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Colorism and Skin Tone Messages in Father-Daughter Relationships

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Walden University

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Abstract

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BS, Old Dominion University, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Colorism, or in-group bias based on skin tone, is a persistent phenomenon within the African American community that often shapes family dynamics and results in significant negative psychosocial effects for African Americans. Researchers have examined colorism primarily as it pertains to mothers' transmission of these messages, but little research exists regarding the paternal role. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the messages fathers transmit to their daughters regarding skin tone, while comparing these messages to those transmitted to fathers in their childhood. Twelve African American men, selected through purposive sampling, participated in individual semistructured interviews. Their responses were analyzed using thematic analysis based on colorism theory. Themes included teachings to daughter, skin tone messages, influence, hard work, attractiveness, love, treatment, and trophies. Findings indicated that fathers provided a protective role in negative colorism messages for daughters, particularly those with darker skin tones. Implications for positive social change include increased understanding of the protective paternal role in transmitting skin tone messages and the potential ability for stakeholders to make inroads to eradicate the negative effects of colorism within the African American family using the protective role of fathers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

African Americans have long been the subjects of discrimination, prejudicial treatment, and racist brutality from outside groups based on the color of their skin (Neal & Wilson, 1989). Although the Civil Rights Movement in America prompted African Americans to overcome many racial barriers, researchers have noted a phenomenon that continues to cause division within the cultural group—the unequal treatment of one another based on skin tone. This phenomenon is also termed *colorism* or *skin color perceptions* (Dunn, Stocker, & Plomin, 1990; Neal & Wilson, 1989; Wilder & Cain, 2011). Scholars have defined colorism as "the allocation of privilege and disadvantage according to the lightness or darkness of one's skin," (Burke, 2008, p. 17) or the intergroup inequality among people of color (Hill, 2005).

Researchers have predominately studied colorism as messages passed on to African Americans through familial and social factors; primarily, researchers have focused on messages passed through general familial relationships, and specifically, relationships between mother and child (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; M. Hunter, 2007; M.L. Hunter, 2002; Suizzo, Robison, & Pahlke, 2008). Considerable research has provided qualitative and quantitative data regarding maternal skin tone messages (Hughes, 2003; Landor et al., 2013; Suizzo et al., 2008; Wilder & Cain, 2011), but researchers have in large part neglected paternal messages of colorism. Because of the gap in literature regarding paternal skin tone messages, I focused on the skin tone

messages passed on to fathers as children, and the messages fathers subsequently convey to their offspring regarding skin tone in this study.

Background

Researchers have noted that colorism is prevalent in African American communities (Hall, 2008; Herring, Keith, & Horton, 2004; Hochschild & Weaver, 2007). In their foundational study, Clark and Clark (1939) found that when presented with a White doll and a Black doll, African American children predominately chose the White doll. In a follow up study, Clark and Clark (1950) added to the dolls test a coloring test, wherein both Northern and Southern African American children aged 5–7 were asked to color a picture of a child their same age, gender, and skin color. The researchers also asked the children to color a child of their opposite gender the color they preferred (Clark & Clark, 1950). In this study, Clark and Clark found that children colored their skin much more carefully than the test drawings of everyday objects (e.g., an apple) and that three color responses were present: realistic, fantasy, and irrelevant. Younger children were less aware of reality and more likely to respond with either fantasy (i.e., lighter skin tones than their own) or irrelevant (i.e., using green, red, or purple), whereas older children showed an increased awareness of differences in skin tones (Clark & Clark, 1950).

Regarding skin color preferences, Clark and Clark (1950) found that children classified as having dark or medium skin showed a stronger preference for White skin color or irrelevant skin colors (i.e., 59% dark preference for White, 43% for irrelevant, 16%; 49% medium preference for White, 32% for irrelevant, 17%) than light children

(i.e., 38% White preference, 10% irrelevant preference, 52% Brown or Black preference). These findings suggested that children with darker skin tones had more awareness of racial differences than their lighter counterparts and more conflict regarding skin tone differences, resulting in fantasy or escapist, irrelevant coloring choices in this setting. Clark and Clark concluded that not only did children with lighter skin tones have social privilege, but these children were also less likely to have been transmitted messages that resulted in a preference for lighter skin.

Subsequently, researchers have demonstrated that, among ethnic cultures, an overall social privilege exists for lighter skin compared to darker skin tones (Allen, Telles, & Hunter, 2000; M. Hunter, 2007). For example, lighter skin complexion has been linked to factors such as beauty, intelligence, and the ability to be socially amicable (Wade & Bielitz, 2005). Multicultural researchers have reported that the effects of skin tone socialization influence self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Researchers have further demonstrated that the existence of skin tone preferences or colorism has been fostered within the African American culture within the family unit (Hughes, 2003). Colorism, whether directly or indirectly, also causes division within families (Lesane-Brown, Brown, Caldwell, & Sellers, 2005). Whereas lighter-skinned daughters typically receive more parental involvement than darker-skinned daughters, darker-skinned sons are conversely the recipients of increased parental care (Wilder & Cain, 2011). This increased care is because of parents' perceptions that darker-skinned sons will be more prone to racism or prejudice (Blair, Judd, & Chapleau, 2004;

Landor, 2012; Landor et al., 2013). Although parents may serve as a buffer between outside racism and discrimination, the initial environment for colorism begins in the home and is transmitted through attitudes, behaviors, and messages that foster a color hierarchy (Hochschild & Weaver, 2007; Suizzo et al., 2008).

Parents play a vital role in how children view themselves and the world around them (Suizzo et al., 2008). Demo and Hughes (1990) and Wilder and Cain (2011) revealed that families pass on, reinforce, and introduce ideologies and morals from one generation to the next. Researchers have found that family members assign or transmit roles, expectations, and acceptance onto individual family members based on their physical appearances (Hunter, 2007).

The family is the foundation for self-perception, self-awareness, social behavior, and emotional functioning; family researchers have suggested that colorism and its effects begin in the home (Simons, Simons, & Wallace, 2004). Family ideals affect a person's self-perception and self-esteem about his or her skin color (Coard, Breland, & Raskin, 2001). Therefore, an in-depth examination of the role of colorism in African American families, as prompted by qualitative research, could provide a clearer understanding of the phenomenon where it begins. Some researchers have conducted studies about this phenomenon as it relates to families and mothers, but the roles of fathers in these situations have been unexplored (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; M. Hunter, 2007; M. L. Hunter, 2002; Suizzo et al., 2008). Since daughters receive the most negative self-images from their mothers regarding skin tone, the father-daughter

relationship may mediate these negative messages (Blair et al., 2004; Landor, 2012; Landor et al., 2013). Alternatively, fathers might reinforce mothers' messages. Little is actually known about the influence and prevalence of paternal skin tone messages on children.

In interviews with low-income African American fathers, Threlfall, Seay, and Kohl (2013) found that the participants acted as providers, nurturers, and teachers and were involved in their children's lives. In situations where both parents are involved, fathers have demonstrated more influence in promoting a long-term sense of wellbeing and adjustment in their children, particularly when the father is perceived to have higher power and prestige than the mother (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Moreover, supportive relationships between fathers and daughters have demonstrated significant positive effects on those daughters' self-esteem (Cooper, 2009; Mori, 1999; Richards, Gitelson, Petersen, & Hurtig, 1991). Therefore, fathers' roles in transmitting social messages, such as colorism, could potentially have a strong effect on their daughters.

The small amount of research collected regarding fathers demonstrates that fathers could possibly ameliorate negative skin tone messages that mothers pass on to their children (Wilder & Cain, 2010, 2011). For example, Wilder and Cain (2010, 2011) conducted studies on the effects of parental skin tone messages and found that only a few women shared the messages that their fathers had passed on through words and actions regarding skin tone. Based on findings from a small sample of fathers and their children,

the researchers found that the female participants stated that their fathers played a role in the positive affirmation of having dark skin (Wilder & Cain, 2010, 2011). In addition, a female participant noted that her father was a positive figure who emphasized Afrocentric characteristics and the acceptance of dark skin (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Therefore, paternal messages about skin tone could be providing a more body-positive image; furthering the knowledge about this phenomenon and helping to build upon it could have profound effects within the African American community (Coard et al., 2001; Hall, 2008; Wilder & Cain, 2011). This qualitative data demonstrated that mothers displayed the most negative skin tone messages, and the researchers did not intend to examine the effects of fathers specifically (Wilder & Cain, 2010, 2011). Therefore, more research, such as the present study, is required to understand the effect of colorism in fathers' parenting practices.

Because of the gap in the literature regarding paternal skin tone messages, I focused this study on the skin tone messages transmitted to fathers as children and the messages fathers subsequently convey to their offspring regarding skin tone through specific actions motivated by biases that the fathers have developed. Phenomenological qualitative interviews with participants provided me with qualitative data regarding African American fathers' perceptions of skin tone and the parenting behaviors that may or may not transmit these beliefs on to their daughters. Research has shown that messages transmitted to parents during their childhood heavily influence the type of skin tone ideologies they portray onto their children (Hill, 2002). Therefore, in this study, I also

investigated the skin tone messages transmitted to fathers as well as their own parenting practices to explore if and how these messages affect subsequent beliefs and parenting behaviors.

The results of this study contribute to the existing literature about African American families and colorism through sharing my exploration of the messages fathers received as children regarding their skin tone and the effect of those messages as well as my investigation of the messages these parents convey to their children. The findings of this study contribute to future literature on colorism by identifying the messages regarding skin tone that fathers received as children and whether and how these messages are passed to their daughters. The findings from this research provide information regarding the role fathers play in fostering skin tone messages and colorism.

Problem Statement

Colorism is a significant problem facing the African American family, particularly since researchers have suggested that negative skin tone perceptions begin in children's homes (Blair et al., 2004; Landor, 2012; Landor et al., 2013; Suizzo et al., 2008). Parental skin tone messages and colorism have received a considerable amount of attention in literature about colorism (Barr & Neville, 2008; Lesane-Brown et al., 2005). However, researchers have explored the family as a whole when examining skin tone messages or focused upon those transmitted by the mother (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; M. Hunter, 2007; M. L. Hunter, 2002; Suizzo et al., 2008). A gap in the literature exists regarding the examination of the paternal transmission of colorism and skin tone

messages to children. Coard et al. (2001) and Hill (2002) asserted that future researchers should explore paternal skin tone messages because of the potential role of fathers in children's psychological development. Through the present study, I addressed this gap in the literature by exploring paternal transmitted skin tone messages and the origin of these messages.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the messages fathers transmit to their daughters about skin tone, while comparing these messages to those transmitted to the fathers in their childhood. Colorism has significant adverse effects on children within their homes; researchers have demonstrated that the family is the primary source of negative skin tone perceptions (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Landor, 2012; Landor et al., 2013). The limited data about fathers suggests they might act as a protective figure in buffering maternal negative skin tone messages and instilling pride for an individual's dark-skin tone (Wilder & Cain, 2011). However, no studies have examined the fathers' role in transmitting skin tone messages to their daughters; therefore, I designed this study to address this gap in the literature.

Research Questions

The research questions in a phenomenological study capture the feelings, thoughts, and beliefs regarding the participants' experience with a particular phenomenon (Groenwald, 2004). Furthermore, my goal with this research was to bring awareness to the phenomenon, the role of fathers in perpetuating or mitigating colorism. The following

research questions initiated my conversation with individual participants:

What messages did African American fathers learn about skin tone within their home as children? What do African American fathers perceive as the effect of parental skin tone messages? What skin tone related messages do African American fathers transmit to their children, specifically daughters?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

To understand how skin tone has shaped attitudes and beliefs projected onto others, I analyzed the literature about colorism and skin tone perceptions as a conceptual framework for this study. Colorism is rooted in the ideology that an overall preference exists for the lighter skin tones associated with White Europeans (Hunter, 2002). According to Fanon (1952) and Hunter (2002), African Americans favor lighter skin tones over darker ones because of the association of lighter skin tones with Whiteness. Within the theory of colorism, darker skin tones are associated with negative attributes, such as meanness, ugliness, and undesirability, whereas lightness of skin has been associated with beauty, civility, and intelligence (Hunter, 2002). Contemporarily, attractiveness, social class, employment, success, and mate selection have all been linked to skin color preference (Quiros & Dawson, 2013).

Historical and current data support the influential effect of colorism on a child's self-esteem and functioning (Kowal, Krull, Kramer, & Crick, 2002; Landor et al., 2013). Bond and Cash (1992) asserted that skin tone might bestow favorable or unfavorable treatment within families. Understanding the role colorism plays in fostering

discrimination and creating a color hierarchy within a cultural group is essential to understanding the lived experiences of others as well as understanding how skin tone can affect many facets of an individual's life (Bond & Cash, 1992). These racial theories underpinned the present study and helped me to interpret the findings.

Nature of the Study

Research has shown that qualitative studies are necessary for exploring understudied phenomena because having this kind of information can be useful for further research studies (Hycner, 1999). An abundance of literature supports the prevalence of transmitted maternal skin tone messages, yet a dearth of literature exits regarding paternal skin tone messages (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011). The phenomenon that I explored in this study was fathers' role in perpetuating messages about colorism. I aimed to learn whether negative colorism messages are present in paternal messages transmitted from fathers to daughters. Researchers have predominately studied colorism as a message transmitted to African Americans through familial and social factors (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; Hunter, 2002, 2007; Suizzo et al., 2008). Considerable research has provided qualitative and quantitative data regarding maternal skin tone messages, but researchers have in large part neglected to shed light on paternal messages of colorism and its existence. Since Wilder and Cain (2011) noted that women are most affected by colorism ideologies, daughters were the primary focus of the study.

Based on past research findings, I explored the following three paradigms in this

study: the messages the fathers received as children, the messages they passed on to their daughters, and participants' perceptions of the effects of these messages on African Americans. Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) found that skin tone socialization influences self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy. In conducting family studies, Coard et al. (2001), marked the weight of family ideals determining a person's self-perception and level of self-esteem about their skin color. Because of the lack of literature regarding paternal skin tone messages, I had a focus on the skin tone messages transmitted to fathers as children and the messages fathers subsequently convey to their offspring regarding skin tone in this study. By soliciting participants' lived experiences and perceptions, I garnered information about colorism from the perspective of African American fathers of daughters.

To collect valid data for this study, I conducted individual interviews with African American adult males who were 18 years and older and fathers of daughters from Washington D.C. and the surrounding areas. The sessions were recorded to capture the accuracy of the fathers' testimonies. Data analysis occurred by transcribing the fathers' testimonies along with a follow-up interview with each participant to ensure the accuracy of their testimonies. Furthermore, if testimonial modifications were needed, they occurred after the validity check.

Definitions

Colorism: Scholars have defined colorism as "the allocation of privilege and disadvantage according to the lightness or darkness of one's skin," or the intercultural

inequality among people of color (Burke, 2008, p. 17; Hill, 2005)

Conscious behaviors: According to Marcel (1983), conscious behaviors are those that stem from thought processes and intentions of which a person is aware.

Privilege: Unearned access to beneficial resources available to some people but usually at the expense of others (Hall, 1992).

Skin tone: The lightness or darkness of a person's skin (Harvey, LaBeach, Pridgen, & Gocial, 2005), and judgments regarding skin tones are subjective based on personal experiences (Hall, 1992).

Skin tone bias: Used interchangeably with colorism; see definition for colorism.

Transmitted skin tone messages: Words or behaviors conveyed that consciously or unconsciously reflect a meaning regarding the pigment of an individual's skin (Wilder & Cain, 2011).

Unconscious behaviors: Marcel (1983) noted that unconscious behaviors are those that a person completes without understanding the intention or personal motivations that drive those actions. Through a process of analysis or discussion, a person can come to understand the motivation behind unconscious behaviors (Marcel, 1983).

Assumptions

I assumed that the participants would have experiences with colorism in some form, and therefore, that their experiences would add to the body of literature regarding colorism. Colorism is a phenomenon that has some roots within family structures and attitudes (Bond & Cash, 1992; Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Kowal et al., 2002; Landor et

al., 2013; Wilder, 2010). African American fathers play a role in their daughters' self-esteem and development (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011). As fathers of daughters, the participants should have experiences with this familial structure, although they may not be aware of colorism as a theory prior to the interviews.

I also assumed that participants answered interview questions honestly and truthfully and to the best of their abilities. Participants were reminded of their anonymity throughout the process, and a supportive environment was created in the interview process through open communication and honesty. I limited my involvement during the interviews to solely asking questions and took care to give no feedback, including not referring to any of my personal experiences. In this manner, I lessened the pressure on participants to conform or provide socially appropriate responses.

Scope and Delimitations

In this study, I addressed the perceptions and lived experiences of African American fathers of daughters. Participants included African American adult males (i.e., 18 years and older) from Washington D.C. and the surrounding areas who are fathers of daughters. This population was selected because of the lack of literature regarding colorism in fathers.

Since the skin tone messages passed on to daughters and sons differ (Blair et al., 2004; Landor, 2012; Landor et al., 2013), the scope of the study was specific to the messages passed on to daughters. In addition, this delimitation was important because African American fathers play a significant role in establishing the self-esteem and

promoting the personal development of their daughters (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011). The interviews included information about the messages that participants received about skin tone and the messages they transfer to their daughters.

Limitations

This study was limited by the convenience sample from which data were collected. Participants included only adult males from Washington D.C. and the surrounding urban areas. Because of the small sample size and limited geographical area, results may not be transferable to the wider population. Additionally, as within any study, I may have held biases and preconceived notions. To address any potential biases in this study, I limited my communication with the participants by focusing solely on asking the research questions and taking notes about the participants' responses.

Significance

The results of this study contribute to existing literature on African American families and colorism by sharing the African American fathers' perceptions and lived experiences with colorism as they parent daughters. The findings of this study may contribute to future literature on colorism by identifying how fathers' messages are learned and passed through generations, practices, and interactions. Findings from this research may also help to fill the gap in research regarding the role fathers play in fostering skin tone messages and colorism.

Transmitted skin tone messages have long-standing psychological influence on the individuals receiving the messages. Thomas and King's (2007) research showed that

parents are instrumental in shaping a positive self-concept and identity, and parents affect identity formation for both men and women. Therefore, messages and interactions among family members can influence individuals' self-perceptions. Based on the effect that fathers have demonstrated to have in both psychological wellbeing and in potentially acting as a buffer for negative skin tone messages, paternal transmission may be of particular interest in studying this phenomenon (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011).

Additionally, awareness of the multifaceted dynamics that foster colorism within the African American community can lead to culturally sensitive interventions that can be useful in family therapy. Addressing family dilemmas in a structured environment such as therapy can support individual family members and educate parents about the influence of the messages they convey to their children (Simons & Conger, 2007). The results of this study have the possibility of enhancing the literature by highlighting the various messages fathers transmit, the effect of those messages in adulthood, and how this effect translates into the projection of colorism.

The results of the study yield significance for social change. By uncovering fathers' influence, stakeholders can target and reduce the negative skin tone messages of fathers similar to the attention placed on mothers in the African American community. Conversely, fathers provide a protective influence against colorism, in line with Wilder and Cain's (2011) preliminary assessment of the father's role in transmitting colorism messages. In either case, the results of the study inform colorism intervention, and

through interventions, may potentially increase women's self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy (see Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). The beneficial effects of reduced colorism could influence African American girls' abilities to handle stereotypes and racism (Barrie et al., 2016), their subsequent performance in college (Lige, Peteet, & Brown, 2016), and their socioeconomic status later in life (Mathews & Johnson, 2015). The results of this study may therefore inform and influence significant social change for African American women.

Summary

Research has supported the idea that parents transmit learned behaviors and practices from their own childhood (Barr & Neville, 2008). Specifically, colorism has been a phenomenon under study within African American families (Bond & Cash, 1992; Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011). However, the paternal role in transmitted skin tone messages remains underdeveloped. I collected the data for this study from individual interviews with 12 participants to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of African American fathers of daughters regarding colorism. In this study, I addressed the gap in literature by exploring the role fathers play in the transference of these messages based on the messages the fathers received in childhood. The following chapter will explore past literature on the colorism phenomenon and its impact on women, African Americans and family members as a whole.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Parental skin tone messages and colorism have received some attention in recent literature (Barr & Neville, 2008; Landor et al., 2013; Lesane-Brown et al., 2005; Wilder & Cane, 2011). Researchers have examined the family as a whole when exploring skin tone messages or focused on messages transmitted by the mother (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; M. Hunter, 2007; M. L. Hunter, 2002; Suizzo et al., 2008). However, a lack of research exists regarding the paternal transmission of colorism and skin tone messages to children. Coard et al. (2001), Hill (2002), and Wilder and Cain (2011) have suggested that future researchers should explore paternal skin tone messages because of the role of fathers in children's psychological development. The limited data about fathers suggests that fathers may act as a protective figure in buffering maternal negative skin tone messages and instilling pride for a person's dark-skin tone (Wilder & Cain, 2011). I addressed the gap in the literature by exploring paternal-transmitted skin tone messages and the origin of these messages. To set a framework for conducting this study, in Chapter 2 I will detail relevant literature related to (a) colorism and its effect on male and female African Americans, (b) African American families, (c) involvement of African American fathers, (d) father-daughter relationships, (e) parents and skin tone messages, and (f) paternal influence on skin tone messages.

Literature Search Strategy

I carried out research for this study using Walden University's Research Library.

The databases searched were Academic Search Premier, Google Scholar, PsycArticles, and PsycInfo. Key terms, such as *the Black family, skin tone phenomenon, African American fathers, father-daughter relationships,* and *colorism*, were employed to locate sources through which to gain more knowledge and insight into the phenomenon being examined. My search also included analyzing recent issues of key journals for relevant studies to the review of literature, including *The Journal of Black Psychology, Journal of Child and Family Studies, Journal of Family Psychology, The Journal of African American Studies,* and *Journal of Black Studies.*

Conceptual Framework: Colorism

Colorism is defined as a psychological preoccupation with skin tone that has consequences for the person who transmits the discrimination and the person receiving the discrimination (Maddox & Gray, 2002). Scholars have defined colorism as "the allocation of privilege and disadvantage according to the lightness or darkness of one's skin" (Burke, 2008, p. 17) or the in-group inequality among people of color (Hall, 2005). Colorism begins with the prejudicial preference for lighter skin tones typically associated with White Europeans (Hunter, 2002). Overall, social privilege for lighter skin opposed to darker skin tones has been demonstrated within the minorities of several cultures (Allen et al., 2000; Hunter, 2007). Lighter skin complexion has been linked to factors such as beauty, intelligence, and the ability to be socially amicable (Maddox & Gray, 2002; Wade & Bielitz, 2005).

Historical Overview of Skin Tone Preferences and Colorism

For African Americans, skin tone preferences became more codified within the American context. Harvey et al. (2005) noted that the division of light-skinned and dark-skinned individuals evolved during slavery. Lighter-skinned slaves were assigned duties in the house, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, whereas darker slaves were assigned fieldwork (Helms, 1990; Hughes & Hertel, 1990). This division showed a preference for one type of skin color instead of the other because of the differential treatment by the slave owners. Therefore, differences in status led to in-group differences in treatment of Blacks with darker skin when compared to those with lighter skin tones (Helms, 1990).

After slavery was abolished, the old mindset of preferential treatment based on a person's skin tone remained (Fanon, 1952). Clark and Clark (1947, 1950) depicted through a doll study that Black children accepted White dolls and rejected Black dolls. Furthermore, the children associated positive attributes with White dolls, including friendliness, which doll color was better, and who the children would like to play with (Clark & Clark, 1947, 1950). They found that Black dolls were associated with more negative traits, such as being mean or unfriendly, and the doll who looked the worst. Clark and Clark's research demonstrated evidence that the African American beauty ideals conformed to those of the White culture and that negative personality traits had become associated with darker skin tones (Wade, 1996).

Although during the Civil Rights era, individuals developed more progressive

attitudes toward skin color, including the "Black is Beautiful" movement, noticeable

differential treatment within the group based on skin tone has continued to exist (Hughes

& Hertel, 1990). Hughes and Hertel (1990) examined quantitative data from the 1980

National Survey of Black Americans ($N = 2,107$) and determined that lighter skin tones

were associated with having higher social status, less cultural consciousness, and spouses

from a high socioeconomic status. Hughes and Hertel found that skin color affected

socioeconomic status to the same degree as did race (Black and White). The authors

demonstrated that skin color has continued to affect Black lives despite the advances in

society on social and political levels (Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Hughes and Hertel concluded that, despite the Civil Rights movement, little forward

progress had been made for Blacks in the period from 1950 to 1980. Keith and Herring

(1991) further asserted that factors that continued to be affected by skin tone were

education, occupation, and income. Darker-skinned males were less likely to continue

education, to be employed in a high paying job, or to be employed (Keith & Herring,

1991).

Contemporary Issues with Colorism and Skin Tone Bias

Skin tone bias remained an issue for contemporary African Americans. While bias

based on skin tone is negative in and of itself, Hall (1992) noted that those of different

races did not solely perpetuate these biases. Surveying 83 African American first-year

undergraduates at a historically Black college in southern Georgia in 1988 and 1989, Hall

asked respondents to rate the desirability of skin colors from light to dark as well as their

own skin color. Lighter-skinned African Americans reported a significant personal and attraction bias for light skin, whereas darker-skinned African Americans reported a preference for darker skin in both categories. Hall (1992, 1995) concluded that African Americans were creating divisions within their own race based on skin colors. This in-group prejudice resulting from these skin tone perceptions was termed colorism because there was a preferential bias attributed to individuals based on their skin tone (Burke, 2008; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hall, 2005; Hunter, 2002; Jones, 2000; Maddox & Gray, 2002). Colorism remains a significant barrier for contemporary African Americans. Jones (2000) stated that colorism is a within group phenomenon that emphasizes social preference for light-skinned opposed to dark-skinned members in many aspects of family, work, and community life in the African American cultural group. Racism and colorism intertwine to foster the color hierarchy that continues to exist among minorities (Hunter, 2007).

Additionally, Maddox and Gray (2002) demonstrated that Black and White individuals place value on skin tone when making judgments and first impressions and that darker-skinned Blacks are perceived more stereotypically and negatively. Particularly, darker-skinned males may be perceived as hyper-masculine and aggressive (Hall, 1995). Wilder and Cain (2011) conducted a focus group of 26 Black women who indicated that the Black family was the locus of prejudicial color perceptions. Hunter (2002) asserted that the lightness in an individual's skin still has a patriarchal influence that limits the abilities of African American and Mexican American people. Researchers

have studied this color hierarchy within the African American community in terms of its development and its social and physiological influence on people within this racial group.

Development of Colorism

Researchers have demonstrated that the messages transmitted to parents during their childhood heavily influence the type of skin tone ideologies that these parents in turn display with their children (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Buckelew, & Freeman, 2010; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hill, 2002; Thomas & Speight, 1999). Hunter (2007) explained that family members assign or transmit roles, expectations, and acceptance onto individual family members based on their physical appearance; therefore, skin color is integrally tied to a person's estimation of his or her own worth. According to Coard et al. (2001) and Barr and Neville (2008), family ideals fundamentally form Black individuals' personal perceptions of and attitudes toward their skin color. Collins (2006) suggested that family interactions and rhetoric play a major role in normalizing racial hierarchies within the home.

Demo and Hughes (1990) theorized that once these attitudes form, colorism is passed down through generations. This theory has appeared frequently in subsequent colorism literature. Barr and Neville (2008) suggested that parents' racial experiences are related to the racial messages that parents convey to their children. For example, Landor et al. (2013) showed that parents' skin tone is a factor in shaping their experiences in life, their parenting behaviors, and their racial socialization messages. Wilder and Cain (2011) identified three notable patterns in which teaching and learning color consciousness exist

within the family: (a) maternal figures provide the foundation for colorism ideologies; (b)

the family provides the location for instantiating and changing color perceptions; and (c)

the family is the foundation for *oppositional* ideologies of colorism, wherein the family

can combat predominant ideals of skin color. The existence of these different paradigms

suggests that the role of the family in developing colorism is complex.

After colorism is developed within the family, various social effects may result in

the evolution of colorism beliefs. Harvey et al. (2005) examined 61 African Americans

(25 males and 36 females) from a historically Black college and 71 African Americans

(27 males and 44 females) from a predominately White institution to discover which

environment was most likely to foster in-group skin tone prejudices. Harvey et al.

determined that students, both male and female, attending predominately Black schools

placed more importance on skin tone. Within schools where the population was primarily

African American, darker skin tones were associated with an increased perception of peer

acceptance and higher self-esteem (Harvey et al., 2005). At predominately White

institutions, lower importance of skin tone was inversely related with increased

perception of peer acceptance (Harvey et al., 2005). In both contexts, students with

darker skin tones reported a stronger sense of racial identity (Harvey et al., 2005). Harvey

et al. suggested that the absence of racial difference within predominately Black

institutions may lead to the exacerbation of in-group differentiation, including colorism,

and this differentiation may influence African Americans. In the following subsection, I

will outline this differentiation.

Colorism or Skin Tone Biases and Their Influence

Multicultural researchers have reported that skin tone socialization influences self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Even in some of the earliest colorism research, Hall (1992) noted that skin tone biases could harm self-concept and self-esteem, thereby affecting African Americans' basic mental health. Skin tone messages have been shown to have long-standing effects on people's self-esteem, self-concept, and their sense of belonging to their own culture (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013). Bond and Cash (1992) and Landor et al. (2013) found that individuals who received differential treatment than their siblings based on their skin tone (whether being treated better or poorly) reported feelings of resentment towards their parents and exhibited behavioral problems later in life. Furthermore, Kowal et al. (2002) outlined how parental preferential treatment influences the socioemotional functioning of a child, such as the child internalizing problems and diminished feelings of overall self-worth.

More concretely, researchers have suggested that skin tone biases have an influence on socioeconomic status. Analyzing survey data from the 1980 National Survey of Black Americans, Keith and Herring (1991) determined that skin tone was a more robust predictor of educational outcomes, occupation, and family income than were the parents' socioeconomic status or the individuals' other demographic attributes. Analyzing the same data set, Hughes and Hertel (1990) similarly found a socioeconomic disparity based on skin tone, with darker-skinned Blacks having lower socioeconomic status and less access to spouses of high socioeconomic status. However, in both of these studies,

the researchers relied on survey data collected in 1980, which was at the time of their studies, 10 years old.

More recent research regarding the socioeconomic effects of colorism was not readily available in the exhaustive review of the literature. The only researcher who utilized an updated, large scale investigation of responses from a national sample was Monk (2014). Monk used responses from native-born Black Americans ($N = 3,125$) to the National Survey of American Life, conducted from 2001 to 2003 by the American government, to determine whether the conclusions from the National Survey of Black Americans in 1980 were still operative. Using Online logistics solutions and ordered logistic regression analyses, Monk discovered that skin tone was significantly associated with household income, occupational status, educational attainment, and spouses' educational attainment and skin tone in this sample. For occupational status, skin tone was related for the sample as a whole for Black men, but not for Black women. Therefore, Monk demonstrated that skin tone stratification remained an issue in the early 21st century. Moreover, the results suggested differences in experiences of colorism based on gender, a common theme in the literature.

Colorism's influence on African American women. Research has shown that lived experiences of colorism are different depending upon gender. Primarily, researchers have focused on women's experiences because the emphasis of skin color and attractiveness has been perceived as a stronger determinant for women's self-esteem than for men's (Hill, 2002). Lighter-skinned individuals have been shown to have higher self-

esteem, particularly women of a higher socioeconomic status (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Lighter-skinned women in Hunter's (2002) study were also more privileged in the

workplace and had an advantage in education and spousal status in comparison with

darker-skinned women (Hunter, 2002). However, Monk (2014) found no economic

influence of colorism on African American women.

Examining the data collected from females in the 1980 National Survey of Black

Americans ($N = 1,310$) as well as from women responding to the 1980 National Chicano

Survey, Hunter (2002) determined that colorism fostered skin color hierarchies for Black

as well as Mexican women. For both groups of women, lighter skin tones predicted

higher educational attainment. Specifically, African American women demonstrated

more privileges based on lighter skin tones, including higher personal earnings and

higher spousal status (Hunter, 2002). Thompson and Keith (2001) also reviewed the

National Survey of Black Americans data and noted that skin color predicted women's

self-esteem levels in this sample. Factors that assisted in moderating this effect included

social class and attractiveness, wherein Black women from higher social classes were less

susceptible to the influence of colorism (Thompson & Keith, 2001). In this sample,

women who showed significant effects were working class, dark-skinned, or perceived as

unattractive (Thompson & Keith, 2001). However, in Hunter's and Thompson and

Keith's analyses, the researchers utilized dated responses because of the lack of more

current data samples. Although it seems that skin color is likely to affect the

socioeconomic status of women of color, more recent data are required to understand the

continued effects of colorism specifically as it pertains to women.

Maddox and Gray (2002) also examined the effects of colorism and skin tone biases against African Americans. In their first study, Maddox and Gray analyzed responses from 62 college students (32 White: 19 women, 13 men; 30 Black: 19 women, 11 men) and determined that the students seemed to categorize and organize groups of people based on their skin tone. In the second study, Maddox and Gray furthered these discoveries by asking 82 students (40 Black: 20 women, 20 men; 42 White: 22 women, 20 men) enrolled in an undergraduate psychology course to assign traits or cultural beliefs to a variety of photographs, categorized in seven groups: (a) White men, (b) White women, (c) Native Americans (sex not specified), (d) dark-skinned Black women, (e) dark-skinned Black men, (f) light-skinned Black women, and (g) light-skinned Black men. Both Black and White participants assigned darker-skinned males adjectives such as criminal, tough, and aggressive, whereas lighter-skinned males were more likely to be described as wealthy. Female participants' assessments for men included the association of the words: *poor, ostentatious, unattractive,* and *uneducated* with darker skin tones, and *educated* and *intelligent* with lighter skin tones. Black and White participants associated the traits of attractiveness and intelligence with lighter-skinned women, and uneducated, unintelligent, tough, and aggressive with darker-skinned women (Maddox & Gray, 2002). Thus, people's perceptions of African Americans were affected by the tone of their skin in this sample.

Further exploring the effects of colorism on personality traits, Wallace,

Townsend, Glasgow, and Ojie (2011) surveyed 272 African American female adolescents in a northeastern city to determine the effects of racial socialization and colorism on drug use behaviors. In this sample, African American adolescents' ascription to the negative stereotype of the modern Jezebel—suggesting that African American women are highly sexual, aggressive, and combative—was moderate *(M* = 2.96), especially with regards to African American women being assertive (Wallace, et al., 2011). However, for the most part, girls in this sample did not ascribe to White beauty ideals except for hair and nails. Through hierarchical regression analyses, Wallace et al. explained that girls who accepted an African American standard of beauty reported less drug use than did girls who ascribed to a White European standard of beauty. A high correlation existed between hearing socialization messages about the negative traits of African American women, ascribing to White beauty ideals, and believing the modern Jezebel myth (Wallace et al., 2011). Therefore, Wallace et al. concluded that negative self-perceptions of African Americans in general might lead to decreased self-worth, thereby resulting in self-harming behaviors such as drug use. Understanding how and why colorism messages are transmitted may help to decrease the likelihood that these negative effects occur (Wallace et al., 2011).

Moreover, some researchers have determined that skin color may have physiological effects on women (Armstead, Hebert, Griffin, & Prince, 2014). Armstead et al. (2014) conducted a stepwise regression analysis of data regarding facial skin color, race discrimination, chronic stress, and prehypertension risk factors among 196 Southern

African American female undergraduates. Skin color was found to predict systolic blood pressure (SBP), diastolic blood pressure (DBP), and Body Mass Index (BMI) while racism and age did not predict SBP or DBP (Armstead et al., 2014). Of the variance in BMI, skin color, chronic stress, and racism predicted 33%, while family history and age did not predict BMI. Armstead et al. did not differentiate between racial discrimination perceived from ethnic others or from the effects of colorism.

  Colorism's influence on African American men. Although literature indicates that parents send various messages to Black men to prepare and buffer them for racial discrepancies that exist within society (Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011), a dearth of scholarly literature exists concerning Black men and colorism. This relative silence may be because of studies such as that by Hill (2002), who examined survey data from the National Survey of Black Americans ($N = 2,107$). The results suggested that lighter skin tone was more associated with attractiveness for Black women, with the largest difference in attractiveness between five skin colors being .93 for men, compared to 1.94 for women. The preference for women was nonlinear, indicating an exaggerated preference for light brown skin, whereas men who were light medium brown, the second lightest color, were slightly preferred (Hill, 2002). Nevertheless, for both men and women, skin color was the second strongest predictor of attractiveness after weight (Hill, 2002). Additionally, Thompson and Keith (2001) examined data from the 1980 National Survey of Black Americans and determined that skin color predicted Black males' reporting of self-efficacy or the ability to be effective within society. These findings

suggested that though the effects of colorism for African American men may be different from women, males do not escape colorism altogether.

Some results do suggest that men are especially, or differentially, affected by colorism and skin tone biases (Wade, 1996). Wade conducted surveys of 91 African American students and alumni (51 males and 40 females) from a northwestern university to determine the influence that skin tone had on self-esteem and perceptions of personal attractiveness among this population. Results suggested that for this population, skin tone did not affect African American women's perceptions of their own attractiveness. On the other hand, men with darker skin tones rated themselves as more attractive than men with lighter skin tones (Wade, 1996).

Attempting to address the gap in literature regarding African American males' specific experiences with colorism and skin tone discrimination, Uzogara, Lee, Abdou, and Jackson (2014) investigated data from the 1995 Detroit Area Study ($N = 1,139$, with 586 African Americans; total sample of 944 completed surveys that were not missing essential information) and the 2003 National Survey of American Life ($N = 5,191$, including 1,217 African American men). Uzogara et al. used the Detroit Area Study from 1995 and the National Survey of American Life from 2003 to get a sense of the development of colorism during that time period. The researchers found through statistical analysis of the Detroit Area Study that, for relations with other races and ethnicities, dark-skinned men experienced the most discrimination, followed by medium-skinned men and light-skinned men (Uzogara et al., 2014). Specifically, all light-skinned

men reported neutral or favorable treatment from Whites when compared with light- and medium-skinned men. In contrast, light-skinned men reported the most in-group discrimination of all of the groups, although dark-skinned men were close in their reports of discrimination. For men, the most favorable skin tone related to colorism discrimination was medium in this sample (Uzogara et al., 2014).

Next, Uzogara et al. (2014) examined the sample from the National Survey of American Life. In this sample, out-group treatment was similar, with a statistically significant relationship between light-skinned men and neutral or favorable treatment from other racial and ethnic groups. However, though medium-skinned men were still the least likely to experience discrimination based on their skin color, dark-skinned men were the most likely to experience colorism (Uzogara et al., 2014). The difference between medium- and light-skinned men was not statistically significant. In both datasets, socioeconomic status exacerbated the effects of skin tone consistent with the data previously discussed involving female participants (Thompson & Keith, 2001; Uzogara et al., 2014). However, Uzogara et al.'s data showed a significant difference between males, wherein medium skin tone was most preferred for in-group social hierarchies, and females, wherein lighter skin tones were preferred uniformly for in-group and out-group situations (Armstead et al., 2014; Maddox & Gray, 2002; Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Therefore, Hill's (2002), Thompson and Keith's (2001), Uzogara et al.'s (2014) and Wade's (1996) research suggest that men are likely to be affected by attractiveness

ideals associated with colorism, though these experiences may be different than those experienced by African American women. Moreover, Black men contribute to perpetuating the beauty ideals fostered through colorism ideologies and skin tone hierarchies through their mate selection (Hill, 2002; Maddox & Gray, 2002). Focusing on men's beliefs and roles in continuing colorism would thus provide a significant addition to the literature. Because of prior focus on the family's role in perpetuating these ideologies, understanding the phenomenon of skin tone hierarchies and the paternal role within this context requires an in-depth review of African American families, as detailed in the next section.

African American Families

The context of the family plays a vital role in how family members view the world. The family is the first place where individuals learn about themselves and others around them (McAdoo, 1997). Demo and Hughes (1990) and Wilder and Cain (2010) revealed that families pass on, reinforce, and introduce ideologies and morals from one generation to the next. Particularly within the Black community, the family is viewed as a dominant force representative of endurance, relationships, and society (Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Hunter & Davis, 1992; McAdoo, 1997; Staples, 1986). Unlike White families, African American families have traditionally maintained egalitarian family and work roles for men and women (Hunter & Davis, 1992; Stanik, Riina, & McHale, 2013). Hall (2005) and Johnson (2013) maintained that the socialization work of Black parents stems from their experiences of social reality and beliefs about the resources, values, and beliefs

children require to navigate these realities successfully.

Part of the current reality that parents pass on may be related to socioeconomic conditions. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), in 2010, only 33.1% of Black children lived with both parents compared to 75.9% of White children and 66.3% of Hispanic children. Of African American families with both parents, 8.6% were under the poverty line, whereas 25% of single-father households and 36.7% of single-mother households were poor (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Of the 20.1% of the nation's children who were below the poverty level, Black children were more likely (35.3%) to live in households below the poverty line than Hispanic (32.5%), Asian (13.6%), and White, non-Hispanic (17%) children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Even while these statistics demonstrated that African American children are more likely to be economically disadvantaged, the data also showed that populations of African American families vary. Stereotypical representations of families frequently reflect only those of low socioeconomic status (Chaney & Fairfax, 2013). The majority of African American families do not meet the expected socioeconomic stereotypes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Therefore, African American children's perceptions of social conditions, particularly related to socioeconomic status, may be skewed based on this gross representation of the African American family (Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Chaney & Fairfax, 2013; Hunter & Davis, 1992; McAdoo, 1997; Staples, 1986).

African American parents may have unique perspectives on what it means to be effective parents. In three studies attempting to validate an instrument about parental

quality, the Parenting Questionnaire, Budd et al. (2012) revealed several specialized features of African American families. The instrument was a 110-item online survey (reduced to 63 items for the retest) that asked respondents to relate whether a parent's reaction to a child was acceptable, somewhat acceptable, minimally acceptable, unacceptable, or if the respondent did not understand the question (Budd et al., 2012). Samples included 1,398 ethnically diverse undergraduates at a midwestern university (age 18–43) and a retested sample of 92 and 142 students (Budd et al., 2012). African American participants were more likely to condone physical discipline and less likely to use supportive feedback as a parenting tool. In particular, African American males were the least likely group to use supportive feedback. Budd et al. attributed this attitude to gender socialization effects that devalued supportive parenting behaviors as not being masculine. However, as African Americans comprised only 7% of the study sample, these results may not translate to a wider, geographically diverse sample since, of the undergraduate students who were surveyed, the majority were not yet parents (Budd et al., 2012).

Stanik et al., (2013) investigated multiinformant interview data from 134 two-parent African American families in two urban, Mid-Atlantic areas to better understand family dynamics' effects on adolescent behavior among African Americans. Parental relationships in this sample were warm (the average was 4 on a 5-point scale); the mothers reported experiencing warmer relationships with adolescents, whereas <both – You have not actually indicated who the other group was? Please specify.> groups

reported warmer relationships with children who were younger (Stanik et al., 2013).

Mothers reported spending 8 to 10 hours with adolescents, and fathers reported spending

6 to 7 hours with adolescents; the difference was especially pronounced when the family

had a daughter, suggesting that there was additional maternal time investment for

daughters (Stanik et al., 2013). Maternal warmth was related to decreased depressive

symptoms among adolescents of both genders, and paternal warmth was negatively

related to risky behaviors in this sample; maternal warmth was negatively related to risky

behaviors for sons, but not for daughters (Stanik et al., 2013). Thus, rather than time

spent, Stanik et al. (2013) determined that parental warmth was a more fundamental

factor in shaping African American adolescents' emotional and risk-taking behaviors.

Within African American families, Boyd-Franklin (2003) determined that

preferential treatment among siblings may be based on physical characteristics such as

gender, skin color, hair texture, and specific facial appearance. Since family plays a

significant role in African American culture, biases formed within this unit may be

particularly harmful or helpful (Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Hunter & Davis, 1992; McAdoo,

1997; Staples, 1986). Because of stereotypical views of African American fathers, this

group has mainly only been discussed in the literature from a negative perspective (Hall,

Livingston, Henderson, Fisher, & Hines, 2007). The following sections include a review

of factors related to African American fathers, including stereotypes, masculine ideals,

and factors affecting involvement.

African American Paternal Involvement

As Hall et al. (2007) have noted, when African American fathers are addressed, it is often from a deficit perspective; African American fathers are labeled as either dysfunctional or as absentees. Alternatively, Hunter and Davis (1992) showed that family comprised an essential component of African American males' definitions of masculinity. After interviewing 32 African American men from New York with diverse ages, socioeconomic statuses, and education levels, Hunter and Davis (1992, 1994) determined that a central theme for African American men's definitions of what it meant to be a man was family, whether the participant was married or unmarried. Specifically, African American men conceptualized masculinity for themselves as being a patriarch of the family while maintaining equality with their partners. Hunter and Davis (1992) noted that these contradictory perspectives of patriarchy and equality may provide tension for men as they define their role within the family structure. These struggles can be particularly difficult considering the men in this sample considered the family to be the major meaning-making apparatus in a man's life (Hunter & Davis, 1994).

The meaning of family for African American males may explain the involvement some researchers have shown African American fathers have with their children (Leavell, Tamis-LaMonda, Ruble, Zosuls, & Cabrera, 2012). Leavell et al. (2012) examined a national sample of African American, Latino, and White fathers ($N = 426$) enrolled in the Early Head Start program to review the involvement of a father in specific activities and caregiving of their preschool age (2–4 years old) children. Leavell et al. found that fathers

were more likely to engage in physical play with sons and literacy promotion activities

with daughters, an effect that was moderated by the education level and marital status of

the paternal figures. Overall, the fathers' education level significantly affected

involvement, with lower-educated fathers contributing less to the children's lives. Among

the three ethnic groups, African American fathers of sons were the most likely to engage

in play and visiting activities. However, African American fathers of daughters did not

engage in play and visiting activities to the same extent (Leavell et al., 2012). African

American fathers (19% of the sample) were more likely to be engaged with their children

than were White fathers in this sample (Leavell et al., 2012). These findings suggested

that when African American fathers are involved in their children's lives, they are more

involved than other ethnic groups, particularly with male children. Moreover, the results

suggested that fathers played a role in passing on gendered ideologies of acceptable

activities for children from the earliest ages (i.e., for 2-year-old children; Leavell et al.,

2012).

Father involvement varies depending on the role that a father plays within the

household. Frequent assessments of fathers' roles include whether they are residential or

nonresidential (Coates & Phares, 2014), involved or distant (Johnson, 2013), or through

parental qualities (Stanik et al., 2013; Webster, Lowe, Siller, & Hackett, 2013). The

importance of fatherhood to identity, as noted by Leavell et al. (2012), for African

American men seems to be contested. For example, Tichenor, McQuillan, Greil,

Contreras, and Schreffler (2011) examined the importance of fatherhood among a

national, ethnically diverse sample ($N = 932$) of men cohabiting with women (either married or unmarried) and found that Black men placed the least importance on fatherhood when compared to other ethnicities.

Several factors may affect a nonresidential father's involvement with his child or children. Coates and Phares (2014) examined survey data from 110 nonresidential African American fathers with children under 10 years old to determine predictive factors for paternal involvement. Factors that showed significant relation with involvement included conviction history, psychological wellbeing, and coparenting quality (Coates & Phares, 2014). Furthermore, coparenting relationship quality mediated the relationship between involvement and both the fathers' conviction history and psychological wellbeing. Coates and Phares found that social support affected the relationship between involvement and psychological wellbeing—when social support was high, psychological wellbeing was not significantly related to parental involvement.

Thus, despite stereotypes of absent or distant African American fathers, the reality of paternal involvement in the African American community is actually more complex (Coates & Phares, 2014; Hall et al., 2007). Whereas the most common type of Black household in 2012 was that with a single mother (46.8%), two-parent households were nearly as common at 43.6% of the population (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Therefore, maintaining a focus primarily on the quality of mother-child relationships and the influence of distant fathers, as is common in literature regarding Black families, does not represent the current reality of a large percentage of the population (Coates & Phares,

2014; Johnson, 2013). To understand the role of father-daughter relationships and their influence on women, the following section includes a review of multiethnic research related to father-daughter relationships.

Father-Daughter Relationships

The father-daughter relationship among African Americans remains generally under-examined within the family literature (Allgood, Beckert, & Peterson, 2012; Johnson, 2013). However, fathers' involvement has been demonstrated as instrumental in the development of self-esteem. Simons and Conger (2007) showed that healthy and consistent relationships formed with fathers are correlated with high self-esteem in both male and female children. Shannon, McFadden, and Jolley-Mitchell (2013) showed that fathers are instrumental in shaping a child's self-esteem, self-concept, and relationship formation. Allen, Hauser, Bell, and O'Connor (1994) showed that adults who report receiving positive affirmation from their fathers also reported having a healthy self-image and realistic expectations of others.

The literature related to father-daughter relationships is limited. From a retrospective quantitative analysis of a sample of 99 18 to 21-year old college females who lived with their father during adolescence, Allgood et al., (2012) determined that fathers' engagement in their daughters' lives and accessibility had statistically significant positive relationships to their daughters' levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction. Measures included the Father Involvement Scale, the Nurturant Father Scale, the Outcome Questionnaire, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Allgood et al., 2012). The

results showed that fathers who are present, engaged, and available can facilitate women's positive self-perceptions. However, their sample was 97% Caucasian, and may not be generalizable to African American relationships (Allgood et al., 2012).

Investigating paternal warmth's effect on children's social skills, Webster et al. (2013) conducted longitudinal analyses of the National Institute of Child Health and Development's Study of Early Child Care. Webster et al. selected 856 children born in 1991 and their families and assessed the paternal role and a child's social development at 54 months, when the child entered first grade, as well as when the child entered third grade. Webster et al. determined that the quality of father-child relationships at 54 months was directly related to the child's social skills in third grade. Specifically, father-daughter relationships where the father fostered warm caregiving roles were related to social development of daughters, though this relationship was not found for sons (Webster et al., 2013). Allgood et al.'s (2012) and Webster et al.'s recent findings seem to suggest that the father-daughter relationship has particular implications for women's development.

In situations where both parents are involved, fathers demonstrated more influence on daughters' long-term sense of wellbeing and adjustment, particularly when the father is perceived to have higher power and prestige than the mother (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Moreover, supportive relationships between fathers and daughters have been demonstrated to have significant positive effects on those daughters' self-esteem (Cooper, 2009; Mori, 1999; Richards et al., 1991) and levels

of social integration (Webster et al., 2013). Cooper (2009) determined that Black fathers' involvement encouraged academic engagement and increased self-esteem in their daughters, and Leavell, Tamis-LeMonda, Ruble, Zosuls, and Cabrera (2012) found that African American fathers promoted literacy activities in their young daughters and physical play for their sons, thereby handing down gendered ideals about acceptable activities. Therefore, it seems that fathers' roles in transmitting social messages, such as colorism, could potentially have a strong effect on their daughters.

Parents and Skin Tone Messages

The initial environment for colorism begins in the home through attitudes, behaviors, and messages that foster a color hierarchy (Hochschild & Weaver, 2007; Suizzo et al., 2008). Generally, parents play a vital role in how children view themselves and the world around them (Suizzo et al., 2008). However, only recently have researchers thoroughly examined the essential role of the family in relation to fostering colorism ideologies. Landor et al. (2013) and Wilder and Cain (2011), who examined parental messages related to colorism, discovered that, along with the media and school, the family was the most influential force in shaping personal views and perceptions about skin color and how individuals learn about colorism. Further research is required to understand the full extent of the role families play in perpetuating skin tone hierarchies (Coard et al., 2001; Hill, 2002; Wilder & Cain, 2011).

In some cases, parents have served as a buffer against outside racism and promoted self-esteem and high cultural salience (Suizzo et al., 2008). Cooper, Brown,

Metzger, Clinton, and Guthrie (2013) conducted a quantitative analysis of surveys from 1,942 African Americans ages 12–18 in a large Midwestern city. Cooper et al. found that social support, largely from parents, could mitigate the negative effects stemming from outside racial prejudices, particularly depressive symptoms, school suspensions, and scholarly engagement. Whereas boys' relationship with their mothers showed a significant relationship to the boys' levels of success, both mothers' and fathers' support affected girls' adjustment (Cooper et al., 2013). However, in this study, males reported receiving more support than females from their parents (Cooper et al., 2013). Cooper et al. noted the relationship between father-daughter relationships and mitigated depressive symptoms. The father-daughter relationship may particularly affect girls' psychological wellbeing.

Research has expanded the issue of colorism within families to show that people teach and as well as learn color consciousness during various phases in life (Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011). Kowal et al. (2002) also determined that parents consciously or unconsciously show preferential treatment towards children based on the color of their skin. Wilder and Cain (2011) suggested color consciousness influences and shapes African American's outlook and understanding of colorism. Demo and Hughes (1990) and Wilder and Cain revealed that families pass on, reinforce, and introduce ideologies and morals from one generation to the next. Researchers have not thoroughly studied parental influences in developing attitudes towards skin tone represented through skin color hierarchies (Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011).

Moreover, Wilder and Cain (2011) showed that parents transmit messages regarding colorism, including biases and judgments towards a particular skin tone, and creating and instilling normative ideologies about colorism. Typically, these messages are unconscious and are therefore difficult to detect. A number of study participants initially denied that they received messages of colorism from family members growing up (Wilder & Cain, 2011). However, after hearing other participants' stories, participants found similarities among experiences and became aware that they had received indirect messages related to their skin tone. For example, a dark-skinned participant recalled being protected more than her sisters and being told to work two times harder than her lighter family members to overcome stereotypes about darker-skinned individuals (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Another participant who perceived herself as being dark-skinned recalled more direct messages of colorism through preferential treatment for lighter-skinned siblings; she recalled getting into trouble more than her lighter sisters, doing more chores, and being yelled at more than her lighter sisters (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Individuals who received differential treatment based on their skin tone have reported feeling resentment towards their parents whether they were treated better or worse than their siblings; the individuals who were treated worse also exhibited behavioral problems later in life (Landor et al., 2013).

After analyzing survey responses from 767 African American families from Georgia and Iowa, Landor et al. (2013) determined that differences in childhood experience of colorism varied according to gender. Children ages 10 to 12 years

participated in Landor et al.'s (2013) Family and Community Health study as well as their primary caregivers (713 females, 53 males). The participants were independently rated by a panel of six researchers (three African American and three European-American) on their skin color. Landor et al. determined that, in this sample, darker-skinned sons received higher quality parenting and more racial socialization messages promoting mistrust towards other racial or ethnic groups in comparison to lighter-skinned sons. However, in the same study, lighter-skinned daughters reportedly received a higher quality of parenting than darker-skinned daughters (Landor et al., 2013). Parents' own skin tones had little effect, though primary caregivers' skin tones marginally predicted the promotion of mistrust among darker-skinned female children. Alternatively, lighter-skinned parents promoted more mistrust in those male children with darker skin tones. Given that Landor et al. found no interaction between racial discrimination and skin tone in this sample, the results suggest that skin tone biases were a phenomenon felt primarily within the African American community and especially in the family.

The literature has reflected that the family is the site of initial development of colorism ideologies. Burton et al. (2010) asserted that issues of racism, discrimination, and colorism within the family context should continue to be investigated with more focus being placed on the issue of colorism within the family in particular paternal messages. According to a study conducted by Wilder and Cain (2011), fathers were seen as protective figures in buffering between maternal negative skin tone messages and instilling pride for one's dark-skin tone. Overall, an abundance of existing research

correlates a healthy paternal relationship with self-pride, positive self-esteem, global worth, and the ability to form healthy relationships both socially and intimately (Allgood et al., 2012; Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Cooper, 2009; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Shannon et al., 2013). Therefore, in the present study the researcher investigated how Black men's colorism and skin tone perceptions transfer to their parenting of daughters.

Father-Daughter Relationships and Colorism

As previously mentioned, colorism is an amalgamation of outside prejudice and inner development fostered in the family (Hall, 2006; Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Landor et al., 2013; Maddox & Gray, 2002; Thompson & Keith, 2001; Wilder & Cain, 2011). Fathers play a role in daughters' development of self-esteem, social behaviors, and their development of ideological beliefs (Allgood et al., 2012; Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Cooper, 2009; Johnson, 2013; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Simons & Conger, 2007; Webster et al., 2013). What data exists regarding the relations between Black males and daughters as well as their responses to racism and colorism, suggests that this gap in the literature needs further investigation by researchers (Coard et al., 2001; Hill, 2002; Wilder & Cain, 2011).

According to Hammond, Banks, and Mattis (2006), African American men have a unique response to racism. In a sample of 171 African American men ages 18–61, Hammond et al. found that African American men who were able to forgive those who had demonstrated racist prejudice towards them had higher levels of emotional support, subjective religiosity, and religious coping. However, factors that were lower in African

American men who could forgive racism were emotionally restrictive behaviors and frequency of racist encounters. Older men who were emotionally restricted, however, were more likely to forgive than were older men who were emotionally open. Therefore, long-term exposure to racist behaviors may decrease the likelihood of African American men forgiving prejudice, but emotional support and religion may help to mitigate these effects (Hammond et al., 2006).

Cultural identification may influence African American men's attitudes and beliefs towards ideologies. Abreu, Goodyear, Campos, and Newcomb (2000) conducted a quantitative analysis of feelings about ethnic belonging, traditional masculinity identity, and demographic data from a large-scale national sample ($N = 378$) of Latino, European, and African American males. Abreu et al. determined that African American males who identified with their ethnicity were less likely than both Latino and European males to ascribe to traditional gender roles (Abreu et al., 2000). Therefore, identifying strongly with African American ethnicity would not seem to influence the gender ideologies Black fathers passed on to their daughters. However, Thomas and Speight's (1999) study on racial identity and racial socialization demonstrated that Black parents who reported low salience with their culture transferred fewer racial messages than those parents identifying with a pro-Black attitude. Therefore, African American fathers' identification with their race or ethnicity may affect the messages they transmit to their daughters. This conflicting data suggests that African American males' relationship to their identities and its influence on the messages they transmitted requires further investigation (Abreu et al.,

2000; Thomas & Speight, 1999)

Moreover, father-daughter relationships seem to influence Black females'
development of ideological beliefs. Examining interview data from 40 college-educated
African American women ages 18–22, Johnson (2013) discovered that father-daughter
relationships shaped the women's behaviors and beliefs about racialized gender ideals.
To assess the role that fathers' involvement played in passing on socialized messages
regarding expectations for Black women, Johnson interviewed the college-educated
women regarding their assessment of what was required from Black women in society
and in their assessment of their relationships with their fathers. Johnson divided
participants into four categories based on their experiences with their fathers: (a)
supportive resident fathers ($N = 17$), (b) distant resident fathers ($N = 3$), (c) supportive
nonresident fathers ($N = 3$), and (d) distant nonresident fathers ($N = 17$). Generally, the
women reported that their relationships with their fathers centered on the development of
ideal Black femininity and protection from male-dominated society. Women with
supportive fathers (resident and nonresident) primarily reported that their fathers' advice
played a significant role in their success; alternatively, women with distant fathers
suggested that they needed to be stronger because they did not have protection from their
fathers. The women also noted that their relationship with their fathers, regardless of the
type, affected their behavior in heterosexual relationships (Johnson, 2013). Therefore, it
seems that the protector role within this family structure translated to fathers' influence in
their daughters' lives being of significant note in determining their subsequent behavior

and transmitting racialized ideologies of gender.

Though Wilder and Cain (2011) focused primarily on the family unit as a whole in relation to colorism, their findings suggest that fathers may play a specialized role within the family development of skin tone hierarchies. Based on focus group data from 26 Black women, Wilder and Cain showed that some fathers instilled an "oppositional consciousness" (p. 598) in their daughters. In other words, for these women, although their mothers transmitted negative messages to darker-skinned daughters based on their skin tones, their fathers were more likely to instill pride and positivity for darker skin tones. As a result, Wilder and Cain suggested that the paternal figure may provide differential experiences with colorism in proposing an alternative beauty ideal for African American women. Wilder and Cain advocated for more specified research regarding different leadership roles within Black families, including grandparents, as well as more focused examination about mothers' and fathers' roles.

Therefore, although little research has been conducted relative to the paternal role in transmitting colorism ideologies, the results of research about African American men's relationships with racism, colorism, and perpetuation of racialized ideological beliefs suggest that the father-daughter relationship is rife with opportunities for either continuing colorism or buffering its effects. Further research is required to understand paternal beliefs and skin tone, and the effect of those beliefs on the transmission of colorism ideals to daughters. In the present study, I addressed the significant gap in colorism research related to the father-daughter relationship.

Summary and Conclusions

Colorism is the in-group skin tone stratification that fundamentally affects living conditions, including socioeconomic status and physiology, for contemporary African Americans (Armstead et al., 2014; Burton et al., 2010; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hill, 2002; Landor et al., 2013; Maddox & Gray, 2002; Thompson, 2014; Wallace et al., 2011). Parents and families transmit skin tone messages based on information they received when they were children, transmitting a skin color hierarchy onto their children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hughes, 2003;; Lesane-Brown et al., 2005; Suizzo et al., 2008; Wilder & Cain, 2011). Because researchers have dubbed colorism as an issue primarily affecting women, colorism researchers have maintained focus on the effects for African American women, especially the passage of the messages between mothers and daughters (Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011). The researchers conducted these studies using the qualitative method because of the covert nature of the phenomenon (Wilder & Cain, 2011); I maintained this paradigm in designing the methodology for this study, as discussed in Chapter 3.

While maternal figures have been the predominate focus in colorism research, researchers outside of the research area of colorism have suggested that father-daughter relationships fundamentally shape self-esteem development and ideological message translation (Cooper, 2009; Cooper et al., 2013; Johnson, 2013; Mori, 1999; Richards et al., 1991). Wilder and Cain (2011) suggested that fathers may buffer their daughters against the harsh messages transmitted by mothers, but more research is required

specifically aimed at understanding the fathers' role in the transmission of colorism. Through this qualitative study, I addressed the gap in literature related to fathers' role in translating skin color messages to their daughters. This research was necessary because skin tone messages have had a long-standing effect on people's self-esteem, self-concept, and their ability to have a sense of belonging to their own culture (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the messages African American fathers transmit to their daughters about skin tone, while comparing these messages to those transmitted by their fathers' fathers during their childhood. Through individual interviews, I explored this phenomenon with African American fathers of daughters as participants. This chapter will begin with a discussion of the research design used in the present study. The chapter will continue with a description of the role of the researcher in this investigation. Next, I will present the methodology of the study, including the procedures for the selection and recruitment of participants, the data collection instruments for this study, and the procedures for the analysis of data. I will then discuss issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures within the study. The chapter will close with a summary of the material presented in this chapter and a transition to Chapter 4.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question in this study was: What are African American fathers' perceptions and lived experiences regarding the messages they pass on to their daughters regarding colorism? A qualitative methodology was the most appropriate approach for this study. A quantitative approach requires the researcher to develop a questionnaire instrument (Bryman, 2006). In a quantitative study, the researcher is required to formulate closed-ended questions that might limit or inaccurately reflect the totality of

participants' experiences and perceptions (Bronstein & Kovacs, 2013). Conversely, a qualitative methodology allows participants to reconstruct their own experiences, thereby determining the direction of the narrative (Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012). Using a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological design, participants could fully explicate their beliefs about colorism and the transmission of skin tone messages through responding to semistructured interview questions. Qualitative methods facilitate the free exchange of ideas among participants and allow for the spontaneous generation of ideas of which the researcher may have been otherwise unaware (Breuer, 2000). For this qualitative study, my use of a phenomenological design added to African American psychological literature by allowing the exploration of skin tone messages and colorism through the lens of paternal figures, an understudied population. I conducted individual interviews using a semistructured interview guide to ensure that the discussion addressed salient questions pertaining to the topic of study, while still allowing participants to freely exchange stories and share experiences from their perspectives (see Breuer, 2000).

The main focus of any phenomenological study is to describe the essence of the phenomenon through the perspectives of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon directly (Groenwald, 2004). I used a phenomenological approach to examine perceptions of colorism and the transmission of skin tone messages from the unique perspectives of fathers who have direct lived experience with the phenomenon. A phenomenological approach was most suitable for this study because of the focus of phenomenology on areas with little data (see Groenewald, 2004). The concepts of

colorism and skin tone perceptions were underexplored from the fathers' perspective (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Furthermore, a large gap existed in the current literature concerning the role that fathers play in transmitting skin tone messages. Thus, my in-depth exploration of this understudied population within the context of this phenomenon was necessary.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this study was to develop the interview questions that guided data collection in this study. I also acted as an instrument of data collection by conducting separate interviews with each participant. In order to carry out the data collection in this study, I endeavored to engage participants by asking open-ended questions and allowing for their free expression. I audiotaped the interviews to ensure that the data collected were accurately and to facilitate the transcription of the collected data. I then analyzed the data using thematic analysis.

Within any study, it is imperative for researchers to avoid biases or preconceived notions regarding the phenomenon being explored (Chenail, 2011). To limit the influence of my personal beliefs about colorism throughout the course of this research, I practiced bracketing or epoché (see Tufford & Newman, 2012). I personally acknowledged my assumptions, interpretations, and preconceived notions about the research and consciously endeavored to set these aside to interact with the research in a more objective manner. To further ensure that the influence of researcher bias is minimized, member checking occurred to ensure that the transcripts were accurate prior to beginning data

analysis (see Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011). Member checking enhances the credibility of a study by allowing participants to verify the accuracy of the collected data. In this study, member checking was accomplished through transcript review. Participants received a copy of their interview transcripts and were asked to confirm that the transcripts accurately presented what they said.

Additionally, I selected group participants from my work environment. No conflicts of interest or power differentials existed because I did not have any personal or professional relationship with any of the prospective study participants. In order to further reduce the risk of power differentials, participants did not receive incentives for participation in the study (see Meins, Fernyhough, & Harris-Waller, 2014).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The target population of this study consisted of African American fathers of daughters who had experience with the concept of colorism. Research participants consisted of 12 adult males aged 18 and older who reported experience with the phenomenon being investigated. I limited data collection to participants from the Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia area because of practical travel limitations for me to conduct face-to-face interviews. The criteria for participation in this study were that each participant must: (a) be an African American male, (b) be 18 years of age or older, (c) report having at least one daughter, and (d) report having experience with receiving skin tone related messages (see Appendix A for the specific screening

questions). I determined that participants met this criterion through a screening phone call with each prospective participant.

During the candidate selection process, potential participants received a flyer, questionnaire, and an informed consent form. I distributed flyers in local Black communities at grocery stores, religious gatherings, and local libraries. The flyer contained a request for interested individuals to call me for more information. Once prospective participants contacted me, they were asked questions from the screening questionnaire to confirm that they met the inclusion criteria for the study (see Benjestorf, Viglione, Lamb, & Giromini, 2013).

Studies have shown that participants in a phenomenological study must be selected carefully (Hycner, 1999). Participant selection in this study occurred through purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling allows for the selection of participants to be based on certain criteria set by the researcher to serve the purpose of the researcher and the study investigated (Huck, 2004). Tongco (2007) asserted that purposive sampling is "most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within" (p. 147). Following the initial recruitment using purposive sampling, I implemented snowball sampling to recruit additional participants (see Suri, 2011; Tongco, 2007). This meant that I asked participants who were selected for participation in the study to refer me to other individuals who may be appropriate for inclusion in the study. I then used the previously described recruitment procedures to select participants to take part in the study (see Suri, 2011).

The sample for this study consisted of 12 participants. Considerations of sample size in qualitative research are based on the concept of saturation (Hanson et al., 2011). Saturation refers to the point at which the addition of more participants fails to produce new themes or to expound upon the identified themes in any meaningful way (Hanson et al., 2011. Researchers have made varying recommendations concerning an appropriate sample size to achieve saturation. Morse (1994) asserted that a minimum of six participants should be used in qualitative research. In their investigation of saturation in an interview-based study, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found that 12 participants are necessary to achieve saturation. Based upon these recommendations, 12 participants comprised the sample in this study.

Instrumentation

I used one form of data collection in the study: individual interviews. Through the semistructured interviews, I aimed to elicit in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences with skin tone messages and colorism. To conduct the data collection, I used an interview guide (see Appendix C).

In constructing the interview questions, I reviewed the existing literature pertaining to the topic of colorism and skin tone messages and also considered the research question guiding the study. I then developed two sets of open-ended questions. Both sets of questions centered on the topics of the messages fathers received about skin tone as children, their perceptions concerning the effects of those messages, and the messages these fathers pass on to their daughters concerning skin tone. The interview

questions were created to elicit in-depth description about the individual's personal experiences.

The literature supports interviews as useful qualitative data collection methods. Individual interviews are the primary tool by which phenomenological researchers gather data (Englander, 2012). Specifically, the use of semistructured interviews enables the researcher to collect in-depth data about the phenomenon of interest from the participant's perspective (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Using open-ended questioning, the researcher can elicit vivid descriptions of the participant's experiences and perceptions, without directing or otherwise influencing their self-report (Chenail, 2011).

As the instruments in the study were newly developed, I had to establish their content validity (see Peipert et al., 2014). To establish the validity of the proposed instruments, I conducted a field test using a panel of experts (see Taylor, Masse, et al., 2013). I asked the experts to verify that the proposed questions were clear and unambiguous and that the questions are likely to elicit information to answer the research questions guiding this study (see Taylor, Shields, et al., 2013). I selected the experts by referrals from colleagues in the psychology and social science field. After the individuals were referred, I contacted them via e-mail inquiring about their background, experience, expertise, and their willingness to participate in evaluating the interview questions for this study. Attached in the e-mail sent to each panel participant were my working proposal, approved prospectus, research questions, and the interview questions. All three panel experts had Doctor of Psychology degrees and were licensed psychologists with an

expertise in teaching and research. The experts expressed an interest in a need for more

cultural research in the field of psychology regarding African American men and their

willingness to assist. Each expert received the Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for

Expert Panels-VREP. The authors of the tool granted me permission to use the

instrument; the instrument and rubric are included at the end of this paper (see Appendix

H).

The panel experts each independently reviewed the instrument for clarity,

wording, use of jargon, appropriateness, relationship to the problem being studied, and

content validity. Each criterion was measured on a Likert Scale with 1 being *not*

acceptable (i.e., major modifications needed) to 4 being *exceeds expectations* (i.e., no

notifications needed). I also provided room for the reviewers to make comments if

necessary. All three reviewers examined the instrument and passed it with no

modifications being necessary. I also invited the experts to offer feedback and

suggestions for modifications to the instruments. The panel examined the validity of the

content, the use of jargon, and ensured that the research questions of the study were

relative to the content of the study.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Before conducting any form of data collection, the researcher must obtain

informed consent from participants (see Appendix B; Owonikoko, 2013). Informed

consent is an instrumental tool for ensuring the protection and ethical treatment of

research participants (Creswell, 2005). During the informed consent process of this study,

the participants were advised about the purpose of the research, the research questions, the procedures, potential risks of the study, the nature of the research, and the self-termination process (Dresser, 2012). Additionally, the participants were informed of the steps I will take to maintain their privacy, and participants received a written agreement noting their participation in the study.

Data collection in this study consisted of 60-minute individual semistructured interviews (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012) that were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The objective of the interviews was to elicit information concerning the skin tone messages fathers received in their childhood and the messages they transmit, or have transmitted, to their children. The scheduling of individual interviews with participants occurred once the participants were selected for participation in the study. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym at the time of the interview to protect the participant's confidentiality (Freund & Fielding, 2013). Prior to beginning the interviews, I reminded the participants that they are free to withdraw from the study at any point. All interviews were audio-recorded. I used the interview guide to facilitate the interview (Qu & Dumay, 2011). After completing the interview, I thanked the individual for participating, answered any questions the participant has about the research, and confirmed the participant's willingness to participate in the interviews.

The interviews took place in a quiet meeting room in a community center that is private and free of external noise and distractions (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). I began the interviews by providing a brief introduction of myself and an explanation of group rules,

confidentiality measures, the purpose of the study, the expectations from participants, the requirements for the study, and a reminder that the sessions were audiotaped. I also reminded participants that participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time. I will secure the data by storing the audiotapes in a locked file cabinet that is solely accessible to the myselfr (Fade & Swift, 2011). I will store the data for 5 years, as required by Walden University. Participants were debriefed after the study to answer any questions they may have about the research (Haskins et al., 2013).

Once the interviews have concluded, I transcribed the audio recordings. I verified the accuracy of these transcripts through member checking via transcript review (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). To complete member checking, I e-mailed participants a copy of the individual interview transcript to confirm that the transcripts accurately reflect the proceedings of the interview. Once the participants verified the accuracy of the transcripts, data analysis commenced.

Data Analysis Plan

To analyze the data in this study, I utilized thematic analysis as specified by Braun and Clarke (2006). The data in this phenomenological study consisted of typed transcripts of semistructured interviews. Thematic analysis has abundant substantiation within the literature as an effective method of analysis in phenomenological research (Frost, McClelland, Clark, & Boylan, 2014; Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012; Joffe, 2011; Wilson, 2014). Thematic analysis requires the researcher to inspect the dataset to ascertain trends and commonalities across the dataset (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas,

2013). The purpose of thematic analysis is to identify significant commonalities within the collected data, which collectively describe the phenomenon of study (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Braun and Clarke (2006) specified six steps for conducting thematic analysis in qualitative research. In the first step of the process, the researcher must transcribe and read the data to gain a general understanding of the content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second step of the analysis entails the coding of the data. To complete the coding process, the researcher reviews the data to denote and label significant phrases or statements across the data, and organizes the data based on the established codes (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). In the third step of the analysis, the researcher arranges the codes into tentative themes, and combs through the rest of the dataset to identify support for each identified theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through the examination of the interview transcripts, the researcher triangulated the data to corroborate the emerging themes (Kufaine & Mtapuri, 2014). In the fourth step of the process, the researcher assesses the tentative themes by comparing them to the coded data and to the dataset in its entirety to devise the thematic structure (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The fifth step involves the refining of each theme to produce named and demarcated themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the final step of the process, the researcher produces a narrative description of the findings, utilizing quotations from the collected data to substantiate the identified themes, and tying the themes to the research questions. I observed the six identified steps to analyze the data and discover themes that describe the messages that African American fathers received

regarding skin tone, and their experiences concerning the transmission of these messages to their daughters.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The validity of a research study, according to Long and Johnson (2000), means that the study measures what it is intended to measure. In qualitative research, the merits of a study are conceptualized in terms of trustworthiness (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) specified four criteria for establishing the trustworthiness of a qualitative study: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. To ensure trustworthiness in the present study, I utilized several strategies.

Credibility

Credibility is a measure of the degree to which the research findings are an accurate depiction of the phenomenon being studied (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). The primary strategy by which the credibility of the study was enhanced is through triangulation (Hanson et al., 2011). Triangulation refers to the use of different data sources to analyze the data comparatively and corroborate the research findings (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Through this process, the validity of the findings is bolstered by evidence gleaned from varying data sources (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In the study, I employed individual interviews as a method of data collection. By using this design, I obtained better-validated research findings by corroborating them through the varied viewpoints of the participants, to contextualize and support the insights gained from the interviews

(Massoudi et al., 2014).

I also improved credibility through member checking (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Member checking occurred through participant review of transcripts (Mero-Jafee, 2011). I e-mailed participants a copy of their interview transcript to confirm that the transcripts accurately depict the interview conversation. Once participants have verified the transcripts, I can assure higher confidence that the transcribed data are not compromised by researcher bias.

I contributed to the credibility of this study through reflexivity and bracketing (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). Reflexivity denotes the researcher's mindful consideration of personal beliefs and biases pertaining to the research. After acknowledging these biases, the researcher practices bracketing to put aside these biases and examine the data more objectively (Tufford & Newman, 2012). By utilizing bracketing, I limited the effects of researcher bias.

Saturation is another method by which the researcher ensures credibility in the study (Hanson et al., 2011). Saturation is the point at which the completion of additional interviews no longer results in new insights or themes. By achieving saturation, the researcher can express higher confidence in the truth and accuracy of the findings.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be extended or applied to other contexts, settings, or participants (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). The chief method to enhance the transferability of the study is the inclusion of thick, detailed

description (Morrow, 2005). Thick description signifies highly-detailed and rich description that provides enough illustrative detail to enable the reader to interpret and contextualize the findings (Petty et al., 2012). In this study, I used thick description to describe the research population, sample, procedures, and the accounts obtained from participants in the interviews.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the degree to which the research findings are stable over time (Morrow, 2005). The establishment of dependability facilitates the replication of the study by another researcher following identical methodological procedures. To improve the dependability of the study, I followed rigorous and systematic procedures to conduct the research (Hanson et al., 2011). Further, I created an audit trail by providing in-depth description of the methodological procedures carried out and the findings obtained in the study. Through the audit trail, another researcher will be able to follow and replicate the methodological procedures used in the study. Lietz and Zayas (2010) held that member checking, as described previously, is also a strategy by which dependability is enriched. Further, triangulation of the interview data also contributed to the dependability of the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability denotes that the findings of the study reflect the perspectives of the participants and not the biases of the researcher (Hanson et al., 2011). To enhance the confirmability in the present study, I utilized epoché or bracketing. Through bracketing,

Iput aside personal beliefs and judgments to limit the influence of researcher bias (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Another strategy I used to improve confirmability is through the development of an audit trail (Thomas & Maglivy, 2011). The audit trail refers to the detailed description of the methodological steps followed during the course of the study. The provision of the audit trail contributes to the transparency of the study, thereby enabling another researcher to appraise the original researcher's methodological and analytic decisions (Hanson et al., 2011).

Ethical Procedures

I obtained organizational approval from authorized representatives of the research sites where participants were recruited (see Appendix B). Prior to beginning data collection, I sought and obtained IRB approval from Walden University to conduct the study (Tracy, 2010). The recruitment process included procedures for obtaining informed consent from participants (Owonikoko, 2013). The informed consent process included a signed form that includes an explanation of the requirements of participation, a confidentiality agreement, a brief synopsis of the purpose of the study, and a restatement of the ability for participants to leave the study at will (Dresser, 2012). This informed consent form addressed all of the preceding topics and were returned to me once they had been signed. Once I received them, I copied the forms and provided a copy of the form to the participant while holding onto the original informed consent form. Once an interview was complete, I used the debriefing form to ensure the participants felt comfortable and asked if they had any additional information.

As participation in the study is strictly voluntary, prospective participants may elect to decline participation in the study or participants may choose to withdraw from the study. To withdraw from the study, participants notified me of their intent to exit the study via phone, e-mail, or written communication (Fjeldsoe et al., 2014). If participant withdrawal resulted in too few participants, I would have resumed recruitment procedures to obtain additional participants for the study. I would have recruited additional participants by redistributing local flyers and by requesting references from current participants. These additional steps for recruiting were not necessary.

To protect the confidentiality of participants and maintain the security of the data collected, I will store audio recordings and transcripts in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office (Fade & Swift, 2011). My password-protected computer will house any digital materials. Only I and the research committee will have access to the raw data. I will securely store the data for a period of 5 years, as required by Walden University. After this period has elapsed, I will destroy the data by commercially shredding all physical materials and deleting all digital materials from my personal computer.

I did not conduct the research within my place of employment. I have no anticipated professional or personal relationship with any prospective participant. As such, no conflicts of interest or power differentials were expected to influence the data collection and analysis.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the messages African American fathers transmit to their daughters about skin tone, while comparing these messages to those transmitted to the fathers from their childhood. The participants in this study consisted of 12 African American fathers in the Washington D.C. area who have daughters and are willing to discuss their experiences with colorism. Data collection involved individual interviews to elicit accounts of the participants' lived experiences. Thematic analysis of interview transcripts allowed for the discovery of commonalities, patterns, and themes pertaining to the participants' experiences with colorism. Through this process, I intended to obtain an in-depth description of the messages African American fathers received regarding colorism and the messages they transmit to their daughters. The following chapter will examine the raw data and results from this study. It will identify the setting, participant demographics, how the data was collected and analyzed, and the themes that emerged from the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the messages African American fathers transmit to their daughters about skin tone, while comparing these messages to those transmitted to their fathers' fathers during their childhood. To explore this concept, I conducted individual interviews with African American fathers. There was one central question used to initiate the conversation for this study: What are African American fathers' perceptions and lived experiences regarding the messages they pass on to their daughters regarding colorism? Chapter 4 include a discussion of the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results as well as conclude with a summary of the chapter. Together, in these sections I will detail the entirety of the results of this study.

Setting

The interviews for this study were conducted in Washington D.C. in a local library. Within the library, I reserved a private room in advance for conducting the interviews. The participants' information was kept confidential and the research room was in a setting that reduced interruption or disturbances. I chose this location due to its exclusivity and its proximity to both me and the participants.

Demographics

I recruited 12 participants to participate in this study. According to Guest et al. (2006), 12 participants are necessary to achieve saturation in a qualitative study. This

number of participants exceeded the recommendations of Morse (1994), who asserted that sample sizes exceeding six participants were sufficient for meeting saturation. As a result, I was able to conclude that the use of 12 participants was sufficient for meeting saturation. The research participants of this study included 12 African American fathers from Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia (see Table 1).

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant Number	Age
Participant 1 (African descent Male)	45
Participant 2	53
Participant 3	55
Participant 4 (African descent Male)	47
Participant 5	39
Participant 6	49
Participant 7	61
Participant 8	61
Participant 9	66
Participant 10	59
Participant 11	53
Participant 12	41

The interviews took place in Washington D.C., at a local library for an average of 45 minutes per interview. I projected the interviews to last approximately 90 minutes; however, that amount of time was not totally used by most participants. The data were recorded on a tape recorder that was purchased at the local Walmart. No technical difficulties were experienced during the interviewing phase of the study. I collected the data in one-time interviews on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings at 7:00pm over the course of 4 weeks. In all, there were a total of three participants interviewed each week.

Data Collection

To recruit participants, I distributed flyers in the local Black community at grocery stores, religious institutions, and local libraries. On the flyer, I requested interested individuals to contact me for further information. Once prospective participants contacted me, they were asked questions from the screening questionnaire to confirm or deny their eligibility to participate in this study according to the inclusion criteria for the study. A copy of the screening questionnaire appears in Appendix A. The participants were given an informed consent form to sign and complete a week prior to the study. The participants were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the study, and I explained that participation in the study was voluntary.

Once the 12 interviews were completed, I began to transfer the interview data via transcribing the audio recordings into a Word document. I checked and double-checked each Word transcript against the audio recording after completing each transcript to

ensure accuracy. Once I completed transcription as outlined in Chapter 3, I proceeded

with member checking via transcript review as suggested by Mero-Jaffe (2011). To

complete member checking, I e-mailed each participant a copy of their individual

interview transcript to confirm that the transcripts accurately reflected their perception of

the proceedings of the interview. Once the participants verified the accuracy of the

transcripts, data analysis commenced.

Data Analysis

I used the six-step thematic analysis specified by Braun and Clarke (2006). In the

first step of this process, I transcribed and read the data to obtain an understanding of the

content. Once the interview transcriptions were completed and verified by each

respective participant, I began the qualitative analysis of the interview data. The second

step of the analysis entailed the coding of the data. During the coding process, I reviewed

the data and denoted and labeled any and all significant phrases or statements made by

participants as well as organized the data based on the discovered codes. In the third step

of the analysis, I arranged the codes into tentative themes and combed through the rest of

the dataset to identify support for each identified theme as outlined by Braun and Clarke.

In the fourth step of the process, I assessed the tentative themes by comparing them to the

coded data as well as to the dataset in its entirety to discover any thematic structure. The

fifth step involved the refining of each theme to produce named and demarcated themes

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the final step of the process, I produced the narrative

description of the findings in this chapter. In the presentation of the results, I used

quotations from the collected data to substantiate the identified themes and subthemes that arose under the central research question.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

In this study, I established credibility through member-checking. Each participant was asked to review his interview transcript to ensure that the data contained in it was an accurate depiction of his perspective and point of view on the study topic. Participants did not request to make any changes to their testimonies once they reviewed their transcript. I also contributed to the credibility of this study through reflexivity and bracketing. As a result, I acknowledged my biases and then put them aside to examine the data objectively. The use of bracketing allowed me to limit the effects of researcher bias in this study.

Transferability

I was able to establish transferability through a thick and rich description of the research process. I outlined the research setting, data collection procedures, data analysis protocol, and the final results of the research study. Providing such description enabled me to convey any and all relevant information regarding the research process should any future researchers wish to draw their own conclusions from this research data.

Dependability

To establish dependability of the study, I followed rigorous and systematic procedures when conducting the research. I also created an audit trail by providing in-

depth description of the methodological procedures carried out as well as the findings

obtained in the study. Through the audit trail, a future researcher will be able to follow

and replicate the methodological procedures used in the study. Lietz and Zayas (2010)

held that member checking, as described previously, is also a strategy by which

dependability is enriched.

Confirmability

To ensure the confirmability of the study, I used epoché or bracketing. Through

bracketing, I put aside personal beliefs and judgments to limit the influence of researcher

bias, as suggested by Tufford and Newman (2012). Another strategy that I used to

improve confirmability was through the development of an audit trail. The audit trail

contains a detailed description of the methodological steps followed during the course of

the study. The audit trail contributes to the transparency of the study, thereby enabling

another researcher to appraise the methodological and analytic decisions I made in this

study.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

There were eight main themes that emerged during the data analysis of this study:

teachings to daughter, skin tone messages, influence, hard work, attractiveness, love,

treatment, and trophies. Among these eight themes, five contained subthemes. Each of

these themes were integral to accurately portraying the participants' perspectives

regarding the research phenomenon. In the following subsections, I will outline the

themes.

Teachings to Daughter

All participants talked about the lessons and teachings they passed on to their

daughters regarding skin tone. During each interview, participants talked about

implanting a sense of self-confidence regarding skin tone to their daughters, so they

would "never feel the way I felt regarding skin tone" (Participant 2). One participant felt

it was important to teach his daughter "to love herself and believe in herself no matter

what other people said" because of what he "overheard from my sisters [who] are dark-

skinned" (Participant 5). The experience of watching and hearing family members close

to him made him take an active part in his daughter's self-confidence and self-esteem

because he "didn't want my daughter to experience what my sisters experienced growing

up" (Participant 5).

Participant 10 talked about how he had three daughters, and one who was darker

skinned than the other two. He explained how he made sure "my darker child felt equal to

her sisters" in all ways because he recognized "what society thinks of darker girls" and

did not want his daughter to feel as if she was less than her sisters. He acknowledged

during his interview how his "other two daughters thought I favored the dark-skin

daughter more" because of the additional attention he gave his darker-skinned daughter,

but he wanted to make sure "she remained solid in her self-esteem" because she faced

challenges the other two girls would not have to. For every participant, it was important

to instill this confidence because they wanted their daughters to have a strong sense of

self, meaning understanding their own character and feeling comfortable in their own skin, rather than feel diminished based on their skin tone.

Several participants recognized what society thought of darker skin tones and made sure they told their daughters how valuable they were. Participant 1 stated he "taught my daughter to love and accept herself for who she was" as a person and to not "allow society's perceptions about darker skin tones impact her negatively" as she grew up. One participant took the opportunity to teach his daughter about skin tone to also discuss "her history and cultural heritage" as an African American woman (Participant 4). He recognized "being an African American woman will most likely have an impact on self-concept and self-esteem" and shared how he would "tell my daughter she is very attractive in addition to her intelligence regardless of her skin tone" (Participant 4). He made sure his daughter had role models to look up to who also discussed these issues, actresses "like Lupita Nyongo, Keke Palmer, and Gabrielle Union" (Participant 4). He explained he wanted his daughter to look up to these women because they "have all spoken about desiring lighter skin growing up because they thought having darker skin made them unattractive," something his daughter laughs about because she considers them as beautiful women in Hollywood regardless of their skin tone (Participant 4).

Two participants talked about how having daughters served as a wake-up call for them regarding their own experience treating darker-skinned women in their lives. Participant 6 shared how he educated his daughter about men "because I know how I treated girls based on their skin tone" and he did not "want my daughter to experience

that type of treatment." For one participant, he admitted how he would "pick on dark-skin women" and "try to date light-skin women" when he was younger (Participant 8). Now he has a daughter who he is "over protective of her growing up" because "I didn't want her to be manipulated by men or treated differently because of her skin color" (Participant 8).

Skin Tone Messages

All participants discussed skin tone messages during their interviews. Some learned about skin tone growing up, either in or outside of the home, while others did not as it was a nonissue in their home or community. As such, from this study the theme skin tone messages had two subthemes: *home and school*.

Home. When speaking about learning about skin tone, Participant 3 said, "I learned about skin tone from my mother and through different interactions among family members with different complexions." Similarly, Participant 12 noted, "Growing up with seven sisters, I overhear their struggles with dark-skin." Participant 4 also recalled hearing messages about skin tone at home, only in a more subtle manner, "If people did discuss [skin tone], it was in an informal manner or behind closed doors."

Alternatively, Participants 1 and 7 did not feel that they had received skin tone messages while growing up. Participant 1 said, "I did not learn anything about skin tone; it was not an issue in my house growing up. The color of a persons' [*sic*] skin was not even considered in my household or community." And Participant 7 noted, "I didn't hear much, my mom was White and my dad was Black so I didn't hear much about skin tone."

School. Four participants noted having received messages about skin tone in school. For example, Participant 2 stated, "I received messages about skin tone from outside of my home. Mostly peers at school." Participant 7 responded to receiving skin tone messages in a similar manner, "I did learn more ideas about the impact of skin tone in school." "I learned about skin color through school" added Participant 11. Participant 10 also noted learning about skin tone through his peers growing up, "All my male friends preferred light skin women over dark women."

Influence

The participants of this study felt that the impact of skin tone messages varied. Participants noted three contributing factors of influence regarding skin tone messages and their impact. The participants received these messages from three main sources: parents, peers, and dating.

Parents. Regarding the influence of messages received from parents, participants mentioned varying effects. For example, "The messages I received [at home] influenced my behavior and I began repeating what I heard" was noted by Participant 3. Similarly, Participant 6 added, "Parents who send messages to their kids about skin tone can have a huge influence whether it be negative or positive. Parents have a direct influence on their kids regardless of whether they know it or not." The response of Participant 10 echoed the same sentiment as Participant 6: "Parents have a huge influence on a child's self-esteem so when the messages are negative then it can make them feel some type of way. Parents, man, really impact their kids, they really do" (Participant 10). Alternatively,

Participant 5 noted a slightly different angle on the perception of parental influence, "Parents can really be instrumental in providing a buffer against other people's views."

Peers. A few of the participants felt that most of the influence that they received regarding skin tone messages came from their peers in school. For example, "… most people learn from peers at school," stated Participant 2. Both Participants 7 and 12 felt that the influence of peers was stronger than that of their parents growing up. Participant 7 said, "It don't matter what message a parent gives a child, during school age years peers have a greater influence, point blank period." In addition, Participant 12 stated, "I think school and kids have more of an impact, not parents."

Dating. The majority of the participants felt that the greatest influence of skin tone messages impacted dating. For example, Participant 6 said, "if I wanted a real wife I better date light-skin. I also learned that light-skin woman would give me better-looking children." The dialogue among the participants continued in this fashion: "It never crossed my mind to date a dark-skin girl" Participant 10, "I automatically knew it wasn't cool to date a dark-skin girl" Participant 11, "[We] all try to date light-skin women" Participant 8, and "I dated only light-skinned women [in childhood]" Participant 3.

Alternatively, some participants spoke about this influence and how it may directly impact women when dating, "As an adult [African American women] may have difficulty in dating" was noted by Participant 1. "The only areas that may be impacted by skin tone for African American women is dating" Participant 3. Participant 5 also said, "I believe [skin color] impacts a woman's self-esteem and her confidence in dating."

Similarly, Participant 8 noted, "The effects of parental messages may have an influence on the woman being able to date because men are superficial, which doesn't play well in a dark-skin woman's favor." "It impacts their ability to date good men," Participant 10 noted. He went on to say, "Most men prefer lighter women based on the stereotypes that light-skin is better and more attractive" (Participant 10).

Hard Work

All of the participants discussed hard work in one form or another. The participants felt that darker-skinned individuals had to work harder to prove themselves. Some spoke in general about this hard work, stating

> I felt like I had to do twice as much as light-skinned black people, I was 'the nappy head, not wannabe.' I got to work harder than anyone else and I'm a black male, I know it must be hard for black females, those that are dark in particular (Participant 2).

Participant 7 noted that this hard work was necessary as a result of societal perceptions, "I instilled in my daughter to work extra hard because I knew how the world perceived/would perceive her based on her skin color." However, when discussing hard work, many of the participants spoke specifically about education or employment.

Education. Participants felt that darker-skinned women often had to work harder to prove themselves compared to lighter-skinned women. For example, Participant 12 said, "[My sisters] always worked hard to prove they were as smart as the smartest person in their class." In addition, Participant 5 stated, "I listen to my wife talk about the

struggles she had being dark skin and not being accepted and needing to work harder than her peers who were lighter." And Participant 7 noted that women had to work harder regarding both education and employment: "It makes them work twice as hard as lighter people. They work harder to obtain men, employment and education."

Employment. Two participants, 1 and 9, discussed the specific struggles that darker-skinned women faced regarding employment. "… my dark skin mom would talk about how hard it is for her to find a job because she has to work twice as hard as white people or even her own race- light-skin women" (Participant 9). He concluded, "It impacts employment for sure because I saw the struggles my mom went through to obtain a job despite all her qualifications" (Participant 9). Similarly, Participant 1 added, "… becoming an American citizen shedded[*sic*] more light on how the skin tone differences really affect a person's existence even relating to work."

Attractiveness

Attractiveness was a theme that occurred across many of the interview questions as well as all of the participant responses. Some of the participants spoke about attractiveness in terms of darker skin tone, while others spoke to it regarding lighter skin tone. As such, this theme has the following two subthemes: darker is less attractive and lighter is more attractive.

Darker is less attractive. Many of the participants spoke to their views on darker skin tones being less attractive. For example, Participant 2 said, "I even began adopting some of the thoughts and behaviors of people who thought dark skin was ugly."

Participant 3 added to this notion stating that "… darker skin people were considered unattractive and ugly." Participant 7 mentioned their view on how they perceived the ways in which others perceived the attractiveness of darker-skinned girls, "I noticed that the dark skin girls were usually the ones picked on and their appearance wasn't as good per se as the light skin girls" (Participant 7). Participant 4 spoke to perceptions of darker-skinned females through a slightly different lens, "Darker skinned women still find their way in society although light-skin is preferable."

Lighter is more attractive. Many of the participants who spoke about skin tone-related attractiveness focused on how girls with lighter skin were perceived as opposed to darker skinned girls. For example, "The perception growing up was if you were light-skinned you were perceived as better." was noted by Participant 3 and "The lighter girls complained of being targeted at school and people not liking them because they look better than 'the darkies' . . ." Participant 12. Participant 3 added the following regarding the results of these perceptions of attractiveness based on skin tone: "I formed an attractiveness and preference for lighter skin women." "Even today some people who are lighter skin consider themselves superior to and more attractive than darker skinned American" was noted by Participant 4.

Love

The participants spoke at length about the concept of love and how they tried to instill it in their daughters. Some of the participants approached this topic as it involves

parental love, while others did so through the concept of self-love. As such, the theme of love contained two subthemes, parental love and self love.

Parental love. The participants who discussed parental love discussed the ways in which they sent messages of their love to their daughters regardless of their skin tone. For example, Participant 1 said, "In my opinion, I think my messages impacted my daughter positively especially as she grew into an adult." Participant 7 noted, "I always wanted my daughter to feel loved and special regardless of what her skin complexion was". Participant 12 added how he expressed his love for his daughter, "I told my daughter that she was smart, accepted, and loved despite what society may think."

Self-love. The participants who did not discuss how they instilled parental love with their daughters spoke to how they tried to teach them self love – some discussed both forms (those participants appear under each subtheme). For example, Participant 5 noted, "I've always taught my daughter to love herself and believe in herself no matter what other people said." According to Participant 7, "[I] knew I would try my hardest to make her love herself." Participant 8 mentioned why they felt it important for their daughter to have a sense of self-love, "I wanted her to know her worth" (Participant 8). In addition, "I just wanted to ensure [my darker-skinned daughter] remained solid in her self-esteem" was noted by Participant 10. Participant 11 approached self-love through instilling a sense of self-esteem in his daughters, "I had all dark-skin girls and I made sure they were secure in their self-esteem" Participant 11. Participant 4 mentioned the result of teaching his daughter self-love, "My daughter is very comfortable in her skin

and I am very proud of it."

Treatment

Many of the participants discussed how colorism influenced the treatment of women with darker skin tones when they were growing up. For example, Participant 2 noted, "I didn't think anything of my dark-skin sister; however, I saw that outside of the home this was an issue." Participant 5 also spoke to this issue and said, "Growing up, my sisters were dark and I overheard things they went through based on their skin color." "[My mom] constantly talked [about] the fights she was in in high school due to being picked on. Furthermore, she explained not really being liked by the pretty girls due to her short hair and darker skin" was noted by Participant 9. In general, Participants 11 and 12 mentioned how kids would treat these girls when they were growing up, "Kids would pick on dark-skin girls calling them 'pavement' or 'darky'… [My daughters] complained about how they would get made fun of at school and it always made me furious" (Participant 11) and "Growing with seven sisters, I overheard their struggles with having dark skin. They complained about being picked on at school mainly by boys." (Participant 12).

Trophies

The final theme that participants discussed was regarding how lighter-skinned girls were viewed as trophies. Specifically, Participant 6 noted, "It was more of a trophy to obtain a light-skin girl because they were seen as 'untouchable' especially if you were a dark-skin male." To this, Participant 8 added, "…for superficial purposes and the

trophy wife appearance, then a light-skin woman is best." In addition, Participant 10 said, "I grew up wanting a light-skin girlfriend because I am a dark-skin man and saw lighter skin women as trophies."

Conclusions

Overall, there were several themes that emerged from the interviews with all 12 research participants regarding how skin tone messages are received by African American dads and then translated to their daughters. Participants talked directly about how they transmitted messages to their daughters while they were growing up by instilling traits like self-confidence and self-esteem in who they were as individuals. While participants recognized how society viewed skin tones, they wanted their daughters to see their worth as intelligent and beautiful women regardless of their skin tone. They passed along lessons and teachings regarding how their daughters conceptualized and viewed themselves as individuals and as African American women. They wanted their daughters to recognize their beauty was more than their skin tone; it was based on their character, their intellect, and their perception of themselves. They understood having strong and beautiful daughters meant teaching them to be confident in themselves and standing up for themselves when others tried to belittle or diminish their value.

Skin tone messages were communicated at home through shared family experiences, school, peers, and dating. Furthermore, skin tone messages affected how women were treated as well as how they were perceived in terms of education and

vocational abilities. Darker women, according to the participants, had to work harder to obtain employment and in school to prove their skill set and abilities, while lighter-skinned women were not given such pressured demands. Furthermore, characteristics and expectations were placed on women solely due to their tone of skin. For example, lighter women were seen as trophies, something to obtain, whereas darker skinned girls were viewed as mean, ugly, or non desirable. Regarding dating, a few men in the study preferred to date lighter women due to their "beauty" and because light-skinned women were the most desired type of woman by their peers. However, some men viewed darker women in a more desirable than light-skinned women based on the experiences of their darker siblings and mothers. Also, the theme of love emerged from the father's testimonials. Most fathers desired to show their daughters that they were loved regardless of the tone of their skin. Additionally, fathers noted how women were treated solely based on the tone of their skin. Some participants noted how women were teased, not chosen as desirable by their peers, and even bullied due their complexion.

Summary

This chapter consisted of the research questions and the testimonials from fathers regarding messages they received as children regarding colorism and the messages they transmitted to their daughters about skin tone. The results of this qualitative study yielded that fathers experienced colorism in many ways, from experiences and testimonials of women in their families to school peers. Furthermore, fathers noted growing up how characteristics and attributes were placed on women based on their skin tone. For example, light-skinned women were seen as more desirable than dark-skinned women when it came to beauty and marriage. Additionally, characteristically, fathers received messages by peers that dark-skinned girls are socially louder, but more loyal in relationship than light-skinned women. Despite receiving negative messages about dark-skinned women, fathers of dark-skinned daughters in this study instilled messages of hope, increased self-esteem, and self acceptance. The following Chapter 5 will discuss, analyze and synthesize the data from this study in detail. It will also draw conclusions from the study, highlight recommendations and discuss the limitations of the study and implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the message that fathers transmit to their daughters regarding the hue of their skin. Additionally, I explored how these messages fathers transmitted compared to the messages transmitted from their own fathers in their childhood. Colorism has significant adverse effects on children within their homes as has been demonstrated by researchers who have shown that the family is the primary source of negative skin tone perceptions (Carrasco & Rohner, 2013; Landor, 2012; Landor et al., 2013). The limited data about the role of fathers suggested that they might act as protective figures in buffering maternal negative skin-tone messages and instilling pride for a person's dark-skin tone (Wilder & Cain, 2011). However, no researchers had only examined the fathers' role in transmitting skin tone messages to their daughters. Therefore, I designed this study to address this gap in the literature. In this final chapter, I will highlight the research findings, the summary of the results, the limitations, the implications of the study results, and my recommendations for future research studies.

The findings indicated that although participants received messages in childhood aligned with stereotypical thoughts regarding skin tone, they worked to combat these stereotypes as parents. Fathers encouraged their daughters to see themselves as beautiful and to find personal worth beyond their looks. In the following section, I will discuss each of the themes in relation to the existing literature.

Interpretation of Findings

The research questions in this study were: What messages did African American fathers learn about skin tone within their home as children? What do African American fathers perceive as the effect of parental skin tone messages? What skin tone related messages do African American fathers transmit to their children, specifically daughters? As indicated in Chapter 4, thematic analysis led to eight major themes. The interpretation of the findings will be organized by theme.

Theme 1: Teachings to Daughters

The first theme noted in this study was teachings to daughters. According to past literature, colorism has a direct effect on a person and its impact varies by gender, with women being the most impacted by the phenomenon (Hill, 2002). Furthermore, research has expanded the issue of colorism within families to emphasize that family members teach and learn color consciousness during various phases in life (Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011). These teachings relate directly to past literature on colorism and can have positive and negative impacts on a child. Relationships with fathers that are warm and healthy teach and promote academic engagement and social integration (Allgood et al., 2012). The findings from this study indicated a significant contribution to the previously limited research that examined the paternal messages that fathers transmit about skin tone to their children (Coard et al., 2001; Hill, 2002).

Based on what the participants said, the fathers transmitted words of empowerment and self-worth. Fathers instilled in their daughters that they needed to

work hard, accept themselves for who they are, and assert themselves when necessary. Many of the fathers told their daughters they were beautiful, could accomplish their dreams, and that their beauty is beyond their skin tone. The results of this study supports current research that shows that, in some cases, parents serve as a buffer against outside racism by promoting self-esteem and cultural awareness (see Suizzo et al., 2008). In contrast to society's norm, the participants never compared their dark-skinned daughters to light-skinned women. In this study, I found that fathers transmitted messages of empowerment, such as the need to have a good work ethic, aspirations toward being the best, and working beyond society's stereotypes, to their daughters.

In this study, the data showed the positive impact that fathers' teachings to daughters have on a child. For example, fathers from this study discussed passing on lessons about loving oneself, self-confidence, and self-esteem. One participant even stated how out of his three daughters, one was dark-skinned, and he intentionally ensured that his daughter felt equal to her lighter-skinned siblings. Another participant recalled that he taught his daughter to "love and accept herself for who she was as a person and to not allow society's perceptions about darker skin tones impact her negatively as she grew up." This finding was consistent with previous research that indicated a healthy paternal relationship related to self-pride, positive self-esteem, global worth, and the ability to form healthy relationships both socially and intimately (Shannon et al., 2013). Furthermore, Webster et al. (2013) stated that father-daughter relationships have major

implications for women's overall development and self-worth, which was in line with the findings of the present study.

Theme 2: Skin-Tone Messages

The second theme, skin-tone messages, also emerged from the testimonials in the study. Maddox and Gray (2002) noted that individuals developed preconceived notions about others based on the pigment of their skin tone. Past researchers indicated that the family relationship is the first dynamic that fosters colorism and its ideologies (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; M. Hunter, , 2007; M. L. Hunter 2002; Suizzo et al., 2008). Moreover, parents played a direct role in the development of skin-tone messages as well as creating color consciousness within the home, whether verbally or behaviorally (Maddox & Gray, 2002).

During the data collection for this study, all fathers admitted to passing on skin-tone messages and experiencing messages about colorism within the home. A participant in the study noted, "Parents have a huge influence on a child's self-esteem so when the messages are negative then it can make them feel some type of way." Another one noted, "Parents, man, really impact their kids, they really do!" Another participant shared how growing up he overheard skin-tone struggles amongst his seven sisters who were dark-skinned, and another admitted hearing about skin tone from his mothers and other family interactions. Lastly, one participant shared, "In my opinion, I think my messages impacted my daughter positively especially as she grew into an adult." Therefore, the

findings for this theme indicated the presence of skin-tone messages integrated within familial relationships.

Theme 3: Influence

A third theme that emerged from the study was the idea of influence. Participants in the study shared how skin-tone messages impacted women and themselves. From the participants' testimonials, three major areas influenced the perpetuation of skin-tone messages; these three subcategories were parents, peers and dating.

Similar to the findings of this study, previous researchers highlighted how parents are the first influencers on how people learn to operate in the world (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; Hunter, 2002, 2007; Suizzo et al., 2008). Landor et al. (2013) found that the phenomenon of colorism was perpetuated primarily within the family home environment. Fathers in the present study indicated that they learned about skin tone at home from their mothers' or sisters' feedback and experiences; most of these experiences were negative. One participant stated how his home environment influenced his behavior and decisions regarding women, saying, "The messages I received at home influenced my behavior and I began repeating what I heard." Another participant shared that "parents who send messages to their kids about skin tone can have a huge influence whether it be negative or positive!" Therefore, the testimonials from participants in this study highlighted how their home experience helped shape how they treated African American women solely based on skin tone, which correlates with past and current research findings on colorism.

In addition to the family role in transmitting skin-tone messages, within this study, fathers noted that peer influence is just as significant or even more influential in perpetuating skin-tone messages. A few participants noted how influences from peers were stronger than parents' influences. For example, one participant stated, "It don't matter what message a parent gives a child during school age years, peers have a greater influence, point blank period!" Another participant noted, "I learned about skin color through school and most people learn from peers at school." Past literature also supports the statements made by the fathers in this study. For example, Landor et al. (2013) stated that along with the family, media and school were the most influential catalysts in fostering colorism ideologies. Lastly, Harvey et al. (2005) conducted a study that showed predominately Black schools place more emphasis on the importance of skin tone. Therefore, the fathers' statements about peer influence on colorism correlates to past literature that indicated peers as one of the largest influences on projecting ideas about skin tone.

Studies have shown that skin tone affects a woman's life in many areas, including dating. Hunter (2002) found that light-skin women had an advantage in spousal status in comparison to dark-skinned women. In the current study, fathers highlighted how skin-tone messages dictated whom they needed to date and attract. For example, "If I wanted a real wife I better date light-skin. I also learned that light-skin woman would give me better-looking children." Also, some fathers stated, "It never crossed my mind to date a dark-skin girl," and "I automatically knew it wasn't cool to date a dark-skin girl." With

society placing stereotypes on skin tone, fathers in the study admitted falling into the stereotypical mindset when dating. Although some fathers reported marrying a dark-skinned woman, most fathers noted that dating light-skinned was socially accepted amongst their peers. Overall, past and current literature on colorism has shown that there is a preference within the African American community on dating a woman who is light skin versus dating a dark-skinned woman.

Demo and Hughes (1990) stated that once attitudes and perceptions are formed, colorism is then passed down from one generation to the next. For the fathers in this study, perceptions were received at early ages, in the home from their mothers or siblings, and in school, from peers or in dating situations. The messages the fathers received in these early years of childhood influenced their thought patterns and behavior towards dark-skinned women.

Theme 4: Hard Work

Another theme that emerged from the study was the concept of hard work. In this study, fathers reported that darker-skinned individuals had to work "twice as hard as lighter-skinned individuals." Additionally, one father highlighted his struggle with equal treatment as a dark-skinned male and noted that it must be even harder for dark-skinned females. Furthermore, fathers discussed hard work in the education or employment setting. The findings regarding the additional work dark-skinned individuals had to put in were consistent with past literature in work and higher learning environments. Past research on colorism by Wilder and Cain (2011) revealed a dark-skinned participant was

told to work harder than her lighter siblings in order to denounce the stereotypes society has on dark-skinned women. One key message the participants had received and experienced was that darker-skinned individuals had to work harder to achieve the same effects as their lighter-skinned counterparts.

Theme 5: Attractiveness

The fifth theme, attractiveness, was highly discussed in the responses I collected from fathers in this study. A study conducted by Hill (2002) showed that for both men and women, skin color was the second strongest predictor of attractiveness. However, in Hall's (1992) study, light-skinned African Americans reported a bias towards being attracted to light-skinned African Americans, whereas dark-skinned participants reported favorably for desiring dark-skinned people. Hall's findings indicated the notion that there was intergroup bias towards attractiveness and desirability within the African American race.

Converse to this seminal research, fathers from the current study overall learned that darker was less attractive and lighter was more desirable. They were told that a light-skinned woman would make a better wife, yet dark-skinned women would most likely be more loyal. One participant in the study, influenced by peers, stated, "I even began adopting some of the thoughts and behaviors of people who thought dark-skin was ugly!" Another participant stated, "Darker skin people were considered unattractive and ugly!" Lastly, another participant shared that "The perception growing up was if you were light-skinned you were perceived as better." Fathers in the study stated how skin tone

influenced what type of woman their families and friends directly and indirectly suggested they should date.

Literature supports the findings from this study. Similar to the present study, fathers in Maddox and Gray's (2002) study indicated they learned about skin tone and its relationship to attractiveness in school. The researchers reported that participants' peers would indicate that lighter girls were prettier, smarter, and seen as desirable more than darker girls. Additionally, they learned in childhood about the difference in status about dating someone with dark-skin versus someone who is light-skinned (Maddox & Gray, 2002). These findings, together with those of the present study, indicate a certain level of status that comes from perceiving lighter-skinned women as more attractive and attracting them as mates, which contradicts some of the more positive messages the fathers tried to transmit to their daughters.

Theme 6: Love and Self-Acceptance

The notion of love and self-acceptance was another theme that emerged from the study that also relate to past literature on colorism. Although society, peers, and even the fathers at times viewed darker skin tone as negative growing up, when passing on messages to their daughters, the fathers indicated that they presented a different message. Past literature on colorism showed that fathers provided a buffer against colorism and transmit messages that instill love, resilience and self-acceptance (Wilder & Cain, 2011), although this literature was significantly limited compared to what was present with respect to the role of mothers.

From the current study, participants shared perspectives on self-worth and self-love. One particular participant shared "I knew I would try my hardest to make her love herself." Another participant noted, "I've always taught my daughter to love herself and believe in herself no matter what other people said." Overall, fathers identified the love they transmitted to their daughters about their darker skin. In particular, two participants stated, "I always wanted my daughter to feel loved and special regardless of what her skin complexion was" and "I told my daughter that she was smart, accepted, and loved despite what society may think" The fathers felt it was important for their daughter to have a sense of self-love, know their worth, and be comfortable in their own skin. Similarly, Johnson (2013) discovered that father-daughter connections shaped a woman's behaviors and beliefs about her gender philosophies regarding her skin tone. In Johnson's study examining father-daughter relationships, women with a close relationship with their father reported a higher level of self-esteem, and this played a significant role in their success. Consistent with Johnson's findings, this study showed that fathers indicated that they play a protective role by their direct messages and interactions with their daughters when translating racialized ideologies.

Theme 7: Treatment

Treatment was another theme of the study. The concept of treatment referred to how people conducted their behaviors towards dark-skinned women based solely on their pre-conceived notions about their skin tone. Past research suggests that people place characteristic assumptions about other people based on the tone of their skin. Kowal et al.

(2002) determined that parents consciously or unconsciously show preferential treatment towards children based on the color of their skin. Similarly, a study conducted by Landor et al. (2013) showed that darker skin males received more messages of mistrust towards others more than light-skinned men. Furthermore, in the same study, light-skinned women reported a higher quality of parenting than dark-skinned women did in their household. Fathers from this study shared about the treatment their family members and siblings received based on their skin tone. One participant stated, "Growing up my sisters were dark and I overheard things they went through based on their skin color." Another participant shared that, "My mom constantly talked about the fights she had in high school due to being picked on; she explained not really being liked by the pretty girls due to her short hair and darker skin." Furthermore, another participant recalled kids picking on his sibling and calling her "darky" and "pavement."

Past literature suggests that a parent's own racial experience relates to the messages they transmit to their children (Barr & Neville 2008). Comments from fathers in this study highlighted how their mothers' own experience of colorism influenced how they treated women. Particularly, one participant indicated that his mother was picked on for having dark skin, and therefore, he treated women of a darker skin tone with more empathy. However, another participant indicated that due to his mother's and sister's experience, he then desired a light-skinned woman based on the belief that light-skin women were more desirable than darker women.

Notably in this study, fathers admitted at times treating their dark-skinned daughters differently than their light-skinned siblings. One participant noted that his lighter skinned daughters believed he favored his darker daughter; however, he felt he was trying to teach his daughter to "remain solid in her self-esteem" due to the challenges she may face from being from a darker skin hue. Landor et al., (2013) believed that parental preferential treatment influences the overall functioning of a child, such as the child internalizing problems and diminished self-worth or self-esteem. Although fathers in the study felt they were doing something positive for their daughters, literature shows that individuals who experienced preferential treatment reported feelings of resentment towards their parents, and then displayed behavior problems later in life (Landor et al.).

Theme 8: Trophies

The last theme that emerged from the study was the concept of women as trophies. The concept as light-skinned women as trophies and desirable and dark-skinned women as less has been highlighted throughout past and current research on colorism. Literature supported the findings from this study, where beauty ideas and "trophy wives" are fostered through colorism ideologies and skin tone hierarchies (Maddox & Gray, 2002). Participants in this study highlighted how women were seen as trophies based solely on their skin tone. Several participants shared that dating a light-skinned person was like obtaining a trophy because they were seen as "untouchable" or not easily obtainable, especially if you were a dark-skinned male. Lastly, one participant shared that dating a light-skinned woman was encouraged because of superficial reasons.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this current study. First, this study was limited by the small sample size and the narrowness of the location sample. Participants only included males from a sample size of 12 and were all from a small radius limited to urban areas of Washington D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Due to the limited sample size and restricted geographical area, the reliability of the results is weakened. Due to the sample size and the small location radius, this study cannot be generalized to reflect all African American fathers. Also, these data were collected in the evening time over the course of four weeks; perhaps if multiple sessions were conducted with fathers across a longer amount of time, such as over the course of a few years, or before and after having children, results might have yielded different viewpoints. In efforts to counteract the limitations, I ensured that there was variety in the location and age of the participants. I also attempted to get an equal number of participants from each of the three demographic areas of the study.

Another limitation of this study is that the qualitative data were solely based on self-reports. Additionally, social desirability may have influenced participants' feedback in order to appear more favorable to the researcher. For example, because I am dark-skinned, fathers may have skewed their answers to prevent possible offense to me, or produced favorable answers based on assumptions made about me. Furthermore, it would be difficult to ensure that fathers who participated in transferring negative skin-tone messages about women in childhood, would openly and accurately share that experience

due to my skin tone.

Recommendations for Future Research

Colorism among African-American families remains relevant and is being debated and researched today to understand its impact on the culture. Therefore, this study contained multiple implications that lends itself for research. Recommendations for future research are:

1. Conduct the research on a larger sample size. In research designs, the sample size is critical for methodology, specifically, the validity of research outcome. Small sample sizes weaken the internal and external validity of the study. Therefore, a larger sample size will help to increase the reliability and validity of the research findings. Also, a larger sample size can highlight any differences among the research participants. Additionally, a larger sample size decreases randomness, whereas a small sample size increases the chance of false evidence.

2. Broaden the demographic circle in which this study was conducted. For example, collect data from other areas as opposed to just urban city areas. Getting data from a widespread geographical location can also yield to understand how African American families transmit messages based on the region they live in. This may possibly lead to understanding to what degree various ideologies from different regions differ from one another within the African American culture.

3. Replicate the findings from the study using women and a standardized tool to assess how women are impacted by messages their fathers transmit about colorism. This study was limited to fathers' perceptions, but provides no insight into how the daughters actually report their impact. Collecting data from women regarding their fathers' role about colorism can help clarify the responsibility that fathers play in shaping one's views of their skin tone. To date, much data are centered around the maternal impact with little influence on data that fathers play in shaping colorism and the impact of their messages on their daughters.

4. Examine the conceptual theory of colorism within other cultures where skin tone bias exists. For example, studies show that in Indian cultures, the adoration for fair skin is widespread through the Indian society (Mishra, 2015). Fairer skin similar to lighter skin within African American culture has been linked to greater intelligence, socio-economic status, and greater opportunity (Mishra 2015). Most research on colorism within Indian society is centered on mothers and daughters and little literature exists on the fathers' role in perpetuating skin tone messages. For example, the methodology of this study could be duplicated by doing a phenomenological study about the Indian culture and examining how fathers in particular play a role in transmitting skin tone messages to their daughters.

Implications

The results of the study may also have significant implications for social change. The interviews with fathers showed that fathers figures do pass on messages to their children, when predominately previous studies have primarily focused on women's, particularly mothers', messages about skin tones. Past research indicated that fathers provide a protective influence against colorism (Wilder & Cain, 2011). This study was aligned with past research in that it demonstrated that fathers said that they pass on messages of self-love, acceptance, and resiliency to their daughters. These messages may alleviate some of the negative implications that skin tone bias has on dark-skin women such as low self-esteem, trouble dating, and difficulty achieving vocational goals (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Positive messages from fathers may potentially increase women's self-esteem, self-worth, self-efficacy, and socioeconomic status (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003).

Empirically, these data supports the important role that fathers play in shaping their children in multiple areas of life. Hunter (2002) implied that color hierarchies within the African American community have social and physiological influences upon those who are impacted. According to the results in this study, interpersonal and intimate relationships were affected by a woman's skin tone. For example, darker women got into more fights and were picked on and viewed as less desirable friends. This affects their ability to make and sustain friends, and causes them to be the subject of bullying. In all, according to the participants and previous literature, the color of a woman's skin

profoundly affects the woman's life from childhood to adulthood. (Hochschild *&* Weaver, 2007; Suizzo et al., 2008).

Conversely, given that healthy relationships with fathers support higher self-esteem, success rate in intimate relationships, and a host of other areas in a woman's life (Johnson, 2013), the testimonies from this research study shows that fathers instill hope, pride and self-acceptance among their daughters. These messages may have a profound impact on a woman's self-esteem. Therefore, fathers may act as a protective factor in addressing some of the discrimination and adverse effects of colorism in the African American community.

Furthermore, family counselors can use this study to help families understand how their messages and behaviors can affect the child's self-awareness and acceptance. Counselors can educate families on the significance of transmitting certain messages to children whether verbally or non-verbally and its possible impact. Multicultural counselors can utilize the study to help various cultures and others in society become aware of inter-racial issues that cause division among cultural groups and how to counteract stereotypical beliefs that still exist among ethnic groups. Therefore, this study can inform and influence significant social change for African American women and may enhance research on father-daughter relationships by educating society about the important role fathers play in communicating messages to their daughters. Studies have shown that fathers play a buffer against negative maternal messages transmitted to daughters; therefore, society can learn the necessity of fathers being present in their

daughters' lives to serve as buffers against negative messages and to serve as figures that

instill self-esteem, self-acceptance, and self-affirmation.

Conclusion

Colorism is a pervasive problem in the African American community, and finding

methods to begin to mitigate its influence on individuals is essential to addressing in-

group inequalities. Multicultural researchers report that skin tone socialization influences

self-esteem, self-worth, and self-efficacy (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Researchers

have focused on the family unit as transmitting skin tone messages, in particular,

messages conveyed by the mother (Bond & Cash, 1992; Greene, 1990; M. Hunter, 2007;

M. L. Hunter, 2002; Suizzo et al., 2008). A study conducted by Hall (1992, 1995)

indicated that African Americans created division within their own race about colorism.

Other previous literature results support the idea that the preference for light-skinned over

dark-skinned derived from slave owners. Jones (2000) stated that there was a hierarchy

among African Americans socially, familial, and work-related. Despite the negative

influences of colorism on African American women and a robust discussion of the role of

mothers in passing on messages regarding skin tone, there has been little research

regarding the role of fathers in transmitting skin tone messages (Carrasco & Rohner,

2013; Landor et al., 2013; Wilder & Cain, 2011).

The present study indicated that fathers heard a host of messages during their

childhoods regarding women's skin tone and the implication it has for beauty, personality

and the woman's intellectual level; however, when they became fathers, they attempted

to pass on positive messages to their darker-skinned daughters about their appearance and worth despite their skin tones. The findings of the present study indicated that fathers said that they transmit positive messages about colorism. They instill self-esteem, love, and acceptance of beauty towards their daughters despite the messages they otherwise received in the home or from peers regarding skin tone. From the research participants, several themes emerged about colorism and women: themes of love, wherein light-skinned women were viewed as more marriageable than dark-skinned women, whereas dark-skinned women were seen as friends instead of intimate partners. In addition, there was a theme of rejection—dark-skinned women seen as loud and unfriendly and undesirable, and a theme of attractiveness--light-skin women seen as more attractive than dark-skin women. Overall, fathers in the study said that they try to instill hope, resiliency, self-worth and acceptance of their daughters, regardless of their skin tone. Thus, fathers may play a vital protective role in potentially beginning to address the pervasive damage that skin tone messages can cause among African American women.

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Appendix A: Screening Criteria

1. Do you consider yourself an African American?

2. Are you between the ages of 40–55 years or older?

3. Do you have a daughter between the ages of 13–17 that you currently live with or spend more than 50% of your time with?

4. Would you be able to participate in a study examining skin-tone messages towards African American women, in particular towards your daughter?

Appendix B: IRB Approval Number

05-15-17-0156279

Appendix C: Research and Interview Questions

Research Question 1: What messages did African American fathers learn about skin tone within their home as children?

1. What did messages did you receive regarding skin tone when you were growing up?

2. How did these messages get communicated to you?

3. How did you make sense of these messages?

4. How did these messages affect you personally during your childhood? What messages did you receive regarding skin tone within your family?

5. How were these messages communicated within your family as a child?

6. What has been your experience with receiving skin tone messages within your family?

Research Question 2: What do African American fathers perceive as the effect of parental skin tone messages?

1. In your opinion, what effects did the skin tone messages you learned as a child have on you during your development?

   - Personally, how did skin tone messages affect various areas of your life in childhood?

2. In your opinion, how, if at all, do these messages affect you now?

- How did these messages affect you in adulthood in comparison to childhood?

Research Question 3: What skin tone related messages do African American fathers transmit to their children, specifically daughters?

1. Can you describe how, if at all, you deal with the subject of skin tone with your daughter?

2. What motivates you to take this approach?

3. What messages do you believe you are sending, or have sent, your daughter regarding skin tone?

4. From your perspective, how does your daughter interpret these messages?

5. In your opinion, what effect do these messages have on your daughter?

6. How important is skin tone regarding your approach to raising a daughter?

7. What role, if any did you play in addressing skin tone issues with your daughters?

8. What areas of life does skin tone messages effect daughters in your opinion?

9. In your perspective what is the effect of these messages on your daughter?

Appendix D: Completed Survey Validation Rubrics

Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - VREP©

Reviewer 1

By Marilyn K. Simon with input from Jacquelyn White

http://dissertationrecipes.com/

Criteria	Operational Definitions	Score 1=Not Acceptable (major modifications needed) 2=Below Expectations (some modifications needed) 3=Meets Expectations (no modifications needed but could be improved with minor changes) 4=Exceeds Expectations (no modifications needed)				Questions NOT meeting standard (List page and question number) and need to be revised. *Please use the comments and suggestions section to recommend revisions.*
		1	2	3	4	
Clarity	• The questions are direct and specific. • Only one question is asked at a time. • The participants can understand what is being asked. • There are no *double-barreled* questions (two				X	

					X	
	questions in one).					
Wordiness	• Questions are concise. • There are no unnecessary words				X	
Negative Wording	• Questions are asked using the affirmative (e.g., Instead of asking, "Which methods are not used?", the researcher asks, "Which methods *are* used?")				X	
Overlapping Responses	• No response covers more than one choice. • All possibilities are considered. • There are no ambiguous questions.				X	
Balance	• The questions are unbiased and do not lead the participants to a response. The questions are asked using a neutral tone.				X	
Use of Jargon	• The terms used are understandable by the target population. • There are no clichés or hyperbole in the wording of the questions.				X	
Appropriateness of Responses Listed	• The choices listed allow participants to respond				X	

	appropriately. • The responses apply to all situations or offer a way for those to respond with unique situations.					
Use of Technical Language	• The use of technical language is minimal and appropriate. • All acronyms are defined.				X	
Application to Praxis	• The questions asked relate to the daily practices or expertise of the potential participants.				X	
Relationship to Problem	• The questions are sufficient to resolve the problem in the study • The questions are sufficient to answer the research questions. • The questions are sufficient to obtain the purpose of the study.				X	
Measure of Content Validity	• The survey adequately measures this content validity				X	

* The operational definition should include the domains and constructs that are being investigated. You need to assign meaning to a variable by specifying the activities and operations necessary to measure, categorize, or manipulate the variable For example, to measure the construct *successful aging* the following domains could be included: degree of physical disability (low number); prevalence of physical performance (high number), and degree of cognitive impairment (low number). If you were to measure creativity, this construct is generally recognized to consist of flexibility, originality, elaboration, and other concepts. Prior studies can be helpful in establishing the domains of a construct.

Comments and Suggestions

The interview questions are valid to the proposed research study.

Types of Validity

VREP is designed to measure face validity, construct validity, and content validity. To establish criterion validity would require further research.

Face validity is concerned with how a measure or procedure appears. Does it seem like a reasonable way to gain the information the researchers are attempting to obtain? Does it seem well designed? Does it seem as though it will work reliably? Face validity is independent of established theories for support (Fink, 1995).

Construct validity seeks agreement between a theoretical concept and a specific measuring device or procedure. This requires operational definitions of all constructs being measured.

Content Validity is based on the extent to which a measurement reflects the specific

intended domain of content (Carmines & Zeller, 1991, p.20). Experts in the field can determine if an instrument satisfies this requirement. Content validity requires the researcher to define the domains they are attempting to study. Construct and content validity should be demonstrated from a variety of perspectives.

Criterion related validity, also referred to as instrumental validity, is used to demonstrate the accuracy of a measure or procedure by comparing it with another measure or procedure which has been demonstrated to be valid. If after an extensive search of the literature, such an instrument is *not* found, then the instrument that meets the other measures of validity are used to provide criterion related validity for future instruments.

Operationalization is the process of defining a concept or construct that could have a variety of meanings to make the term measurable and distinguishable from similar concepts. Operationalizing enables the concept or construct to be expressed in terms of empirical observations. Operationalizing includes describing what is, and what is not, part of that concept or construct.

References

Carmines, E. G., & Zeller, R. A. (1991). *Reliability and validity assessment*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Fink, A. (Ed.). (1995). *How to measure survey reliability and validity* (Vol. 7). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - VREP©

Reviewer 2

By Marilyn K. Simon with input from Jacquelyn White

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Criteria	Operational Definitions	Score 1=**Not Acceptable** (major modifications needed) 2=**Below Expectations** (some modifications needed) 3=**Meets Expectations** (no modifications needed but could be improved with minor changes) 4=**Exceeds Expectations** (no modifications needed)				Questions **NOT meeting standard (List page and question number) and need to be revised.** *Please use the comments and suggestions section to recommend revisions.*
		1	2	3	4	
Clarity	• The questions are direct and specific. • Only one question is asked at a time. • The participants can understand what is being asked. • There are no *double-barreled* questions (two questions in one).				X	
Wordiness	• Questions are concise. • There are no unnecessary words				X	
Negative	• Questions are asked				X	

Wording	using the affirmative (e.g., Instead of asking, "Which methods are not used?", the researcher asks, "Which methods *are* used?")					
Overlapping Responses	• No response covers more than one choice. • All possibilities are considered. • There are no ambiguous questions.				X	
Balance	• The questions are unbiased and do not lead the participants to a response. The questions are asked using a neutral tone.				X	
Use of Jargon	• The terms used are understandable by the target population. • There are no clichés or hyperbole in the wording of the questions.				X	
Appropriateness of Responses Listed	• The choices listed allow participants to respond appropriately. • The responses apply to all situations or offer a way for those to respond with unique situations.				X	
Use of Technical Language	• The use of technical language is minimal and appropriate. • All acronyms are defined.				X	
Application to Praxis	• The questions asked relate to the daily practices or expertise of the potential				X	

	participants.					
Relationship to Problem	• The questions are sufficient to resolve the problem in the study • The questions are sufficient to answer the research questions. • The questions are sufficient to obtain the purpose of the study.				X	
Measure of Content Validity	• The survey adequately measures this content validity				X	

*The operational definition should include the domains and constructs that are being investigated. You need to assign meaning to a variable by specifying the activities and operations necessary to measure, categorize, or manipulate the variable For example, to measure the construct *successful aging* the following domains could be included: degree of physical disability (low number); prevalence of physical performance (high number), and degree of cognitive impairment (low number). If you were to measure creativity, this construct is generally recognized to consist of flexibility, originality, elaboration, and other concepts. Prior studies can be helpful in establishing the domains of a construct.

Comments and Suggestions

The proposed research questions are appropriate and valid to the research study. No revisions needed.

Types of Validity

VREP is designed to measure face validity, construct validity, and content validity. To establish criterion validity would require further research.

Face validity is concerned with how a measure or procedure appears. Does it seem like a reasonable way to gain the information the researchers are attempting to obtain? Does it seem well designed? Does it seem as though it will work reliably? Face validity is independent of established theories for support (Fink, 1995).

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Operationalization is the process of defining a concept or construct that could have a variety of meanings to make the term measurable and distinguishable from similar concepts. Operationalizing enables the concept or construct to be expressed in terms of empirical observations. Operationalizing includes describing what is, and what is not, part of that concept or construct.

References

Carmines, E. G., & Zeller, R. A. (1991). *Reliability and validity assessment*. Newbury

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Fink, A. (Ed.). (1995). *How to measure survey reliability and validity* (Vol. 7). Thousand

Oaks, CA: Sage.

Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - VREP©

Reviewer 3

By Marilyn K. Simon with input from Jacquelyn White

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Criteria	Operational Definitions	Score 1=Not Acceptable (major modifications needed) 2=Below Expectations (some modifications needed) 3=Meets Expectations (no modifications needed but could be improved with minor changes) 4=Exceeds Expectations (no modifications needed)				Questions NOT meeting standard (List page <u>and</u> question number) and need to be revised. *Please use the comments and suggestions section to recommend revisions.*
		1	2	3	4	
Clarity	• The questions are direct and specific. • Only one question is asked at a time. • The participants can understand what is being asked. • There are no *double-barreled* questions (two questions in one).				X	
Wordiness	• Questions are concise. • There are no unnecessary words				X	
Negative Wording	• Questions are asked using the affirmative (e.g., Instead of				X	

	asking, "Which methods are not used?", the researcher asks, "Which methods *are* used?")					
Overlapping Responses	• No response covers more than one choice. • All possibilities are considered. • There are no ambiguous questions.				X	
Balance	• The questions are unbiased and do not lead the participants to a response. The questions are asked using a neutral tone.				X	
Use of Jargon	• The terms used are understandable by the target population. • There are no clichés or hyperbole in the wording of the questions.				X	
Appropriateness of Responses Listed	• The choices listed allow participants to respond appropriately. • The responses apply to all situations or offer a way for those to respond with unique situations.				X	
Use of Technical Language	• The use of technical language is minimal and appropriate. • All acronyms are defined.				X	
Application to Praxis	• The questions asked relate to the daily practices or expertise of the potential participants.				X	
Relationship to Problem	• The questions are sufficient to resolve the problem in the study • The questions are sufficient to answer the research questions. • The questions are sufficient to obtain the purpose of the study.				X	
Measure of Content Validity	• The survey adequately measures this content validity				X	

* The operational definition should include the domains and constructs that are being investigated. You need to assign meaning to a variable by specifying the activities and operations necessary to measure, categorize, or manipulate the variable For example, to measure the construct *successful aging* the following domains could be included: degree of physical disability (low number); prevalence of physical performance (high number), and degree of cognitive impairment (low number). If you were to measure creativity, this construct is generally recognized to consist of flexibility, originality, elaboration, and other concepts. Prior studies can be helpful in establishing the domains of a construct.

Comments and Suggestions

The research questions appear pertinent to the research topic.

Types of Validity

VREP is designed to measure face validity, construct validity, and content validity. To establish criterion validity would require further research.

Face validity is concerned with how a measure or procedure appears. Does it seem like a reasonable way to gain the information the researchers are attempting to obtain? Does it seem well designed? Does it seem as though it will work reliably? Face validity is independent of established theories for support (Fink, 1995).

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Operationalization is the process of defining a concept or construct that could have a variety of meanings to make the term measurable and distinguishable from similar concepts. Operationalizing enables the concept or construct to be expressed in terms of empirical observations. Operationalizing includes describing what is, and what is not, part of that concept or construct.

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Fink, A. (Ed.). (1995). *How to measure survey reliability and validity* (Vol. 7). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix E: Letter of Permission

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