positive impact on adolescents' personal identity development (Branje et al., 2021).

Mentoring relationships can benefit Black male youth in academics, social-emotional well-being, and mental health and may serve as a resiliency factor to offset trauma (Sánchez et al., 2017). This would be a valuable resource for state-employed and

community agency social workers who work with Black male youth who need emotional or behavioral support. Understanding the relational dynamics of fictive kinship, mentoring, and identity development in Black adolescent male youth is important (Scott & Deutsch, 2021). According to Gaylord-Harden et al. (2018), Black male youth are the most vulnerable population and could benefit from positive interactions within their communities (p. 753).

Purpose Statement and Research Question

The theoretical framework was Erikson's (1950s) fifth stage of psychosocial development: identity versus role confusion. TI aimed to explore Black male mentees' perceptions of their mentoring experiences and the perceived impact on their identity development. When there is a lack of visible, positive fictive kin role models, Black male youth may follow in the footsteps of adult Black males who lack hope or direction (Richardson, 2020). Through research, I explored a resource that promotes awareness and fosters positive social change, particularly for all communities serving Black male youth.

The National Sigma Beta Club Foundation, established by Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., promotes the positive development of Black adolescent males (National Sigma Beta Club Foundation [NSBCF], 2024). Mentees' perceptions of how the mentoring program impacted their adolescent identities were obtained to contribute to social work practice. This research was guided by one research question: What are the mentees' perceptions of the impact mentoring had on their identities?

Key Terms

Some key research terms used in this project relate to the research participants, their community, and the intervention program and were defined to provide insight into the trajectory of this research project. The terms are as follows:

Adolescence or Adolescent: Adolescence is a developmental transition from childhood to physical, psychological, and social maturity to develop skills to deal with critical situations (World Health Organization, 2020).

Adverse childhood experiences: “Harmful effects that directly and indirectly occur in their living environment during adolescence or childhood (Hughes et al., 2017,p.356).”

Biracial: Identify with more than one racial category on the U.S. Census, granting biracial individuals the option to fully express themselves in terms of their multiracial background (Weaver et al., 2020).

Black: Relating to any of various population groups of especially African ancestry, often considered to have dark skin pigmentation but a wide range of skin colors (Merriam-Webster, n.d-a.).

Culturally responsive mentoring: A mentoring program that supports the voices, lived experiences, and identities of the student mentee (Williams West,2023).

Divine Nine Black Greek Organizations: is the nickname for the nine historically Black Greek letter organizations that are members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (The Historical Legacy of the Divine Nine, n.d).

Fictive kin: Relationships that were enacted to compensate for a believed deficiency in families; however, fictive kin are also viewed as supplemental relations rather than substitutes (Taylor et al., 2021).

Identity: Identity refers to an individual's organized constellation of traits: attitudes, self-knowledge, cognitive structures, past, present, and future self-representations, social roles, relationships, and group affiliations (Guenther et al., 2020)

Male: An individual of the sex typically capable of producing small, usually motile gametes (such as sperm or spermatozoa) that fertilize a female's eggs (Merriam-Webster, n.d-b).

Mentee: One who is being mentored (Merriam-Webster, n.d-c).

Mentor: An experienced and trusted person who gives another person advice and help, especially related to work or school, over time (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d).

Mentorship: A relationship that provides guidance and assists with personal growth (Somers et al., 2016)

National Sigma Beta Club Foundation: The youth affiliate entity of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. Our National Sigma Beta Club members consist of young males between the ages of eight and 18 (still in high school), which is organized with the expressed purpose of ensuring that the goals and objectives of the National Sigma Beta Clubs are implemented in an organized and unified manner (National Sigma Beta Club Foundation, 2024).

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. (Southern Region): This region encompasses the following states: Alabama, the Bahamas Islands, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi (Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., n.d.).

Role Confusion: A person's confusion over who they are and where they fit (Cherry, 2019).

Nature of Doctoral Project

In this research, I employed a basic qualitative research design to explore the perspectives of the mentees and answer the research question. Qualitative research involves a systematic and contextualized process to interpret how humans understand their experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The participants in this research were adults and previous mentees who identified as Black, and the criteria extended to biracial males who identified as Black. However, the final 10 participants were non-biracial males who identify as Black. Semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews were employed for data collection, allowing for the sharing of information, posing follow-up questions, and maintaining focus on the research question.

The primary rationale for using semi-structured interviewing was to gain insight into the mentees lived experiences, their understanding of the meaning behind these experiences, and their perspectives as mentees (Seidman, 2019). Seidman (2019) noted that this interviewing style is best when transforming participants' words into written text (p. 123). This method preserved the participants' words, allowing for double-checking of accuracy. To maintain organization, each individual was asked to complete the list of research questions, and emerging themes were analyzed.

Significance of Research

This research is significant as the results can contribute to the study of culturally responsive mentoring and the perspective of Black males. The significance of the data supported the role mentoring plays in shaping Black male identity during adolescence and provided insight into how they came to see themselves. The contribution to the social work profession will increase resources for Black adolescent males who have experienced trauma, at-risk behaviors, identity challenges, discrimination, and environmental crises.

Additionally, social workers can utilize the mentor relationship to help support healthier psychosocial development for adolescent Black males. Mentorship has been a valuable resource that helps facilitate social change in communities by supporting at-risk youth and providing a platform for their developmental growth. This resource may be vital in lessening the gap in communities with limited resources for Black adolescent males. The research's outcome will provide additional insight into organized mentoring programs, foster positive change, and support adolescents in transitioning from a negative to a positive self-identity.

Based on Erikson's (1968) theory, the success of this positive social change could alleviate the crisis in their relational development during young adulthood. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. was founded in 1914 to create a brotherhood that promotes positive social change (Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., n.d.). Conducting qualitative research on their mentoring program, the Sigma Beta Youth Club provided first-person narratives from an adult Black male who matured from being a young Black adolescent

male in his community. Through lived experience, the project allowed Black males to share their mentoring perspective by collecting scientific data.

Theoretical Framework

The foundation for this qualitative research is Erikson's (1950) theory of identity vs role confusion psychosocial development. Erikson proposed that the eight stages of psychosocial development provided insight into the psychological struggles that may occur from birth to death. These stages focus on individual personality, the biopsychosocial approach to development, and the impact of each crisis on an individual. The eight stages are (a) trust versus mistrust, (b) autonomy versus shame/doubt, (c) initiative versus guilt, (d) industry versus inferiority, (e) identity versus role confusion, (f) intimacy versus isolation, (g) generativity versus stagnation, and (h) integrity versus despair (Maree, 2021).

I focused on the fifth stage of Erikson's theory, identity versus role confusion. The fifth stage spotlights the concept of identity, which focuses on the adolescent's ability to explore the crisis stage of "Who am I?" I examined the perspectives of Black males who experience mentoring during the critical ages of 12–17. Mentoring relationships provide boys and men the space to be emotionally vulnerable without feeling they must sacrifice their manhood, which is often influenced by negative societal views (Sánchez et al., 2017).

Erikson (1968) endorsed that Black identities are negatively impacted by social expectations and stereotypes. The difficulty of one's ability to self-define for personal reasons or based on negative ideas of a group results in role confusion. Erikson pointed

out that identity consciousness is the ability to “know where he is going and who is going with him” (p. 300). In 1965, Erikson wrote about the societal struggles of minorities The Negro revolution the impact on identity vs role confusion psychosocial development (Syed & Fish, 2018).

Syed and Fish (2018) noted that Erikson was discussing the events of 1965, in which Black people's quest for identity, emancipating themselves from the residue, at the time, colonists' negative views of thinking, which he believed would generationally constrain the Black identity. This concept addressed negative perceptions, which would prevent minority adolescents from being able to solve the question of “who am I?” Throughout the Black community, there has been the prolonged denial of acceptance into society, generational trauma, racial trauma, and the removal of cultural traditions for over four hundred years. Hindering the initial stages of development, when a child learns to trust, navigate the world, and develops a sense of initiative and competency to achieve a successful identity stage (Erikson, 1968) .

Resulting in environmental and situational trauma in society, causing a crisis in Black male youth significantly higher than in other racial and ethnic groups (Henderson Z, 2017) . Using identity versus role confusion as a theoretical framework and basic qualitative research design provided insight into the influence that culturally responsive mentoring programs have on adolescent Black males. I examined how participating in the Sigma Beta Youth Club impacted their experience in the community, school, and their ability to navigate any negative social perspectives they encountered. This research examined the perspectives of graduate mentees on how the Sigma Beta Youth Club

influenced their lives as Black male adolescents, with a primary focus on their identity development and transitioning into adulthood.

Values and Ethics

The value of social justice is significant in this project to obtain the perspective of young Black males who may have experienced oppression or racial trauma. This research aimed to raise awareness about potential identity issues faced by Black male youth due to systemic oppression and highlight the influence of culturally responsive mentorship. The guidance received through mentoring empowers individuals to bring about change in communities (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2021). Social justice and human relationships are fundamental principles and values that support vulnerable individuals who are experiencing oppression (NASW, 2021).

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics governs the practice of social work. The code provides a framework of values, principles, and standards to guide decision-making and conduct in cases where ethical issues arise (NASW, 2021). According to the NASW (2021), social workers are expected to be educated on social diversity and oppression, which aligns with the purpose of this project. The results of this capstone research can be utilized to provide resources for social justice and human relationships from the perspectives of predominantly Black male youth mentoring programs, focusing on adolescent development among youth aged 12 to 17.

Review of Professional and Academic Literature

In this section, I review the relevant peer-reviewed, scholarly academic articles related to Black adolescent males, identity crises, psychosocial stages of development,

racial trauma, criminal injustice, at-risk youth, and mentorship program . These areas provided insight into historical perceptions, societal perceptions, mental health, criminal justice systemic racism, impact on education, psychosocial development, and the impact of community and social media influences on Black males' identities. I focused on (a) adolescent identity development and its impact on Black male adolescents' maturation process, (b) the importance of a supportive relationship, and (c) the possible effectiveness of mentoring. The following keywords were used to search for literature: *adolescent, special education, religion, social and emotional learning, adolescence, adverse childhood experience, youth, crisis, identity development, identity, mentor programs, mentee, Black males, Black youth, formal mentoring, informal and mentoring, natural mentoring, community-based youth mentoring, relationship, mental health, school to prison pipeline, discipline, race, teachers, suicide, historical stereotypes, fictive kinship mentoring, systematic psychosocial stages, fraternity, boys, strategic mentoring, thug, brute, Erikson, Sigma Beta Youth Club, Phi Beta Sigma, identity vs. role confusion, and mentorship programs for at-risk youth*. The databases I searched were Google, ResearchGate, Sage Publications, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, ProQuest, and the Walden University Library.

Throughout the review of research on perspectives, policies, and issues affecting Black males. I noticed a common thread between Criminal Justice reform, the media's portrayal of Black Boys, and events that led to the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as academic settings, public health, the education system, and the need for Black boys to have access to Black male role models. The impact of racism, the need for mental health

resources, and trauma resources are public health issues for Black males . Additionally, Barbarian (2019) researched the effect of educational settings, Behavioral and Emotional Development on Black Boys growing up in risky environments.

For this reason, the literature review was divided into sections based on their commonalities. Within the main common themes, there were some subtopics that I further explored regarding their impact on Black males. These topics were outlined in the literature review based on correlation. When reviewing the literature, it became apparent that there is an overlap in common themes related to historical issues affecting Black males.

Identity Consciousness

Erikson (1968) coined the concept of "identity consciousness," which represented a balance between an individual's acceptance of their identity and societal acceptance of their identity. Erikson's discussion of identity brought forth historical evolution and outcries from revolutionary writers on the personal impact of identity confusion. Erikson wrote Negro and Jewish writers were the "artistic spokesmen and prophets of identity confusion" (p. 298). In addition to their artistic creativity, having a painful awareness of identity confusion allowed them to critique the issue insightfully.

Hawkins-Jones (2017) focused on identity crisis and the impact of the historical perception of Black Americans. He mentioned that racist societal perspectives often place Black Americans in situations where they must choose between their identity and societal acceptance (p. 41). An example based on the literature related to identity development is the process of "identity shifting" (Loyd et al., 2023; Carr et al., 2021). Identity shifting

refers to “self-altering strategies,” which are common among minority groups as they modify their identities to cope with or accommodate the dominant society (p. 702).

As the need for literature continues to bring awareness to the traumatic effects of racism experienced among Black youth, racism must be identified as a unique form of adversity that can have lasting effects on their mental health journey (Bernard et al., 2020). Racial discrimination has been found to increase negative life stressors, increasing negative emotional functioning, maladaptive coping strategies, and substance usage (Bernard et al., 2020). Black children who experience adverse community experiences, which, in fact, at higher rates can exacerbate adverse childhood experiences (Lanier, 2020; Prevention Institute, 2016). These rates, which stem from environmental and internal factors, led to a crisis within their society (Erikson, 1968).

In the 1940s, K. Clark and M. Clark experimented to explore the effects of segregation on Black children (McNeill, 2017). The Clarks gave Black children four dolls; two had a darker skin complexion, and two had a lighter skin complexion. The children were asked several questions: which one was "nice," which was terrible, and which doll they were most like (McNeill, 2017). In this experiment, two-thirds of the Black children assigned positive characteristics to the white dolls and associated negative traits with Black dolls (McNeill, 2017).

The Clarks concluded that these children had formed racial identity at an early age and attached negative traits to their identities based on segregation and prejudices (McNeill, 2017). Identity is impacted when a negative self-image about one's appearance is taught and becomes a learned behavior. The traumatic perceptions and events that

Black youth experience are harmful and have psychological impacts. This is supported by highlighting the harmful and widespread effects of adverse childhood experiences on health (Bernard et al., 2020).

There is research detailing the implications of racial discrimination conducted on Black adults; however, only a few studies explore racial discrimination as a potentially traumatic event for Black youth (Bernard et al, 2020; Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Saleem et al, 2019; Williams et al., 2018). The negative perception that the media portrays of Black children as adults bearing more liability, in which they are then perceived as less vulnerable and more liable (Alfonseca, 2023; Davis et al.,2020). Historically, Black adolescents experience confusion; however, it is often due to societal adverse treatment (Taylor et al., 2019).

Historical Perspective of Black Males

Dehumanization and negative perspectives often led to individuals believing the narrative and internalizing the oppression of Black people. Erikson (1968) stated, “Two of the most shameful chapters in the history of a Christian nation are the systemic exploitation of the Negro male as a domestic animal and denial to him of the status of responsible fatherhood” (Erikson, 1968, p. 311). For Black youth males exploring and developing their identity, these negative portrayals create a greater need to reassess their perspectives and identify support within their community (Taylor et al., 2019). Negative perceptions and systemic racism perpetuate identity crises for Black boys (Rizzo et al., 2022).

Banaji et al. (2021) stated that this form of racism reinforces disadvantages and unlawful treatment across all areas of life and is rooted in subordinated status. As the many deaths of Black men have shown, the narrative is that they were a threat, which justifies how they died. Targeting Black men due to the negative perceptions of their skin color creates a climate of racial profiling and abuse of power. Racial profiling is a form of stereotyping that we have seen for years used to target men of color (Laurencin & Walker, 2020).

Dr. King described racism as an evil deeply embedded in American society (Kendall, 2019, p.76). Internalizing negative stereotypes can affect one's self-concept without one's awareness. The societal criminalization based on the color of their skin causes law enforcement and other authority figures to assume Black males are criminals (Najdowski, 2023). This deeply embedded racism had, over the years, trickled into state and local laws.

The Jim Crow laws of the 1890s and Black codes of the 1860s, which were introduced in the southern states, led to the Great Migration of Black residents to Northern and Western States (Vuletich et al., 2023). Additionally, Vuletich et al. (2023) highlighted that Black Americans migrated away from the South in hopes of a better life; however, they were denied fair housing and labor. These laws were acts of violence often targeted toward Black codes in the 1860s and Jim Crow laws of the 1890s; researchers have shown these acts of violence often targeted primarily Black males (Greene, 2020). These acts of violence included public lynchings, which it is believed were racially and politically motivated (Williams et al., 2021).

The negative portrayals of Black people led to massacres and thriving, predominantly Black communities being destroyed (Brown, 2020). The stories of Black Wall Street, Rosewood, the Lynching of Sam Hose, and the East St. Louis Massacre, to name a few, led to the deaths of hundreds of Black men, children, and women. According to Gorup (2020), “between 1877 and 1950, white mobs across the American South lynched 4,075 African Americans—more than one person per week for seventy-three years” (Equal Justice Initiative, 2017; Gorup, 2020). Additionally, Gorup (2020) expounded on Lynch Law and the 1899 case of Sam Hose, who was lynched and burned due to the allegation of murdering his white employer. Research conducted by EJI showed that between 1882 and 1968, less than a quarter of lynchings were followed by allegations of rape, and half were connected to allegations of murder (Equal Justice Initiative, 2017; Gorup, 2020).

The mob that lynched Sam Hose is noted to have taken body parts as mementos, even his burnt knuckles were displayed in a local general store for sale, in which Du Bois would reconsider his conviction that racism could be explained by their ignorance (Gorup, 2020). Ida B. Wells noted an interview conducted with a participant after Sam Hose's lynching, “with the freedom which one would talk about an afternoon’s divertissement in which he had very pleasantly participated” (Wells, 2014, p. 328; Gorup, 2020). Furthermore, regarding Lynch Law in America, in an address to Congress in 1906, then-President Roosevelt affirmed the myth, laying the blame for lynching squarely at the feet of black men, claiming that lynching’s “greatest cause... is the perpetration, especially by black men” (Roosevelt, 1923, p. 421; Gorup, 2020). As

Frederick Douglass argued in 1892, it is not “the immorality or the enormity of the crime itself that arouses popular wrath, but the emphasis is put upon the race and color of the parties (Douglass, 1892; Gorup, 2020).

Black Lives Matter

In 2013, the BlackLivesMatter hashtag sparked a global outcry that ignited internal flames in communities worldwide (Walker et al., 2021). The death of Trayvon Martin galvanized a call to action after the acquittal of George Zimmerman. This call for action mobilized people to demand that Black lives globally be treated with dignity and humanity (Walker et al., 2021, p. 196). Parents throughout saw the vulnerability of their young Black sons after the death of this unarmed 15-year-old Black male (Deepti Hajela,2022).

Throughout the case, it was noted that Trayvon’s death was based on being profiled solely due to his race (Deepti Hajela, 2022). Researchers studied the aftereffects of Trayvon Martin’s death, the Black Lives Matter movement, and Michael Brown’s death (Rogers et al., 2021). According to Rogers et al. (2021), Black adolescent boys began to perceive themselves differently around the beginning of the Black Lives Matter movement and continued to do so for years afterward. One of the participants interviewed was a seventh-grade Black male adolescent, and it was noted that his overall self-concept had changed, as he began to view himself through the lens of his race and the Black Lives Matter movement.

These traumatic events that happened in society helped to shape the Black male adolescent’s prior narrative regarding race and identity (Rogers et al., 2021). This

concept of shifting the racial narrative in response to societal events relates to Erickson's writings on the transactional nature. According to Rogers et al. (2018), transactional nature is a theme explored by Erikson concerning identity, with the idea that self and society are interwoven. Therefore, Erikson stated, "We cannot separate personal growth and communal change, nor can we separate the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crises in historical development because the two help to define each other and are genuinely relative to each other" (Erikson, 1968, p. 23).

Media

Throughout history, the media have released negative narratives in which young Black males are influenced by stereotypical representations (Williams, 2019). These negative images of minorities in the past decade have taken a toll on Black men and Black youth (Wilcox et al., 2018). The stories of systemic racial injustice, police shootings, Black males being portrayed as incompetent and unmotivated have played a role in the audience's perception of Black males (Dill-Shackleford et al., 2017). These negative representations impacted their identity and contributed to the exploration of an identity crisis at an early age (Dupiton, 2021).

In 1916, "The Waco Horror" photo was released, which featured the lynching of Jesse Washington, who was a Black male (Terry, 2017). These acts of violence against Black people were often hidden. However, local newspapers would use them as propaganda. In 2018, The Montgomery Advertiser, a newspaper based in Montgomery, Alabama, published an apology for its paper's role in acts of violence from the 1870s through the 1950s. The newspaper editor stated, "We propagated a worldview rooted in

racism and the sickening myth of racial superiority” (ch, 2018). Although we are aware of the historical negative media portrayals of Black people, the New York Times writer Adeel Hassan quoted Mamie Till’s memoir (1955), “They had to see what I had seen” (Hassan, 2023). Mamie Till was the mother of thirteen-year-old Emmitt Till, who was murdered and lynched in Mississippi.” The victim’s story was now being told, rather than the depiction of superiority by the one who committed the offense.

Social media platforms are being utilized to promote change and foster political engagement among Black Americans. The impact of social media after the killing of Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, and George Floyd, to name a few, resulted in widespread protests (Auxier, 2020). The murder of Ahmad Arbery was captured on video and shared on media outlets and was the vital evidence that called for attention to his death (Adams, 2021). Despite the need to bring awareness to these incidents, it continues the discussion on school settings, systemic criminal injustice, and the need for mental health resources for black males (Adkison-Johnson, 2023).

Therefore, these platforms are changing the narrative and researching hopeful stories of Black men in the United States, such as “Black Men Making It in America” by Wilcox et al. (2018). This report highlighted positive news about the economic success of Black men (p. 3). Additionally, this capstone project aimed to enhance social workers' understanding of the impact of the media on Black male adolescents and to contribute to the discussion of identity. Society sometimes uses media to promote good causes and evoke emotions in its target audience.

Systemic Criminal Injustice

The Civil War and the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 shaped Black Americans' experiences with the criminal justice system, criminalization, and incarceration (Hinton et al., 2021). According to research by Napoleon (2019), the legal treatment of youth as adults is surprising, despite the current law that prevents youth from receiving the death penalty (p. 459). Additionally, Black male youth have still experienced dangerous and harsh prison environments due to being sentenced with older adult criminals. Napoleon (2019) highlighted the 1944 case of George Stinney, who at the age of fourteen was executed before being exonerated seventy years later because he did not receive a fair trial; Stinney died before seeing the change in the laws (p. 459).

Napoleon (2019) further expressed that unbiased researchers should be able to see that the U.S. criminal justice system is fueled by racism and slave labor for corporations that invest in prison complexes. According to Pettit et al. (2018), young black males in the United States are disproportionately incarcerated. The effects of mass incarceration extend to inequality and systemic removal of young Black men from society and impact their families and communities. As of 2021, Black youth were 4.7 times more detained in juvenile facilities than their white peers (Puzzanchera et al., 2021).

Despite Black Americans only comprising 15% of youth across the United States, 42% of these youth detained are Black (Puzzanchera et al., 2021). In 1986, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act campaign is believed to have been created to target young Black men who have specifically been disproportionately impacted by controlled substance legislation (Britton, 2021). Britton (2021) suggested that changes in the severity of state drug laws

could positively impact the college enrollment and educational outcomes of young Black men (p. 9). Excessive and unnecessary traffic stops uniquely concentrated among African Americans can fuel racial inequality in experiences with a maze of criminal justice procedures and their consequences (Baumgartner et al., 2017).

The War on Drugs, racial profiling, mass incarceration, three-strikes laws, and officer-involved shootings have shown throughout the past decades that were designed to target Black males(Howard-Mullins, 2022). According to Nix (2020), due to disproportionate rates, Black Americans are killed by police gunfire each year in the United States, and more data collection by states is needed. Ang et al. (2021) reported that nearly a thousand officer killings occur in the United States each year, and exposure to police violence decreases ninth and 10th-graders' college enrollment. Community trauma can hinder adolescent learning and development of their identity (Ang et al.,2021).

Black Males in School Settings

The disproportionate discipline in school settings based on negative societal stereotypes contributed to inequality for children of color (Taylor, 2019). Twenty percent of Black male students received out-of-school suspensions, compared to 6% of white male students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; Taylor et al., 2019). Research has shown that the behaviors of Black male students are perceived as harsher than those of other ethnic groups. These alarming statistics, trends, and statements may cause Black males to believe that they cannot succeed, creating a negative self-fulfilling prophecy.

Despite these problems, some Black males still overcome statistical odds and obtain academic success. Taylor et al. (2019) employed the phenomenological method to better understand how some Black males achieve academic success, thereby providing others with insights into how they can succeed in an academic environment. Taylor et al. aimed to investigate how stereotypes a teacher may hold influence their bias, which often mirrors societal biases (. According to Kunjufu (2019), teachers need to understand the learning styles and gender differences of Black males.

According to Busette (2022), Black adolescent youth can achieve excellence; however, they need to be in school settings that foster a “culture of care” (p. 2). The concept of a culture of care involves focusing on each individual's strengths and considering their unique environment. Failure to provide support and acknowledge the nature of Black adolescent boys’ experience results in neglecting their specific developmental needs within the educational context (Wint et al., 2022). Some writers believe the research community has not given adequate attention to the connection between early learning years and the adverse treatment of Black adolescent boys during their educational years (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2018).

Academic problems among males from underrepresented communities begin during early education; for example, some teachers and counselors impose negative expectations about Black males attending college (Hines et al., 2023). Despite the challenges faced by Black males in higher education, researchers and practitioners have sought to develop and identify interventions and best practices to support their retention through graduation (Hines et al., 2023) . Structural and cultural theorists acknowledge the

factors contributing to these impediments; however, many Black males are succeeding despite the hardships that impact their academic performance (Irvine, 2019). Black males are discouraged by the American educational system, which limits, removes, and often overlooks historical factors in textbooks (Irvine, 2019).

There has been heated discussion on banning advanced placement African American studies and Critical Race Theory in the State of Florida. According to the Tampa Times, Governor DeSantis argued that he wanted to end what he calls “woke” and “liberal indoctrination” (Ceballos et al., 2023, p. 5). Furthermore, he endorsed that it violates state law and “lacks educational value” (Kaufman, 2023). Alexander (2022) noted that before the Brown vs Board of Education decision of 1954, Black students were educated in school environments that shared a cultural commitment to academic achievement and pride within the Black community.

Researchers found that having low regard for being Black was associated negatively with school performance and attitude (Buckley, 2018). The role of teachers and administration contributing to the identity crisis of Black male adolescents was further explored in this research. A national research group conducted an analysis and found that three out of every five Black Americans feel their stories are not being represented on-screen (Turchiano, 2020). The negative media portrayals of Black men are heavily outweighing the positive (Aweah, 2023).

Ladson-Billings (2021) noted that culturally related teaching would positively impact on students of color, resulting in a stronger perception of themselves as capable learners. There are often stigmatized feelings of being placed in special education the

entire time in high school that Black males experience (Houssou, 2023). Woodson and Harris (2018) wrote that Black male students are significantly more likely to be placed in special education programs. Additionally, the high placement and stigmatized labels of emotional disturbance negatively influence black male youth learning outcomes (Bal et al., 2017; Banks, 2017; Houssou, 2023).

Johnson et al. (2018) noted that rural schools lack the appropriate staff and resources to match the special education needs of Black/African American males. This deficiency within the school system is attributed to inadequate funding, poor resource allocation, and difficulty finding qualified and experienced educators. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2024), lower graduation rates may be attributed to deficiencies in special education programs and the needs of African American males (NCES, 2020). These factors also significantly influence their transition through the school-to-prison pipeline (Raufu, 2017).

School-to-prison is defined as school policies that enmesh children and adolescents from schools to the juvenile criminal system (Camarena Castillo, 2021; Hemez, 2019). According to Morgan (2022), the school-to-prison pipeline resulted from various factors, including teacher biases, punitive school systems, and institutional discrimination. These factors are often fueled by misinterpretations and criminalization of black male youth (Ogunbanwo, 2019). Some schools established zero-tolerance policies, which are concerning to Black males who are disproportionately suspended and expelled (Henry et al., 2021).

According to the Civil Rights Data Collection (2017), Black students are more likely to be referred to law enforcement than white students. Lindsay et. al. (2017) endorsed that approximately sixteen percent of Black male elementary school students in the classrooms of White female teachers received exclusionary discipline. However, when assigned a Black female teacher, the percentage was reduced by 2% to approximately 14%. When assigned a Black male teacher, this number was reduced by 13%; this is important given the 15-18% decrease observed with White male and female teachers (p. 77).

Ford (2021) noted that Black youths often receive harsher sanctions and have more involvement with the judicial system for their behavior. Additionally, they will have more involvement with the system, which could harm their future (p. 49). Zero-tolerance policies were implemented to impose predetermined consequences for behaviors that could endanger all students; however, race determines the suspension rate. Therefore, policies such as zero tolerance have deviated from their original intent and appear to have caused more harm than good.

Behavioral and Emotional Development

The concept of social cognition shapes how Black adolescents perceive themselves as having a safe space to express and explore their Black identity (Lozado et al., 2021). According to Lozado et al. (2021), Black adolescents must navigate their identities while managing their emotions, considering how others perceive them, and their ability to regulate emotions (p. 15). School settings with a social-emotional learning (SEL) program support students in expressing and managing their emotions, thereby

creating positive developmental outcomes (Jones et al., 2023). Therefore, due to this reason, researchers have concerns about the SEL programs and whether they are pertinent for Black boys (Jagers et al., 2019).

According to Barbarian et al. (2019), Black boys experience a threat to development due to poverty-related adversity, trauma-demeaning racial bias, and conflicting messages about masculinity (p. 215). Negative portrayals may portray Black boys as acting out their assigned roles (Barbarian et al., 2019). Maladaptive behaviors are not always a direct result of these stressors but depend on the adolescent's ability to cope with them (Barbarian et al., 2019). The inability to self-regulate emotions leads to antisocial and disruptive behaviors, collectively referred to as behavioral dysregulation (Barbarian et al., 2019). Despite the reporting of Black boys' rate of clinical depression diagnoses being lower than other groups, they report a severity in symptoms and prolonged depression before treatment (Ribeiro Brown et al., 2022). Overall, Black boys are under-assessed with mental health needs, and more research is needed to explore if they are susceptible to anxiety and depression (Ribeiro Brown et al., 2022). According to Planey (2019), results from research conducted show that 76.5% of Black youth need mental health services (p. 190). Barbarian et al. (2019) explored how conduct problems are among the common reasons boys are referred to mental health services and disparities in conduct problems in school settings. (p. 216).

The writer endorsed that one of the factors that could reduce the school-to-prison pipeline among Black boys is mental health counseling (Gordon-Young, 2023). However, Black families are the least likely to trust a mental health or medical provider

due to the historical events of mistreatment (Boulware, 2021). The Tuskegee Syphilis experiment on black males is believed to be the catalyst for the underlying mistrust (Jaiswal et al., 2019). Additionally, the impact of mental health on black male adolescents with no intervention was further explored in the next section.

Mental Health

According to Erikson, a consistent identity may help one dispute negative self-evaluations (Villines, 2023). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified that the ages at which suicide is the second leading cause of death are between 10 and 34 years old (CDC, 2019). Along cultural lines, a survey conducted in 2020 showed a 73% increase in suicide attempts among Black adolescents (Abrams, 2021). Goodwill et al. (2019) conducted research that showed a correlation between depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation among Black males (p. 74).

These symptoms and ideations were due to experiencing racial discrimination daily (Goodwill et al., 2019). Daily racial discrimination often happens during school hours, in which we find that our educational system is a microcosm of our larger society (Fletcher, 2023). However, school settings are partnering with in-house health services to provide mental health services for youth (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2018). Research supports that minority adolescents are less likely to be referred to receive mental health support through school settings (Barlis, 2018).

Regarding mental health, educational settings are essential in how depressive symptoms in Black boys are handled (Hamilton, 2023). Disruptive behaviors that impact learning for other students are often related behaviors that are residual symptoms of

depression (Jones et al., 2018). School settings that provide mental health services are more effective when they are aware of systemic racism and demonstrate cultural competence (Gordon-Young, 2023). School exclusionary discipline strategies, zero-tolerance policies, and the involvement of the Department of Juvenile Justice hurt the mental health of Black boys (Hamilton, 2023; Marcucci, 2019).

Seales et al. (2022) found that Black young males express depressive symptoms through behavioral and conduct issues, through stomach aches, which are somatic symptoms. According to Saucedo et al. (2021), stereotypes that are not supported by empirical data are likely to be the reason Black individuals' somatic depression is underdiagnosed. Additionally, higher rates of somatic symptoms emerge in adolescents and emerging adults forming a well-defined identity (Raemen et al., 2022). There is a need for more research on somatic symptoms among adolescent and young adult Black males (Scott et al., 2018). Researchers are finding that somatic symptoms of exposure to trauma are a public health issue. Furthermore, exposure to racism, such as residential segregation or any other form of discrimination, impacts health through psychosocial stressors (Davis, 2020; Lanier, 2020).

Public Health

There are various public health issues that Black male adolescents experience. The exposure to community-based violence (CBV) is a significant public health concern for Black male emerging adults (Motley et al., 2020). Researchers are exploring ways to redefine and expand the scope of practice for public health workers who work with Black youth (Hampton-Anderson et al., 2023). In this qualitative research, I discussed the high

suicidality rates, the need for mental health resources, the role of trauma, and systemic criminal injustice, to name a few, that create challenges in the development of a healthy identity.

As mentioned earlier, there is an issue of Black adolescent males not being referred to mental health resources within the school setting, and the fear of trusting a mental health or medical provider. Once a Black male adolescent is referred to services, they are withdrawn from services, often due to a lack of trust, before completion of treatment. Providing cultural treatment for Black males will help dispel stigmas (DeAngelis, 2024). Black adolescent males' underutilization of mental health resources is a public health issue (Williams et al., 2023).

This public health data indicates that resources are limited and that adolescent identities are in a fragile state (Williams et al., 2021). Additionally, there is limited research examining the long-term effects of untreated mental health in Black adolescent males (Williams et al., 2023). In some studies, there are factors such as masculine perception, stigma, and self-reliance that are endorsed as barriers to Black adolescent males utilizing mental health resources (Williams et al., 2023). Researchers are exploring the role of religion in addressing mental health in Black male adolescents; however, they are finding that utilizing religion to mitigate the adverse effects (Jackson et al., 2021).

Black Male Mentoring Relationship

Rogers et al. (2023) stated, "Black boys cannot be what they cannot see" (p. 27). This idea is shared by other researchers who have explored the contribution culturally responsive mentoring makes to Black male adolescent identity development. Although

the benefits of mentoring are widely recognized, ongoing discussions persist about the origins of the mentor-mentee relationship. The distinction between natural and formal mentors, and the challenges of finding a natural mentor in the Black community.

Gibson et al. (2018) suggested that acknowledging these disparities is not enough, and there is a need for programs and specific interventions to promote positive development for Black boys. According to Sánchez (2017), most children participating in mentoring programs are Black American, and further research is needed to explore the potential benefits of these programs. It is unclear whether culturally tailored mentor programs for minority youth are more effective than general mentoring (Sánchez et al., 2017). Clark et al. (2021) conducted a study to explore the experiences of male college students serving as youth mentors, using a specific cultural approach to mentoring.

The findings emphasize the importance of a holistic approach to support identity development and community change (Clark et al., 2021). Throughout the years, there has been a movement in Black communities and families to support African-centered programs for their youth (Lateef et al., 2021). Lateef et al. (2021) called on social workers to identify and integrate African-centered intervention strategies into their practice with Black youth. According to Feemster (2021), healthy self-perception develops when adolescents of African descent are exposed to a positive representation of their African heritage (p. 7).

This is vital for developing Black male adolescents into mature individuals and forming their self-perception (p. 24). Studies find that Black males must navigate the world's perception and prosocial behaviors (Harris et al., 2022). This ties into the concept

of “double consciousness,” the idea of black males having to navigate a world in which they are both accepted and despised (Boykin, 2020; DuBois, 1903). This research explored the impact of Black males as mentors and their perceptions.

Perry (2020) conducted a qualitative narrative on mentoring among Black males, examining the roles of mentors and mentees. The survey results helped the mentees discuss racial trauma and understand their identity development crisis. The opinions of their mentors provided the mentees with a sense of self and helped them incorporate these perspectives into their identity (Erikson, 1968). Black male mentors may provide their Black male youth mentees with social opportunities that facilitate their identity development (Sanchez et al., 2017).

Moreover, the academic support students traditionally receive through mentoring is also important. These efforts also affirm Black male identities by providing them with knowledge and information about their history and cultures (Broom et al, 2021). Broom et al. (2021) found that black males appreciated having Sankofa Scholars due to the cultural connection with their mentors. The role of Black males mentoring Black boys empowers them to draw from their backgrounds and narrows the opportunity gap (Rogers et al., 2023).

Natural and Formal Mentoring

For this capstone research, the concepts of natural and formal mentoring are expounded upon, and the influence of seeing their role models in their communities and connecting with another individual is discussed. According to Kelley et al. (2018), a natural mentor relationship, also referred to as an informal mentor, develops organically

based on a social connection within the adolescent's environment (p. 319). Additionally, the "natural" mentor helps alter the probability of adolescent behaviors, further supporting the influence of healthy attachment (p. 321). Kelley et al. supported the importance of a healthy role model and combined social learning with development perspectives from early adolescence to maturation.

Researchers believe that social learning, facilitated through the development of relationships between youth and adults, can optimize positive youth outcomes (Pekel et al., 2018). Due to its structured approach and support, formal mentoring generally favors youth behavior, socioemotional, and academic outcomes (Lyons et al., 2018). From a research perspective, the key to effective mentoring is a strong, caring relationship that fosters the desired positive change (Werntz et al., 2023). According to Charity-Parker et al. (2023), additional interventions and community-based programs are necessary to support the development of Black youth's identity within society.

Summary

This literature review examined various factors that influence the psychosocial development of Black male adolescents. Most of the research focused on societal factors and historical negative perceptions of Black males. There appears to be a gap in research surrounding the role of culturally responsive mentoring. These factors have a role in supporting a healthy identity in maturation, along with historical events of racial discrimination that contributed to the fear of Black males, which led to not only death or incarceration.

According to Dove et al. (2022), culturally supportive mentoring relationships foster mutual and positive identity development. The research supports the need for further investigation into culturally responsive mentoring programs for Black youth. Most research supports the idea that mentoring relationships have a positive impact on youth development; however, this capstone research aimed to explore a culturally responsive mentoring program. Sánchez et al.'s (2017) research supported the positive influence of mentoring programs on the identity development of Black male youth.

Therefore, the mentoring perspective and Erikson's identity psychosocial stage of development were explored together in this capstone. This research aims to contribute to educational research and identify a resource that can change one community at a time for adolescent Black males. This literature suggests that natural mentoring relationship dynamics also play a role in establishing and maintaining success in mentoring relationships. Section 2 was divided into five level one headings: Research Design, Methodology, Instrumentation, Data Analysis, and Ethical Procedures.

Section 2: Research Design and Data Collection

In this research, I aimed to explore Black male mentees' perceptions of their mentoring experiences and the perceived impact on their identity development. The social work problem related to this research was the historical, situational, and environmental factors that negatively affect the identity of adolescent Black males. As a social worker previously employed as a foster care worker, I sought to identify resources and facilitate social change for Black male youth through this research by exploring a culturally responsive mentoring program. The impact of the culturally responsive mentoring program as a resource to help mitigate the identity crisis among Black male youth (Robinson, 2021).

This section outlines the proposed research design, data collection methodology, and the participants to be recruited for the qualitative study. Additionally, how the information obtained from the participants was stored, ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of the research. In the project, I adhered to the guidelines of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the ethics and values of NASW.

Research Design

A generic qualitative research design was used for this research study. Black adult males who were graduates or former participants of Sigma Beta Youth Club, the youth auxiliary group of Phi Beta Sigma, Incorporated, were recruited. The data collection tool was a semi-structured interview questionnaire (see Appendix), and thematic analysis was conducted based on the identified concepts and theories. According to Seidman (2019), qualitative interviewing enabled the exploration of participants' experiences as mentees.

The following research question guided this study: What are the mentees' perceptions of the impact of mentoring on their identities? The research question was developed for data collection and aligned with semi-structured interviewing. Semi-structured qualitative interviewing was used to gather mentoring perspectives from past mentees, facilitating an in-depth exploration of their perceptions and clarifying their experiences.

The qualitative research design captures participants' real-world problems, experiences, perspectives, and behaviors (Tenny et al., 2022). Using a qualitative research design allowed for the interpretation of a range of ways humans view and make meaning of their experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Qualitative research explains patterns of human behavior that cannot be quantified (Tenny et al., 2022). Its design captures participants' real-world problems, experiences, perspectives, and behaviors (Tenny et al., 2022).

A few operational definitions and critical aspects are defined to ensure a clear understanding of the research procedures for this research, which are as follows:

Coding: a word or short phrase that captures a portion of language or visual data (Saldana, 2021).

Semi-structured interviews: open-ended questions with the use of an interview guide (Busetto et al., 2020).

Themes: Analyzed summarization for improved understanding of data based on common patterns (Aspers et al., 2019).

Transcribe: Analysis of interviews and document verbatim (Busetto et al., 2020).

Methodology

Participants Selection

In this qualitative study, I explored the perceptions of former Sigma Beta Youth Club mentees who are now adults and identify as Black males. While no minimum number of participants is required, a researcher should continue collecting data until saturation is reached or no new themes emerge (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). According to Hennink et al. (2020), data saturation can be reached with a small sample size of fewer than 20 interviews conducted at different points, depending on the research parameters. Additionally, some previous experiments conducted to determine data saturation demonstrated that saturation was reached after nine interviews (Hennink et al., 2020).

Hence, factors contributing to data saturation included the purpose and population. The flexibility in sample size estimation for the research was necessary to support an inductive data collection process. Therefore, for this research project, the estimated range of participants was 10-15, rather than a fixed number (see Hennink et al., 2020). I recruited 10 Black adult males from the Southern Region of the Sigma Beta Club, an affiliate of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

The Southern Region encompasses states, as defined by Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and the Bahamas Islands (Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., n.d.). By using former mentees, I assessed their perspectives and the perceived impact the program had on their identity development. Southern Region mentees were used to ensure that there was no conflict of interest between the participants and the researcher, given the researcher's sorority affiliation. A purposive

sampling method was employed to gain a deeper understanding of this research, in which individuals participated voluntarily (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Recruitment and Data Collection

I reached data saturation by contacting all graduate chapters in the Southern region and selecting participants who volunteered and met the research criteria. As mentioned earlier, the Southern region encompasses Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and the Bahamas Islands. This region was used for travel due to its proximity to my residential area.

Purposeful sampling was used to intentionally select individuals who met specific criteria and had relevant experiences related to my research goals (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). In order to be eligible to participate in this research, participants had to meet the following criteria: (a) be a Black male or biracial, (b) 18 years old or older, (c) a Previous mentee of the Sigma Beta Club, and (d) speak English. Participants were recruited through a flyer. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, and a Google search was used to identify Facebook accounts for all graduate chapters in the Southern region. Upon locating the chapters, I sent a message with a flyer enclosed via Facebook Messenger. It was posted to their public social media site, and requests were sent to chapter emails when email addresses were preferred over Facebook messages.

Instrumentation

According to Hennink et al. (2020), in-depth interviews are effective for gathering information on sensitive topics, personal stories, and individual experiences. I developed a semi-structured interview tool to collect data during the interviews (see Appendix),

along with audio recordings, a research log, and notes for this research (Hennink et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Instrumental tools were used to ensure the clarity and credibility of the data obtained (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Additionally, the information was transcribed and coded after the interviews were completed, and it was then transferred to spreadsheets (Saldaña, 2021).

The rationale for using coding, analytic memos, quick transcription, and field notes was to accurately capture, for dependability, participants' experiences (Hennink et al., 2020; Miles et al., 2020; Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Consent forms were obtained, and the meetings were conducted via Zoom due to distance. The research purpose was explained in the informed consent form, which was signed before the interview. Establishing a relationship with the interviewee was essential for creating a comfortable environment, fostering trustworthiness, and obtaining informed consent (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The interviews were narrative, and the semi-structured approach allowed me to guide the conversation with prepared questions, facilitating a clear understanding of their perceptions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Data Analysis

According to Saldana et al. (2021), coding solidifies observations into concrete meaning. Saldana (2021) endorsed the first cycle of coding as the thematic analysis process in which words are taken apart, and the second cycle of coding is synthesis, putting things together to create a new collection of meanings. I collected the data during the interviews to gain each mentee's perspective and experience. I used an in vivo coding strategy to analyze the mentees' words, utilizing direct quotes to capture their lived

experiences as mentees of the Sigma Beta Club (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021; Saldana, 2021).

The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using a recording device to produce interview transcripts (Saldana, 2021). To facilitate transcription, Miles et al. (2020) proposed dividing data analysis into three concurrent streams of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, the interview was transcribed from the recorder into a Microsoft Word document, and then participants reviewed it to ensure validity. Clarifying questions were asked throughout the data collection and afterward to ensure I understood the participants' perspectives (Bailey et al., 2021).

Therefore, clarifying questions were asked to understand the perspective response (Bailey et al., 2021). I then manually organized a list of codes and counted how many times each code appeared in the recordings. The second stream of analysis activity involves data display, where I listed the codes (Saldana, 2021). I categorized the initial codes for the second coding cycle and identified which codes go together.

Afterward, the phrases were condensed to determine which parts to code and which to exclude (Miles et al., 2020, p. 46). The third stream of analysis is conclusion drawing and verification. I then continued analyzing the common themes across the study to develop an emergent theoretical framework for this research (Miles et al., 2020). I employed the confirmability of the results from the collected data, which were reported for review in this research. Based on these findings, I analyzed the overall experience and perspective of the mentor program participants (Saldana, 2021).

Trustworthiness

According to Ravitch & Carl (2021), to assess validity, a rigorous process is required, and the methods in qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (p. 167). To establish credibility, I provided participants with transcripts of the interviews for review and allowed them to ask clarifying questions. Providing participants with the ability to review transcripts—a concept known as member checking—also ensured dependability and credibility (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). Additionally, confirmability was ensured through consultations with my chair, and feedback was provided to mitigate potential biases arising from my affiliation with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc.

Transferability was ensured by providing detailed information on the research process, enabling other researchers to replicate or build upon my capstone project. To ensure triangulation and trustworthiness, I confirmed the accuracy and validity of my research results by involving a peer group of fellow doctoral students in a process known as peer debriefing (Ravitch & Carl, 2021). The peer group is not affiliated with the Divine Nine and was unaware of the Sigma Beta Club. Therefore, it increases the validity of the research and provides unbiased feedback.

Ethical Procedures

Upon IRB approval, Walden University's approval number for this study is 09-18-24-1017920. After receiving IRB approval, I began collecting data in accordance with university standards. Consent forms were provided to each participant to ensure adherence to ethical standards. They were able to gain a genuine understanding by asking questions,

ensuring that participation was voluntary, and making the research purpose clear (Academic Guides: Research Ethics: Tools and Guides, 2025).

Additionally, all participants' identities remained confidential, and everyone was assigned a code to maintain confidentiality (NASW, 2021). Initials were utilized in the study, and if volunteers shared the same initials, a numerical code was added. No interviewees shared the same initials; all interview materials were stored on a password-protected computer, and any recordings were kept in a locked box with a key. All data must be destroyed after 5 years.

Summary

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews consisted of Black male adults who identified as mentees. I conducted a Google search on the Southern region of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity's website to identify email addresses to request permission to post a volunteer opportunity on the chapter's Facebook pages. Once the post was available on their pages, the flyer requested that volunteers contact me and included a notice stating that the information would be confidential. The Facebook pages are public; therefore, the flyer was accessible to the public.

Throughout the research, I maintained full disclosure and disclosed my status as a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. The consent forms were emailed to the participants and returned to the researcher; participant consent remained confidential and was not publicly accessible. My role as a researcher was clearly defined. The interviews took place in a comfortable Zoom environment, which was convenient for all

participants. All participants' interviews were transcribed, and the findings are outlined in the next section.

Section 3: Presentation of the Findings

In this qualitative research, I aimed to explore the perceptions of prior Black male mentees of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. and the Sigma Beta Club in the Southern region, as well as the impact on their identity development. I employed a qualitative approach to contextualize the process, aiming to interpret how humans understand their experiences (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). I used a theoretical framework to develop the research question: What are mentees' perceptions of the impact of mentoring on their identities?

I sought mentees via social media platforms such as Facebook and Google to obtain a list of chapters and their corresponding emails. The 10 mentees were identified using the purposive sampling method, meeting the criteria of being an adult over the age of 18, identifying as a Black male, speaking English, residing in the Southern region, a graduate chapter member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and having been a previous mentee. I researched emails for the Southern region Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. graduate chapter officers on the PBSSOUTHERN.org website. I emailed the flyer to each graduate chapter's Facebook page, which is listed on the regional page for informational correspondence and dissemination, based on the criteria.

The interviews were conducted via Zoom video chat, and prior to the interview, consent was obtained to use an audio-recording device to document and transcribe the conversation. Clarification questions were asked throughout each interview to ensure participants' perspectives were understood (see Bailey et al., 2022). The data was transcribed to analyze and synthesize the meaning of the participants' words (see

Saldana, 2021). The data were analyzed using vivo coding to identify a literal pattern related to the significance of the research questions about the impact of mentoring on their identity, and to provide trustworthy evidence for the findings (see Saldana, 2021).

Data Analysis Techniques

Initially, in-vivo coding was conducted manually by listening to each participant's recorded interview, transcribing it in Microsoft Word, creating a spreadsheet, and identifying common themes. After each interview, questions were asked, and notes were read to each participant for clarification purposes, ensuring the quality and integrity of this capstone project. Saldana (2021) mentioned member checking as a method to validate the findings to increase credibility. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns in qualitative data and analyze common themes.

After receiving IRB approval to begin recruiting and collecting data, participants provided over ten hours of feedback to develop the transcripts, and eleven follow-up questions were asked for clarification. The mentees were engaged, provided detailed accounts of their experiences, and added to the concept of mentoring. According to Naeem et al. (2023), thematic analysis is a research method used to interpret patterns or themes, often providing clarity and understanding of the data. I transcribed the interviews from Zoom recordings in Microsoft Word, capturing the participants' words, and each quote was categorized in a spreadsheet with corresponding themes.

The data collection timeframe was 2 months; the minimum requirement was met, as 10 participants volunteered for the capstone research. Despite this, there was an expectation of an overflow response regarding participation. The mentees were from

various locations within Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. The limitation was due to the low response rate of volunteers to the flyer and the absence of a known Sigma Beta Youth Auxiliary chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity in the Bahamas, despite the Southern Region encompassing Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and the Bahamas. However, the perspectives I received enabled me to gain experience in mentoring through a Black male organization.

The mentees were graduates of the National Sigma Beta Club, a Youth Auxiliary program of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., and members of the Southern Region Graduate Chapters of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Each participant was asked to share their perspective on their mentoring experience, including the age at which they joined the youth group, the length of time they spent in the program, and how the Sigma Beta Club mentoring program influenced their identity, exploring if it also positively changed their thoughts, behaviors, and home environment. Additionally, the way mentoring had impacted their education and school environment at the time.

All 10 mentees selected as respondents met the inclusion criteria. Seven participants were from Georgia, two from Florida, and one participant, originally from Alabama, resides in Florida. All 10 participants were inducted into the Southern region of the National Sigma Beta Club Foundation. The mentees were adolescent males aged 12 to 17, spoke English, and were willing to participate in the recorded interview. A detailed description of each participant's characteristics is presented in Table 1. Additionally, PBM (Participate Black Male) and mentee were used interchangeably throughout this research.

Findings

Despite the differences in the states where the mentees were inducted into the Sigma Beta Club, the themes from the interviewees were consistently similar. They helped answer the specific research questions in this capstone project. The seven themes were: academic support/ discipline/accountability, identity, father figures, consistency, representation matters, brotherhood, and providing life skills. The findings supported Erikson's (1950) theory that adolescence is a critical stage for identity formation, demonstrating that mentoring relationships contributed to the development of self-concept among Black male youth.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics and Demographics

Participant	Age of induction	Racial category/Male	State
PBM1	14	Black/Male	Alabama (resides in FL)
PBM2	14	Black/Male	Georgia
PBM3	15	Black/Male	Georgia
PMB4	13	Black/Male	Georgia
PMB5	16	Black/Male	Florida
PMB6	13	Black/Male	Florida
PMB7	13	Black/Male	Georgia
PMB8	15	Black/Male	Georgia
PMB9	13	Black/Male	Georgia
PMB10	13	Black/Male	Georgia

Note: The following abbreviation is used in Table 1: PBM – Participant

Black Male, and participant number

Table 2*Overview of Codes, Categories, and Themes*

Codes	Categories	Themes
Bad grades Trouble Impact Participation Help Advice Step shows Inspire	Academics Guidance	Academic Support, Discipline, Accountability
Call mentor Single mothers At risk Father at home Discuss feelings I was homeless Phone call away Check up on	Parent Trust	Father Figures Consistent Meetings
Representation Proud Looks like me Respect Positive Brother Member Matter	Identity Brotherhood	Representation Matters Importance of Brotherhood
Self-confidence influence Life Learned Finances Curriculum	Identity	Perception of Identity Provided Life Skills

Theme 1: Academic Support, Discipline, and Accountability

Mentees provided insight into how their mentors positively changed their thoughts and behaviors. Their perspectives encompassed relationships with teachers at school and the home environment, which influenced their academic performance and addressed behavioral issues. PBM4 stated, “I was a knucklehead.” The mentee expressed that home stressors negatively impacted his grades, and his mentor held him accountable for changing his behavior. PBM 1 said, “We could not perform in the step shows if our grades were not good.” PMB2 stated, “The things we did were fun, and you wanted to keep your grades up so you could participate.” In some states, Sigma Beta Club groups participated in step shows against other youth organizations throughout the region and toured local colleges. PMB9 recalled, “The school would call my mentor, instead of my parents, if I were not doing what I am supposed to do.” PBM6 said, “I knew that if I did not do what I was supposed to do, I would be in trouble, and my mentor would sit down and talk to me.”

Additionally, participants reported that their relationships with their mentors helped improve their grades, instilling discipline in both school and home settings. PBM 4 responded, “My mentor would assist with helping me with my homework when I was struggling.” Mentees mentioned spending time with their mentors once a month, and occasionally, for mentors who worked at the school, mentees would see them daily. Additionally, having the opportunity to tour colleges and meet on college campuses gave them hope for their future.

Theme 2: Father Figures

Mentees discussed their home environment in detail. Out of 10 participants, eight had fathers in the home; two brothers were raised primarily by their mothers. Two of the eight had father figures in the home, and their fathers were members of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Mentees shared how male mentors had influenced them, even though they had fathers in the home. According to Henry et al. (2019), positive father involvement is crucial to a child's healthy social, emotional, and academic development at all stages of life. PBM 7 stated, "I was homeless, and my mentor took me in." PMB8 said, "There were times I would call my mentors when I was upset, and they would just allow me the space to vent and take me home." PBM4 responded, "We were able to talk and discuss our feelings and what we had going on." PBM5 stated, "I appreciated my mentors, even though I had my father at home." According to PBM1, "My mentor came to my home and showed my parents respect, which made my father feel comfortable with me being a part of Sigma Beta." PBM4 shared, "I grew up around members of Phi Beta Sigma, but this gave me a whole new perspective on being a man." The interviewees reported that relationships with their mentors were crucial to them as they entered the maturation stage of their lives.

Theme 3: Consistent Meetings

Mentees emphasized the importance of the consistency that Sigma Beta Club mentors provided, which helped them trust and feel comfortable. A mentor is an effective solution for the uncertainties that come with the transition from adolescence to adulthood by youth identified as "at-risk" (Bonella et al, 2020). According to PBM10, "Knowing

that my mentor was only a phone call away and would check in on me weekly made me feel like I mattered.” PBM6 stated, “Having our monthly meetings gave me something to look forward to...I knew I would have a good time with my brothers.” PBM7 said, “When you do not have consistency in your home, it helps to know you have someone who shows they care.” All 10 participants shared a sentiment, PBM1-10 stated, “My mentor would consistently check in on me, to make sure I was good.” PBM4 responded, “I learned from my mentor the importance of being a person of your word.” PBM9 reflected, “I did not want the program to end when I graduated as a senior...I knew I would miss having this consistent relationship.” PBM1 stated, “I still have a close bond with my mentor today because he showed all the time he cared about me and my well-being.”

Theme 4: Representation Matters

According to Feemster (2021), when African-descent adolescents are exposed to a positive representation of their African heritage, they developed a healthy self-perception. All 10 mentees expressed that representation contributed to their sense of identity and fostered healthy maturation. PBM1 shared, “It felt good to see someone who looked like me.” PBM2 stated, “I felt as though I could relate more, and they understood my concerns.” PBM3 said, “I never had a Black teacher, so to have a Black mentor was different.” PBM4 responded, “He made me feel as though I could become anything.” PBM5 shared, “I was able to see someone who looked like me all around me.” PBM6 remembered, “At school, my teachers were harder on me, and they did not know what was going on at home.”

According to Heilbrun et al. (2018), in K-12 schools, Black boys were disciplined at higher rates than Black females and white peers. Additionally, Black males are heavily policed in the community and more likely to be incarcerated, resulting in the systemic dehumanization of Black boys (Harris et al., 2022; Way et al., 2017). PBM7 shared, “I grew up around positive Black men, but it still felt good, and I appreciated it.” PBM8 said, “My mentee was someone who was respected, and it helped me the way I saw myself.” PBM 9 stated, “Representation does matter. . . I know it did for me.” PBM 10 shared, “As a Black male, we often see ourselves negatively, and now I know how important representation is. . . I did not know it then.”

Theme 5: Importance of Brotherhood

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. is an organization founded on the principles of brotherhood, scholarship, and service(Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., n.d). These mentees stated that, while participating in Sigma Beta Club, a youth auxiliary of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., their mentors instilled and exhibited these same principles. PBM1 shared, “My brothers were my brothers, and I still have a relationship with them today.” PBM4 said, “I love my Sigma Beta brothers.”

PBM2 stated, “I did not grow up with a brother, and the Sigma Beta Club gave me brothers.”

According to PBM6, “It feels good to have someone that you know will be there for you.” PBM9 stated, “They made me feel like I was already a member of Phi Beta Sigma.”

The definition of brotherhood, according to the Encyclopedia.com (2018), is the relationship between brothers; the feeling of kinship with a group of people who share a common male identity; an association, society, or community of people linked by a shared interest, religion, or profession. According to Madry (2020), “Boys who are raised without another male in the family unit often feel isolated in their social development within society(p.9).” “Therefore, these boys often seek organizations that will provide them with a sense of acceptance(p.9).” All participants described brotherhood as one of the reasons they wanted to join Phi Beta Sigma.

Theme 6: Perception of Identity

The mentees expressed their perception of identity, which varied among mentees. This theme was addressed in response to Question 6: How might participation in the Sigma Beta Club mentoring program influence your identity? PBM1 and PBM2 answered the question-based curiosity of who they will become after graduation. PBM1 answered, “Having mentors who encourage you to do other things besides just going to college is important.”PBM2 answered, “To get to know you and understand what motivates you based on your other interests.”

PBM3 and PBM4 stated, “My mentor showed me who I could become and all the things that are possible.”

How might participation in the Sigma Beta Club mentoring program have influenced your identity?

PBM7 stated, “The Sigma Beta Club gave me self-confidence, showed me a possible path, and I knew that I had brothers behind me.”

Theme 7: Provided Life Skills

The Sigma Beta Club follows a curriculum titled “Rise and Thunder.” According to the mentees, the National Sigma Beta Club Foundation's motto is “The next generation of leaders accepting responsibility and loving the challenge” (sigmabetaclub.org). When asked what positive aspects of this mentorship program they believe other programs can benefit from, they said: All the participants shared how their experience should be shared with all communities. Additionally, being part of the National Sigma Beta Club Foundation changed their lives and helped them develop their identity. According to mentees, they learned about financial management, participated in community service and field trips, developed a healthier lifestyle, and received academic support. PBM3 stated, “We spent time learning about life while having fun.” “Every young male should be part of the Sigma Beta Club.” PBM10 stated, “I would change nothing about being part of the Sigma Beta Club.”

PBM1 stated, “I cannot say enough how much I enjoyed going to college step shows and seeing other chapters.”

PBM8: “I did not appreciate financial management at such a young age, but now I appreciate what I remember.”

In Chapter 4, I discussed the application of this research, its ethical implications, the professional practice it entails, and its implications for social change.

Summary

The participants shared personal challenges and victories they experienced during adolescence. The mentees endorsed the bond they experienced as members of

the Sigma Beta Club and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. The Mentors were the deciding factors in their desire to become men of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Their perspective, supported by Erikson (1968), described identity as involving interaction between oneself, society, and the community. The seven themes were: academic support/discipline/accountability, identity, father figures, consistency, representation matters, and providing life skills. Academic support, discipline, and accountability are grouped because of the commonality in the interviewees' responses. This qualitative research sought mentees who met the criteria, and the minimum was completed in approximately two months. Mentees shared their perspectives on their experiences, and the role of identity and representation played a significant part in their personal growth and maturation. Based on the answer to Question 5 – What are the benefits of having a Black adult male mentor as a Black male youth mentee? The answer is that representation matters, and having Black male mentors who support their identity and help diffuse role confusion is crucial.

Based on the interviews, mentees who had behavioral and emotional needs felt that the Sigma Beta Club provided a safe space to discuss their concerns. The Sigma Beta Club mentors gave them hope about who they could become. The mentee, who was homeless, had a mentor take him in temporarily with his parents' permission. This act was unique in that it addressed an environmental stressor, and through mentoring, the mentor became fictive kin.

Based on the literature review, Black children who experience adverse community experiences at higher rates can exacerbate adverse childhood experiences

(Lanier, 2020; Prevention Institute, 2016). According to Erikson (1968), these rates would lead to a crisis within their society. Therefore, as participants mentioned, the Sigma Beta Club provided life skills that should be shared with other communities and helped create a healthier identity and a life-changing experience. That can be an intervention to offset unlawful treatment and racism that reinforces disadvantages that are rooted in the subordination of black males (Banaji et al,2021).

The program provided the mentees with structure, and the “Rise of Thunder” curriculum helped guide their mentoring experience by clearly understanding the mission and vision of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Participant PBM3 endorsed the positive difference of having a Black mentor, and the mentoring experience for PBM4 mentoring made him feel that “he could be anything”. When reflecting on themes providing life skills, perception of identity, Erikson's statement regarding personal growth and identity crisis, “they cannot be separated in individual life along with contemporary crises in historical development, because the two help to define each other and are genuinely relative to each other (Erikson, 1968, p. 23).” In the discussion of theme 4, Representation matters when African-descent adolescents are exposed to positive African heritage, which develops a healthy self-perception (Feemster, 2021, p.7)

In Section 4, I discussed the Social Work NASW Code of Ethics in relation to the social problems addressed in this research. Based on the findings, I provided recommendations for social work practice and outlined the implications for social change. The strengths and limitations of the study were explored, providing further insight into the positive impact of culturally competent organizations on adolescent Black

males. The need for further research, the expansion of these programs into rural areas, and transportation are discussed in Section 4.

Section 4: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Social Change

In this qualitative project, I aimed to explore the gap of “identity development and cultural influences within the mentor-mentee relationship” (see Dove, 2022, p. 2).

Exploring perceptions of the mentoring experience and its perceived impact on identity development from Black male mentees is the foundation for this study. Based on the mentees’ perspectives, mentoring supported their identity development during their enrollment in the National Sigma Beta Club. While each mentee shared their perspective, the relationship and feeling of having someone who understands your struggles created a healthy trajectory into maturation.

These findings contribute to prior research by providing insight into the impact of cultural influence on the mentee. The research results provided insight into the relationship and highlighted that Black males being mentored by other Black males can serve as a valuable resource for the social work profession. Over the years, I have heard about the positive impact mentoring has on individuals. I learned through this research that culturally responsive mentoring programs have a direct impact on social change within the Black community. In the remainder of this chapter, I applied the findings of this research to social work ethics and practice, providing recommendations.

Application to Professional Ethics in Social Work Practice

As a social worker, I must adhere to the NASW (2021) Code of Ethics. Values related to my capstone research include dignity and worth, service, competence, the importance of human relationships, and social justice (see NASW, 2021). These values establish a foundation for social change within our communities, and applying these

values supports the reason this research study was needed. Social workers should demonstrate understanding of culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures (NASW, 2021).

Once an understanding of the need is established, identify what is needed for that community, as a change agent is vital. Therefore, in this research, establishing a resource for adolescent Black males within all communities, including rural and metro areas, follows the principle that social workers should demonstrate knowledge that guides practice with clients of various cultures and be able to demonstrate skills in the provision of culturally informed services that empower marginalized individuals and groups. Social workers must act against oppression, racism, discrimination, and inequities, and acknowledge personal privilege (NASW, 2021b)

Social workers should recognize the central importance of human relationships and understand that relationships between and among people are important for change (NASW, 2021). Based on the mentees' interviews, their induction into the National Sigma Beta Club created a positive platform for Black males in society, changing the trajectory of those previously facing challenges and opening new possibilities for their futures. Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression concerning race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political beliefs, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability (NASW, 2021c)

Therefore, the Code of Ethics guides clinical social work practice, addresses social issues, and informs one's decision on best practices to support clients (NASW,

2021). This research addressed the needs of Black male adolescents by assessing their perspectives on the impact of participating in a culturally responsive mentoring program, aiming to counter society's negative historical views of Black males and promote positive development. The Code of Ethics serves as a resource that guides the effective promotion of positive changes among minority populations by addressing the need for culturally competent social workers, while building relationships within the community, empowering them, and advocating for social change.

The results of this research can impact communities, school districts, and local departments of children's services, thereby influencing social work practices in identifying mentoring programs and providing resources to support these initiatives, especially in rural communities that often have limited resources and are often uninformed about specific organizational resources. Furthermore, this awareness is vital for social workers, community organizations, mentors, social workers, and other professionals to be trained in cultural competence.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice

This capstone research provided perspectives from Black males who were mentees aged 12 to 17 and are now adults. The idea was for these men to tell their stories in their own words, share their experiences, and highlight the impact that mentoring has on making a positive difference in their lives. These recommendations are for fellow micro, mezzo, and macro social workers who serve this population.

Recommendation 1

This study found that representation matters and fostered healthier maturation into adulthood. Participants endorsed having mentors whom they feel they can relate to, are trustworthy, and understand their home stressors. Additionally, participants reported that their mentors instilled a sense of accountability, and seeing someone who looked like them strengthened their self-perception and reduced feelings of criminalization. Societal criminalization based on their skin color creates an assumption by law enforcers that Black males are criminals(Najdowski, 2023).

Therefore, it is recommended that social workers seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression related to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and age (NASW, 2021c). Social Workers should lead communities in learning about historical trauma and the judicial system that disproportionately affects Black adolescent males. Drawing on historical context, they can gain insight into behavioral issues and systemic racism. There is also a lack of trust within minority communities, particularly in rural areas with limited access and inadequate legal representation.

Recommendation 2

Secondly, this study found that the Sigma Beta Club had a positive impact on changing the maladaptive behaviors of the participants. The interviewees shared firsthand experiences of how a Black male mentor can create effective positive change and reduce the behaviors. As a practitioner, I can share these findings with others in the social work field and support my clients during therapy sessions to explore their identity crises when

discussing their childhood trauma. In the field of social work, studies can create a more person-centered treatment plan to address adolescent black male youth's social and emotional needs.

These negative environmental and situational factors are barriers to their educational journey, and as a result, social workers are recommended to examine and stay current with emerging knowledge. The results are helpful and can provide a therapeutic approach to mentoring, using a mixed-methods study to support rural communities that often have limited resources and to explore identity development further using standardized measures. This is relevant to social work and fully utilizes evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice (NASW, 2021b). Social workers should conduct mixed-method studies that capture both human experience and data outcomes to explore identity development further using standardized measures.

The research results can impact social work practice and be applied at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. This capstone project offers valuable insights into innovative approaches to support positive youth development. According to Opara et al. (2022), attention towards mental health disparities is needed for Black adolescents with mental health disorders, who are less likely than non-Black adolescents with mental health disorders to receive treatment, due to negative perceptions of services, providers, and a lack of access to mental health services (Opara et al.,2022). Erikson's psychosocial stage of development, identity vs. role confusion, as mentioned earlier, is a stage of development for young black boys who, due to media and personal encounters, may constantly wonder what they can become, who they are, or where they fit into society.

Recommendation 3

This study found that some participants reported they enjoyed having their Sigma Beta Club mentor employed at their local school. This gave them someone they could trust to help resolve issues during school hours. According to the NASW (2021b), social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs, become more knowledgeable about the community's needs, gain insight into educational barriers, and build connections. As a result, it is recommended that Social Workers should partner with community organizations that provide resources for adolescent black males.

The recommendation is just as Boys and Girls Clubs partner with local schools to offer after-school programs. School Social Workers should partner with Divine Nine youth mentoring programs to alleviate the burden on children who lack weekend transportation by providing daily mentoring during the school day. They usually meet on Saturday mornings at a designated location, and some students mention this as an issue. I recommend that further research be conducted to provide a daily mentoring opportunity during school hours to strengthen the results.

Strengths and Limitations

This capstone research project had strengths and limitations, as revealed through the participants' perspectives. Participants were engaged and provided with detailed information to answer all 11 research questions, offering insight into their perspectives as mentees and the impact it had on their identities. The study had a positive outcome; the mentee's relationship with their mentor gave them insight into who they could

become and instilled confidence, addressing the question, “Who am I?” without directly asking the question. The National Sigma Beta Club meets once a month; however, some mentees may see their mentors informally daily, particularly if they work in a school setting or in their community.

Neither complained about the frequency or lack thereof, given the relationships established throughout the program year. Some participants felt their mentors were like father figures, and their fellow mentees were their brothers. As a researcher, my goal was to capture the participants' perspectives on the problem and gather their opinions to address any identified issues (see Hennink et al., 2020). Overall, the participants found that the program contributed to healthy development into maturation and created a safe environment for those whose homes were unstable.

Limitations

Although the Southern region encompasses Mississippi, the Bahamas, Florida, Georgia, and Alabama, the sample size was smaller than expected. The findings of this research were limited to two states — Georgia and Florida — and to one mentee, who resided in Alabama but now resides in Florida. These 10 participants from the two states provided an insightful perspective. Moreover, there were key limitations that presented challenges. In my personal reflection, as a member of an organization within the Divine Nine, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., I remained unbiased.

However, my challenge was that I felt being a member of a Divine Nine organization would have increased the study participation. Therefore, I presumed I would have exceeded 10-15 participants for the study, as I mentioned earlier, the

individuals who received the flyer had to be active members of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. and past mentees of the National Sigma Beta Club. The criterion was limiting, and I should have expanded it to include both active and inactive members of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. I received responses from a minimum of 10, and it took two months to recruit my first participant after I posted my flyer on a social media site.

Also, I did not receive feedback from the graduate chapters in Alabama, Mississippi, or the Bahamas. I was informed by one of the participants that there were no active National Sigma Beta Clubs in the Bahamas. Additionally, I should have included National Sigma Beta Club participants who were not members of a fraternal organization or chose not to join Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Therefore, during semi-structured interviews, due to the small number of participants. I reiterated to all participants that their identities would remain confidential to maintain their comfort throughout the interview.

Men having to identify as Black or biracial was not mentioned as a concern by the participants. However, one of the participants mentioned that, as a member of the Sigma Beta Club, he had never interacted with a member of the Sigma Beta Club who was of a different ethnicity.

PBM1 stated, “We have brothers from all over the world, yet it was not reflected in the Sigma Beta Club when I was a member.” PBM1 was inducted into the organization in the late 1990s. PBM6 mentioned that he loves the fact that Sigma Beta Club represents Black culture and that he had a fellow mentee brother who was Caucasian. The mentees

reported no issues with transportation when attending meetings. However, the participants noted that some of their fellow mentees had issues attending meetings due to transportation concerns. This was particularly evident in metropolitan areas and households with a single parent.

The research was limited to males, and future research should examine the impact that the Divine Nine mentoring organizations could have on female adolescents. Black women continue to be underrepresented in clinical research (Le et al., 2022). Lastly, the results do not detail the influence of Phi Beta Sigma's curriculum, 'Rise and Thunder.' Therefore, the study's results could have been influenced by the general mentor relationship rather than the Phi Beta Sigma curriculum itself. This factor was not determined in my study because it fell outside the scope of the criteria. Acknowledging limitations and recommending future research is part of examining one's methodology (Montgomery, 2023).

Recommendations for Future Research

The capstone research focused on the perspectives of Black male mentees of the Sigma Beta Club of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. The theory that supported the research was identity vs. role confusion, examining its impact on the identity of adolescent black males. I recommend that future research continue to be conducted on young adolescent black males and the impact society has on their mental health to identify person-centered wrap-around services to support their behavioral and environmental needs. Given the outcome, I also recommend a mixed-methods study to

minimize limitations in the research and to provide in-depth data and participants' human experience.

Additionally, future research should include the program's curriculum to capture its impact on adolescents' identity development. Based on this factor, the results may have been influenced by the general mentoring relationship rather than Phi Beta Sigma's curriculum, 'Rise and Thunder.' Furthermore, recommendations for expanding this research to other regions, not just the Southern Region, but worldwide. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity has active chapters in various countries and regions of the United States.

Therefore, my final recommendation, based on the positive results and learning impact, is that a mixed-methods study be conducted with adult Black women or adolescent girls who were mentees in a culturally responsive program. Possibly decreasing the reluctance of African American women who are willing to participate in research studies. This expounds on my learning impact based on the results of this study, expanding research criteria to be more inclusive, increasing participation, and obtaining more diverse perspectives. This new understanding of the research process will provide a stronger foundation for future research.

Dissemination of Findings

Upon approval of my capstone research project, I will seek to publish a final copy of this research in a peer-reviewed journal. The qualitative research will be uploaded to the Walden University Library site, and I will email a summary of the results to all participants. Also, present findings at professional conferences, such as the National Social Work Association and Divine Nine organizations' national meetings. I will

request invitations to present at the local Department of Children Services and the local school administrators' staff meetings. As well as present research findings at local specialized foster care agencies and attend community outreach events.

Implications for Social Change

Positive social change is part of Walden University's mission (Brown et al., 2017). This study has the potential to positively influence social change at the micro level, including individual homes, as well as in rural and urban communities and in domestic and international contexts. Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. is an international organization with chapters in various countries, including Nigeria, Japan, and South Korea. It raises awareness about the impact of culturally competent mentoring programs led by adult Black men.

Hence, at the macro level, it lays the foundation for further research on the influence of psychosocial development on positive youth development and its role in reducing maladaptive behaviors, and it provides a program for judicial systems to incorporate into their policies. It addressed environmental and situational factors that are barriers to the educational success of Black males. This is pertinent for those who are considered at-risk in their communities or exhibit behavioral and emotional challenges. Culturally competent organizations can play a crucial role in dismantling stereotypes within communities (Taylor et al., 2019).

Summary

Newton(1973) stated, "In order for man to survive, there has to be some universal identity that does not depend upon people thinking that others are less than they are" (as

cited in Erikson, p.140, 1973). In conclusion, this qualitative research aimed to answer the question; What are the mentees' perceptions of the impact mentoring had on their identities? This problem warranted further exploration to examine the gap between "identity development and cultural influences within the mentor-mentee relationship" (Dove, 2022, p. 2). I obtained the perspectives of 10 adult Black males on their mentoring experiences as adolescents, including any concerns they had as mentees of the National Sigma Beta Club of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

Throughout the interviews, the participants provided insight into the impactful role that representation played in changing a potentially harmful trajectory into a positive one. The concept of the mentee-mentor relationship, as noted in this study's findings, is deeply intertwined with their adult identity and builds on Erikson's theory of identity vs. role confusion. The proposed strategy recommendations aimed to enhance community awareness, school district initiatives, and social work practices by improving mentoring programs through partnerships with Divine Nine organizations. Programs like the National Sigma Beta Club serve as a positive resource to address the societal and environmental impacts on the identity of adolescent Black males.

Identifying the need for these vulnerable youth to be connected to mentors, based on the community and societal barriers that impede the psychosocial development and maturation of adolescent Black males. Social workers, especially those who work within school systems and local state family and children services, should refer and provide these critical services for adolescent black males by linking them with supportive adult Black male mentors. Social workers trained in cultural competence should advise local

leaders to incorporate these programs into the local school systems. Often, for this to happen, the need must be expressed by mentors, mentees, and the community that is negatively affected by a lack of access to resources.

Based on the study's outcomes, the results were impactful and enhanced my understanding of the process. I learned that it is important to explore greater inclusivity in the criteria to increase the number of participants, and that a mixed-methods study might have provided a deeper human perspective. Therefore, in this case, including both the mentee and mentor perspectives to capture the whole infrastructure of the mentoring program. Also, including active, inactive, and non-members of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc., who were members of the National Sigma Beta Club.

Hence, an additional way for them to voice a desire for these resources is for communities to be made aware of these programs. I believe my findings provided valuable information on the need and helped fill existing literature gaps, serving as a guide for developing an action plan to explore cultural mentoring programs for adolescent Black males in communities. The results of this research revealed that for Black male adolescents, having a Black adult male mentor in a culturally responsive mentoring program can lead to positive social change in their identity development. “In the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity (Erikson, 1968, p.130).”

References

- Abrams, Z. (2021). *Sounding the alarm on black youth suicide*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2020/black-youth-suicide>
- Adams, C. (2021, November 24). *They almost got away with it: how a leaked video led to convictions in the Ahmaud Arbery case*. NBC NEWS. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/-almost-got-away-leaked-video-led-convictions-ahmaud-arbery-case-rcna6690>
- Adkison-Johnson, C. (2023). Understanding the Black male experience: Recommendations for clinical, community, and school settings. Introduction to special issue. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 51, 210–212. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12287>
- Alexander, C. (2022). Cultural relevance training and coaching of teachers in a Texas elementary school: A design development intervention study investigating how teachers can positively impact African American students [Doctoral dissertation, Texas Tech University]. TTU DSpace Repository. <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/2acc09e-6f13-4ebf-9750-db60b0ba7f2a/content>
- Alfonseca, K. (2023, April 19). *Ralph Yarl's case highlights “adultification” of Black children, researchers say*. ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/ralph-yarl-case-highlights-adultification-black-children-researchers/story?id=98662646>
- Anderson, R. E., & Stevenson, H. C. (2019). RECASTing racial stress and trauma:

- Theorizing the healing potential of racial socialization in families. *American Psychologist*, 74(1), 63–75. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000392>
- Ang, D., Bencsik, P., Bruhn, J., & Derenoncourt, E. (2021). Police violence reduces civilian cooperation and engagement with law enforcement. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3920493>
- Aspers, P., & Corte, U. (2019). What Is Qualitative in Qualitative Research? *Qualitative Sociology*, 42(2), 139–160. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7>
- Auxier, B. (2020, December 11). *Social media continues to be an important political outlet for Black Americans*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/12/11/social-media-continue-to-be-important-political-outlets-for-black-americans/>
- Aweah, EE. A. (2023). I say who I am: Black males and building our identity. Children's Defense Fund Ohio. <https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/i-say-who-i-am-black-males-and-building-our-identity/>
- Bailey, A., Bailey, R., Newman, G., Barrett, A., Nguyen, M., & Lindsay, J. (2023). Deconstructing the trauma-altered identity of Black men. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 17(3), 999–1012. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-023-00526-0>
- Bailey, T.-K. M., Yeh, C. J., & Madu, K. (2021). Exploring Black adolescent males' experiences with racism and internalized racial oppression. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 69(4), 375–388. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000591>
- Bal, A., Betters-Bubon, J., & Fish, R. E. (2017). A multilevel analysis of statewide

disproportionality in exclusionary discipline and the identification of emotional disturbance. *Education and Urban Society*, 51(2), 247–268.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124517716260>

Banaji, M. R., Fiske, S. T., & Massey, D. S. (2021). Systemic racism: individuals and interactions, institutions, and society. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 6(1), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-021-00349-3>

Banks, J. (2017). These people are never going to stop labeling me: Educational experiences of African American male students labeled with learning disabilities. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(1), 96–107.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2016.1250235>

Barbarian, O.A., Hitti, A., & Copeland, L. N. (2019). Behavioral and emotional development of African American boys growing up in risky environments. *Child Development Perspectives*, 13(4), 2015-220. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12341>

Barlis, J. E. C. (2018). Mental health literacy, stigma, and attitudes toward help-seeking at school for Asian-and Latino-American adolescents. [Master's thesis, University of Maryland]. <https://doi.org/10.13016/M2V698G5W>

Baumgartner, F. R., Christiani, L., Epp, D. A., Roach, K., & Shoub, K. (2017). Racial disparities in traffic stop outcomes. *Duke Forum for Law and Social Change*, 9,21-53.

Bernard, D. L., Calhoun, C. D., Banks, D. E., Halliday, C. A., Hughes-Halbert, C., & Danielson, C. K. (2020). Making the “C-ACE” for a culturally informed adverse childhood experiences framework to understand the pervasive mental health

impact of racism on Black youth. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 14(14).

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-020-00319-9>

Bonella, B., Beirwolf, K., Coleman, L., Sterger, C., Pulli, K., Anguiano, C., & Barton, K.

(2019). Mixed methods evaluation of formal mentoring: Journey UP for aging out of foster care. *Global Social Welfare*, 7, 121-130. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-019-00157-0)

[019-00157-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-019-00157-0)

Boulware, Myisha, "Reluctance to Seek Mental Health Treatment Among African

Americans Living in Generational Poverty" (2021). *Walden Dissertations and*

Doctoral Studies. 11478. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/11478>

Branje, S., de Moor, E. L., Spitzer, J., & Becht, A. I. (2021). Dynamics of identity

development in adolescence: A decade in review. *Journal of Research on*

Adolescence, 31(4), 908–927. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12678>

Britton, T. (2021). Does locked up mean locked out? The effects of the Anti-Drug Abuse

Act of 1986 on Black male students' college enrollment. *Journal of Economics,*

Race, and Policy, 5, 54-71. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41996-020-00073-y>

Brown, D. (2020, May 29). Human rights watch calls for Tulsa race massacre reparations

a century after violence. *The Washington Post*.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/05/29/human-rights-watch-calls-](https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/05/29/human-rights-watch-calls-tulsa-race-massacre-reparations-century-after-violence/)

[tulsa-race-massacre-reparations-century-after-violence/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/05/29/human-rights-watch-calls-tulsa-race-massacre-reparations-century-after-violence/)

Brown, K. D. (2017). *Promoting positive social development among African American*

boys [Doctoral thesis, University of Illinois Chicago]. INDIGO.

<https://hdl.handle.net/10027/21842>

- Buckley T. R. (2018). Black adolescent males: Intersections among their gender role identity and racial identity and associations with self-concept (Global and school). *Child development*, 89(4), e311–e322.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12950>
- Busetto, C. (2022, November). *Defining a culture of care for Black boys*. Brookings.
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/defining-a-culture-of-care-for-black-boys>
- Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2, 14.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z>
- Camarena Castillo, Roxanne, "Challenges within the Education System: An In-Depth Analysis of the School to Prison Pipeline in the United States" (2021). CMC Senior Theses. 2682. https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/2682
- Carr, C. T., Kim, Y., Valov, J. J., Rosenbaum, J. E., Johnson, B. K., Hancock, J. T., & Gonzales, A. L. (2021). An explication of identity shift theory: Getting our shift together. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, and Applications*, 33(4), 202–214. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1864-1105/a000314>.
- Ceballos, A., & Johnson, A. (2023, August 29). Documents detail Florida’s objections to African American studies course.
<https://www.tampabay.com/news/education/2023/08/29/desantis-african-american-studies-reviewers-slavery-college-board/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *Suicide data and statistics*. Suicide Prevention; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>

Charity-Parker, B. M., & Adams-Bass, V. N. (2023). Exploring Black Youth's Belief in Racial Socialization Across Parental and Non-parental Agents. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-022-02451-6>

Cherry, K. (2023). *Identity vs. Role Confusion in Psychosocial Development*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/identity-versus-confusion-2795735>

Civil Rights Data Collection. (2017). 2015–16 state and national estimations.

https://ocrdata.ed.gov/StateNationalEstimations/Estimations_2015_16

Clark, J. S., Brooms, D. R., Smith, M., & Franklin, W. (2021). Understanding the Laws of Harvest: Black and Latino Male Collegians Enacting Critical Race Care as Youth Mentors. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, 123(12), 155–179. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01614681211070874>

Davis (2020) Discrimination: A Social Determinant of Health Inequities. *Health Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/discrimination-social-determinant-health-inequities>.

Davis, J., & Marsh, N. (2020). Boys to men: the cost of 'adultification' in safeguarding responses to Black boys. *Critical and Radical Social Work*, 8(2), 255–259.

Retrieved April 5th, 2019,

from <https://doi.org/10.1332/204986020X15945756023543>

DeAngelis, T. (2024, May 9). Black men's mental health matters. *Monitor on*

Psychology, 52(6). <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2021/09/ce-black-mental-health>

Deepti Hajela. (2022, February 24). Trayvon Martin, 10 years later: Teen's death changes

nation. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/ahmaud-arbery-george-floyd-social-media-florida-race-and-ethnicity-6f8d85215fd776c7dc0842e38963828f>

Dill-Shackleford, K., Ramasubramanian, S., Drake, L. M. II, (Eds.). (2017). Stories about Black men in the media and their consequences for health. In C. Alexander, V., McBride Murry, & K. Bogard (Eds.), *Perspectives on health equity and social determinants of health* (Chapter 9). National Academies Press
<https://doi.org/10.17226/27117>

Douglass, F. (1892). Lynch law in the South. *North American Review* 155(428) 17–24.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822380856-030>

Dove, L. M. (2022). Black Youths' Perspectives: Importance of Family and Caregiver Involvement in the Mentor–Mentee Relationship. *Healthcare*, 10(11), 2181.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10112181>

DuBois, W. E. B. (1903). *The souls of Black folks*. McClurg & Co.

Dupiton, Marvin Earl, "The Examination of Racial Identity of Black Males through Self-Efficacy, Social Integration, Persistence, and Mentorship at a Predominantly White Institution" (2021). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 5623.
https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/5623

Ellis, J. M., Rowley, L. L., Nellum, C. J., & Smith, C. D. (2018). From alienation to efficacy: Examining racial identity and racial academic stereotypes among Black male adolescents. *Urban Education*, 53(7), 899–928
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915602538>

Encyclopedia.com. (2018). Brotherhood. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/literature-and->

- arts/language-linguistics-and-literary-terms/english-vocabulary-d/brotherhood
- Equal Justice Initiative. (2017). "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror" 3d ed. Montgomery, AL: Equal Justice Initiative [Google Scholar](#)
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. W W Norton & Co.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. Norton.
- Erikson, E. H., & Newton, H. P. (1973). *In Search of Common Ground : Conversations with Erik H. Erikson and Huey P. Newton*. <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA32547791>
- Fagan, A. A., & Novak, A. (2018). Adverse childhood experiences and adolescent delinquency in a high-risk sample: A comparison of white and black youth. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 16(4), 395–417.
- Feemster, E. (2021). Exploring Identity in Male Adolescents of African Descent with Culturally Affirming African Images <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/exploring-identity-male-adolescents-african/docview/2615134727/se-2>
- Fletcher, E. C. (2023). Representation matters: A case study of ethnic matching aimed at building an environment of success for Black males. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 51(4), 269-291. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jmcd.12284>
- Ford, S. (2021) "Learning While Black: How "Zero Tolerance" Policies Disproportionately Affect Black Students," *University of Florida Journal of Law & Public Policy*: Vol. 32(1), <https://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/jlpp/vol32/iss1/2>
- Gaylord-Harden, N. K., Barbarin, O., Tolan, P. H., & Murry, V. M. (2018). Understanding development of African American boys and young men: Moving

- from risks to positive youth development. *American Psychologist*, 73(6), 753–767. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000300>
- Gibson, E. M., Sandifer, M. C., & Bedford, W. (2018). A Sense of Mattering: A Group Intervention for African American Boys. *Professional School Counseling*, 22(1), 2156759X1986733. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759x19867336>
- Goodwill, J. R., Taylor, R. J., & Watkins, D. C. (2019). Everyday Discrimination, Depressive Symptoms, and Suicide Ideation Among African American Men. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 25(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2019.1660287>
- Gordon-Young, B. (2023). The Experiences of Successful Formerly Incarcerated African American Males. Scholar Works. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/14144>
- Greene, B. L. (2020). And Ain't I a Man: An Examination of Violence Against African-American Men by Caucasian Men in the United States. CUNY Academic Works. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/3755
- Group, M. (2020). The Strange Fruit of the Tree of Liberty: Lynch Law and Popular Sovereignty in the United States. *Perspectives on Politics*, 18(3), 819–834. doi:10.1017/S1537592720001255
- Guenther, C. L., Wilton, E., & Fernandes, R. (2020). Identity. *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, 2136–2145. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24612-3_1132
- Hamilton, S. D. (2023). *School Social Workers' Role in School Discipline:*

Understanding School Discipline and Juvenile Justice. Scholar Works.

<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/14165>

Hampton-Anderson, J. N., Novacek, D. M., Zhen-Duan, J., Latimer, S., Perry, T., & Renard, D. (2023). Redefining the Role of Public Health Professionals Serving Black Youths Seeking Mental Health Care: Implications for Training and Mentoring. *American Journal of Public Health, 113*(S2), S140–S148.

<https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2022.307194>

Harris, J., & Kruger, A. C. (2022). “Be Kind But Not Too Kind”: Black Males’ Prosocial Behaviors in the Face of Dehumanization. *Journal of Research on*

Adolescence, 32(2), 552–568. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12746>

Hassan, Adeel (2023, April 27) . Emmett Till’s Enduring Legacy. *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/who-was-emmett-till.html>

Hawkins-Jones, J. Y. (2017). *Identity Crisis: Understanding How American Males’ Self-Perception and Experiences Impact Their Educational Attainment*. The Aquila Digital Community. <https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/1389>

Heilbrun, A., Cornell, D., & Konold, T. (2017). Authoritative school climate and suspension rates in middle schools: Implications for reducing the racial disparity in school discipline. *Journal of School Violence, 17*(3), 324–338.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2017.1368395>

Hemez, P., Brent, J. J., & Mowen, T. J. (2019). Exploring the School-to-Prison Pipeline: How School Suspensions Influence Incarceration During Young Adulthood. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 18*(3).

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1541204019880945>

Henderson, Z. (2017). In Their Own Words: How Black Teens Define Trauma. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-017-0168-6>

Hennink, M., Hutter, I. and Bailey, A. (2020) *Qualitative Research Methods*. SAGE Publications Limited, Thousand Oaks.

Henry, J. B., Julion, W. A., Bounds, D. T., & Sumo, J. (2019). Fatherhood Matters: An Integrative Review of Fatherhood Intervention Research. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 36(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059840519873380>

Henry, K.-A. K., Catagnus, R. M., Griffith, A. K., & Garcia, Y. A. (2021). Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Perception and Experience with Zero-Tolerance Policies and Interventions to Address Racial Inequality. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 15(4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-021-00634-z>

Hines, E. M., Cintron, D.W., Moore III, J. L., Singleton II, P., Golden, M., Fletcher Jr., E.C., Henderson, J.A., SLACK, T., Moore, W. C., Ouiette, D., Reid Jr., M., D.Y (2023). A Bridge Over Troubled Water: Designing and Implementing a Living-Learning Community to Produce Optimal Outcomes for Black Males. *Journal of College & University Student Housing*, 49(2), 66-85

Hinton, E., & Cook, D. (2021). The mass criminalization of Black Americans: A historical overview. *Annual Review of Criminology*, 4(1), 261–286. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-060520-033306>

Houssou, Jacques, "Understanding the Impact of Special Education Programs on African American Males" (2023). *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. 11713.

<https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/11713>

- Howard-Mullins, Alexia L., "The War on Drugs and its Legal Effects on Black Americans" (2022). 2022 Symposium. 12. https://dc.ewu.edu/srcw_2022/12
- Hughes, K., Bellis, M. A., Hardcastle, K. A., Sethi, D., Butchart, A., Mikton, C., Jones, L., & Dunne, M. P. (2017). The effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences on health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet Public Health*, 2(8), 356–366. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(17\)30118-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(17)30118-4)
- Ijadi-Maghsoodi, R., Bonnet, K., Feller, S., Nagaran, K., Puffer, M., & Kataoka, S.(2018) Voices from Minority Youth on Help-Seeking and Barriers to Mental Health Services: Partnering with School-Based Health Centers. *Ethnicity & disease*, 28(Suppl 2), 437–444. <https://doi.org/10.18865/ed.28.S2.437>
- Irvine, F. R. (2019). Academic Success of African American Males in a Historically Black University. *Journal of African American Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-019-09434-w>
- Jackson, L., Ford, J., Randolph, C., Schleiden, C., Harris-McKoy, D., & McWey, L. (2021). School Climate as a Link Between High School Black Males' Math Identity and Outcomes. *Education and Urban Society*, 53(4), 469–487. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124520931453>
- Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 162–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032>

- Jaiswal, Jessica & Halkitis, Perry. (2019). Towards a More Inclusive and Dynamic Understanding of Medical Mistrust Informed by Science. *Behavioral Medicine*. 45(2). 79-85. 10.1080/08964289.2019.1619511.
- Johnson, J., Ohlson, M. A., & Shope, S. (2018). Demographic Changes in Rural America and the Implications for Special Education Programming: A Descriptive and Comparative Analysis. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, 37(3), 140-149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8756870518771381>
- Johnson, R. (2024). I Am a Man: Understanding Black Male Identity and Mental Health Needs. In D. Bates (Ed.), *Mental Health Counseling for Men: Practical Strategies and Effective Engagement* (pp. 74-102). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1459-3.ch004>
- Jones, K., Ferguson, A., Ramirez, C., & Owens, M. (2018). Seen But Not Heard: Personal Narratives of Systemic Failure Within the School-to-Prison Pipeline. *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*, 17(4). <https://doi.org/10.31390/taboo.17.4.04>
- Jones, M., Jacobs, M., Kamontá Heidelberg, & Graves, S. L. (2023). Social-Emotional and Behavioral Strategies to Improve School Outcomes for Black Males. *Theory into Practice*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2023.2258734>
- Kaufman, A. (2023, May 22). *Gov. Ron DeSantis' feud with the College Board over AP African American Studies, explained*. USA TODAY. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2023/05/22/ron-desantis-ap-african-american-studies-ban-explained/11418542002>

- Kelley, M. S., & Lee, M. J. (2018). When natural mentors matter: Unraveling the relationship with delinquency. *Children and Youth Services Review, 91*, 319–328. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chidyouth.2018.06.00>
- Kendall, W. J. (2019). Martin Luther King, Jr., Civil Disobedience and the Duty to Obey the Law: Where Do We Go from Here? *The Journal of Social Encounters, 3*(1), 75–87. <https://doi.org/10.69755/2995-2212.1030>
- Kunjufu, J. (2019). Understanding Black Male Learning Styles. In T. S. Ransaw, C. P. Gause, & R. Majors (Eds.), *The Handbook of Research on Black Males: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Multidisciplinary* (pp. 287–298). Michigan State University Press. <https://doi.org/10.14321/j.ctv4g1qgh.29>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). Three Decades of Culturally Relevant, Responsive, & Sustaining Pedagogy: What Lies Ahead? *The Educational Forum, 85*(4), 351–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2021.1957632>
- Lanier, P. (2020, July 2). *Racism is an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE)*. The Jordan Institute for Families. <https://jordaninstituteforfamilies.org/2020/racism-is-an-adverse-childhood-experience-ace/>
- Lateef, H., Amoako, E. O., Nartey, P., Tan, J., & Joe, S. (2021). Black Youth and African-Centered Interventions: A Systematic Review. *Research on Social Work Practice, 32*(1), 104973152110033. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10497315211003322>
- Laurencin, C. T., & Walker, J. M. (2020). Racial profiling is a public health and health disparities issue. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities, 7*(3), 393–397. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-020-00738-2>

- Le, D., Ozbeki, H., Salazar, S., Berl, M., Turner, M. M., & Price, O. A. (2022). Improving African American women's engagement in clinical research: A systematic review of barriers to participation in clinical trials. *Journal of the National Medical Association, 114*(3), 324–339.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnma.2022.02.004>
- Lindsay, C.A., & Hart, C.M.D. (2017). Teacher Race and School Discipline: Are students suspended less often when they have a teacher of the same race? *Education Next, 17*(1), 72–78. <https://www.educationnext.org/teacher-race-and-school-discipline-suspensions-research/>
- Liu, S. R., Kia-Keating, M., & Nylund-Gibson, K. (2018). Patterns of adversity and pathways to health among White, Black, and Latinx youth. *Child abuse & neglect, 86*, 89–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.09.007>
- Loyd, A. B., Westberg, D. W., Williams, L., Humphries, M., Meca, A., & Rodil, J. C (2023). “I Just Want to Be Me, Authentically”: Identity Shifting Among Racially and Ethnically Diverse Young Adults. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 52*(4).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-023-01744-3>
- Lozada, F. T., Riley, T. N., Catherine, E., & Brown, D. W. (2021) Black Emotions Matter: Understanding the Impact of Racial Oppression on Black Youth’s Emotional Development. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 32*(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12699>
- Lyons, M. D., McQuillin, S. D., & Henderson, L. J. (2018). Finding the Sweet Spot: Investigating the Effects of Relationship Closeness and Instrumental Activities in

School-based Mentoring. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 63(1-2), 88–98. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12283>

Madry, T. S. (2020). *Mentoring: A Leadership Tool for Black Greek Fraternities* (Order No. 28765570). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Closed Collection; ProQuest One Academic. (2572594511).

<https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/mentoring-leadership-tool-black-greek/docview/2572594511/se-2>

Marcucci, O. (2019). Implicit bias in the era of social desirability: Understanding antiblackness in rehabilitative and punitive school discipline. *The Urban Review*, 52(1), 47–74. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00512-7>

Maree, J. G. (2021). The psychosocial development theory of Erik Erikson: a critical overview, *Early Child Development, and Care*, 191:7-8, 1107–1121, DOI: 10.1080/03004430.2020.1845163

McNeill, L. (2017, October 26). *How a Psychologist's Work on Race Identity Helped Overturn School Segregation in 1950s America*. *Smithsonian Magazine*. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/psychologist-work-identity-helped-overturn-school-segregation-180966934>

MENTOR Canada. (2020). *The mentoring effect for Black youth*.

<https://youthrex.com/report/the-mentoring-effect-for-black-youth/>

Mentor definition in the Cambridge English dictionary. (n.d.-a) . Retrieved May 3rd, 2025 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/mentor>

Merriam-Webster. (n.d-a). Black. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved June

- 17th, 2023a, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/black>.
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d-b) Male. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved June 17th, 2023b, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/male>.
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d-c) Mentee. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved May 3rd, 2025c, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/male>.
- Metzger, I. W., Cooper, S. M., Griffin, C. B., Golden, A. R., Opara, I., & Ritchwood, T. D. (2020). Parenting profiles of academic and racial socialization: Associations with academic engagement and academic self-beliefs of African American adolescents. *Journal of school psychology, 82*, 36–48.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2020.07.001>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative Data Analysis: a Methods Sourcebook* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Moench, M. (2018, April 26). *Newspaper apologizes for “shameful” coverage of lynchings*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/general-news-290b606c5ae248408031b803cefd927f>
- Montgomery, D. P. (2023). “This study is not without its limitations”: Acknowledging limitations and recommending future research in applied linguistics research articles. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 65*, 101291.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2023.101291>
- Morgan, H. (2021). Restorative Justice and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: A Review of Existing Literature. *Education Sciences, 11*(4).
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11040159>

- Motley, R. O., Jr., Chen, Y.-C., Johnson, C., & Joe, S. (2020). Exposure to community-based violence on social media among Black male emerging adults involved with the criminal justice system. *Social Work Research, 44*(2), 87–97.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svaa002>
- Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 22*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>
- Najdowski, C. (2023). How the “Black Criminal” Stereotype Shapes Black People’s Psychological Experience of Policing: Evidence of Stereotype Threat and Remaining Questions. *Psychology Faculty Scholarship*.
https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/psychology_fac_scholar/38
- Napoleon, L. (2019). No Positive Role Models: Growing Up in Prison. In T. S. Ransaw, C. P. Gause, & R. Majors (Eds.), *The Handbook of Research on Black Males: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Multidisciplinary* (pp. 457–463). Michigan State University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.14321/j.ctv4g1qgh.37>
- National Association of Social Workers. (2021). Ethical principles. Read the code of ethics. Retrieved from <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English?67e74307bdc91>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2019). *Indicator 15: Retention, Suspension, and Expulsion*. Ed.gov. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/raceindicators/indicator_rda.asp
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). High School Graduation

- Rates. *Condition of Education*. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences . <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/coi>.
- National Sigma Beta Club Foundation. (2019, September 7). *National Sigma Beta Club Foundation*. <https://sigmabetaclub.org/>
- Nix, J. (2020). On the challenges associated with the study of police use of deadly force in the United States: A response to Schwartz & Jahn. *PLOS ONE*, 15(7), e0236158. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0236158>
- Obama Foundation. (n.d.). *My brother's Keeper Alliance*. <https://www.obama.org/programs/my-brothers-keeper-alliance/>
- Ogunbanwo, Folasade, "Breaking the Chains: Reversing the School-to-Prison Pipeline Through the Academic Experiences of Formerly Incarcerated Black Males" (2019). Master's Theses. 1203. <https://repository.usfca.edu/thes/1203>
- Okeke-Adeyanju, N., Taylor, L. C., Craig, A. B., Smith, R. E., Thomas, A., Boyle, A. E., & DeRosier, M. E. (2014). Celebrating the Strengths of Black Youth: Increasing Self-Esteem and Implications for Prevention. *The Journal of Primary Prevention*, 35(5), 357–369. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-014-0356-1>
- Pekel, K., Roehlkepartain, E. C., Syvertsen, A. K., Scales, P. C., Sullivan, T. K., & Sethi, J. (2018). Finding the fluoride: Examining how and why developmental relationships are the active ingredient in interventions that work. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 88(5), 493-502. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000333>
- Perry, V. N. (2020). *He gets me: Black male mentoring relationships as sites of mutual liberation* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia]. UGA Open Scholar.

<https://openscholar.uga.edu/record/6209?ln=en&v=pdf>

- Pervine, R., Brown, K., Westerhaus, C., & Grays, K. (2022). From the 1930s to the 2020s: What Ice Cube's Song "Endangered Species" Meant for Four Generations of Black Males. In G. S. Parks & F. R. Cooper (Eds.), *Fight the Power: Law and Policy through Hip-Hop Songs* (pp. 187–206). chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pettit, B., & Gutierrez, C. (2018). Mass incarceration and racial inequality. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 77(3–4), 1153–1182.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12241>
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. (n.d.). *PBS Southern region*. <https://www.pbssouthern.org/>
- Planey, A. M., Smith, S. M., Moore, S., & Walker, T. D. (2019). Barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking among African American youth and their families: A systematic review study. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 101, 190–200.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2019.04.001>
- Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2024). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2022." Online. Available: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/>
- Raemen, L., Claes, L., Palmeroni, N., Buelens, T., Vankerckhoven, L., & Luyckx, K. (2022). Identity formation and psychopathological symptoms in adolescence: Examining developmental trajectories and co-development. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 83, 101473.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2022.101473>
- Raufu, A. (2017). School-to-prison pipeline: Impact of school discipline on African

- American students. *Journal of Education and Social Science*, 7(1), 47-53.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2021). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. SAGE Publications. 2nd edition
- Ribeiro Brown, B., Williams, E.-D. G., Abelson, J. M., Chandrakapure, A., & Watkins, D. C. (2022). An Exploratory Case Study of the Types of Resources Black Boys Use to Support Their Mental Health. *Healthcare*, 10(6), 1082.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare10061082>
- Richardson, Q. A. (2020). *Examining African American male mentors' relationships with African American boys: Benefits, barriers, recruitment, and retention*. UNI ScholarWorks. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/etd/1044/>
- Rizzo, M. T., Britton, T. C., & Rhodes, M. (2022). Developmental origins of anti-Black bias in White children in the United States: Exposure to and beliefs about racial inequality. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 119(47).
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2209129119>
- Robinson, Q. L. (2021). Strategic Mentoring: A Culturally Responsive Approach for Supporting Black Males. *Journal of Black Studies*, 002193472199806.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934721998068>
- Rodgers, B. J., & Rodgers, D. J. (2023). The need for Black male mentors. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 104(7), 25–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00317217231168259>
- Rogers, L. O. (2018). Who am I, who are we? Erikson and a transactional approach to identity research. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, 18(4), 284–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1523728>

- Rogers, L. O., Rosario, R. J., Padilla, D., & Foo, C. (2021). “[I]t’s hard because it’s the cops that are killing us for stupid stuff’: Racial identity in the sociopolitical context of Black Lives Matter. *Developmental Psychology*, 57(1), 87–101. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001130>
- Roosevelt, Theodore 1923 *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*. Memorial ed. Vol. 17. New York: C. Scribner’s Sons. [Google Scholar](#)
- Saldaña, J. (2021). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Saleem, F. T., Anderson, R. E., & Williams, M. (2019). Addressing the “Myth” of Racial Trauma: Developmental and ecological considerations for Youth of color. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 23(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-019-00304-1>
- Sánchez, B., Hurd, N. M., Neblett, E. W., & Vaclavik, D. (2017). Mentoring for Black Male Youth: A Systematic Review of the Research. *Adolescent Research Review*, 3(3), 259–278. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-017-0074-z>
- Scott, E. D., & Deutsch, N. L. (2021). Conferring Kinship: Examining Fictive Kinship Status in a Black Adolescent’s Natural Mentoring Relationship. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 009579842110026. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00957984211002613>
- Scott, L. D., & McCoy, H. (2016). Correlates of Somatic Symptoms Among African American Males Transitioning from a Public System of Care. *American Journal of Men’s Health*, 12(2), 274–282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988316630304>
- Seales, J. (2022, May 16). *Mental Health of Black Youth: How Adults Can Help* . Psych

Central. <https://psychcentral.com/health/how-adults-can-help-black-youth-with-mental-health#The-Black-youth-mental-health-crisis>

- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research : a guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.
- Somers, C. L., Wang, D., & Piliawsky, M. (2016). Effectiveness of a combined tutoring and mentoring intervention with Ninth-Grade, Urban Black adolescents. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 32*(3), 199–213.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15377903.2015.1136719>
- Syed, M., & Fish, J. (2018). Revisiting Erik Erikson’s legacy on culture, race, and ethnicity. *Identity, 18*(4), 274–283.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1523729>
- Taylor, E., Guy-Walls, P., Wilkerson, P., & Addae, R. (2019). The historical perspectives of stereotypes on African American males. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work, 4*(3), 213–225. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41134-019-00096-y>
- Taylor, R., Chatters, L., Cross, C. J., & Mouzon, D. (2021). Fictive Kin Networks among African Americans, Black Caribbeans, and Non-Latino Whites. *Journal of Family Issues, 43*(1), 20–46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x21993188>
- Tenny, S., Brannan, J. M., & Brannan, G. D. (2022, September 18). *Qualitative study*. StatPearls - NCBI Bookshelf. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/>
- Terry, K. A. (2017). *Forgetting the Lynching of Jesse Washington: Manifestations of memory and the “Waco Horror.”* SFA ScholarWorks.
<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds/101>

- The Historical Legacy of the Divine Nine. (n.d.). National Museum of African American History and Culture. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/divine-nine-black-fraternities-sororities>
- Turchiano, D. (2020, September 17). *Two in Three Black Americans Don't Feel Properly Represented in Media (Study)*. Variety. <https://variety.com/2020/tv/news/representation-matters-study-nrg-black-americans-media-1234772025/>
- van Doeselaar, L., Klimstra, T. A., Denissen, J. J. A., Branje, S., & Meeus, W. (2018). The role of identity commitments in depressive symptoms and stressful life events in adolescence and young adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, 54(5), 950–962. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000479>
- Villines, Z. (2023, February 14). *What is an identity crisis?* <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/identity-crisis>
- Vuletich, H. A., Sommet, N., & Payne, B. K. (2023). The Great Migration and implicit bias in the Northern United States. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 15(5), 498–508. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506231181718>
- Walden University. (n.d.). *Academic guides: Research ethics: Tools and guides*. <https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec/documents>
- Walker, Aisha Noni, "Racism Stress and Self-Concept: The Moderating Role of Ethnic-Racial Socialization." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2020. doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/20465532>
- Walker, S., Strong, K., Wallace, D., Sriprakash, A., Tikly, L., & Soudien, C. (2021).

- Special Issue: Black Lives Matter and Global Struggles for Racial Justice in Education. *Comparative Education Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1086/712760>
- Way, N., & Rogers, L. O. (2017). Resistance to dehumanization during childhood and adolescence: A developmental and contextual process. In N. Budwig, E. Turiel, & P. D. Zelazo (Eds.), *New perspectives on human development* (pp. 229–257). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316282755.014>
- Weaver, J., & Masalehdan Block, A. (2020). Identity Development in Biracial Children Contextual Factors from Social Work. *Keystone Journal of Undergraduate Research*, 7(1), 13–22. https://www.ship.edu/globalassets/keystone-journal/v7n1_weaver_masalehdan.pdf
- Weaver, M. (2019). “Judge Lynch” in the Court of Public Opinion: Publicity and the De-legitimation of Lynching. *American Political Science Review*, 113(2), 293-310. doi:10.1017/S0003055418000886
- Wertz, A., Poon, C. Y. S., & Rhodes, J. E. (2023). Striking the Balance: The Relative Benefits of Goal- and Youth-Focused Approaches to Youth Mentoring Relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-023-01751-4>
- Wilcox, W. B., Wang, W., & Mincy, R. (2018). BLACK MEN MAKING IT IN AMERICA: The Engines of Economic Success for Black Men in America. www.aie.org Retrieved 2023 from <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/black-men-making-it-in-america-the-engines-of-economic-success-for-black-men-in-america/>.

- Williams West, C. (2023). *A narrative case study: The role of culturally responsive mentorship to navigate, empower, and level the playing field for Black and brown students in higher education* [Doctoral dissertation, Molloy University]. Digital Commons @ Molloy. <https://digitalcommons.molloy.edu/etd/166>
- Williams, D. R. (2018). Stress and the mental health of populations of color: Advancing our understanding of race-related stressors. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 59(4), 466–485. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146518814251>.
- Williams, E.-D. G., Lateef, H., Gale, A., Boyd, D., Albrecht, J., Paladino, J., & Koschmann, E. (2023). Barriers to School-Based Mental Health Resource Utilization Among Black Adolescent Males. *Barriers to School-Based Mental Health Resource Utilization among Black Adolescent Males*, 51. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10615-023-00866-2>
- Williams, J. A., Logan, T. D., & Hardy, B. L. (2021). The Persistence of Historical Racial Violence and Political Suppression: Implications for Contemporary Regional Inequality. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 694(1), 92–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162211016298>
- Williams, M. R. (2019). *#AMIManEnough: Black Male Masculine Identity development in the digital landscape of Twitter - ProQuest*. (n.d.). <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/amimanenough-black-male-masculine-identity/docview/2292189934/se-2>
- Wint, K. M., Opara, I., Gordon, R., & Brooms, D. R. (2021). Countering Educational Disparities Among Black Boys and Black Adolescent Boys from Pre-K to High

School: A Life Course-Intersectional Perspective. *The Urban Review*, 54(2), 183–206. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-021-00616-z>

Woodson, L. (2018). Teacher and student demographic variables which predict teacher referrals of males for special education evaluation. *www.academia.edu*.
https://www.academia.edu/104569849/Teacher_and_Student_Demographic_Variables_Which_Predict_Teacher_Referrals_of_Males_for_Special_Education_Evaluation

World Health Organization. (2020). *Adolescent health*. [Www.who.int](http://www.who.int).

https://www.who.int/health-topics/adolescent-health/#tab=tab_1

Yoon, E., Adams, K., Clawson, A., Chang, H., Surya, S., & Jérémie-Brink, G. (2017). East Asian adolescents' ethnic identity development and cultural integration: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 64(1), 65–79.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000181>

Appendix: Interview Questions Guide for Mentees

1. Were you a mentee of the Phi Beta Sigma, Sigma Beta Club? If so, at what age did you join the youth group?
2. How did your mentor assist with positively changing your thoughts and behaviors? Length of Time in the program?
3. What were some of the problems academically and behaviorally that you experienced before becoming a mentee? How did those problems change once you became a Sigma Beta Club member?
4. How often did you meet/see your mentors? What are some things you did as a mentee?
5. What are the benefits of having a Black adult male mentor for a Black male youth mentee?
6. How might participation in the Sigma Beta Club mentoring program have influenced your identity?
7. How would you describe the strengths and weaknesses of the mentoring program?
8. How did your role as the mentee assist with positively changing your thoughts and behaviors?
9. As a mentee, describe your home environment.
10. How would you describe your relationships with your teachers and peers?
11. What positive things about this mentorship program do you believe other programs can benefit from?