EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF GENERATIONAL TRAUMA ON MOTHER-DAUGHTER

RELATIONSHIPS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE AFRICAN AMERICAN

COMMMUNITY

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

In many communities the mother-daughter relationship is not only vital in the younger years but also in the teen and young adult years. Several studies have explored a mother's influence on her daughter's views of the self, others, and the world in general. The mother-daughter relationship does not only impact personal morals and values but also the types of relationships the daughters gravitate to. In the African American community, many of the mother-daughter relationships are known to be similar in nature and/or dynamics throughout generations. Relationships that are tainted or known as toxic also seem to cycle throughout several generations. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the impact of generational trauma amongst a family on the mother-daughter relationship within the African American community. This study will also seek to explore if the mother-daughter relationship influences a daughter's self-identity and relationships. This study will also evaluate if there is a connection between family trauma and self-identity and preferred relationships. The theories guiding this study will be the life span developmental theory which has origin in many eighteenth and nineteenth century writers especially Johann Nikolaus Tetens and Adolphe Quetelet, Murray Bowen's family systems theory as well as Black Feminist Thought. There is a need for this research as many young women in the African American community are longing to break generational curses of complex mother-daughter relationships. Many young women in the African American community believe that their views and personal bias were created independently. However, these views may be attributed to inadequate education about one's family. Some innate values and beliefs may be present within the family for generations and simply passed down through the mother-daughter

relationship. This research also contributes by fulfilling the need for African American female

scholars to not only research but also interpret the experiences of African American women.

Keywords: Phenomenology, Life Span Development, Family Systems, Mother-Daughter

Relationships, Black Feminist Thought

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This qualitative study aims to explore generational trauma inflicted on African American women and its impact on mother-daughter relationships. This study will delve into mothers' and daughters' views of self, views of other women, outlooks on romantic and nonromantic relationships, as well as beliefs about gender/sex roles. Research has been done on mother-daughter relationships but not African American mother-daughter duos exclusively. This study is significant because generational trauma has been the rationale for many customs and beliefs instilled in many African American women however, this trauma and its impact have not been explained prior to this study.

Background

The relationship between a mother and her daughter has been evaluated for many years to explain an array of topics, with medical conditions being one of the most popular (Shawler, Edward, Ling, Crawford, & Rayens, 2018). The ability to recollect memories and create narratives about mother-child interactions has also been a big topic explored in the mother-daughter relationship (Butler & Shalit-Naggar, 2008). Although the research on medical conditions and memory has been extensive and insightful, it does not explore the impact a mother has on her daughter in social settings amongst the African American community. It also does not explore if women's views of the self and others are influenced by their mother. It is believed that the culture and environment in which one grows up in contribute to his or her beliefs, customs, and values (Bruno et al, 2019). However, this research takes a deeper look into a specific element in the environment, and that is one's mother.

The relationships between mothers and daughters tend to appear in all aspects of life. Women who become mothers can influence how their child views and interacts with others and how the child sees him or herself. Although this concept applies to all women with children, this research focuses specifically on African American women and their daughters. Views of African American women are evolving; however, there are still many opposing views and assumptions present. This research aims to shed light on many beliefs and views that several African American women share on account of family generational bias and beliefs.

The mother-daughter relationship is diverse, often complicated, intimate, and lifelong. Due to this relationship's longevity, it has the power to affect all phases of development, from nurturance, to emerging independence, to functioning as an adult (Bojczyk, Lehan, McWey, Melson, & Kaufman, 2011). Research has shown that the mother-daughter relationship has a significant level of interdependence and emotional intensity therefore, it can also influence career decisions, self-concept, and identification, coping skills, and resiliency (Everet, Marks, & Clarke-Mitchell, 2016). This particular research explores views of self and others, romantic and nonromantic relationships, and views on gender/sex roles. All these factors can be influenced by self-worth, resiliency, and coping skills passed down from one's mother. Overall, this research will show how generational trauma is passed down throughout several generations of African American women and how these beliefs and biases continue to appear in not only self-views but in social settings. This research may be relatable for many African American women and may provide a rationale for why they are similar to or the complete opposite of their mother. This research will also give people from other races and ethnicities a glimpse of how trauma can be unconsciously transferred throughout an African American family system.

Mother-daughter relationships are present in every race however, the parenting style, communication, and nature of the relationship may differ across races. Many affluent White mothers believe that a "good mother" should invest a significant amount of time, money, and energy into mothering, while many African American mothers focus on sacrifice, self-reliance, and protection (Elliott, Powell, & Brenton, 2015). Although the focus between these two racial groups may be different, neither has been deemed correct or incorrect. Elliott, Powell, & Brenton (2015), believe the difference in what is prioritized is not solely based off race and class but also historical racial inequalities. Historical racial inequalities did not only impact how a mother decided to parent her daughter but also who would assist her with parenting her daughter. In the African American community, it is not uncommon for daughters to be raised by othermothers, extended family, and fictive kin (Everet, Marks, & Clarke-Mitchell, 2016). Othermothers are women that assist blood mothers with mothering responsibilities. Other races will have assistance with mothering, but it is often in the form of a paid provider such as a Nanny. In modern times, many African American women shy away from hiring a Nanny or becoming a Nanny as such work has historically been devalued and associated with women but specifically enslaved, poor, black, or immigrant women (Duffy, 2011; Wu, 2016). Knowing that African American women often select assistance from within their family, it is not uncanny that the caregiver will have similar views, values, and beliefs to teach the daughter.

Mother-daughter relationships have been researched from a Feminist and Developmental theoretical perspective. Feminism is the desire for males and females to be free from sexist role patterns, domination, and oppression (Lancet, 2019). Although this ideology had good intentions, it was not beneficial for everyone it was intended for due to pervasive and inexcusable bias against one's ethnicity, class, geography, and or disability (Lancet, 2019).

Overtime Feminism has become more inclusive, but it still contains some limitations. Black Feminist Thought focuses on lived experiences and empowers African American women to interpret and define their shared experiences within the context of racial, gender, and class oppression (Lancet, 2019). This theory will be utilized in this research as it provides an appropriate lens for African American women to accurately identify, name, interpret, and write a narrative that may consist of many successes as well as the tribulations due to race. This research will examine the African American female psyche and social experiences with an emphasis on experienced trauma. This may require many women to disclose events and experiences that may have occurred during childhood. When thinking of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), it has been proven that they can impact one's future and overall development (Jones, Merrick, & Houry, 2020). Developmental theories systematically explain how human beings grow throughout the life cycle (Hammond, 2014). Many developmental theories are based on middle-class, White male norms (Lindsay-Dennis,2015). These norms do not necessarily include membership in devalued races/ethnicities, gender, or economic groups. When African American women's behaviors are compared to the white male normative, the behaviors can be seen as negative, maladaptive, and not meeting developmental trends because they are not congruent (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Consideration of culture should be included when thinking of an African American woman's development because her life cycle cannot be truly explained with the isolation of race (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Overall, much research has not been conducted about African American girls and women. This research will combine Developmental theory with Black Feminist Thought to acknowledge that African American girls thrive in a unique racial and gendered context, and that will shape their worldviews, emotional

and behavioral responses. Many of these women may continue to have the same views and responses in adulthood and possibly motherhood.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework serves as the justification for why a study should be conducted (Varpio, 2020). It describes known knowledge, identifies gaps in the phenomenon, and outlines the methodological underpinnings of the research (Varpio, 2020). This study will examine the impact of generational trauma on mother-daughter relationships within the African American community. While examining these relationships, I will look at them through the lens of relativism. Relativism refers to the idea that reality is constructed from human perceptions and subjective minds (Dulles, 2017). I must remember that there can be multiple truths, so I must remain aware of different contexts, cultures, and their personal values in the inquiry process. I must also be mindful that there will be multiple truths that can be equally valid.

Prior research has examined mother-daughter relationships about health concerns, specific races other than African Americans, and body image (Maor, 2012; Garcia-Hernandez, 2016; Ko & Wei, 2018). Mother-daughter literature also focused on the duo creating narratives about their relationship to describe how they function within a family unit or during an isolated event (Hurst, 2012; Gilchrist-Petty & Reynolds, 2015; Horstman et al, 2016). However, there is a gap in the literature concerning the impact of trauma on mother-daughter duos and general insight into mother-daughter duos in the African American community. This study derived from a conversation I had with a few African American women in their thirties. The majority of the women reported that they were confident that their mother loved them, but they were unsure if their mother liked the women they had become. Many of them also expressed that their mothers had experienced previous trauma they were unaware of until they were much older. This group

of women agreed that their mothers were secretive and did not like being questioned. Many of the women in the conversation expressed that they often found themselves parenting and treating their children the same way their mothers treated them.

As I continued to think about my research topic, I decided that I would research the generational trauma amongst the mother-daughter relationship specifically with African American women for several additional reasons; I have an older sister and as we grew older, I realized that much of our thinking and preferences were influenced by my mother. How we chose to maintain a home, attend to our hygiene, and vet people for new relationships were all influenced by my mother's thinking, as evidenced by our routines being very similar. I also realized that my sister's relationship with our mother was differed from mine. If we both had to describe our relationship with our mother, it would almost appear as if we were referring to a different woman. I coached a cheer/dance team for seven years, and I found that many of my dancers would confide in me and ask me things that should have been addressed by their mothers. Upon meeting each of the mothers, I realized that many of the dancers' undesirable characteristics were very similar to their mothers. Many of the dancer's views about relationships with their peers and males, were derived or influenced by their mother. I was very aware that upbringing and environment would impact each young woman I was working with, but I wanted to know more about how generational trauma shaped each young woman and if the trauma was present for more than two generations. I am aware that I have clear assumptions and biases so I will document them via bracketing and a journal.

I am utilizing an ontological philosophical perspective. Ontology is the science of what might exist in every area of reality (Smith, 2012). I am aware that it will be challenging to remain objective about a phenomenon that has shaped my childhood and adulthood; however, it

is also an advantage to be intimately knowledgeable of the process and trends I am researching (Smith, 2012). Ontology will allow the participants to be subjective while sharing their experiences. I will work from an emic viewpoint by only focusing on trauma impacting mother-daughter duos within the African American community. An etic viewpoint would require me to compare mother-daughter relationships that are cross-cultural or cross-setting, and that is not my intent (Olive, 2014). I intent to focus on the African American community as most of the mother-daughter research is cross-cultural and does not specifically speak for or to African American women.

Social constructivism highlights the importance of ideas, identity, and interactions through the actions of people living a specific lifestyle (Agius, 2013). It acknowledges the value of social relations and why identity, norms, and culture matter (Agius, 2013). Within social constructivism, I have selected to utilize phenomenology which studies the structures of experiences and consciousness. Although many people may have similar experiences, there is not one narrative that fits all. This approach allows the women to disclose their trauma and parenting styles and create their own meanings based on interactions with others and their environment (Amineh & Asl, 2015). Dissecting past trauma, learning about bias, and being privy to details about an intimate relationship between a mother and daughter cannot be quantified, so the stories and themes will be described qualitatively. This research paradigm is fitting because it allows me to provide clarity to others who are not in my culture and to individuals with whom I share the same culture.

Problem Statement

Several studies focus on the mother-daughter relationship. However, many studies evaluated normative relationships instead of problematic ones (Bojczyk, Lehan, McWey,

Melson, & Kaufman, 2011; Pillemer, Suitor, Pardo, & Henderson, 2010; Ringering et al., 2014).

In general, the attachment between mothers and daughters is so strong that no matter how much

conflict resides in the relationship, it is very rare that ties will be cut between the duo (Pickering

et al., 2015). In order to have a full understanding of the unique dynamics, it is beneficial to

learn more about where the conflict stems from and how it impacts the duo during the life cycle.

The problem is that many mother-daughter relationships in the African American

community are described as deleterious. However, there has not been an explanation that

accounts for the characteristics of the majority of the duos. Some mother-daughter duos have

ongoing tension due to conflicting views on dating, marriage, and parenting; however they still

report a close bond (Ringering et al, 2014). Mother-daughter relationships in the African

American community may be similar to that of other mother-daughter duos amongst different

races but the large amount of trauma experienced by African American women for many years

has the potential to impact motherhood in different ways. Motherhood in the African American

community is exceptionally prominent. Many mothers unknowingly assist their daughters with

facing and/or embracing negative messages often directed toward African American women

(Turnage, 2004). Negative messages could turn into unconscious biases or preferences that have

cycled through the family for years. Exploring the impact of generational trauma on mother-

daughter relationships in the African American community will give others a better idea of

where many African American women's beliefs were derived and explain why they respond in

specific ways in intimate or public settings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand and describe how

generational trauma impacts the mother-daughter relationship in the African American

community. The participants in this study are African American women that are mothers and or daughters. The mother is defined as an African American woman who raised an African American daughter until she was at least 14 years of age. The daughters are defined as African American women that are between the ages of 14 and 35. The theories guiding this study are Lifespan Development because the mother-daughter relationship is lifelong and explores the changes as one grows, Murray Bowen's family system theory because it is hard to understand a single person, the African American woman, in isolation, so we must view her as a part of a family, and Black Feminist Thought from Patricia Hill Collins perspective as it describes black women's experiences from their own historical viewpoint.

Significance of the Study

This study has great significance to African American women as they are the focus; however, it is significant to the African American community at large as well as people of other races. African American women have struggled with continued devaluation, especially for possessing specific features. Although some strides have been made in terms of cultural diversity, many of these women are still trying to cope with the negative social messages (Turnage, 2004). This study will highlight the generational trauma women in the African American community have endured and how it has been passed down from mothers to daughters throughout several generations. This study will highlight how beliefs and biases become second nature to African American women and how they pass the same beliefs down to their daughter's. African American mothers serve as a powerful stimulant in their daughter's development, so it is not unrealistic to think that they will influence self-identity (Turnage, 2004). If more mothers are aware of the ways in which they can influence their daughters, they may be able to pay closer attention to what they are teaching their daughters and break the cycle of passing down negative

beliefs and biases. This study will also provide people of different ethnicities an explanation for why some African American women think the way they do, how they respond and or cope with trauma, and how they see themselves as part of society as a whole.

Research Questions

RQ1:   How does generational trauma impact the African American mother-daughter relationship?

RQ2:   How does the mother-daughter relationship influence the African American daughter's romantic and nonromantic relationships?

RQ3:   What are the significant connections between generational trauma and a daughter's self- identity?

Definitions

1. *Bias-* In favor of or against something or someone. Personal likes and dislikes in personalities, presentation styles, ethics, morals, and values (Neher, 2020).

2. *Gender Roles-* Prescriptive ideals on how men and women should behave. Behaviors and attitudes considered appropriate and desirable for a person based on biological or perceived sex (masculine and feminine) (Lagaert, Van Houtte, & Roose, 2019). Gender implies that roles may be socially or culturally produced.

3. *Generation-* All people and things living or circulating roughly the same time. A set of members of a family regarded as a single stage in descent (Schneider, 2018).

4. *Preferences-* Greater liking for one alternative over another (*Dictionary.com*, 2022).

5. *Self-Identity-* The label used to describe oneself (Van der Werff, Steg, & Keizer, 2013).

6. *Sex Roles-* Socially coded behaviors and practices often related to a person's reproductive capacities, such as women with roles of motherhood and men with roles of fatherhood (Lagaert, Van Houtte, & Roose, 2019). Sex implies that roles may be naturally or biologically determined.

Summary

This qualitative study explores generational trauma's impact on the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. It attempts to fill the gaps about how mothers truly influence their daughters and how preferences and biases shape the lessons that are taught to daughters throughout several generations. The study is significant because it sheds light on the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community, which is different from other ethnicities due to historical trauma. Majority of the literature addresses generational trauma that African American women have endured for years and how the trauma can sculpt bias and preferences that can be unconsciously passed down for several generations. Current research on the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community typically focuses on mental and physical health but this study will expand that focus and explore the duo in social settings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Many African American women are confident that their mothers love and care for them; however, it has been difficult to tell if one's mother truly likes the girl she raised (Pickering et al.,2015). Complications in the mother-daughter relationship are not only evident in the home or amongst the family but have found a way to percolate into peer and romantic relationships (Hall, 2015). The mother-daughter relationship is powerful and cannot only influence the type of relationship a mother will have with her own children, but it will also impact how she sees herself as a woman compared to her peers (Justice-Malloy, 2016). The mother-daughter relationship can be influenced by an array of things, such as family morals, values, or traditions. Although morals, values, and traditions are important, this study will focus on the influence of generational trauma on the relationship. This study will also explore the impact of the mother-daughter relationship on the daughter's self-identification and desired relationships.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Mother-daughter relationships are often complicated and diverse (Everet alt, Marks, and Clarke-Mitchell, 2016). Everet alt, Marks, and Clarke-Mitchell (2016) performed a qualitative study that explored African American mother's influence on their daughter's self-esteem, resilience, and coping skills. The results indicated that less than half of the daughters in their study described the mother-daughter relationship as supportive, healthy, and great. Most of the daughters in the study described the mother-daughter relationship as troublesome, distant, and disappointing. Bojczyk, Lehan, McWey, Melson, & Kaufman's (2011) study explored mothers' and daughters' perceptions of their relationships. The study discovered that mothers and daughters evaluated persistent intimacy, unidirectional mothering, and conflict both in the past

and present. This study also implied that childhood experiences influenced adult relationships directly impacting the mother-daughter relationship.

Mother-daughter relationships change throughout the life span. For an infant and toddler, one's mother is often seen as a goddess and the primary source of nurturance. As a teen, the relationship between mother and daughter becomes hectic and often challenging. However, a mother's impact on her daughter's transition from adolescence to young adulthood is significant because the mother serves as the role model (Santarossa & Woodruff, 2020). The hope is that as a teenage girl transition to young adulthood, her mother will become her best friend. Although daughters seek autonomy during this phase of life, they will continue to value their mother's opinions (Santarossa & Woodruff, 2020). As an adolescent's autonomy increases, the parental relationship will change. At the start of adolescence, the relationship tends to be asymmetrical, and the parents hold most of the power and influence (Feldman, 2009). By the end of adolescence, power and influence have become more balanced and the relationship becomes more symmetrical (Feldman, 2009). Nevertheless, the parents will typically retain the upper hand and continue to shape views, beliefs, and behaviors. A mother influences the formation of her daughter's perception of herself, body, eating attitudes, behavior patterns, leisure activities, sex role attitudes, values, and overall psychological development (Santarossa & Woodruff, 2020). Mother-daughter relationships are present in every culture and have many of the same trials and tribulations, though morals, values, expectations, and lessons may differ from one culture to the next. The cycle of the mother-daughter relationship varies for each mother-daughter duo from one generation to the next. However, it is always present.

The vicious cycle of complicated mother-daughter relationships is similar for many families throughout several generations in the African American community (MacKinnon-Lewis,

Lindsey, Frabutt & Chambers, 2014). Burkart, Winner, Greever, and Alhassan (2014) suggest

that mother-daughter relationships in African American communities have not sparked much

research until now because the idea that mothers influence psychosocial variables has become

more popular, and more people want to understand how African American women perceive their

relationship with their mothers. They report that the relationship between mothers and daughters

influence many factors such as depression, self-esteem, and future aspirations. Many of the

mother-daughter relationships can be explained as toxic, which can negatively influence views of

oneself and/or other women (Caplan, 2010). According to Caplan (2010), mothers and daughters

are naturally for or against one another. Despite the mother-daughter duo being allies or

enemies, there is a heavy influence and connection amongst the two. Many daughters share

similar beliefs as their mothers no matter how positive or negative their relationship has been in

the past or present. DeAnda and Geist-Martin (2018) express that many women have vivid

memories of their mother's treatment of them. These memories are often intrusive and help

sculpt the mother-daughter relationships from one generation to the next.

 In the African American community, it is not uncommon for many young adult women to

question if their mother "likes" them based on feelings of experiencing childhood injustices

(Pickering, Mentes, Moon, Pieters, and Phillips, 2015). In a Pickering et al. (2015) study, some

of the childhood injustices were described as unfulfilled maternal role obligations, enforced

power-dependency, and the creation of an unstable environment. In relation to unfulfilled

maternal roles, daughters reported that they did not feel their mothers met their expectations of a

confidant, a source of love and support, and a source of knowledge about being a woman.

Daughters also expressed that enforced power-dependency was evident amongst the mother-

daughter relationship because the mothers repeatedly demonstrated they had all the power, and

the daughter had none. Paradoxical behaviors of the mothers explained the creation of an

unstable environment. Mothers would present in a warm, loving manner in public and a distant

and aggressive manner in the home. This conflicting view of the mother created confusion and

much frustration for the daughters, which exacerbated the feelings of powerlessness and

encouraged isolation. Overall, daughters were reported to feel they were treated unfairly or

cruelly.

Mother-daughter relationships are present throughout the entire lifespan and are ever-

changing due to the continuous growth of physical, cognitive, personality, and social

development. It is appropriate to apply a life span perspective to explore the impact of

generational trauma on mother-daughter relationships in the African American community since

we are considering patterns of growth, change, and stability. Within each mother-daughter duo

each woman can bring differences due to her generation, role, chronological age, and historical

differences that may have been derived by their individual life experiences (Bojczyk et al.,

2011). Within the life span perspective, it can be expected that complexity, ambivalence, and

intimacy will be based on perception and may create themes between several generations

amongst families (Bojczyk et al., 2011). Much of the research has focused on the impact of the

mother-daughter relationship at birth and in the later adult years when the daughter is expected to

care for her elderly mother. It is essential to evaluate how the relationship grows or detaches in

the young/middle adult years, particularly as a result of experienced traumas. Due to the lack of

research, the life span perspective will be applied to this research focusing on social and

personality development in early adulthood. Some of the developmental tasks in young

adulthood include psychological separation from parents, becoming aware of one's personal

history, developing a capacity for intimacy with a partner, deciding whether to have children,

assuming a social role, and adapting ethical and spiritual values (Feldman, 2009). Once these series of developmental tasks are completed, people will begin to perceive themselves as members of society with significant responsibilities. There is also a concentration on developing relationships. Many of these tasks are choices in which the adult must make. The life span perspective can be applied to all mother-daughter relationships, but each duo will experience different traumas from their own family system.

Murray Bowen viewed the family as a fluid, ever-changing, functional system (Bowen & Butler, 2013). The term functional suggests that the family has a purpose to accomplish and implies that each family member has a role. Bowen and Butler (2013) also expressed that the family system is subject to the laws of natural systems, so the unit must respond to the conditions of its environment in a manner that allows the family to meet the biological needs of each member. Although the family will respond to conditions within the environment, they will also respond to conditions within the family unit. Family systems theory focused on interactional patterns amongst the family highlighting predicable and recurring patterns among family members (Keller and Noone, 2020). Bowen thought of the relationship system of the family as one emotional unit that is mainly regulated by the family member's actual relationships with one another (Elena Marie Piteo & MacKay 2021). The use of the family systems theory may assist with explaining variability in functioning among family members, things that increase dysfunction, the relationship amongst past, present, and future generations, and influences of generational patterns. It is impossible to negate the overall family structure and the way in which the family functions if the desire is to have a clear understanding of the impact of generational trauma on the mother-daughter duo. Family structure and family function can change, and the rationale for change should also be considered while examining the mother-

daughter relationship. Family Systems theory has eight interlocking concepts that are used to describe the challenges in relationships amongst a family. This research will highlight the concept of the family projection process. The Family projection process is the transmission of emotional problems from a parent to a child (Haefner, 2014). In the family projection process, a parent will have fears or discomforts that may have been present prior to a child's arrival. Once the child is born, the parent will treat the child as if he or she has problems that need to be fixed (Haefner, 2014). Some research has been done on mothers projecting on their children (Skogstad, 2013) and found that many projections arise out of an early relationship with a mother who may be disturbed or traumatized, so she is unable to tolerate her child's projections and may use the child as a receptacle for her own projections (Skogstad, 2013). This process is mentioned because generational trauma is being explored, and if a mother has had previous trauma, there is a slight chance that she may transfer her inadequacies to her daughter. There is also a chance that the mother may overcompensate in a particular area such as affection, boundaries, or level of involvement to satisfy her own emotional distress.

      Black feminist thought is a field of knowledge that focuses on the perspectives and experiences of African American women (Collins, 2009). The overall perspective of the thought is that the historical and factual circumstances of Black women are inseparable, unique, and contain certain commonalities of perception that are shared by Black women. Black feminist thought connects with the relationship between the individual and society, or between human agency and social structures (Alinia, 2015). Black feminist thought exposes the path of struggle and the path of empowerment. It also highlights the challenges in combating oppression considering that people can be oppressed in one setting and oppressors in another. Collins (2009) named five distinguishing features of black feminist thought (Collins, 2009). The first

feature is gender, class, race, and sexuality making up the matrix of domination that frames African American women's oppression and struggles. The second feature is that Black womanhood is shaped around the dialect of oppression and resistance. The third feature explains that as a collective identity, Black women contain internal divisions and differences within social structures and hierarchies of social class, sexual orientation, education, region, age, and religion. The fourth feature explains that despite the internal heterogeneities, there is a group knowledge and a consciousness based on a collective memory and shared history as well as common daily experiences of being a Black woman. Lastly, the fifth feature highlights the significance of change for black feminist thought as a critical social theory. While it is important to understand and address the ways in which different oppressions intersect and appear throughout a family system, it is necessary to analyze the entire system of thought and how it meshes in the mother-daughter relationship (Bhambra, 2015).

This research will utilize participants from various families and locations; however, they will all be African American women. As Black Feminist thought has mentioned, African American women will have shared lived experiences. The Lifespan perspective is applied to this research and will help examine if the worldview a daughter has consumed over time is similar to her mother's. It is known that over the lifespan, a daughter will grow biologically, cognitively, and psychosocially. However, this research will explore the significance of the mother's influence and teachings. While exploring the development of the women in the study, it is important to remember that development is plastic, meaning the characteristics are malleable or changeable. Views may change due to a traumatic event, and the rationale for change will be thoroughly noted. This research will advance current research that has mainly focused on mother-daughter relationships in relation to medical conditions or of other ethnicities. It will

also expand the narrative for African American women in general. African American women have faced many stereotypes based on their speech, demeanor, mannerisms, and overall behaviors. However, this research will provide an opportunity for a select few to share their lived experiences and create more accurate narratives. This research will also encourage women in the African American community to explore and heal from their trauma free of guilt and shame. Lastly, this research will encourage women in the African American community to evaluate how they interact with their daughters and pay closer attention to the beliefs, preferences, and biases they are passing down throughout several generations.

Related Literature

Mother-daughter relationships are vital in the African American community, and they impact several factors in a young woman's life (Bojczyk et al., 2011; Burkart et al., 2014; Caplan, 2010; Everet alt, Marks & Clarke-Mitchell, 2016; Fithriyah et al., 2020; Freud, 2010). Everet alt, Marks & Clarke-Mitchell (2016) conducted a qualitative study with 17 African American women between the ages of 18 and 70 who resided with their mother/mother figure or daughter for at least 5 years without disruption. Participants were recruited from two New England cities. Seventeen participants spoke about their experiences as both mothers and daughters. They sought to explore the influence African American mothers have on the development of self-esteem, resilience, and coping strategies in their daughters. Each participant was interviewed using a set of 13 main questions about their current and past (while they were growing up) mother or daughter relationship. Findings indicated that 9 participants described the relationships as supportive and the remainder described it as troublesome. Most of the participants reported that their mothers recognized the importance of teaching them to be comfortable with themselves. In terms of coping, many mothers used themselves as examples to

show their daughters what to do to overcome things. Mothers were also sending mixed messages regarding coping and being resilient. Due to the sample size, these results cannot be generalized. The mother's voice is absent in this study, and it is impossible to know if the mother agrees with what the daughter self-reported. My phenomenological study will allow mothers and daughters to share their own experiences. My study will also allow feedback from more than one generation. By allowing the mother and the daughter to share their experience, I will be able to look for similarities, differences, themes, and rationale for the thinking.

Fithriyah, Muhdi, Setiawati & Febriyana, (2020) explain that a girl's life is shaped by her relationship with her mother from infancy to adulthood. Girls with insecure bonds with their mothers during infancy tend to have psychological problems and do not function well in adulthood (Fithriyah et al., 2020). Establishing a secure bond is the goal after birth; however, that is not always the case for many women. The experience of pregnancy and childbirth can reactivate the somatic memories of women with the possibility of a re-enactment of traumatic experiences and the possibility of a transformation and integration of these experiences through physiological, biological, and psychological processes characteristic of motherhood (Piccini, 2021). African American women have endured many traumatic events for years. These traumas impact their bodies when carrying a child and how they connect and bond with their children. Many individual traumas become generational trauma, and my study will display how that appears throughout a family unit and influences the mother-daughter relationship.

Colaner & Rittenour (2015) introduced feminist identity as the means through which mothers' gender-based communication influences daughters' present and projected selves. Mother-daughter communication is consequential for the daughter's self-concept and relationship worldviews (Koenig Kellas, 2010). A women's views on romantic relationships are

sculpted by her mother's views on sex, love, sex/gender roles, avoiding relationships, and forming boundaries. Many of these views are congruent with upbringing and messages that were passed down from women in the family. Koenig Kellas (2010) is a study that builds on several previous studies that investigate ways in which message content daughters recall hearing from their mothers may shape their ideologies about romantic relationships. Intergenerational transmission of memorable messages between a mother and her daughter compliment current relational worldviews and be more likely to be passed down to future generations (Koenig Kellas, 2010). Just as a mother's preferences can impact a daughter's standards, a family trauma can be passed down from one generation to the next. Overall, my study will explore the mother-daughter relationship and investigate how it is connected to generational trauma as well as the daughter's self-identification and desired relationships.

Trauma

As the world changes and people are exposed to more stressful events, the definition of trauma continues to expand and become more inclusive. For years, only direct exposure to an actual or threatened death, sexual violation, or serious injury was considered trauma. This was changed with the recent revision of the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic Statistical Manual V (DSM-V) which now includes witnessing a traumatic event (Sanderson, 2014). Several events can constitute as trauma and the DSM-5 has recently added new events (Briere & Scott, 2015). If an individual has directly experienced a traumatic event or witnessed a traumatic event in person, that individual has undergone a traumatic event. Learning of a traumatic event that has happened to close friends/family and has a significant impact on a person can be considered trauma. The expansion of what is considered trauma was consistent with the rapid development of communication technology, which now allows everyone access to experience

various traumatic events in real time (Wong et al., 2018). Communication technology is the

hardware equipment, organizational structures, and social values that assist with collecting,

processing, and exchanging information (Sundar, 2015). Information can be exchanged in real

time using websites, social media, mobile devices, and robotics (Sundar, 2015). This

advancement makes it easy for people to be made aware of or watch traumatic incidents from

anywhere in the world. Trauma can be violent, accidental, and/or repeated. Trauma can be

difficult to cope with and potentially cause problems in one's daily functioning. The problems

will often appear as impairments that may cause a person to avoid people, places, things, or

simply illicit a fear that was not present prior to the event (Sanderson, 2014). From a relational

perspective, impairments that arise after a traumatic event can shatter individuals' sense of trust,

safety, hope, and belief in people (Courtois & Ford, 2013). This mistrust can lead to ambivalent

relationships that compel individuals to waver between withdrawing from and clinging to

relationships with others (Blakey & Grocher, 2020).

It is nearly impossible to say that trauma is not subjective. Many events can be

considered traumatic, but they may not be distressing to the individual that experienced it.

Everyone has a different threshold of stress they can endure as well as different levels of

resiliency. Resilience is a positive adaptation process despite adversity (Masten, 2018). The

amount of stress one withstands, and the amount of resiliency is determined by one's natural

makeup and past experiences dating back to infancy and early childhood (Hornor, 2016;2017).

Resiliency is nurtured through supportive relationships and environments (Lipscomb et al.,

2019). Reactions to trauma cannot be predicted, as they will vary from person to person.

Reactions from one individual may also vary and be completely different from one traumatic

event to the next. Trauma can also be classified as Complex Trauma depending on the length of

time the distress has occurred (Su & Stone, 2020). Complex trauma may also produce a higher severity in symptoms or symptoms that have caused large levels of distress for an extended period.

Trauma within the African American Community

It has been reported that 65% to 88% of African Americans have had exposure to trauma in their lifetime (Goldmann et al., 2011). More specifically, African American women experience interpersonal trauma at a disproportionately higher rate than other racial groups (Blakey & Grocher, 2020). African American women have endured and witnessed traumatic events for centuries. This exposure can be dated back to the 19th century and is still present. African American women have endured centuries of racism, sexism, and classist ideologies contributing to objectification and traumatic experiences (Watson et al., 2012). Sociocultural factors such as historical influence of slavery, sexualized views/images of African American women, and patriarchal social structures have contributed to sexual objectification (Watson et al, 2012). Sexual objectification has ranged from comments and objectifying looks or gestures to more extreme forms such as sexual abuse (Watson et al, 2012). Sexual objectification has produced physical safety anxiety, self-objectification, and psychological/emotional distress for many African American women (Watson et al., 2012).

African American women's experiences are mainly rooted in oppression, which has been evident in many areas such as gender, race, and social class (Watson et al., 2012). Although much of this oppression occurred centuries ago, feelings of being the oppressed or inadequate have remained present in many women's mindsets and daily lives due to their harsh nature and slight presence in contemporary culture. Racism and sexism appear in the contemporary culture as microaggressions. Microaggression provides a way to classify subtle yet everyday

manifestations of oppression (Lewis et al., 2013;2012). Although several forms of racism are

not frequently shown publicly, they still exist and continue to serve as one of the catalysts for

African American women's feeling of being inadequate. These feelings of inadequacy have also

been passed down from many generations. In today's world, there have been a few laws (Sexual

Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013;

CROWN Act, 2019; and Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act, 2021) and general acceptance of

African American women but that does not negate the past trauma that is widely known. During

slavery, African American women were sexually objectified and prized if they could produce

large amounts of children. Prather et al., (2018) would argue that a thorough examination of

these historical factors would be essential to addressing current health care needs of African

American women related to chronic stress, health outcomes with sexually transmitted infections

and pregnancy related morbidity and mortality. While creating children and marriages, normal

family life, adequate health care, and motherhood were not promoted. These views of having

one's body controlled by men with power can be considered a generational curse for women in

the African American community. African American women's feelings of inferiority continue to

be common and unfortunately, these feelings arise in motherhood and are often passed down to

their daughters.

<div align="center">**Generational Trauma Among Women**</div>

Generational trauma is known as trauma that is transferred from parents to their children

(Doucet and Rovers, 2010). It can also be referred to as secondary trauma, transgenerational

trauma, or intergenerational trauma. Clinical and empirical studies have revealed many

discrepancies about generational trauma (Doucet and Rovers, 2010). There have also been

systemic reviews (Bryant-Davis et al., 2017; Heberle et al., 2020) that have criticized the lack of

including intergenerational trauma in literature. Highlighting generational trauma is important because it is not only felt in the past; but also creates interpersonal complications that impact future generations (Yates, Obus, Peele, Petrovic, Wing & Cunningham, 2022). Generational trauma can be derived from several events such as exposure to a threat or serious injury, death, or sexual violation. This exposure could be a single or repeated event that lasts for hours, weeks, months, or possibly years. Abuse, neglect, and assault are examples of traumas that are often repeated. These events are known to elicit fear and distress that could cause impairments in an individual's daily and social functioning. Trauma is currently thought to be common and statistics report that more than half of all Americans will be exposed to at least one traumatic event in their lifetime (Friedman, 2015). In knowing that trauma is so prevalent, it is not uncanny that trauma could impact the mother-daughter relationship and, in some cases, passed down for several generations.

Traumatic events produce emotional responses that vary depending upon the experienced events and the individual. Experiences that individuals have as a child influence and oftentimes shape their way of thinking, personal preferences, morals and values, and overall personality (Cronholm et al., 2015). This can be applied to mothers parenting their daughters and daughters parenting their daughters in the future. It is possible that after a woman has experienced a traumatic event, the changes in her preferences, morals, and values are seen as norms amongst the family unit and are passed down for many generations. Trauma amongst women and girls is prevalent, and although the challenges are most salient during the reproductive years, they are capable of remaining present later in life (Berman, Mason, Hall, Rodger, Classen, Evans, Al-Zoubi, 2014). Many interpersonal traumas result in a disruption of trusted relationships. The lack of trust often results in women responding in ways that promote self-preservation (Berman

et al., 2014). In lieu of self-preservation, women may change their social and cultural preferences. These changes may cause unconscious stress, which has the potential to appear during pregnancy, childbirth, or while raising a child (Berman et al., 2014). Parenting within itself can create a great deal of stress for mothers, and if it is accompanied by residual stress from past trauma, it may infringe on the mother-child relationship. Due to the mother's traumatic stress reaction, the mother-child relationship becomes at risk of harsh or abusive parenting, attachment problems, or neglectful parenting (Berman, Mason, Hall, Rodger, Classen, Evans, Al-Zoubi, 2014).

Memories, good or bad, are present not only for reflection but also to assist with learning. DeAnda and Geist-Martin (2018) explore how involuntary autobiographical memories assist with one's own mothering experiences. Each researcher pursues her mother's narrative and compares it to her current episodes of mothering. The researchers were able to retrieve many memories from childhood and realized that they mimicked many of their mother's behavior patterns. Researchers also reported that involuntary autobiographical memories were present years later when making decisions with one's daughter (DeAnda & Geist-Martin, 2018). Involuntary autobiographical memories are vivid memories of past personal events that come to a person's mind without an attempt to retrieve the memory (Rasmussen & Berntsen, 2009). Mothers expressed that the spontaneous memories served as signals and reminders of their past when they were in the midst of providing support or advice to their daughter (DeAnda & Geist-Martin, 2018). A mother's memories have the potential to assist her with navigating through her own experience of being a mother. Memories for mothers and daughters aid them with creating and maintaining various relationships and with generating a sense of self.

Many assume that everyone inherits most of their beliefs from their parents; this is partially true, but people are also heavily influenced by how their parents were parented. As humans in a life cycle, families tend to pass down the same parenting style from one generation to the next. This impacts how one parents her child, relates to partners and relates to herself (Wolynn, 2017). These noticeable patterns will often appear within a person as soon as a child is in her womb. How a person bonds with her baby while in the womb is instrumental to the child's development (Wolynn, 2017). This developmental process is continued outside of the womb. If a person has had a broken bond with her mother or experienced extensive trauma in her own life, there is a great possibility that she may have trouble bonding with her baby during these early stages. Awareness of parenting styles and past trauma is important because mothers unconsciously pass down tainted parent-child relationships, which is detrimental to a mother-daughter relationship.

Generational family traumas should be addressed even if the person involved is no longer an active family member. Much research has been conducted about engaging in psychotherapy and identifying trauma as "ghosts" that are part of one's history instead of haunting him or her (Wolynn, 2017). Disturbed early childhood experiences from the mother's past are known as "ghosts in the nursery" (Guedeney, Guedeney, Wendland, & Burtchen, 2013;2014). These memories haunt the mother-infant relationship and increase the risk of social skill deficits, behavior problems, cognitive difficulties, and later psychopathology (Guedeney et al., 2013;2014). It is believed that if the mother addresses her unresolved attachment conflicts with her "ghosts", she will develop a more adaptative parenting style and a more secure and organized attachment with her child (Guedeney et al., 2013;2014).

"Ghosts" often carry past trauma(s), and the trauma(s) must be addressed because it not only impacts the parent-child relationship but can also be represented by a later member of the family. It is not uncommon for family members of different generations to display similar behaviors. Of course, birth order and gender naturally play a role in behaviors but so do past unresolved traumas to which we are connected. Iyengar, Kim, Martinez, Fonagy, and Strathearn (2014) assessed forty-seven first-time mothers during pregnancy and 11 months after giving birth. Their findings suggest that mothers with unresolved trauma struggled with attachments and in turn, their babies had an insecure attachment. Wolynn (2017) expressed that as he got older, he started to realize that his mother had inherited his grandmother's stress patterns and had also begun to have the same stress patterns. Wolynn explained that his grandmother had a large amount of unresolved trauma, similar to his mother's unresolved trauma. Unresolved trauma can impact the behavior patterns of numerous individuals in a family across several generations.

Historical Trauma Shaping African American Women's Mentality

African Americans are burdened with a past that lingers on their cultural psyche (Halloran, 2019). The African American experience has been comprised of traumatic events and is based upon the psychological, mental, emotional, physical, and emotional oppression of individuals, families, and communities (Chappelle & Tadros, 2021). The enslavement of African Americans has caused trauma and has transmitted through several generations resulting in contemporary social, psychological, and physical complications (DeGruy, 2017). Intergenerational cultural trauma robbed African Americans of a sense of group identity, values, meaning and purpose, and cultural worldviews because all these things were undermined while their ancestors were enslaved (Halloran, 2019). Overall, slavery continuously promoted a belief

system that African Americans were not only inferior but also seen as less than human (Graff, 2014).

The African American community, specifically African American women, sought ways to mitigate negative stereotypes in the aftermath of enslavement (Christopher-Byrd, 2019). By virtue of race, African American women's mentality about domesticity, sexual restraint, hard work, cleanliness, and womanhood were skewed because they did not fit into the idealized fantasy of these canons (Christopher-Byrd, 2019). In addition to social standards of public behavior, social standards within African Americans' homes have historically been regulated by the aftermath of slavery. African American men's inability to obtain decent work resulted in many women having to work outside of the home, which impacted the family structure and exposed African American women to the workforce that consisted of many structural barriers created by racial segregation (Christopher-Byrd, 2019). Overtime, this discourse continues to push the narrative that African American women did not fit in with the dominant view of gender norms within a home. Many African American men were unable to provide economically for their families and unable to protect their wife's womanhood. These barriers were often ignored and overshadowed by the morals and values, or lack thereof, that many working women developed (Christopher-Byrd, 2019). For many years, the idea of womanhood did not include African American women because they were not treated as human. As a result, many of their views, bias, and preferences have been tainted yet served as the basis of how they dealt with people and issues in the world and the home.

Trauma can affect how a person feels about oneself and how they relate to others. Slavery had a traumatic impact on the African American community and DeGury (2017) hypothesized that many displayed behaviors were emotional avoidance, low self-esteem, and

chronic anger. She insists that these behaviors are learned patterns that have manifested in

adulthood and eventually possessed a generational transference. Although African American

women were resilient, the internalization of oppressed beliefs, behaviors, and relational

dynamics were carried across generations and present within parent-child relationships (DeGury,

2017). Much of what is taught to daughters within the African American community is rooted in

the mother's need to protect her daughter from racial and gender discrimination. In knowing that

parent-child relationships were impacted, a closer look into mother-daughter relationships is

critical because this relationship has been noted to be the closest within the family unit, and

daughters may pass down these same oppressive beliefs to their children.

Mother-Daughter Relationships

Mother-daughter relationships are said to be the strongest and the longest relationship in

a family unit (Creese, 2017). Although it is the strongest and longest, it is often reported to

consist of the most confrontation (Creese, 2017). In the African American community, many

women are known to have strong personalities that have been passed down from one generation

to the next (Thomas, Hacker, & Hoxha, 2011). Having a strong personality tends to be seen as a

great trait until the strong personality is present with one's mother. Interestingly, some African

American mothers are not fond of their daughter's personality because African American

parents, particularly mothers, help girls and young women develop protective mechanisms and

resistance strategies (Thomas, Hacker, & Hoxha, 2011). African American mothers contribute to

the process of socializing their daughters to appear strong, tough, resilient, and self-sufficient

(Thomas, Hacker, & Hoxha, 2011). These characteristics are congruent with the "Strong Black

Woman" image. Historically, this image served as a measure of control and a justification for

exploitation and abuse; however it simultaneously served as an agent of survival from the

inflicted oppression (Davis & Jones, 2021). Davis and Jones (2021) expressed that this image is an archetype embodied by a significant number of Black women and pertains to their fierce independence, self-sacrifice, and emotional silencing. Although these attributes seem favorable, Patricia Collins (2009) explains how Black feminists consider this a negative set of beliefs. Although strength is often associated with resilience, a few researchers (Walker-Barnes, 2014; Watson & Hunter, 2015; Woods-Giscombe' et al., 2019) support Patricia Hill's notion that this ideology is negative. Despite modern views glamorizing this ideology, it remains detrimental to African American women as it promotes impractical independence and caring for others at the expense of one's own self-care and emotions (Nelson, Cardemil, & Adeoye, 2016). The "Strong Black Woman" image is different from the traditional feminine image of submissiveness and passivity; however, it is not only being promoted in society but also by immediate family members (Thomas, Hacker, & Hoxha, 2011). These contrasting images could create conflicts and disagreements within a mother-daughter relationship. All mother-daughter relationships are not filled with turmoil, but several mother-daughter relationships have been tumultuous for years. Many of these relationships date back to many generations within one family unit. When a relationship between a mother and daughter is tainted, it is not uncommon for similar issues to reside in other relationships (Freud, 2010).

Communication in the mother-daughter relationship is important and can have an influence on many future factors. Everet alt, Marks, and Clark-Mitchell (2016) focused on daughters' perception of the impact their mothers had on self-worth, self-esteem, coping techniques, and resiliency. The study explored these views with seventeen African American mother-daughter duos. Overall, communication played a significant role in the relationships. When daughters were asked to describe the relationship, the type of communication was

congruent with their perception of the relationship. For example: if a daughter felt the relationship was horrible, she described the communication as inadequate, and her mother did not listen to her (Everet alt, Marks, and Clark-Mithell, 2016). Feeling heard and understood within the mother-daughter relationship is important to many women in the African American community. Being heard and understood can become a challenging task within society, so the desire for one's mother to provide a safe space to be heard and to truly be oneself is crucial. For many young women in this community, this is not feasible because her mother is unaware of how to do so because her mother did not create that type of environment for her. When that level of nurturance is not present, many women lack the ability to be nurturing to others in different relationships. In some families within this community, "tough love" is a learned behavior, and it is assumed that this method will work on all relationships when it does not. Some relationships require greater nurturance, a softer approach, and creative use of language. Not all African American women are unable to provide this level of nurturance but the ones that struggle may have a difficult time because of one's relationship with her mother.

Relationships Among African American Women

In the African American community, single young adult women frequently have difficulty creating and maintaining healthy relationships with other women of different ages. Other women are not always viewed as allies but at times, threats (Greif & Sharpe, 2010). Many young adult African American women see their peers as competition, which makes it hard to build trust within the relationship. Greif and Sharpe (2010) took a closer look into female friendships with twenty Caucasian women and twenty African American women. They wanted to compare the cultural difference between African American women and Caucasian women forming friendships with other women. This comparison was derived from one of the notions

that women do not support one another as much as men, and they often have trouble celebrating the joys of other women due to the perceived level of competition amongst one another. It was suggested that a woman can provide more support to another woman when she feels the other woman is in need. It is also suggested that women's friendships are derived from love, envy, and competition. For many women, there has been an internalized sexism that assumes all women are catty, selfish, trifling, and untrustworthy (Bryant-Davis, 2013). When these myths are internalized, women tend to be completive instead of compassionate and often seek the approval of males instead of creating and maintaining healthy friendships with other women (Bryant-Davis, 2013).

Many same-sex friendships that are long-lasting were created when both women were younger. There is a great chance that the two may grow apart over the years due to a difference in life course. Women are more prone to create a friendship with a homosexual male and discuss intimate topics because they do not feel he will compete with them like a heterosexual woman would be and he will not focus on her physical attributes like a heterosexual male would (Russell, Ta, Lewis, Babcock, and Ickes, 2017). Choosing to befriend a homosexual male instead of a heterosexual woman is not the case for every young adult female; however, it is common. Many friendships women have with other women are formed with the task of caring for children being the basis of the friendship (Cronin, 2015). Women who have children also desire to befriend other women, but most of the friendships they create are with other women who have children or have the potential to care for them. These women look for similarities to connect them to other women, which can be difficult for young adult women who do not have children and are currently in the working world. For young adult women, relationships outside of the home are essential as they contribute to one's overall versatility and support system.

In many homes, compliments are not transferred from the mother to the daughter and vice versa. In some homes, it is also reported that daughters have not seen their mothers compliment other women which may be attributed to the lack of female friends the mother has due to distrust (Greif & Sharpe, 2010). In comparison to men, women give and receive far more compliments. Women typically give other women more compliments on appearance rather than on their performance or possessions. Researchers suggest that women provide compliments as a means to connect and feel equal with other women however, much research has challenged this notion because many of the compliments from one woman to another were insincere and sarcastic (Rees-Miller, 2011). The idea that women give compliments to feel equal could have validity in the African American community, and the lack of compliments could be supported by the idea that mothers in the African American community do not see themselves as equal to their children. Although mothers are held to the expectation of allowing their children to become independent and gain more responsibility, African American mothers have an increased need to be responsible for their children's safety, well-being, and protect them from a host of social ills and risks in the community (Elliott, Powell, & Brenton, 2015). African American mothers do not view themselves as friends to their children but more so protectors. Many African American women between ages 18-25 do not prefer positive compliments on physical appearance as researchers feel it may promote self–objectification, appearance anxiety, body surveillance, as well as an intense pressure to maintain a shape or size that receives positive attention (Herbozo, Stevens, Moldovan, and Morrell, 2017).

Sex and Intimacy Amongst African American Women

Mothers play a prominent role in teaching as well as showing their daughters healthy romantic relationships that may include sexual encounters. Sex and intimacy are a component of

many romantic relationships, and mothers have the opportunity to introduce these ideas to their daughters. More than 50% of sexual encounters begin in youth (Shams, Parhizkar, Mousavizadeh, and Majdpour, 2017). One would assume that a young female would receive sexual health education from her mother but, surprisingly, that is not always the case. African American mothers were more likely to focus on prohibitive messages such as abstinence and pregnancy prevention rather than the benefits of having sex and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (Sanchez et al., 2017). In the African American community, infertility, sexually transmitted diseases, and high-risk sexual behaviors have existed for many years. As these similar issues continue to cycle throughout the community, we assume that mothers would educate their daughters in hopes of increasing healthy sexual habits. Research suggests that the lack of sufficient knowledge and embarrassment has been the barrier to mothers providing their daughters with sufficient sex education (Shams et al., 2017). Within a family, it is expected that a female will learn about sex through maternal guidance. This becomes a burden if the mother holds negative views about sex, as she may not be willing to teach proper sexual education or be open to answering questions. Due to the lack of awareness and communication, many young females are forced to pursue sexual education from other family members, friends, or programs. In turn, it would not be rare if this daughter encourages her daughter to learn about sex education outside of the mother-daughter relationship because that is what she learned from her mother. Research suggests that African American women from impoverished communities are more likely to come from a single-mother home, engage in sexual activities earlier and more frequently, and are at a higher risk of becoming pregnant (Bynum, 2007). Bynum (2007) demonstrated that supportive mother-daughter relationships decreased early sexual debuts and shaped sexual attitudes and behaviors more positively.

Just as a mother has the ability to influence her daughter's sexual attitudes directly and indirectly, she can influence her views on intimacy and boundaries within a romantic relationship. Intimacy does not only include sexual intercourse. There are several ways to be intimate with another person; intimacy is simply the idea of closeness. Being close with a partner requires openness but also the ability to maintain healthy boundaries. At times it may be hard for females to set and maintain boundaries within a romantic relationship. There are several instances of women consenting to sexual activity they did not desire to engage in. In most cases, the woman's choice was made because of learned behavior or to prevent potential threat (Bay-Cheng & Bruns, 2016). Potential threats include provoking a verbal or physical altercation or the partner leaving her because she would not engage in sexual activity (Bay-Cheng & Fava, 2014). A female's willingness to engage in an undesired activity can be attributed to her adhering to gender norms, her desire to have her social and material resources remain intact, and her dependence on the particular relationship (Bay-Cheng & Bruns, 2016). These ideas were expressed from women that had been raised in foster care that did not have the luxury of having a supportive mother-daughter relationship; however, these ways of thinking can also be learned by a mother that is present.

All forms of intimacy can be present within a romantic relationship that could eventually transpire into marriage. Although these things do not have to happen in chronological order, romantic relationships can be thought of as a segue to marriage, and marriage serving as the steppingstone for creating families. This is not always a linear process or the exact timeline of specific events, as many African American young adults have different views about dating relationships and marriage (Martin, Astone, & Peters, 2014). For African Americans, family is vital and instrumental within the community (Brooks & Moore, 2020). For many years, most

families were comprised of married couples, but most recently, African Americans have had a steady decline in marriage (Belgrave & Allision, 2019). Currently, African Americans have the lowest marriage rate of all races; and are getting married later in life (Brooks & Moore, 2020). Amongst these rates, African American women account for a significant portion. African American women marry later in life, have the greatest amount of marital instability and are less likely to marry (Raley, Sweeney, & Wondra, 2015). African American women's decline in marriage draws on historical discourse and current social conditions (Christopher-Byrd, 2019). During slavery, African American men were not able to protect African American womanhood. African American men were also underemployed and/or underpaid, forcing many African American women into the workforce to assist with financially supporting a family (Christopher-Byrd, 2019). Forcing African American women into the workforce resulted in more time away from the home and fewer marriages since this group of women no longer fit into the dominant views of gender roles. Currently, African American women surpass African American males in college enrollment and are more likely to be their families' primary caregivers and financial providers (Lopez and Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014; Wang, Parker, & Taylor, 2013). Thus, African American women are deemed unmarriageable and statistically have fewer marriages compared to other races (Christopher-Byrd, 2019). African American women have had significant trauma in relation to sex and intimacy, yet they are expected to teach their daughters about these subjects and provide insight on how to be a wife. It may be extremely difficult for some African American women to teach their daughters free of bias due to their past and present experiences with sex and intimacy.

Gender Roles

Sex roles are typically considered the behaviors and attitudes commonly expected from a particular gender (Lagaert, Van Houtte, & Roose, 2019). They consist of social and behavioral expectations of both genders. Men are expected to be independent and assertive, whereas women are expected to be expressive and emotional. Over the years, society has been able to blend many sex roles and make them appear gender neutral. Gender role distinctions have been deemed more flexible within the African American community compared to other ethnicities (Sanchez, Flannigan, Guevara, Arango & Hamilton, 2017). Many scholars believe this flexibility does not truly represent African American ideologies but instead reflects adaptive coping mechanisms in response to slavery, racism, poverty, single parenthood, and gender-role stereotypes of African American men and women (Sanchez, et al., 2017). No matter one's views of sex roles, they may have been influenced by one's upbringing. Many women's views on sex roles were curated within the mother-daughter relationship and sometimes from the lack of that particular relationship. Sex role beliefs can be established in daughters by their memories and experiences with their mother, which can be passed down from generation to generation. Sex roles can be traditional or nontraditional, depending on the family. In the African American community, there is not one common belief on sex roles that all families implement. Research suggests that daughters desire to have conversations about sex and sex roles with their mothers. At times this is feasible, but it becomes uncomfortable for some mothers when their mother has never spoken to them about sex, sexual health, or sexual experiences (Rodgers, Tarimo, and Diveris, 2018). Just as young women need to learn about sexual education, they need to learn about sex roles. Young women should learn how to express sexual concerns to their parent. Although sex roles have been blurred over the years, young women will most likely have sexual

conversations with their mothers. Mothers may allow their own biases or experiences to drive the conversation (Coffelt, 2017).

Although there are many similarities in sex roles amongst women in general, African American women have different beliefs, which may be attributed to cultural socialization and sociohistorical influences (Belgrave et al., 2016). Beliefs about sex roles influence self-concept, mental health, sexual attitudes, behaviors, intimate interactions, and relationships (Belgrave et al., 2016). They also influence family planning, childrearing, and career aspirations (Belgrave et al., 2016). It is suggested that African American women have traditional feminine traits such as nurturing and caring as well as traditional masculine traits of self-reliance and assertiveness (Donnelly & Twenge, 2016;2017). Typical feminine ideologies consist of submissiveness, sensitivity, and dependence, whereas African American women's ideologies diverge from this view as it consists of independence, strength, and resilience (Belgrave et al., 2016). Understanding how African American daughters are socialized requires attention to the society, media, and mother the daughter is exposed to (Johnson, 2013). A mother influences her daughter's gender roles through modeled behavior and teachings (Johnson, 2013).

Views of Self

A daughter will begin to separate from her mother to develop her own unique identity, but this identity is influenced by her relationship with her mother (Gillison, Givan, Beatty, Kim, Reynolds, and Baker, 2015). As she transitions to her teenage and young adult years, she will have the opportunity to make similar or different decisions as her mother, with one choice being to reproduce. Women who become mothers have the opportunity to create their legacy as a mother that is different from their mother or motherly figure. For some, this may be difficult because of their relationship with their mother which may have been tainted. The closeness of

the mother-daughter relationship is seen to depend on the mother. As the daughter develops and learns behaviors from her mother, she will have the opportunity to determine how close she is to her daughter, if she has one. Intimacy might be hard for a daughter if her mother was not intimate with her (Justice-Malloy, 2016). Knowing that one may not have had a great experience with her mother, it would not be rare that she has difficultly identifying herself as an invested intimate mother. There is also a chance that that daughter did not enjoy the lack of intimacy and desires to self-identify as a mother that is more intimate with her daughter than in her experience. How one sees herself in motherhood can be a direct replication of her mother's parenting style, the complete opposite, or a combination of her mother's style and her own beliefs.

Self-esteem and confidence are often instilled in women at a young age. Typically, it is assumed that one's mother assists with building confidence and having high self-esteem. When mother-daughter relationships are healthy, daughters are less likely to have low self-esteem or body shaming thoughts (Katz-Wise, Budge, Lindberg, and Hyde, 2013). Several traumatic childhood experiences have the potential to damage self-esteem. For some women, their mothers never attempted to help with their self-esteem, so they did not know how to instill confidence and practice of high self-esteem in their own daughters. Self-esteem and confidence are highly correlated with body image. A daughter's first impression of body standards comes from their mother if she is actively involved. There is a great chance that the daughter will have similar views on body image and sex as her mother had (Arroyo & Anderson, 2016). Many female teens and young adults may have difficulties with body image, which can impact relationships with the opposite sex and other females. A positive or negative self-image can be influenced by how a mother sees herself or pays attention to the daughter's body (Smith, Erickson, Austin, Winn, Lash, and Amrhein, 2016). Mothers are able to serve as a caregiver

while teaching her daughter how to become nurturing. When the mother-daughter relationship is tainted, it becomes difficult for a daughter to develop adequate self-esteem or depictions of the self and others (Cwikel, 2016).

Self-esteem and views of oneself can be impacted by beauty and body image. Most recently, skin tone and hair have been found to be important in relation to beauty and body image (Awad et al., 2015;2014). When mentioning an African American woman's physical attributes, it could be a reminder that body image and beauty in her community is interlocked with racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism (Awad et al., 2015;2014). For generations, women in the African American community have been known to have larger body shapes, which constantly challenges society's idea of physical attractiveness. African American women's bodies have been devalued and rejected by mainstream culture for centuries. They also find a way to dehumanize and exoticize their bodies (Awad et al., 2015;2014). Their bodies were also routinely violated for profit and pleasure without recourse or protection (Awad et al., 2015;2014). The messages that popular culture sends to African American women about self-esteem and body image are just as important as the messages sent from her family unit. Messages from both popular culture and family are received and assist with the constructing African American woman's view of herself.

Summary

Generational traumas and preferences are being passed down from mothers to their daughters. The mother-daughter relationship is unique but often possesses many deficits. There are many positive effects of the mother-daughter relationship but also adverse effects that have not been addressed for years. Over the past five years, more African American women between the ages of 16 to 35 have created blogs, articles, books, and interviews, shedding light on their

experiences with their mother. They have acknowledged similarities, differences, and what

many may call generational curses. Most research has addressed generational physical and

mental health concerns, but personality traits and relationship preferences are now coming to the

forefront. Exploring a mother's and grandmother's preferences has the ability to explain some of

the views a young woman may have or at least where the idea derived from. A mother's

generational bias/preferences inevitably have some impact on her daughter's views of other

women, her desire to form or avoid meaningful relationships with other women, how she views

love, and how she identifies herself. It is expected that these views will be present in the

daughter's choice of self-identification, the types of romantic and nonromantic relationships she

gravitates to, and views on sex roles.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This qualitative research study is designed to explore several benefits, deficits, and outcomes of the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. Recent research has been conducted on the mother-daughter relationship, but not much has focused directly on the African American community. The proposed study will explore the impact of generational trauma in a family on the mother-daughter relationship. This study will also explore if the mother-daughter relationship influences the daughter's self-identity and relationships. This study will also evaluate if there is a connection between family trauma and self-identity, and preferred relationships. This proposed study will highlight how a mother influences her daughter and if biases and or preferences derived from a trauma are passed down from one mother-daughter relationship to the next.

Design

The study will be conducted with a qualitative research design that consists of interviews with African American mother-daughter duos. An interview is appropriate for capturing information about the duo because the participants will be free to do the majority of the talking about their perception of their own life-world (Austin & Sutton, 2014). Interviews will also eliminate the possibility of the researcher persuading the participants to answer in a particular manner using self-administered surveys. Surveys are constructed based on pre-knowledge about the topic, so the participant is only able to select the options provided, which may or may not encompass all the necessary information (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). Interviews were chosen because they allow extensive and intensive data collection, which is needed for this study. Interviews also allow the interviewee to express ideas and experiences freely with as

many details as they desire. Overall, an interview is the best method to assess personal qualities and lived experiences. The researcher will conduct separate interviews so the mother and daughter will have the opportunity to answer the questions as open and honest and free of pressure. The researcher will not designate a concrete number of mother-daughter duos to interview; however, it will be between 6 and 12. This type of research design is appropriate because the researcher is not focused on the number of mother-daughter relationships but instead on the quality and outcomes of each relationship (Harper & Thompson, 2012; 2011). The interviews will be semi-structured and combine a traditional empirical approach to an interview and an interpretative phenomenological analysis approach. The traditional empirical approach will allow the researcher to ask questions in a specific order, have a well-designed interview schedule and allow the researcher to see any consistencies in the way in which the mothers or daughters answer the questions (Harper & Thompson, 2012; 2011). The interpretative phenomenological analysis approach will consist of some key areas to address but the researcher will not necessarily know the route to get there because that will depend on the interviewee (Harper & Thompson, 2012; 2011). The interviewee will have the opportunity to determine how much historical information she will provide because the questions are created to elicit a response to her lived experiences. Some basic questions will be asked that consist of general information such as age, number of children, level of education attained, number of traumatic events, and marital status. Although these questions could be answered in a preliminary questionnaire, the researcher wants to use simple questions such as these as part of rapport building. The researcher also believes that some of these questions will provide more insight into how much of an influence the mother had on the daughter. For example, if the daughter

decided to attend a particular college because her mother attended or if she selected her career path because it is the same or similar to her mother's.

As an effort to preserve the efficacy of the research and ensure that the research is a clear depiction of mother-daughter duos in the African American community instead of the researcher's opinion, phenomenological epoche or bracketing of preconceptions will be utilized (Roberts, 2019). The researcher will engage in bracketing throughout the research process to avoid the influence of personal beliefs about African American mother-daughter duos, as this is a lived experience for her and should be purged from the research (Overgaard, 2015).

Qualitative Study

The qualitative study will create and give meaning to the social experiences and lived realities of the mother-daughter relationship, particularly amongst African Americans. The phenomenon of interest will be best explained by interviews that allow the mother-daughter duo to provide an account of their experiences from their points of view (Heppner, Thompson, Wampold, & Wang, 2016). Qualitative research is an interactive process often shaped by the researcher's demographics and the people in the desired setting (Heppner et al., 2016). When researching a topic that can be very sensitive for many, a qualitative approach will have a great benefit as it will allow the researcher to be more emphatic and supportive while gathering information (Ponterotto, 2010). The researcher will gather all data through semi-structured interviews. The typology of the interview questions will be a mixture of background, opinion or belief, experiential, and feeling questions.

Within this design, the qualitative research will describe the existence and provide additional details about the phenomenon (Heppner et al., 2016). This design explores a well-known concept and answers particular questions about a specific area or population (Zyphur &

Pierides, 2017). Interviews will be utilized because they are self-reports that provide the researcher with facts, opinions, behaviors, and attitudes (Heppner et al., 2016). The interviews will also be utilized to explore any relationships and trends amongst the variables. Relationships and themes have the ability to locate problems and potential needs within the selected population. The interviews may also allow the researcher to notice any patterns or cause-and-effect issues amongst this particular mother-daughter population (Heppner et al., 2016).

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is known to be an approach that focuses on the study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience. Phenomenology will explore how a particular group of individuals in a specific place or group have certain experiences (Van Manen, 2017). This approach is often considered complex because it seeks the essential structures of real human beings and is not an imaginable experience (Wertz, 2014). Looking into the lives of real humans is important because the researcher should focus on how things appear, show, or give themselves in lived experiences or in the consciousness. Aside from serving as informative research, it is the hope that this phenomenological approach will have a long-term impact on the African American community. Some long-term impacts include but are not limited to improving the psychological health of African American mother-daughter duos, being beginner steps to self-development, encourage women in this particular community to create personal growth plans, influence more experimental designs, or become more open to therapeutic healing. These long-term impacts often justify why a phenomenological approach was chosen (Van Manen, 2017).

Through the use of phenomenology, this research will aim to expose details that are typically omitted in mother-daughter relationships in the African American community. It will also provide an opportunity for mothers and daughters in this particular community to express

how it feels to have certain experiences. The phenomenology approach will present others with the opportunity to attempt to understand how mother-daughter relationships in the African American community are similar throughout several generations but are different from mother-daughter relationships in other cultures, mostly due to experienced trauma. Clear questions and themes guide this research as that is important with phenomenological research. Phenomenological research will engage the readers with its questions that are explored through the identification, critical examination, and elaboration of themes that help the reader recognize the meaningfulness of the human experiences and events.

Research Questions

Research questions for the study are as follows:

RQ1:   How does generational trauma impact the mother-daughter relationship?

RQ2:   How does the mother-daughter relationship influence a woman's romantic and nonromantic relationship?

RQ3: What are the significant connections between generational trauma and a daughter's self- identity?

Participants and Setting

The participants will consist of mother-daughter pairs to complete individual 90-minute interviews. The cut off factors for the participants will be that the woman must be a mother of a daughter between the ages of 14 and 35. This is the age range where views on self-identification, meaningful relationships, and sex roles are created and implemented due to the daughter's being in early adulthood (Feldman, 2009). In early adolescence, social and personality development occurs, which often influences how one perceives the self, integrates into society, and forms relationships during early adulthood (Friedman, 2015). The limiters will

be mothers that were not raised by their mother or a maternal figure. For example, if a mother was raised by her father and had limited to no interaction with her mother or a maternal figure, she would not qualify for the research. Another limiter would be if the mother and the daughter were not raised with their mother or a maternal figure until age 14. An invite will recruit participants on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Due to the research targeting a particular population, the sampling will be judgmental or purposive. Participants will also have an opportunity to participate in the study by providing contact information from a conference scheduled to be held in Landover, Maryland, in April 2020 entitled "Breaking Generational Curses by Healing the Minority Mother-Daughter Dynamic." The conference was created to focus on the healing and restoration of Black and Brown mothers and daughters. Although the conference did not occur due to a worldwide pandemic, the researcher has a database of all scheduled participants. The researcher will reach out to these individuals via email to inquire about participation in the study. Before being selected for an interview, a brief survey will be sent to all potential participants. The survey will explore the daughters age and inquire if both mother and daughter were raised by their mother or maternal figure up until the age of 14.

All interviews will be conducted one on one. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be a face-to-face interview option in an office and a virtual option that will consist of a scheduled Skype/Zoom meeting. An office setting was selected for this interview because it is a neutral space for the researcher and the participant. If the participant elects a Skype/Zoom meeting, it will be required that the participant is in a room free of others.

Procedures

Once all contact information is received, mother-daughter pairs will be identified based on meeting the survey's criteria. A survey on Survey Monkey will be sent to both parties to complete before the interview to ensure they are part of the targeted population. A link will be emailed to the potential participants to complete a survey that is a maximum of 8 questions and takes no longer than 20 minutes. Once the surveys are complete, the mothers and daughters will be asked to sign consent forms to participate, and they will be made aware that their personal information will not be shared however, their answers will. The pairs will also be asked to not share any information about the survey or the interviews until both parties have completed both. After consent forms have been signed and submitted, interviews will be scheduled. All interviews will be conducted face to face or via Skype/Zoom and audio recorded. Each interview will only consist of the mother or the daughter, not both simultaneously. Each interview will be scheduled for 90 minutes with a maximum of twenty questions and conducted in a private room. If the mother and daughter reside in the same home, they will be asked to schedule at a time that they are apart. Once all interviews have been conducted, the researcher will explore themes within the collected data to seek any similarities between the mother and the daughter and compare results from one mother-daughter duo to other duos.

The Researcher's Role

As the researcher, my role was to select a research topic with supporting questions, solidify the research design, identify the target population, create a survey to capture the targeted population, construct interview questions, and set interview protocols. I utilized bracketing to document my feelings, assumptions, and understandings from my lived experiences as an African American woman between the age of 14 and 35 whom my mother raised up until age 14.

I understood that when interviewing the mothers, I would have to include more tactics to build rapport due to the many physical similarities I may have with the daughters. When thinking of my own bias within the study, I wanted to eliminate any other factors that may taint the data, so I decided to exclude any woman I may know or have a personal relationship with. I will not allow any mother-daughter duo I am familiar with to enter the study. Familiar people will not be included because I will be conducting all interviews. I do not want the participants to feel that they cannot be honest due to familiarity. I also do not want to interview people I know because I do not want to increase the chances of skewed data due to my knowledge of the mother-daughter duo's previous history.

Instrumentation

Interviews

Each mother-daughter duo will be interviewed separately, which this was the main data collection method. The personal interviews were semi structed and required me to see the interviewee's face even if it occurred virtually. An advantage to seeing the person is that it allows me to see facial expressions and nonverbal responses (Jackson, 2009). Semi structured interview questions are beneficial to a qualitative study as they allow the participants to disclose facts, attitudes, and patterns that may lead to unexpected themes (Heppner et al., 2016). After participants were selected from the survey pool, they were invited to a personal interview that was scheduled for 90 minutes.

Interview Questions

The following questions will be asked during each interview:

1. What was your mother's parenting style with you?

    (Prompt: Was she strict, fun, attentive, etc.)

2. Describe your relationship with your mother going back to your younger years.

   (*Prompt: Age 5 and above*)

3. What two words would you use to describe you and your mother's relationship, and why?

   (*Prompt; Words that describe the overall relationship, are you close, distant, etc.*)

4. What were the most important lessons your mother taught you?

5. If you could change anything about you and your mother's (daughter's) relationship, what would it be?

   (*Prompt: Change the amount of communication, time spent, less arguments, etc.*)

6. Who taught you about sex, menstruation, and romantic relationships? How were you taught?

7. Describe some of the relationships you have witnessed your mother involved in. These should be romantic and nonromantic.

   (*Prompt: Did you witness your mother with close friends, how was she with her significant other, etc.*)

8. Explain your father's role in your upbringing.

9. How did your father engage in disputes with you and your mother?

10. To your knowledge, has your mother (daughter) experienced any traumatic incidents that you have witnessed or been made aware of?

    (*Prompt: Traumatic incidents can include directly or indirectly experiencing an accident, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, natural disaster, neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, living with family with MH/SA disorders, separation, racism, war, etc.*)

11. What was her response to the trauma?

    (*Follow up: How do you know this?*)

12. Have you experienced any traumatic incidents? If so, did your mother witness the trauma or was she made aware of the trauma?

13. What was your response to the trauma?

14. What was your mother's response to your traumatic event?

15. Have there been any traumatic events that have impacted your family as a whole?

   (Prompt: Caused a separation, legal issues, mental health services for the family, etc.)

16. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate your self-esteem?

17. How do you describe yourself?

18. How do you describe your mother?

19. How would you describe your current romantic relationships?

   (Follow up if not present: what are you looking for in a partner and why?)

20. How would you describe your current platonic relationships?

   (Follow up: Friendships with men and women.)

21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Preliminary Survey

All potential participants will be sent a preliminary survey that consists of six questions. The survey will be sent via email with Survey Monkey (See Appendix). The survey will be utilized for descriptive purposes and will consist of closed-ended questions that will have a limited number of alternatives (Jackson, 2009). The potential participant will be asked to select the applicable answer. The survey will only be sent to individuals who are part of the representative population and will help the researcher determine who qualifies for the target population.

Preliminary Survey Questions

1. What is your age range?
   18-25
   26-33
   34-41
   42-50
   51 and over

2. What is your race?
   American Indian/Alaska Native
   Asian
   Black or African American
   Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
   White/Caucasian
   Multiracial

3. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?
   Yes
   No

4. Do you have a daughter?
   Yes
   No

5. What is your daughter's age range?
   0-3
   4-7
   8-11
   12-14
   15-17
   18-21
   22-29
   30 and over

6. Did you reside with your mother at least until age 18?
   Yes
   No

7. Have you and/or your mother experienced a traumatic event?
   Yes
   No
   Not Sure

Data Analysis

Phenomenological analysis allows participants to report their lived experiences as they exist in their consciousness (Wertz, 2014). Phenomenology can focus on a collective human experience over a period of time (Embree, 1997). Overall, phenomenology aids in seeing human experience, patterns, and universal features.

The first step in the phenomenological analysis is epoche, an ancient Greek term that typically translates as "suspension of judgment" (Pylkkanen, 2015). Epoche helps the researcher set aside assumptions and beliefs. Remaining free of judgment is important to phenomenological analysis because the researcher does not want to affirm or deny any of the collected material (Pylkkanen, 2015). Epoche allows the researcher the opportunity to exclude personal thoughts and experiences on the subject matter.

The researcher will remove personal experiences by using bracketing. Bracketing allows the researcher to remove her own thoughts on the subject matter and promotes the voices of the participants to emerge authentically in the research. During the bracketing process, the researcher will make sure to write out all assumptions, feelings, and unanswered questions from her own relationship with her mother so she can focus solely on the participants responses.

As part of the phenomenological reduction process, horizontalization will be used. Horizontalization requires the researcher to give value to all of the participants' responses but allows the researcher to remove statements that are not relevant to the study. This process allows the researcher to group similar responses together to ultimately form themes.

Lastly, phenomenological structuralism will be completed. This will allow the researcher the opportunity to provide meaning and essence to the themes that arose in the study.

Trustworthiness

The aspect of trustworthiness addresses credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Trustworthiness refers to the confidence in data, interpretation, and methods utilized to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Beck, 2014). In qualitative research, trustworthiness can be seen as true value or transparency and it is useful to the integrity of the

findings (Cope, 2014). Trustworthiness is necessary, and the researcher should establish

protocols and procedures that could be worthy of consideration by readers (Amankwaa, 2016).

Credibility

Credibility of a study is often considered the most important criterion and is seen as the

truth of the study (Polit & Beck, 2014). To ensure the findings are credible, I made sure that all

participants are appropriately identified and that they are truly part of the targeted population. I

will meet with a peer debriefer after each mother-daughter duo's interviews and during data

analysis.

Data will be collected from each of the recorded interviews. I will analyze the data as

well as the peer debriefer. Once themes are identified, and conclusions are made, I will reach out

to the participants to see if my themes and conclusions were an accurate depiction of the

responses. This is considered member checking.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability are similar to reliability in a quantitative study. They

deal with consistency and the data's stability over time and study's conditions (Polit & Beck,

2014). I will have research logs to take note of all activities during the study and decisions made

during the study (Connelly, 2016).

Confirmability is the degree to which findings are consistent and able to be repeated

(Connelly, 2016). I will maintain an analysis audit trail with my decisions made during the study

and detailed notes. This audit trail of analysis will be shared with the peer debriefer.

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Ethical Consideration

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I will schedule virtual interviews and send the participant the invite. The participant will

need a password to enter the virtual room, and I will also have to grant the participant into the

virtual room manually. All video and audio recordings will be saved in a password-protected electronic file. I will not utilize names to save the recordings but instead, a participant number. As unexpected issues arise, I will make sure to include them in the audit trail analysis and the solution.

Summary

This chapter described the qualitative research design that was utilized to explore the impact of generational trauma on mother-daughter relationships in the African American community. This chapter explained why this study is relevant and why it was important to capture the true essence of this issue using the phenomenological methodology. Within the chapter, I have provided my research questions, procedures, my roles, and data collection. This chapter also explains the procedures used to increase the study's trustworthiness.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This study was designed to explore the impact of generational trauma on the mother-daughter relationship specifically in the African American community guided by the research questions:

1. How does generational trauma impact the mother-daughter relationship?

2. How does the mother-daughter relationship influence a woman's romantic and nonromantic relationship?

3. What are the significant connections between generational trauma and a daughter's self- identity?

Data was collected from participant interviews using a phenomenological methodology. The data was then analyzed for emanating codes and themes to explain and describe generational trauma's impact on the African American mother-daughter relationship.

This chapter starts with a summary of the data collection followed by a demographic overview of the participants. Within the descriptions of the participants, there will be a brief profile of each person within the duo. This section will be followed by the results of the study. All themes that emerged will be presented in full detail and an essence of the phenomenon. Lastly, responses to the research questions will be provided.

Participants

A demographic portrayal of each participant's personal background is shown in Table 1. Participants completed a preliminary summary prior to participating in the semi-structured interview. This section presents a group profile, or an overview of the participants.

There were nine mother-daughter duos which resulted in eighteen participants total. All eighteen participants were African American females. Nine participants were identified as the mother and nine participants were identified as the daughter within the study. In relation to the mothers, four fell within the 34-41 age range and five fell within the 51 and over age range. In relation to the daughters, two fell within the 12-14 range, one within the 15-17 age range, one within the 18-21 age range, and five fell within the 30 and over age range.

Table 1: Participant's Demographic Overview

Participant	Age Range	Role Within Duo
2A	51 and over	Mother
2B	30 and over	Daughter
4A	34-41	Mother
4B	12-14	Daughter
5A	34-41	Mother
5B	15-17	Daughter
7A	34-41	Mother
7B	18-21	Daughter
8A	51 and over	Mother
8B	30 and over	Daughter
9A	34-41	Mother
9B	12-14	Daughter
11A	51 and over	Mother
11B	30 and over	Daughter
12A	51 and over	Mother
12B	30 and over	Daughter
15A	51 and over	Mother
15B	30 and over	Daughter

Individual Profiles

This section provides an individual profile of each participant to provide a rich description or portrait and to clarity whom the study findings apply. The use of participant numbers protects the participants anonymity. All the participates allowed me to assign participant numbers.

Duo 1: 2A and 2B

  2A is the mother within duo 1. She is in her early sixties and an only child. She is currently divorced and the mother of two adult women.

  2A reports that her mother was "easy going" and that they were close. She described her mother as sweet, calm, patient, and quiet. 2A reports that the most important lesson her mother taught her was to always work hard. When asked if there was anything that she would change about her and her mother's relationship, 2A reported she would not change anything. 2A's parents separated when she was younger, so she did not spend much time with her father.

  2A believes her and her daughter have a good relationship even though her daughter can be "strong headed" in relation to certain things. 2A describes her daughter as strong, bold, a go getter, and she will not allow anyone to tell her what to do once her mind is set. When asked if 2A would change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, she was not sure if she would change anything at this time since their communication has increased tremendously since her daughter's teenage years.

  2B is the daughter within duo 1. She is in her mid-thirties and the youngest of two. She is single and has never been married.

  2B reports that her mother has always been supportive and the organizer. During 2B's younger years, her mother would make sure her needs were met, chores were done, homework was completed, and ensure she was present at all necessary events (i.e., dance, cheerleading, etc.). 2B believes that over the years, her and her mother's communication has increased and has become more open and honest. When 2B was younger, she was taught to "stay in a child's place" and did not question much. As 2B has grown, she has been able to freely ask her mother questions free of hesitation. 2B reports that the most important lessons her mother taught her

were, be kind to others because you never know what others are going through, always be grateful for what you have because there are a lot of people who do not have a fraction of what you have, put God first in everything that you do, and allow God to give you the wisdom to navigate life. When asked if 2B would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, she reported that she would have liked to have open communication with her mother at a younger age and learn more life lessons in the home setting instead of in the community. Although 2B's parents are currently divorced, she is close with her father and has always been able to talk more openly with him.

Duo 2: 4A and 4B

4A is the mother within duo 2. She is in her mid-thirties and has three sisters. She is currently in a long-term relationship but previously divorced. 4A has two daughters with her ex-husband.

4A reports that her biological mother was around but had a hands-off approach. 4A explained that she was raised by her father and stepmother. 4A describes her relationship with her biological mother as strained because she wanted to be with her so much when she was younger but as she got older, she learned to accept her for who she was. She describes their current relationship as "friends" meaning, her mother is cool for good times, but she does not confide in her. She also does not seek guidance or advice from her mother. When asked what the most important lessons her mother taught her, 4A reported that her mother taught her the kind of mother she did not want to be, she taught her to be present in her children's life and avoid having different men around her children. 4A expressed that these lessons were important because these were acts that her mother engaged in, and she was not fond of them. Her mother also taught her the value of having a good heart. If 4A could change anything about her and her mother's

relationship, she would like for them to be closer and have a true bond. 4A's father remarried and was not only a provider but also her primary caretaker.

4A describes her relationship with her daughter as strained. 4A reports that she was so against old school parenting (i.e., do as I say, parents are always right, parents will not apologize, etc.) that she tried to make her daughter feel valued and as if she had a voice. In turn, she feels that her daughter sees her as an equal. Despite the nature of the strained relationship, 4A reports her and her daughter are close. She describes her daughter as intelligent, talented, creative, quiet, a loner, but an overall awesome kid. When asked if she would change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, 4A reported she would change the way in which they communicate. She explained that they both desire to be heard and understood so they often become defensive, upset, and shut down.

4B is the daughter within duo 2. She is 14 years old and the oldest of two.

4B reports that her mother is strict, attentive, fun, and kind of controlling. She reports that her and her mother's relationship was better when she was younger because they would do a lot of things together and she did not talk back to her mother as much. 4B also described her and her mother's relationship as "bipolar" because they are both very moody people. 4B reports that the most important lessons that her mother taught her were to always love herself and to be safe in the world. When asked if there was anything that she would change about her and her mother's relationship, 4B reported she would like her mother to trust her more and be less controlling. 4B reported that her father would visit and call, but he did not play a significant role in her life.

Duo 3: 5A and 5B

5A is the mother within duo 3. She is in her late thirties and has five siblings. She is currently single and never married. She is the mother of one teenage girl.

5A expressed that her relationship with her mother was "stretched". She felt they were good enough to reside in the same home, but the relationship was different in comparison to her siblings. 5A expressed that her mother trusted her to be responsible for her siblings. 5A also reported that her mother did not have to discipline her often but when she did, she would restrict her time with her father. Overall, 5A describes her relationship with her mother as strangers and broken. 5A describes her mother as lonely, tired, and overwhelmed. 5A reports that the most important lesson her mother taught her was to be strong and keep going no matter what. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 5A reported she would change her and her mother's communication. 5A reports that her father was always present even after he and her mother divorced. Their relationship changed once she was older and involved in her own domestic disputes.

5A reports that her and her daughter are best friends and a team. She describes their relationship as a team because her daughter has been with her throughout many trials and tribulations free of judgment. 5A expressed that her daughter has been supportive with her anxiety. 5A has also expressed that she has recently realized that she may be too attached to her daughter. When asked if 5A would change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, she reported that she wanted to have more trust in her. She has little trust in her daughter, but it is no fault of her daughter's.

5B is the daughter within duo 3. She is 16 years old and is the only child.

5B reports that her mother is a mixture of fun and strict. She also reports that her mother has clear boundaries. She reports that she and her mother have a good relationship, but it was better in her younger years. 5B expressed that her and her mother are close, and they are very similar. 5B reports that the most important lessons her mother taught her were to stay to herself, do not trust too many people, and stay focused in school. When asked if 5B would change anything about her relationship with her mother, she reported she would change the way in which they communicate. She also wishes they would have a better understanding of one another. 5B reports that her father has always supported her physically but not mentally.

Duo 4: 7A and 7B

7A is the mother within the duo. She is in her early forties and has one younger sister. She is currently single but has had three previous marriages. She is the mother of one young adult daughter.

7A describes her mom as a fun mom. She had more of a democratic approach to parenting, so discipline seemed more like a negotiation. 7A believes her mom was too lenient and had a more verbal approach rather than physical. 7A reports that she always had a voice and was able to speak with her mom about a lot of different subjects. Overall, her mother was open-minded. 7A reports that her and her mom's relationship is strong and resilient. She reports that her mother is very sweet and does not have a mean bone in her body. When asked what she would change about her and her mother's relationship, 7A reported she would change her mother's marriage because that impacted their relationship, and she would change her mother's passive demeanor. 7A reports that the most important lesson her mother taught her was to always stand firm on what she believes and never waver. 7A did not remember her interactions

with her biological father due to him passing when she was three years old. 7A did report having a tremulous relationship with her stepfather.

7A describes her relationship with her daughter as complex and strained. She reports that they love one another but they often do not see eye to eye. She feels that her daughter challenges her because she does not trust what she is saying and because she wants to learn things for herself. She describes her daughter as strong, self-sufficient, suffers from only child syndrome, does not accept disappointment well, and typically looks for the easy way out. When asked what she would change about her and her daughter's relationship, 7A would change their communication and trust level.

7B is the daughter in duo 4. She is 19 years old and her mother's only child.

7B believes her mother is authoritative and feels that it is either her mom's way or no way. She also admits that her mom can be open at times and allows her to do her own thing. 7B expressed that when she was younger her mother was still active in the military so she was in and out of the home and they would always have a great time when they saw each other. Once her mother was no longer in active duty, they were spending more time together and learning more about one another. The more they learned about one another, they started to bump heads. Despite bumping heads, 7B feels her and her mother are connected and similar in some ways. 7B believes the most important lessons her mother taught her were to always be there for yourself because no one's going to be there for you like you can and to never depend on others. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 7B reported she would change the way they communicate. She feels that her mother often talks at her and that makes it hard for her to articulate her thoughts and feelings. 7B's mother and father

separated when she was an infant, but her father has always been involved as much as possible without residing in the same home.

Duo 5: 8A and 8B

8A is the mother in duo 5. She is in her early seventies and was her mother's only child. Currently 8A is a widow and mother of three children.

8A reports that her mother was extremely loving. Her mother made it clear that she was the center of her life and filled a void since her mother passed away when she was young. 8A reports that her mother had a big personality, was a traditional stereotypical black church lady, and was a little controlling. Her mother always told her how beautiful and how proud of her she was. Overall, 8A reports her mother was determined, persistent, and spiritual. 8A believes the most important lessons her mother taught her were to work hard and that she is blessed by God, and she should always give back to others. When asked if there was anything that she would change about her and her mother's relationship, 8A expressed that her mother was somewhat controlling but she cannot think of anything that she would want to change. Although 8A's father was present, he was mainly the breadwinner and her mother tended to her upbringing.

8A reports to have a symbiotic relationship with her daughter. She states that they get a lot from each other and ultimately the relationship is fun and loving. 8A describes her daughter as smart, a hard worker, self -centered, fun, and an overall good person. When asked if she would change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, 8A would like for her daughter to become more spiritual. She reports that she has taught her about the importance of spirituality and hoping that one day it will manifest. It is significant to note that although 8A only has one daughter in this study, she reports that her relationship with her two daughters is completely different.

8B is the daughter in duo 5. She is in her mid-thirties and has two siblings. 8B is currently involved in a romantic relationship.

8B reports that at times she felt her mother was hands off in terms of allowing her to determine what types of extracurricular activities she desired to engage in. 8B reported that she and her mother would talk about more topics as she got older in age. She also reports that her and her mother are very close, they are friends, and although she has siblings, she often felt like an only child. 8B describes her mother as sweet, soft but not weak, a woman of faith, and successful. 8B believes the most important lessons her mother taught her were to speak up for herself and her faith. When asked if there was anything that she would change about her and her mother's relationship, 8B reported she wished her mother would have told her more things about her family or her situations earlier in life. Although 8B's father is deceased, he was an active parent, very involved, but at times, emotionally disconnected.

Duo 6: 9A and 9B

9A is the mother in duo 6. She is in her late thirties and has 4 siblings. She is currently single, never been married, and the mother of one teenage girl.

9A reports that her mother was aggressive, direct, and zero tolerance. Her mother was also the epitome of loving. She knew when to be understanding and compassionate. As she got older, her mother became more of her friend. 9A did mention that her mother would often take a softer approach with her due to her fragile health. Overall, 9A describes her mother as the best. 9A believes the most important lessons her mother taught her was she would never tell her anything wrong and to always treat people the way you want to be treated. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 9A reports she would not change anything.

9A describes her daughter as caring and mature. She reports she is mature because she has been by her side through the good and bad times. 9A reports that her daughter always makes her smile, and she is the perfect daughter for her. When asked if she would change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, 9A reports she would change her daughter's limit pushing. 9A feels that her daughter toys with her and always attempts to push boundaries she has set.

9B is the daughter within duo 6. She is 14 years old and an only child.

9B reports that her mother is strict but also fun. She reports they have a good relationship, and they always communicate. 9B believes that her and her mother's relationship has gotten better as she gets older, and this may be attributed to her having a better understanding of what her mother is telling her. Overall, 9B describes her relationship with her mother as honest and loving. She feels she can always talk to her mother about anything, and she knows her mother loves her unconditionally. 9B reports the most important lessons her mother taught her was communication is key and trust is very important and once it is broken, it is hard to get back. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 9B did not desire to change anything and feels she and her mother fit perfectly like puzzles pieces. Although 9B's mother and father are not together, her father is and has been very active in her life and she frequently stays with him.

Duo 7: 11A and 11B

11A is the mother within duo 7. She is in her early sixties and the youngest of three. She is currently married and the mother of two adults.

11A reports her mother was strict but fair. She always offered advice and overall, they had a good relationship. 11A describes her mother as loving, helpful, religious, and giving. She

reports that her mother was so kind, she could never find any harsh words to describe her. 11A shared that the most important lessons her mother taught her was that honesty is important, she taught her the importance of loving God, and to keep religion in her life. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 11A reports she would have learned more about her mother prior to her passing. She feels she lost a part of herself when her mother passed and there was so much more information she desired to know. 11A reports that her father was very involved in her upbringing.

11A reports that her daughter is very loving and giving. She will give until she no longer has anything else to give. 11A reports that she loves her daughter dearly and has seen their love change since her daughter had to become a primary caretaker for her once she became ill. She does report that patience is not her daughter's best quality, but she sees her working on it. 11A reports that her daughter is good with people but often gets taken advantage of and does not receive reciprocation for all her acts of kindness. When asked if she would change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, 11A reports that she would be less judgmental and more understanding.

11B is the daughter within duo 7. She is in her mid-thirties and the oldest of two. She is currently in a long-term romantic relationship.

11B reports that her mother had a traditional parenting style. She believes that her mother utilized the morals and values that her mother instilled in her and taught her the same things. 11B reports that she and her mother are close and became closer as she got older due to her becoming her mother's caretaker. 11B reports that there were a few life events during her teen years that put a strain on their relationship however they have grown closer over time. 11B also describes her and her mother's relationship as reliable and honest. 11B shared that as she

grew older, her and her mother had to learn each other's communication styles and acknowledge that she was no longer a child. 11B reports that the most important lessons her mother taught her were to make sure her and her spouse were equally yoked, take care of herself, never settle, go for what she wants, be true to herself, and know your worth. 11B describes her mother as superwoman. She reports that she is loving, giving, supportive, and a bit overbearing at times. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 11B reported that although it has improved, she would change their communication. 11B expresses that at times, she takes on a parental role while they are communicating. 11B's mother and father are currently married and he has been active in her upbringing. In her younger years they were very close however a distance was created once she discovered his infidelity.

Duo 8: 12A and 12B

12A is the mother within duo 8. She is in her late fifties and the youngest of two. She is currently divorced and the mother of two.

12A reports that her mother was strict, did not tolerate misbehavior, expected academic excellence, and expected her to complete her chores. 12A reports that she had a wonderful mother and she taught her about obedience. 12A also reported that her mother was warm and caring. She describes her mother as outgoing, friendly, and a great woman. 12A believes the most important lessons her mother taught her were to work hard, be honest, strive for excellence, and always do your best. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 12A reported she would not change anything. 12A's father was active in her upbringing physically, emotionally, financially, and educationally.

12A reports that her and her daughter have an intense relationship. She reports that her daughter is not obedient, does not like to work hard for things, does not take guidance, and does

not respect her. 12A describes her daughter as a drama queen, hardheaded, and stubborn. She also reports that her daughter is caring however the beforementioned characteristics are more prominent. When asked if she would change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, 12A reported she would like the relationship to be different, loving, and respectful but this is simply a hope or wish or prayer.

12B is the daughter within duo 8. She is in her mid-thirties and the oldest of two. She is currently single and the mother of one infant boy.

12B reports that her mother was strict and old school regarding her parenting style. Her mom was older and 12B reports her maturity influenced how she raised her and structured the home. 12B reports that her mother worked a lot, so they did not spend a large amount of time together. 12B believes the lack of time spent when she was younger explains why her mother does not completely know her now. 12B reports her and her mother's relationship is strained and difficult. She describes her mother as quiet, studious, and very firm even though she does not raise her voice often. 12B shares that the most important lessons her mother taught her were financial literacy such as keeping good credit and saving money as well as treat people how you want to be treated. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 12B reported she would like for her mother to try to understand her. She would also like to feel as if she were allowed to have an opinion and an opportunity to express how she feels. 12B reports her biological father did not have a part in her upbringing once he separated from her mother and her stepfather did not have a great relationship with her either.

Duo 9: 15A and 15B

15A is the mother in duo 9. She is in her late fifties and an only child. She is currently divorced and a mother of two.

15A shared that her mother was young when she had her, so her grandparents did majority of the parenting until she was eight or nine years old. Around this time, 15A and her mother moved to their own home, and she reports her mother was firm and a good mother. Prior to becoming school age, 15A felt that her and her mother were more like siblings and she would call her by her first name. She eventually started to refer to her as mom. 15A's mother did not have to discipline her often and they did not engage in much conversation until 15A was older. 15A reports that overall, she and her mother have a good relationship and it was trustworthy and dependable. 15A believes that the most important lessons her mother taught her were to be independent, take care of herself, and have good morals. When asked if 15A would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, she would have liked for her mother to be more considerate of other people's decisions and not be so judgmental. 15A reports to have had inconsistent visits with her father due to his active duty in the Navy. Once he moved back home, the relationship soon turned unstable due to the infrequency of phone calls and visits.

15A reports her and her daughter have a good relationship. They are best friends and can talk to one another about anything. They do not always agree with one another, but they try to remain open-minded. 15A describes her daughter as a good person, outspoken, kind of critical, kindhearted, and giving. When asked if she could change anything about her and her daughter's relationship, 15A wishes that her daughter would realize that she is a senior citizen and will make decisions that are age appropriate for her. She also would like for her to understand that she does not always want to be around people and enjoys time to herself.

15B is the daughter in duo 9. She is in her early thirties and the youngest of two. She is single and the mother of one infant boy.

15B reports that her mother was not strict and relaxed. She gave her freedom and she felt comfortable talking about any subject. 15B refers to her and her mother's relationship as open and nonjudgmental. 15B describes her mother as emotional, sweet, loving, free spirited, and unorganized. 15B believes that the most important lessons her mother taught her were to not wear out your welcome and always take care of yourself. When asked if she would change anything about her and her mother's relationship, 15B reports the way in which they communicate when they do not agree with each other. She also reports that they may not communicate if they are upset but it does not last long. 15B's father is currently deceased but when she was younger, he would do what he could despite his addiction.

Results

The following section presents the results from the data collection and analysis. The results are broken into four themes and eight sub-themes. The first theme is Communication, it is supported by the sub-themes Verbal Communication and Active Listening. The second theme is Inadequate Knowledge, it is supported by the sub-themes Women's Bodies and Wombs and Love and Marriage. The third theme is Relationships, it is supported by the sub-themes Black Women in Friendships and Relationship with Yourself. Lastly, the fourth theme is Trauma Acceptance, it is supported by the sub-themes Denial and Secrecy. Each sub-theme is supported by one or two sections, which further describes each theme.

Theme 1: Communication

At some point during the interviews, all the participants mentioned communication. The sub-themes and sections below will highlight the two types of communication styles reported by the participants that they were dissatisfied with and would opt to change if they had the ability.

Sub-Theme A: Verbal Communication

Fourteen of the participants reported if they could change anything about their mother's relationship, it would be communication. The following sections describe the communication dissatisfaction in greater detail.

Increase

Nine individuals of nine mother-daughter duo participants reported they would like to increase communication within the mother-daughter relationship. Within this group there was as a common goal of wanting the increased communication to consistent of openness and honesty. There was also a frequent desire for increased communication at a younger age. 2A could not think of anything to change because she acknowledged the recent change in her and her daughter's communication which she is satisfied with. 2A said their communication was "better than before because we have more conversations since she lives in another state." 2B said "I wanted our (her and her mother) lines of communication to be more open because I think as you grow up, there are things that you learn, and I wish I had learned them at home versus in the streets (non-home setting)." 5A said "the only thing that I would change is the communication" and that was in reference to her and her mother's relationship. 7A would make communication changes to her and her daughter's relationship and she said, "I assume that I give off that she can talk to me about anything, but I still feel there's certain things she is not comfortable talking to me about." 8B said "I wish that she (her mother) would have been more open to talking about a lot of stuff when I was younger." 11A said "I wish that I was able to ask more questions and get more information about her (her mother)." 11B said "I would improve our communication and be able to think about things that have happened in our lives and be able to better talk about how it impacted us." 15A said "sometimes she (her mother) would not agree with decisions that I made and there would be times where she would go however amount of time without talking."

Sub-Theme B: Active Listening

Out of the fourteen participants that reported they would change communication within the mother-daughter relationship, five reported they would change the way both parties observed the verbal and non-verbal messages, generate a mutual understanding, and provide appropriate feedback. The following section describes the dissatisfaction in relation to active listening in greater detail.

Manner

Five individuals of the nine mother-daughter duos expressed concerns with interpreting what is being communicated and the desire to be understood. These participants expressed that they wanted to change the way in which they communicate, deliver, interpret, and comprehend each other. When communicating with her daughter and desiring to make changes, 4A said "I think maybe the way we communicate; we both want to be heard and understood. We also get defensive." When communicating with her mother, 5B said she would change "the way we talk to each other but sometimes when we talk to each other, it comes across differently and we need a better understanding of one another." When communicating with her mother, 7B said "I would definitely change the way we communicate with each other. I feel like we bump heads a lot and instead of talking with her she talks at me and I feel like I can't get my thoughts and feelings out." 12B said "I want her to try to understand me. I do not have to sit there and eat it and just hold it inside and let it boil. Anytime I try to have a conversation, she (her mother) gets upset and calls me rude." 15B stated "I would change the way we (her and her mother) communicate when we are upset or the lack thereof. When we do not agree or it is not a good time to talk, we still try to have those conversations and then someone ends up mad."

Theme 2: Inadequate Knowledge

All the participants reported inadequate knowledge with menstruation, sex, and romantic relationships. The sub-themes and sections below will highlight the limited knowledge each participant was provided by her mother.

Sub-Theme A: Women's Bodies and Wombs

All the participants were provided information from their mothers about menstruation and sex however it was not detailed information. All the mothers focused on hygiene in relation to menstruation and prevention in relation to sex.

Sex and Reproductive Education

Participants were asked who taught them about menstruation and how were they taught. 2A said "From what I can remember, I think my mother and her sister taught me about menstruation and to be honest, I do not remember having that conversation with her or about sex like parents do now." 2B said "I think my mom taught me by going to the store to purchase sanitary napkins and I taught myself how to use tampons by reading the pamphlet in the box. She told me to take ibuprofen and use a heating pad. I do not think anyone ever taught me about sex, but I took sex education in high school. I also heard about experiences from friends and family." 4A said "Probably my stepmother (taught her about menstruation) but I cannot remember having a whole conversation. I did have a book called *The Period Book*. I learned about sex from school, television, and things my parents would say but we did not talk about that kind of stuff openly." 4B said "My mom bought me an American Girl book from Barnes and Noble about menstruation. I learned about sex from my mom and school. I attended a sex education class, and my mom told me stuff could happen and how to be safe." 5A said "I taught myself about menstruation. My mother had feminine products in the bathroom. I started my

cycle and went in the bathroom and found a sanitary napkin. My mother found out when she washed my clothes, and I was in trouble. I taught myself about sex and talking in the neighborhood with older kids and hearing their stories." 5B said "School and my mom taught me about menstruation. My mom and school taught me about sex and my mom talked to me about being peer pressured to do it since I was in high school."

7A said "She (her mother) gave me a little information about it so when it came, I was not completely freaked out. She went through the process of how to change your napkins, carry extra clothes, and properly dispose. She went to the library, pulled books, and watched videos to learn about sex." 7B said "My mother taught me and would make sure I knew to have backups in my bag, what to expect, and medicine I can take. My mom, social media, and attending doctor's appointments taught me about sex." 8A said "A girl in my class was bleeding and messed up her clothes so I went home and asked my mother. She told me what it was. There was not a whole lot of discussion about sex. I saw a movie at school but did not have a real discussion." 8B said "I started my period in the fifth grade and my mother taught me how to put a tampon in and stuff like that. I learned about sex from television shows." 9A said "When I started my cycle my mom told me how I am going to have to take care of myself and the different products to use. I was introduced to sex by my peers and my mother had an initial conversation with me, but my sister gave me all the details." 9B said "My mom taught me why it happens, what happens during it, and the time period it happens. One day I asked my mom about sex. She told me about it, the dangers of it, what happens during sex and what it leads to. I learned more from school, my friends, shows, books, and articles."

11A said "I was not taught about menstruation until it happened. When it happened, I was afraid. My mother did not make it fun for me and I felt like I could not go outside, take a

shower, or get in the bathtub. My introduction to sex was with my mother and she had me frightened. If I thought about sex, I thought I was going to get pregnant and then going to be in trouble. I got a better understanding of sex from my sex education class at school." 11B said "I started my cycle while getting ready for my Great Aunt's funeral. My mother taught me how to dispose of my used sanitary napkins and how to be well kept. My mother taught me what sex was and the result of sex and the risk and what it meant to save yourself." 12A said "I had very little teaching about that. My mom came home and told me how to put on a sanitary napkin and that was all the education. I had "on the job" training in college and I learned from a book called *The Joy of Sex*." 12B said "My mom taught me about pads, keeping track of your cycle every month and I taught myself about tampons. My mom did not teach me about sex, it was myself and the boys I was with. I also learned from girls at school. My mom found out I had sex for the first time and when I told her the symptoms I had, she took me to the doctor. I was tested and found out I had an STD. I was prescribed antibiotics and birth control. She was upset but we never sat down and had a real conversation, but she said use condoms and take my birth control if I must have sex."

15A said "My mother taught me about pads and let me know it will happen once a month She said if I do not have a cycle, I could be pregnant. I did not learn about ovulation until I was much older. I do not know if sex was actually taught aside from middle school. I knew that if you have sex, you can get pregnant and not have a menstrual cycle." 15B said "Family life and a teen girl's book taught me about my cycle and my mom taught me how to care for myself, how to count it and how to count ovulation. I learned about sex in school in Family Life and I used to read a lot of books that were kind of raunchy for lack of better terms. I do not think my mom necessarily talked to me about sex. She told me to let her know if I wanted to have sex and she

would put me on birth control, and I did not the first time, but she found out and immediately put me on birth control."

Sub-Theme B: Love and Marriage

All the participants reported that they did not have any specific teachings of romantic relationships. There were also not many examples of romantic relationships. Although some mothers were involved in romantic relationships, affection was not displayed while daughters were around. Many of the participants reported to learn from their own experiences.

Romance

Romantic relationships are profound and a source of deep fulfillment. Human connections are innate however the ability to form healthy relationships is learned. All participants were asked to share who taught them about romantic relationships and the chosen teaching method. All the participants voiced that there was not a formal teaching or conversation specifically about romantic relationships.

2A said "I honestly do not remember ever being taught. They were just here and there." 2B stated "I do not think I was ever taught about that either. I just kind of looked at my mom, dad, aunts, uncles, and just modeled my romantic relationships after that. My dad taught me about self-worth, but I could not have a boyfriend until I was 15." 4A said "No one. I saw a lot of things about relationships from TV and my dad; but he had a messed-up marriage. My mom, I saw her with different boyfriends. Nobody talked with me about relationships and how they are supposed to go or how you are supposed to behave. My stepmom and my mom did not trust men so they would tell me things in terms of male bashing." 4B said "I always knew about them from little elementary school boyfriends. But it was my mom because I would see her in a relationship, and she would always say be with the right person who treats you right and loves

you." 5A said "It was my daughter's father and boys along the way that taught me. I currently have an older friend who's teaching me about intimacy." 5B said "I do not know if somebody taught me, but I would see people around in relationships."

7A said "No one actually taught me, I kind of learned from watching those around me and how they interacted, how they talked to each other, and certain things that took place from different interactions." 7B said "I do not think I was ever taught about relationships and romance. I think I just saw it from my experience like my environment and different people and family members being around me. I also saw things in movies and on TV." 8A said "Nobody taught me that either. I think that probably was a failing of my mom. I think that particularly as black women, we are not taught how men behave and how women behave in relationships." 8B said "Nobody honestly, I think I just kind of had to watch and try to figure some things out. It is not until recently that we started talking about stuff like that." 9A said "So I learned from my experiences, and I am still learning. It is what I see through the acts of the friendships that my mom and her husband had, my sister and her husband, my dad and his wife, and my brother and his wife. It is a continuous thing and everybody who's in a relationship has taught me about a romantic relationship and my own experiences." 9B said "I know a relationship is a man or woman or whatever you may like. I know what it has led to, and people love each other get together. But I have learned more about it myself."

11A said "I would read books, but they would teach you anything. I learned mostly by girl friends that gave me insight on sexual education, boyfriends, and things of that nature." 11B said "I do not think I was actually taught; I think it was more so observing my parents, grandparents, and married couples. I saw some things I did not want to experience and some things that I do want to experience." 12A said "I would not say I was ever taught about romantic

relationships. I was 16 when I went to college and that was my first exposure to having relationships with men. It started out more sexual than romantic." 12B said "I am still learning about romantic relationships in my adult years. When I was younger, I had boyfriends, but I did not bring them around my mom. She would meet men as I got older and started to get serious boyfriends, but we never had conversations about romantic relationships." 15A said "That was never taught. I guess I pretty much learned that on my own. I still do not know if I know." Lastly, 15B said "I just think I learned about it as I got older. I do not think anyone sat me down and talked to me about it."

Marriage

Each participant was asked to describe their current romantic relationship. If they were not involved in a romantic relationship, they were asked to describe what they are looking for in a romantic relationship. Within the participants, one is married, one is a widow, five are divorced, and eleven have never been married. There are six of the eleven participants that have never been married that are 30 years of age and over. The other four are not of age to get married and one just entered college. 11A is the one married participant and she described her marriage as "solid but it changes." 18A is the one participant that is a widow and she expressed that "she is not looking to get married again." Of the five participants that were divorced, 2A reported "she was not ready for dating." 4A is the only participant that is divorced and involved in a romantic relationship. She reports that her relationship is "long distance and somewhat of a challenge." 7A is the only participant that is divorced and open to a romantic relationship. 12A was able to articulate what she would be looking for, but she did not express if she was open to dating at this time. 15A knows what she would like in a partner, but she is not looking at this time. Of the participants that have never been married, 2B and 9A are the only two that are

currently open to dating. 5A is in a relationship that she describes as a "secret and he is older."

8B, 11B, 12B, and 15B were all involved in romantic relationships. 8B reports that her current

relationship has "friendship as the foundation and she can be soft." 11B reports "I know he is

the one for me, but we are often at odds." 12B described her relationship as "rocky" and 15B

described hers as "inconsistent." Out of all the participants, except for 11A, none of them

mentioned a desire to be married or expectations of a marriage. Many were able to describe the

qualities they would like their partners to possess as well as how he should treat her however

none of the participants mentioned the process of transitioning from dating to marriage.

Theme 3: Relationships

Creating and maintaining healthy friendships is vital however it can often be difficult for

Black women to make new friends as an adult. Once bonds are established, a simple presence is

not enough. All parties must be willing to work for the relationship to sustain, thrive, and grow.

Although all Black women can gravitate and choose specific friends, many expectations about

friendships were influenced by the friendships they saw their mother's involved in. All the

participants were asked to describe the friendships they saw their mothers involved in. They

were also asked to describe their own platonic relationships.

Sub-Theme A: Black Women in Friendships

Although it is not mandatory, it is beneficial to have a heathy example of friendships.

Oftentimes what is modeled in the home may be replicated in the real world. All participants

were asked about their mother's friendships, and they described her role.

Model

In Duo 1, both 2A and 2B report seeing their mother's involved in a close friendship that

turned from friend to family. 2A reported that her mother's close friends were her coworker and

her sister. In relation to her mother's coworker, 2A reports "we would go and visit her, and she became part of our family." When 2A was asked to explain her current platonic relationships, she stated "I have close relationships with people that are just like my family who are always there for me. I can call them anytime and they would do anything for me. I consider them my brothers and sisters." 2A reporting her friends are like family is congruent to her daughter's, 2B, description of her relationships. 2B reported that her mother has close friends, and they were like a "village". 2B stated "My mother and her friends had constant communication and they would help each other even with things such as picking up kids. It was not just a give and take." 2B believes her friendships vary depending on the group. She has made friends in her doctoral program, but those friendships were focused on schoolwork. Recently, they have started to share more and becoming acquainted with one another. 2B has another set of friends that she describes as "A sisterhood and we check in on one another and I really try to make sure they are integrated in my life in a meaningful way." 2B has male friendships that she reports are different. They do not talk as often and they do not require as much as her female friendships. 2B states "I think females are more sensitive than males and my female friends will reach out to inquire what is going on if they have not heard from me."

Duo 2 was able to report friendships, but they were not all consistent or positive. 4A reported that she saw her mother have friendships, but she was always falling out with them. 4A believes that one of her mother's friends always helped and supported her bad habits. 4A reported that she was a tomboy when she was younger, so she had a lot of male friends however that has changed as she got older and started to have romantic relationships. 4A reported that she has a group of girlfriends in another state, and they text and facetime often. She also has an older friend who she seeks information and guidance from. 4A describes her friendships as "an

amazing village and she could not ask for better friendships." 4A spoke highly of her friendships however her daughter, 4B, reports that she has not really seen her mother with her friends. In terms of her own friendships, 4B reported that most of her friendships are good. She expressed that it is difficult for her to make friends because she cannot make plans and have the time to get closer to people. 4B is not able to spend time with her peers outside of school and she stated, "It sucks and kind of goes back to my mom not being able to allow me to do things because she is doing everything by herself."

Duo 3 reported a mixture of friendship engagement levels. 5A reported that she did not see her mother with female friends. 5A stated "I have never seen her out shopping with her best homegirl or out with a best friend or a sister friend. I have only seen her with partners." Overall, 5A has never seen her mother have a friendship. 5A reported that she is starting to "fall back" from everybody (her friends). She expressed that she is in a place where she is finding her peace. 5A also expressed there is a sense of jealousy and depression in some of her friendships. 5B describes her mother's friendships as loving and caring. She expressed that her mother's friends care for her a lot. 5B reported that her current friendships are good, and they have been friends for a long time. 5B talks to her friends every day and feels they have a good bond.

Duo 4 reported to have similar types of friendships. 7A reported that her mother had "seemingly good friendships" prior to her birth. 7A describes her friendships as amazing and reports she loves her friends. 7A states "I am a little dependent on my friends and I will go to war for them." 7B describes her mother's friendships as fun and adventurous. She reports they always go on trips, try new things, laugh, talk about memories, and have girl time. 7B reported that her friendships are fun. She reports she does not talk much about her personal life because she is a person that is fun to be around and always wants to have a good time.

Duo 5 reported to have similar friendships as well as similar values within friendships. 8A reported that her mother had a lot of female friends. 8A stated "My mom was friends with women who she had fun with, worked in the church with, and called them her sister friends." 8A expressed that she saw her mother have healthy relationships with other women and she thanks her for that because it has been a very positive aspect in her life. 8A also gives her mother credit because she knows there are many women who cannot get along with other women. 8A says she has a lot of friendships. She believes that the women she has in her inner circle are transparent, honest, smart, and very successful yet humble. 8B stated "I saw my mom have so many friends. I probably learned the importance of having girlfriends and long-lasting friendships from her just because her friends were around all the time." 8B values her friendships and thinks they are necessary. She believes that as she got older, she had a learning curve for knowing who her friends were and their likes and needs. 8B stated "Around my late twenties it was important to reevaluate friendships and know who I wanted around."

Duo 6 was able to provide congruent descriptions of some friendships. 9A reported that her mother had a decent number of friends. Her mother was well respected, known as a big sister and everyone had so much love for her. 9A reports "My mother's friends were like family." 9A describes her friendships as enjoyable and recyclable. When asked what "recyclable" meant, 9A stated, "The relationships come and go but never go away. It is always within arm's reach." 9B reported that her mother has a lot of friends that she is close to, and she calls them her aunts. 9B expressed that her mother's friends and their children are family, and they do things such as going on trips together and celebrating birthdays. 9B expressed that she does not have many friends, but she is loving and playful with the ones that she does have.

Duo 7 shared details about their friendships and it displayed how friendship circles can evolve over time. 11A reported that she has seen her mother be a friend to a small group of people. They would call and talk to one another daily and they had a strong bond. Her mother would do things with her friends such as play cards, go shopping, have cookouts, and go to church events. 11A expressed that she has some very good relationships although she has had to put them in separate groups. She was not getting reciprocation so now she is aware that some friends are there on an as needed basis. 11B reported that her mother does haves some friends from her childhood however they do not see each other often but remain in contact. 11B reports that her mother has sorority sister's that have stepped up to assist her with providing care to her mother. Her mother also has great relationships from college, and they are like family and have served as uncles and aunts to 11B. As 11B has gotten older, her friendships have shifted, and she has realized that some friends are for a reason, and some are for a season. She has decided that her peace is important and is it fine to accept that some friendships serve a different purpose. 11B shared dissatisfaction with reciprocation and she started to reevaluate expectations within friendships.

Duo 8 shared details about their friendships and they were not similar. 12A reported that her mother had wonderful friends. They met in college and stayed close throughout her life. They would talk on a regular basis, travel, and have fun. Her mother cherished those friendships. 12A's mother did have a few friends at work but those friendships were underlined with hostility since her mother was an African American woman teaching in a predominantly Jewish school system. 12A reported "I am not particularly close with anyone, but I am someone that my friends can depend on." 12B explained that her mother had friends, but she has only interacted with them via telephone. Her mother and her friends did not interact in person much due to

distance and intense work schedules. 12B reports to be a good friend and have great friends. 12B also reports that at times, she overshares too fast with people. 12B also has several long-standing relationships. 12B shared that she does not like having animosity in her friendships however she is no stranger to confrontation.

Duo 9 shared their experiences with friendships, and they all seemed healthy but not necessarily significant. 15A reported that her mother had friends, but it was very few people that she would open up with and genuinely have a good time. 15A recalls her mother talking on the phone, cooking, and having a good time with her one close friend. 15A states she has good relationships and people she associates with. She reports that she is respectful of people and their desires because she has been friends with people that would become upset when you do not do what they want you to do. 15A reports she never tries to change people or what they want to do because that typically causes problems. 15B reports that her mother has had most of her friends since childhood. 15B shared that one of her mother's friends confided in her and expressed concern about the distance between them and she attributes it to a new romantic relationship. 15B feels as if her mother's friend will continue to be her friend because this is not the first time it has appeared as if she put a man first. In relation to her own friendships, 15B stated "I have trust issues in general so I kind of take it for what it is and just accept people for who they are."

Sub-Theme B: Relationship with Yourself

During the interview, each participant was asked to rate her self-esteem on a scale from 1-10. This question was strategically placed towards the end of the interview so the participants would rate their self-esteem after discussing relationships, traumas, and preferences. It was the hope of the researcher that the participants would evaluate self-esteem from a full spectrum. The

participants were asked to describe their mothers and themselves. All the participants had a harder time describing themselves. It is also significant to note that when negative attributes or flaws were mentioned, from both the mothers and the daughters, they all felt a need to justify the characteristics or state what other people have told them.

Comfortability

Duo 1 had similar self-esteem ratings. 2A rated her self-esteem as a 9. 2B rated her self-esteem as an 8 and reported it fluctuates depending on her acne outbreaks. 2A describes herself as helping, encouraging, and independent. This is congruent with her daughter describing her as giving, selfless and a hard worker. 2A reported she is very quiet at times, and she attributed it to her being an only child and wanting to be by herself. 2A also described her mother as quiet. 2B describes herself as determined, driven, and outgoing. This is congruent with her mother describing her as strong and bold. 2B reported that she can come off as harsh or a little aggressive however it is attributed to her passion. Both 2A and 2B had an easier time describing each other versus themselves.

Duo 2 had a similar self-esteem rating. 4A rated her self-esteem as 5 and shared that this has been a lifelong journey of her working on it. 4B rated her self-esteem as 4.2. 4A describes herself as sensitive, empathetic, not always strong, and always thinking of her negatives. This is congruent with her daughter describing her as cool, controlling, affected by her past, and low confidence when raising her. 4A describes her daughter as awesome, smart, quiet, a loner, sarcastic, and funny. 4B described herself as ok looking, between nice and mean, and lazy but she knows how to work hard. 4A and 4B had somewhat of a difficult time describing themselves but they did not have any trouble focusing on negative qualities.

Duo 3 had similar self-esteem ratings. 5A rated her self-esteem as a 7 and 5B rated hers at 8. 5A described herself as funny, intelligent, quiet at times, easily overwhelmed, tired, and lazy. It is significant to note that 5A also described her mother as overwhelmed and tired. 5A and her mother did not have a great relationship. 5A described her daughter as loving and caring. This is congruent with 5B describing herself as funny, caring, loving, and energetic. 5B also described her mother as loving, caring, and serious. It is significant to note that 5B proceeded to apologize when she felt she was going to mention her mother's negative characteristics.

Duo 4 had similar self-esteem ratings. 7A rated her self-esteem as a 7.5 and 7B rated hers as an 8. 7A describes herself as resilient, compassionate, has tough skin, has a big soft spot, and loving. This is congruent to her daughter's description of her which was strong, wise, outgoing, has a big heart, helpful, but not nice in her tone and delivery. 7A mentions that she has a huge soft spot. It is significant to note that she describes her mother as sweet and soft. 7B describes herself as social, shy at times, very independent, and not adventurous. This mirrors her mother's description of her in which she stated she was strong, self-sufficient, and scary at times. 7A and 7B described themselves as open-minded but they did not mention this quality about each other.

Duo 5 had similar self-esteem ratings. 8A rated her self-esteem as 9 and 8B rated her self-esteem as 8. 8A described herself as smart, kind, fun, and reflective. 8B described her as sweet, determined, successful, and spiritual. It is significant to note that 8A also described her mother as spiritual. 8B describes herself as fun, goes for what she wants, easy to get along with, but also standoffish. This is similar to her mother's description of her which was hard working, fun, and self-centered. Both 8A and 8B had an easier time describing each other.

Duo 6 had significantly different self-esteem ratings. 9A rated her self-esteem as 8 and 9B rated her self-esteem as 3. 9B explained that her self-esteem is low for personal reasons and not because someone has said or done anything to her. She does not have a lot of confidence in herself however her mother continuously encourages her. 9A describes herself as beautiful, loving, caring, loyal, sassy, dependable, a jokester and considerate. 9B's daughter also described her as honest, loving, hardworking, confident, and bubbly. 9B describes herself as intelligent, honest, great communicator, pretty, and talented. 9B and her mother have very similar descriptions except for self-esteem which 9B believes is directly impacted by her low confidence.

Duo 7 had the same self-esteem rating of 7. 11A describes herself as friendly, a good listener, good at giving advice, loves to interact with people, and enjoys helping. 11B's description of her mother was very similar. She stated she is sweet, loving, always giving, and always willing to help. 11B describes herself as an extrovert with introvert tendencies people pleaser, bubbly, and a lover. 11B's mother states she is dependable, loving, and giving. It is significant to note that 11A referred to her mother and her daughter as loving and caring. 11B also referred to her mother and herself as loving and caring.

Duo 8 had similar self-esteem ratings. 12A rated her self-esteem a 10 and 12B rated her self-esteem as a 9. 12A describes herself as hardworking, intellectual, curious, and caring. 12A's daughter describes her as intelligent, calm, and the opposite of her. 12B describes herself as funny, outgoing, a leader, smart, loud, spiteful, and fun. 12A and 12B are both intelligent and stern however they have completely different presentations. They both also see one another from a negative point of view even if they are exploring positive attributes.

Duo 9 did not have similar self-esteem ratings. 15A reports that her self-esteem varies each day, but it is typically a 5.5. 15B rated her self-esteem as an 8. 15A describes herself as happy, likes to have a good time, and positive. 15B described her mother in a similar way by saying she was a free spirit, loving, emotional and sweet. 15B describes herself as silly, emotional, confident, nice, and dedicated. 15A describes her as outspoken, kind, and giving. 15A and 15B provided more information about one another than themselves.

Theme 4: Trauma Acceptance

Trauma has become very common. At times, people are asked if they were involved in any traumatic events and they will say no but, they have had traumatic events. Within the African American community, many people have endured several traumatic events but because they were able to cope with the trauma, they do not consider it a trauma. It is also common that people within the African American community do not consider traumatic events as trauma because it has been a secret.

Sub-Theme A: Identifying Trauma

Each duo was asked about trauma experiences. The mothers in the duos were asked about personal trauma as well as known traumatic events of their mothers and daughters. The daughters in the study were asked to share personal traumatic events as well as any known trauma their mother's may have experienced. Many of the participants were not completely sure if the event was traumatic. This was displayed using language that was not concrete, mentioning a traumatic event after answering "no" and reporting they were not sure if the incident would be considered a trauma.

Denial or Uncertainty

Duo 1 both reported traumatic incidents with uncertainty. They both started off the responses with "I think" which was not concrete. 2A reported "my mom had a miscarriage and I guess with me being so young, I guess it is something that kind of stuck with me. 2B also reported that she thinks her daughter may have experienced trauma when she transitioned from private school to public school. In relation to her own trauma, 2A reported "I think what would probably be traumatic for me would be my recent divorce." 2B reported that she guessed her mother's environment while growing up may have been traumatic. She stated "she lived in an apartment complex, and she could hear others arguing. She also had a miscarriage." 2B reports that she has had a few traumatic incidents. Although she was an adult when her parents divorced, it had an impact on her. She stated, "I do not want to be in a relationship for 30 plus years and then this happens to me." 2B reports she had a bad break up years ago and at the time she was not aware of depression but now that she is thinking of it, she was depressed. 2B also shared an encounter where she went to a friend's home, and he had a gun on the table with plans to commit suicide.

In Duo 3, 5A reported a childhood experience but did not sound confident that it was an identified trauma. 5A said "As a child, I have never experienced anything traumatic. I guess you could say when my mom put the hot comb on my face, and she sent me to school." When 5B was asked if she had experienced any trauma, she reported "No. Okay, I feel like what my mom went through could have been a traumatic incident for me."

Duo 4 reported several traumatic incidents with family members passing away having a large impact on both 7A and 7B. 7A has also experienced extensive trauma during combat. 7A reports that she was in a domestic dispute with her ex-husband. When she informed her mother

about the incident, her mother was in denial until she saw all the proof which was bruises, marks, and injuries. 7B shared that one of her most traumatic events was when her stepsister came to live with her and her mother. This new family dynamic caused a disconnect with 7B and her mother. 7B reports "Every time I tried to talk to my mom about it, she would just throw it in my face and blame me. I forgot how to express myself because my safe mechanism was shut down. At the time, I felt like she did not hear me and did not care and now that she sees me shutting down, she tries to get me to open up."

In Duo 6, a few traumatic incidents were shared from 9A and 9B however they did not necessarily consider them traumatic. 9A shared that she witnessed domestic violence with her mother and her father. They would try not to become physical in front of the children, but they were not always successful. 9A reports that her mother was bullied when she was younger which resulted in her engaging in frequent fights to protect herself. 9A reports that her mother was often the aggressor in the domestic disputes in the home. When 9A was asked about her personal experience with trauma, she stated "Besides the domestic violence and I do not consider that trauma, I do not know. I guess I can say when my mom and father separated, and we fell on hard times because he no longer provided any financial assistance." The separation caused 9A, her mother and siblings to relocate. The relocation did create environmental trauma such as finding crack cocaine in the home, seeing neighborhood fights, seeing people pull out guns, hearing gunshots, seeing ski masks, and even having a gun put in her face. 9A states "I think medically I am traumatized." 9A had to undergo brain surgery which was a catalyst to her severe anxiety. 9B reports that she believes her grandparent's divorce was traumatic for her mother. She also reports that she is not completely sure of her mother's response to the trauma, but she guesses she just had to deal with it. When asked about her own trauma, 9B said "No I

have not experienced any trauma, I am really grateful. I guess the most traumatic thing that I've

been through is not having a house, but I was so young."

Within Duo 8, 11A shared a few of her mother's experiences. 12A expressed that her

mother was involved in a car accident and on another occasion, she was in the hospital for

gastrointestinal bleeding. 12A stated "I do not know if she considered these incidents to be

traumatic, but I did not see any negative responses."

Sub-Theme B: Withholding Information

Each of the participants were asked to share incidents of trauma about themselves and

their mothers. This question was followed by asking if they knew the trauma response. Many of

the participants made assumptions about the trauma response or only knew what they saw.

There were not many conversations about how people felt and coped with trauma.

Secrecy

In Duo 1, 2A saw her mother sick after a miscarriage but that is all the information she

knows about the situation. 2A said "She was so quiet, and I think she shielded a lot of things

from me and did not tell me." 2A shared that later in life, she was told that she had an older half-

sister with the same name, but it was kept quiet. 2A was able to physically see the fear and

weight loss of her daughter when she transitioned from private to public school. 2B reported that

her parent's divorce impacted her, but she was "far-removed from the home due to school" so

she did not directly see her mother's response, but she would hear about it from her sister and

father.

Duo 2 did report a few traumatic events however there was a significant amount of secrecy

reported. 4A reported that her mother resented her father. 4A shared that she was not aware of

what lead her mother to these strong feelings, but her mother pulled away from her father and in

turn, she missed out on spending a significant amount of time with her grandfather. 4A reported that her daughter was molested at age 5 however she was not made aware of the incident until her daughter was 13 years old. 4A stated "My heart broke learning that my child has been struggling and suffering by herself for years." This resonated for 4A because when she was 5 years old, her older cousin molested her. She reported "I never told anyone." Overtime, 4A has started to share more but she remains selective out of fear of what the information would do to her family. For years, 4A was around her perpetrator often until recent years when she decided she would no longer be uncomfortable, so she no longer engages with him. 4A also shared that as a little girl, there was an incident of her sitting on her uncle's lap and him shifting and moaning. When she did mention this to her aunt, nobody ever said anything about it again. 4A also believes that something similar has happened to someone else in the family however no one is willing to share. 4A has also had a cousin touch her inappropriately. She only told her sister and when it was mentioned to others, they stated "oh, he is a pedophile" however the issue was never addressed. 4B reported that she was aware of her mother being involved in a car accident, her father being physically abusive to her, and her cousin sexually assaulting her. 4B reported that her mother was nervous about her and her sister driving due to her own feelings about her accident. She also reported that her mother does not speak much about the physical abuse or the molestation. 4B was made aware of her mother's molestation when she disclosed her own trauma years after it occurred. 4B reports that although her trauma occurred years ago, "It still affects me, still makes me uncomfortable around men and sometimes family members."

Duo 3 reported experiencing traumatic events. One of the major traumatic incidents became a long-standing family secret. 5A shared that her mother was adopted because she is a product of incest. 5A's grandmother was raped by her brother. The family did not know how to

hide it so they gave the baby up for adoption. 5A also shared that her mother was abused by some of her male friends. 5A was not sure of her mother's response to domestic violence. She reported "I am pretty sure she did not say anything or do anything about it because she had very low self-esteem." 5A expressed that her daughter was exposed to domestic violence. 5A did not know how her daughter was dealing with the trauma until she took her to therapy. 5A reports that she did experience domestic violence and she is still trying to figure out her response because she was not aware that she had anxiety and depression. 5B reported that she did witness her mother in domestic violence. She reported that at times she did see her crying and that she feels her mom became more guarded.

Within Duo 5, 8A shared her mother had a traumatic event and that she and her daughter, 8B, did not have any traumatic events that she was aware of. 8A shared that her grandmother moved to New Jersey after her significant other died. Her plan was to work until she had enough money to send for her four children. She eventually sent for the children to relocate from North Carolina to New Jersey. Roughly six months after the move, one of the children fell on the kitchen floor screaming in agony and she had a baby. No one knew she was pregnant, and she was being molested while in North Carolina. 8A's mother told her she did not know what was happening to her sister, but they all were screaming. When 8B was asked if her mother had experienced any traumatic events, she reported "I do not know but I feel like my mom would say my sister being emancipated when she was 17 and my brother being incarcerated." In relation to her own trauma, 8B reported that she was physically assaulted by a male which resulted in being knocked out, having scratches all over her face, and her teeth coming loose. The male also got on social media and bragged about assaulting her. 8B reported she was fine until she had to go to court for the incident and that was traumatic for her. After going to court, she started to shut

down and stay to herself even when her parents would call her. She expressed "I needed time to myself."

Duo 7 shared several traumas however there are a few traumatic events that have created family secrets or uncertainties. 11A reports that her mother dealt with infidelity in her marriage. It was also reported that her father had kids outside of the marriage. 11A said "It was not a lot of discussion about it but when it would come up, I can remember the argument." 11A reported that her mother was not a very verbal person. 11A reports that she is aware of her daughter's traumatic experiences with relationships, her weight and dealing with the separation. 11B shared that during her previous relationship, she did experience domestic violence however she did not share all the details about the physical violence. While involved in this relationship, 11B shared that she had a miscarriage. She did not share this with her mother immediately out of fear that she would be disappointed. She also did not share all the details about the grief that followed. 11B also expressed that she was significantly impacted by her father's infidelity and still has not shared all her feelings about their discord. 11A and 11B report that 11A's unexpected illness not only impacted the entire family, but it impacted their relationship because 11B was now a caregiver. 11A's quality of life as well as ability to maintain daily living skills were declining so eventually it became impossible for her to not share what was happening.

Within Duo 8, there was a significant amount of trauma shared but both parties were not aware of the nature of the trauma. 11A reported that her daughter has dealt with domestic violence, deaths of animals, and deaths of people. 11A said "My daughter never said anything about her incidents and does not share her trauma with me." 11A reported that she personally has not endured any major trauma. 11B reports "I know my mother struggled with a little depression and was hospitalized for a week. I did not know the full details and since we were

young, they did not want to tell us what was going on." During this time, 11B stated her mother "rested in her room until she got back to herself." 11B reports "I have plenty of trauma that she does not know about and the incidents she is aware of, I told her after the fact." 11B has been abused, raped, had roughly three miscarriages, had several abortions, and has suffered with depression, and has had a difficult time grieving her ex-boyfriend's death. 11B expressed "I do not like disappointing my mom, I do not like her being upset or mad at me and I feel like some of the things that happened to me might have been my fault or something. I do not like to tell her things that may make her look at me differently or feel like she did something wrong with me."

Duo 9 shared several traumatic incidents but some of the incidents were not shared at all or delayed for years. 15A reported that her mother was involved in domestic violence and dealt with infidelity in her marriage. 15A's father had a child outside of his marriage. 15A stated "My mom did not really respond to the violence and infidelity. She kept everything to herself." 15A was molested by her stepfather and she did not disclose this information to anyone. Her mother was made aware of the molestation years later because 15A's cousin wrote her a letter after she was also molested.

Summary

This chapter includes an overview of the data collection and analysis procedures for this phenomenological study. A thick description of the participants was derived from semi-structured interviews. The data analysis process yielded the following categories: communication, inadequate knowledge, relationships, and trauma acceptance. To promote trustworthiness, I conducted member checking, practiced bracketing, reflexive journaling, peer debriefing, and maintained an audit trail electronically and physically. Table 2 displays each

theme with corresponding sub-themes. Appendix K depicts a within-case display example of the

themes and sub-themes. Overall, the essence of the phenomenon was provided in this chapter.

Table 2: Thematic Analysis

Communication	Inadequate Knowledge	Relationships	Trauma Acceptance
Verbal Communication • Increase	Women's Bodies and Wombs • Sex and Reproductive Education	Black Women in Friendships • Model	Identifying Trauma • Denial or Uncertainty
Active Listening • Manner	Love and Marriage • Romance • Marriage	Relationship with Yourself • Comfortability	Withholding Information • Secrecy

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand and describe how generational trauma impacts the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. This chapter will provide a discussion of the findings and its connection to relevant literature and theories. This chapter will present implications for mother-daughter duos in the African American community. It will also outline the delimitations and limitations. Finally, this chapter will provide recommendations for future research studies.

Summary of Findings

This study attempted to answer the following questions: "How does generational trauma impact the mother-daughter relationship?", "How does the mother-daughter relationship influence a woman's romantic and nonromantic relationships?" and "What are the significant connections between generational trauma and a daughter's self-identity?" Generational trauma has had an impact on the mother-daughter relationship within the African American community in several ways however this research highlighted how significant communication and the lack thereof is within the duo. Majority of the participants expressed that they would have benefited from more open and honest conversations with their mother. Many participants also believe if they had started to talk with their mothers at a younger age, they would have known more about her as well as women in general. The participates did not have a rationale for not having open conversations with their daughter's sooner, it was simply how they were raised so they adapted the same habit. Many of the daughters mentioned communication as a concern and they wanted to change the way in which they communicated with their mothers because they did not feel as if they were being heard or understood. The mother-daughter relationship influences a woman's

romantic and nonromantic relationship because participants often modeled their relationships after what their mother exposed them to. None of the participants were taught about romantic relationships and they all reported to have learned about them by watching what was around them. It was also evident that if mothers had healthy friendships with other women that the daughter saw, she would also grow to value friendships with other women. Generational trauma and a daughter's self-identity was highlighted through a combination of being comfortable with oneself as well as trauma acceptance. When asked about themselves, all the participants had a hard time describing and talking about themselves. Many reported it was because they do not typically talk about themselves however the inability to confidently speak about oneself has been nurtured by the silence and uncertainty that appears within the theme of trauma acceptance.

Discussion

The first research question sought to explore how generational trauma impacts mother-daughter relationships in the African American community. Theme one and theme two addresses the research question.

Theme 1: Communication

Verbal Communication. The societal structure during and after slavery imposed a code of silence upon African American women (Broussard, 2013). There are some aspects of life that are shared and other aspects that silence protects (Broussard, 2013). This culture of silence still exists and has unintentionally protected abusers and has impacted mother-daughter relationships in a negative way. Although secrecy is discussed within the trauma theme, it is directly connected to verbal communication. Of the fourteen participants that identified communication as an area of concern within the mother-daughter relationship, nine of them expressed that they would like to increase the amount of communication as well as make it more open and honest.

By nature, many African American women are secretive and believe "their business is their business." This mentality is not only displayed in society, but it also shows up in the home setting while parenting and building bonds with their daughters. Unfortunately, this is a protective factor that many generations utilize but it creates distance amongst the mother-daughter relationship. African American women speech patterns are typically honest, direct, and assertive yet they are usually not about feelings (Davis, 2015). This type of verbal strategy is not always detrimental in the community however it does create a barrier in the mother-daughter relationship when both parties are trying to learn more about each other and learn more about the family.

Active Listening. Existing literature reports that mother-daughter relationships are the strongest, but they have the most confrontation (Creese, 2017). Mothers are raising their daughters to be strong black women however those qualities such as being strong, tough, and self-sufficient are being displayed in the way they communicate and often seen as negative (Thomas, Hacker, & Hoxha, 2011; Collins, 2009). Five of the fourteen participants that reported concerns with communication expressed that both parties in the duo want to be heard however they both become defensive but that only increases confrontation and decreases understanding. Everet alt. Marks & Clark-Mitchell (2016) found that if daughters were unsatisfied with the mother-daughter relationship they were dissatisfied with the communication however out of the five participants that wanted to change how they communicated, only one reported the relationship to be inadequate.

Theme 2: Inadequate Knowledge

Women's Bodies and Wombs. Previous research suggested that the lack of communication forces young women to seek education about sex and their bodies from sources outside of the

mother-daughter relationship (Shams et al., 2017). Insufficient knowledge also contributes to the limited conversations mothers have with daughters. All participants in this study reported that their mother spoke to them about menstruation and sex however it was not a detailed conversation. All the conversations about menstruation were centered around appropriate hygiene routines. There were not teachings about the female reproductive system, the reason for mensuration, or mentioning symptoms that could be indicators of abnormal cycles. Four participants had additional teachings from books. Of those four participants, two of them were part of the same duo. The mother was given a book during her teenage years, and she also gave her daughter a book for further knowledge.

All the conversations about sex were centered around pregnancy prevention and mentions of avoiding sexually transmitted diseases. Pregnancy and disease prevention is vital when providing sexual education however these should not be the only two focal points. When young girls are not completely informed, there is a possibility of developing fear and negative sexual attitudes (Bynum, 2007). Lessons about the female body are important because they connect menstruation to womanhood and pregnancy. These lessons also provide the opportunity to learn about the womb and maternal health. For centuries, African American women have been sexually objectified and have had their bodies controlled by others (Prather et al., 2018). Knowing that this type of generational trauma occurred, it would be beneficial for African American women to teach their daughters about their bodies, reproductive system, and appropriate sexual health in a safe space, the mother-daughter relationship. Inadequate knowledge is a result of suppressed communication as well as limited knowledge. Both inadequate knowledge and suppressed communication were some of the results of long-term trauma inflicted on African American women. As these trauma responses became second nature,

they soon developed into ordinary routines that have been passed down from one generation to the next.

The second research question sought to examine how the mother-daughter relationship influences a woman's romantic and nonromantic relationships. Themes 2 and 3 address this question.

Theme 2: Inadequate Knowledge

Love and Marriage. Due to the steady decline in marriage in the African American community, the family unit has evolved but remained essential (Belgrave &Allison, 2019). Previous research has highlighted that African American women significantly contribute to this decline (Raley, Sweeney, & Wondra, 2015; Christopher-Byrd, 2019). Aside from historical discourse, researchers believed some of the factors that attributed to the decline were marital instability, marrying later in life, and not marrying at all. This current study implies that inadequate knowledge about romantic relationships is also a contributing factor in the marriage decline. Typically, knowledge about interpersonal relationships starts in the home. All eighteen participants reported that they were never taught about romantic relationships. They watched their mothers, people around them, television, and social media. Unfortunately, a large amount of African American women has had trauma surrounding intimacy and romantic relationships. It is not impossible to not have formal lessons about romantic relationships and still thrive however many African American women are looking at their mother's romantic relationships as an example. The deficit with this concept is that many of the mothers are secretive about their romantic relationships and do not show public displays of affection. The inability to see a healthy romantic relationship may also impact a young woman's beliefs about gender roles. The

standard pattern of dating, getting married, and staring a family continues to be challenged by African American women.

Within this study, one participant is married, one widowed, five divorced, and eleven never married. Of the divorced participants, only one is involved in a romantic relationship. Of the never married participants, four are involved romantic relationships. None of the eighteen participants mentioned getting married despite being aware of what they wanted in a romantic partner.

Theme 3: Relationships

Black Women in Friendships. Friendships are socially constructed and connected to the context in which they were formed (McCabe, 2016). Research on friendships have evaluated the importance of personal backgrounds when forming friendships as well as the purpose of the friendship (Roland & Agosto, 2017; Winkle-Wagner, McCallum, Luedke, & Ota-Malloy, 2019). Although friendships make life more enjoyable, creating and maintaining healthy friendships can be a challenge for African American women. Previous studies suggested that women often see each other as allies or threats (Grief & Sharpe, 2010). African American mothers influence their daughters view of other women and friendships through modeled behavior. Six of nine mother-daughter duos had positive friendships with other African American women. Both the mother and the daughter were able to report seeing her mom engaged in friendships that were meaningful, positive, close, and long-lasting. At times these friendships would have shared activities, but the basis of the friendships were loyalty and genuine connections. The three duos that did not report having positive friendships with other women, shared the same inconsistencies in their friendships that they saw in their mother's friendships.

The third research question sought to explore the significant connections between generational trauma and a daughter's self-identity. Theme 3 and Theme 4 address this question.

Theme 3: Relationships

Relationship with Self. Studies suggest that self-esteem and confidence are connected and that daughters are less likely to have deficits in these areas if they have had a healthy mother-daughter relationship (Katz-Wise et al., 2013). Studies also suggest that a daughter's self-image can be influenced by her mother's self-image (Awad et al., 2015; 2014). Six duos had similar self-esteem ratings. The same six duos also described oneself and the other half of the duo using similar, if not exact, words. Out of the three duos that were not similar, only one participant was a daughter and she reported that her self-esteem is low due to her confidence, not because of anything her mother has said or did. Her mother has been uplifting. Of the three duos that were not similar, only one duo reported dissatisfaction with the relationship in general. As the beforementioned studies suggest, how a daughter identifies herself is influenced by not only how her mother identifies her but also how the mother sees herself. These consistencies did not only apply to positive self-images but also negative images and attributes.

Theme 4: Trauma Acceptance

Identifying Trauma. The strong Black woman (SBW) schema has been deemed by many researchers as the central aspect of African American womanhood (Watson & Hunter, 2015). Empirical findings have demonstrated that the endorsement of the SBW schema was associated with emotion dysregulation and increased distress however recent work has brought attention to its ability to preserve self-image (Woods-Giscombé et al., 2019). The SBW schema promotes strength and persevering through obstacles (Woods-Giscombé et al., 2019). African American women are resilient and, in this study, because they were able to cope with traumatic events, they

had a hard time concretely saying they have experienced a trauma. Being able to identity what has happened to you contributes to the overall self-image. Five of the nine duos shared a traumatic event but denied they had a trauma or used language that supported they were not sure if the event was an actual trauma. This notion of being strong not only impacts how an individual responds but also how an individual identifies and sees the self.

Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for addressing trauma in African American mother-daughter relationships. Implications for the following will be discussed in detail: Mother-Daughter Relationship, Romantic and Nonromantic Relationships, and Self-Identity.

Mother-Daughter Relationship

The findings of this study as well as Creese (2017) study indicate that mother-daughter relationships are the longest, strongest, and most complicated relationships with a family unit. Mothers and daughters are invested in the relationship despite how positive or negative it may be. Within this duo, a mother's influence is heavily considered even if it is never mentioned. Knowing that a mother can shape the morals and values of her daughter, it is important to increase communication and seek understanding from one another.

Everet alt, Marks, and Clark-Mitchell (2016) reiterates that perceptions shape self-worth, self-esteem, coping techniques, and resiliency and perception is not always accurate. At times it may be hard to fully understand someone's intent and the message can be misinterpreted. If mothers and daughters have open and honest communication within the relationship, there will always be a level of comfortability that encourages either party to seek clarity. It is not uncommon for African American women to speak with a high level of assertiveness which is

often translated as aggressiveness. If mother-daughter duos learn to communicate effectively, both mothers and daughters will be able to explain, disagree or challenge in a respectful manner. When younger daughters challenge their mothers, it is often seen as "grown" however if they were taught effective ways to communicate, the frustration, defensiveness, and attitude may decrease and be replaced with confidence, respect, and curiosity.

Relationships

Elliott, Powell, and Brenton (2015) highlight the increased need for African American mothers to protect their children instead of befriending them. This concept remains true no matter how old the child is. Knowing that friendships are important, it is imperative that mothers continue to encourage their daughters to curate friendships that have the potential to have longevity. In general, African American women continue to view each other as competition but this way of thinking is slowly changing. This study included six mother-daughter duos that have seen and are involved in positive friendships with other women.

Brooks and Moore (2020) highlight the decline in African American women getting married. This study was conducted and only one participant out of eighteen was currently married. Because African American women are changing the image of the ideal family unit, it is important for mothers to educate their daughters on romantic relationships. African American women are not being taught about gender roles, romance, and all forms of intimacy. It is not uncanny that marriage was not mentioned in the study considering African American women's focus have somewhat shifted to academics, careers, increasing income, and being socially present. If the African American community desires to increase the marital rates, there needs to be more conversations and examples of healthy romantic relationships.

Self-Identity

This study and Gillison et al. (2015) highlight that a daughter's self-identity is influenced by her mother. In this study, the daughters identified like their mothers and often used the same language. Despite any reported discord, all the mothers, except for one, provided mostly positive characteristics when describing their daughters. It is important for mothers and daughters to speak about how they identify and why. It is also important for mothers to avoid being secretive and or uncertain about trauma. Acknowledging trauma may help some of the mothers see themselves in a better light because they will see how resilient they were or how tainted they are from the trauma. This allows an opportunity to rectify or manage the emotions better and refrain from passing down negative views. Mothers being open about their trauma also opens a safe space for daughters to share their trauma in the event it arises. Also, daughters will not feel as if they must hide parts of themselves.

Christian Worldview

This study did not include a Christian worldview because that is not the expertise or desired focus for the researcher. In terms of exploring generational trauma amongst the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community, there was not a lot of mentions of the church. It was interesting and shocking that it was not mentioned because for centuries, African Americans relied on the church for counseling and support. Historically, spirituality and participation in the Christian faith have been mechanisms of healing and strength for African Americans as they dealt with numerous injustices in society (King, 2015). African American women are a staple in black churches and in turn, the church has been a contributor to positive self-esteem and positive self-concepts (King, 2015). Many of the participants are active

members of a church however they did not share its influence or support of the mother-daughter relationship.

Delimitations and Limitations

I made the decision to have cut off ages for the daughters. I wanted the daughters to be at least 13 years of age because they are most likely experiencing a major change in the mother-daughter relationship since they are now teenagers. I also figured that at this age, they would be able to articulate their thoughts and feelings in a clear concise way. I also wanted to make sure the daughters were not over the age of 35. I realize that the older you get, it is hard to recall household dynamics unless they were significant. I knew the mothers may have a hard time remembering details, so I did not want that to be the case for both parts of the duo.

I made the decision to do all interviews separate because I wanted the mother and the daughter to speak as freely as they desired without the fear of judgment or discomfort. I also made the decision that all interviewees had to have their cameras on during the entire interview. I am aware that all I needed was audio, but I wanted to observe body language.

Lastly, I made sure that the participants were raised by their mother or a mother figure. Originally, I only wanted to do mother's however mother figures also have relationships with the daughters and are just as influential as biological mothers.

There are a few limitations to this study. I served as the main instrument for data collection. The research process may have been affected due to my personal bias and my own experiences with my mother. I maintained a reflective journal throughout the process and discussed my thoughts and opinions with my peer debriefer. My peer debriefer is also an African American woman so it is possible that my data analysis process is impacted. I also used epoche and bracketing. Despite my efforts, my data may still be slightly skewed.

Recommendations for Future Research

A follow-up qualitative study would be beneficial in filling in the gaps from the limitations of the current study. The follow-up study would need to consist of more participants and less interview questions. The participants would also need to be more diverse geographically. It may also be beneficial to remove the age restrictions so the researcher can see if trauma truly impacts the mother-daughter relationship at all ages.

An interesting study would examine trauma acceptance in terms of denial or uncertainty. Many African American women do not report traumatic events so it would be interesting to know why as well as their perception of the event. Denial or uncertainty may simply be a result of desensitization or secrecy. This study should be phenomenological.

When considering the lack of knowledge provided about sex and menstruation, it would be interesting to explore African American women's maternal health. Oftentimes, African American women are not aware of issues with our reproductive system until something happens. It would be beneficial to not only discover the barrier to receiving this information but to also include a survey to see other areas of interest in relation to maternal health.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the purpose of this research study and connected findings to existing research. Delimitations and limitations were also discussed. This chapter discussed implications of the mother-daughter relationship, romantic and nonromantic relationship, and self-identity. Finally, this chapter provided suggestions for future research.

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Appendix A

Social Media Posts

Facebook
ATTENTION FACEBOOK FRIENDS: I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Ed.D. in Community Care and Counseling: Traumatology Cognate at Liberty University. The purpose of my research is to understand and describe how generational trauma impacts the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. It will highlight the generational trauma women in the African American community have endured and how it has been passed down from mothers to their daughters throughout several generations. To participate, you must be an African American mother-daughter duo. The mother is defined as an African American woman who has raised an African American daughter until she was at least 14 years of age. The daughters are defined as an African American woman that is between the ages of 14-35. Participants will be asked to participate in an interview that will consist of 20 questions, which should take about 90 minutes to complete. If you would like to participate and meet the study criteria, please direct message me or contact me at ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆ or ▆▆▆▆▆▆▆ for more information and to receive the link to the preliminary survey. If you are under the age of 18 and you and your mother are interested in participating, please have your mother contact me for more information. A consent document will be emailed to you after the preliminary survey is complete and you have agreed to participate in the study.

Twitter and Instagram
Are you an African American woman who does not mind sharing details about your mother-daughter relationship? Direct message me for information about a research study on Generational Trauma and its impact on the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. If you are under the age of 18, please have your mother direct message me.

Appendix B

Initial Email to Potential Participants

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Bernadette Ward, I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University in the Community Care and Counseling department. I am currently completing my doctoral dissertation requirement. My dissertation topic is *Exploring the Impact of Generational Trauma on Mother-Daughter Relationships with an Emphasis on the African American Community*. I am hoping to conduct an in person or virtual interview with you that will last roughly 90 minutes. Your interview will assist me with researching generational trauma's impact on mother-daughter relationships in the African American community. As an African American woman, my interest in this topic was derived from my upbringing and seeing how other women within my community had similar preferences and bias. I also wanted this research to serve as another opportunity for individuals of different races to be introduced to part of the foundation that shapes how a significant amount of African American women think and respond. It is my goal to highlight trauma throughout several generations so that mother-daughter duos in the African American community can not only acknowledge what is being passed down but break the cycle of passing down bias and preferences that may be detrimental to women socially.

I am attempting to explore trauma that has occurred to women within a family unit and see if the trauma response had an impact on the morals and values passed down to their daughters. This research does require personal information to be disclosed so participation is voluntary and confidential. To complete the research, an informed consent form must be signed. My plan is to conduct interviews as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ or via email ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓. My dissertation chair is Dr. Krystal L. Clemons, and you may contact her with questions or concerns at ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓.

As an effort to keep all information confidential, each participant will have an identification number randomly assigned. I will not utilize or refer to you as your legal name throughout the research. Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this study. Your lived experiences will serve as a valuable contribution to the advancement of research and understanding of African American women. If you are willing to move forward in this study, please complete the Preliminary Survey below. I greatly appreciate you.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/96KRQX5

Bernadette Ward, B.S., M.A., LPC, NCC

Appendix C

Human Subject Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 13, 2022

Bernadette Ward
Krystal Clemons

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-757 Exploring the Impact of Generational Trauma on Mother-Daughter Relationships with an Emphasis on the African American Community

Dear Bernadette Ward, Krystal Clemons,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: April 13, 2022. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

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

Appendix D

Consent

Title of the Project: Exploring the Impact of Generational Trauma on Mother-Daughter Relationships with an Emphasis on the African American Community
Principal Investigator: Bernadette Ward, B.S., M.A., LPC, NCC, Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be an African American mother-daughter duo. The mother is defined as an African American woman who has raised an African American daughter until she was at least 14 years of age. The daughters are defined as an African American woman that is between the ages of 14-35. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to understand and describe how generational trauma impacts the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. It will highlight the generational trauma women in the African American community have endured and how it has been passed down from mothers to their daughters throughout several generations. Lastly, this study will explore African American mother-daughter duos views of self, views of other women, outlooks on romantic and nonromantic relationships, as well as beliefs about gender/sex roles.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:
1. Once selected, schedule a 90-minute interview that will consist of 20 questions. Interviews will be face to face or via Skype/Zoom and audio recorded.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society may include displaying how generational trauma has impacted African American women and how it has been passed down to their daughters for several generations. This study also provides people of different ethnicities an explanation for why some African American women think the way they do, how they respond and/or cope with trauma, as well as how they see themselves as part of society as a whole.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your child would experience in daily life. However, participants may experience negative affective states such as anxiety, depression, and guilt. In the event psychological risks become too detrimental and the participant is unable to complete the interview and does not have a form of mental health support, the participant will be removed from the study.

It should be noted that the researcher is a mandated reporter for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others.

How will personal information be protected?

Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of participant numbers. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Bernadette Ward. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (202) 957-5536 or via email at ███████████████ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Krystal Clemons, at ███████████████

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

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered

and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

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

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

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

Appendix E

Parental Consent

Parental Consent

Title of the Project: Exploring the Impact of Generational Trauma on Mother-Daughter Relationships with an Emphasis on the African American Community
Principal Investigator: Bernadette Ward, B.S., M.A., LPC, NCC, Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be African American females between the ages of 14 and 35, have resided with her mother up to age 14, and her or her mother must have experienced at least one traumatic event. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your child to take part in this research project.

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

The purpose of the study is to understand and describe how generational trauma impacts the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. It will highlight the generational trauma women in the African American community have endured and how it has been passed down from mothers to their daughters throughout several generations. Lastly, this study will explore African American mother-daughter duos views of self, views of other women, outlooks on romantic and nonromantic relationships, as well as beliefs about gender/sex roles.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I will ask her to do the following things:
1. Once selected, schedule a 90-minute interview that will consist of 20 questions. Interviews will be face-to-face or via Skype/Zoom and audio recorded.

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Benefits to society may include displaying how generational trauma has impacted African American women and how it has been passed down to their daughters for several generations. This study also provides people of different ethnicities an explanation for why some African American women think the way they do, how they respond and/or cope with trauma, as well as how they see themselves as part of society as a whole

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your child would experience in daily life. However, participants may experience negative affective states such as anxiety, depression, and guilt. In the event psychological risks become too detrimental and the participant is unable to complete the interview and does not have a form of mental health support, the participant will be removed from the study.

It should be noted that the researcher is a mandated reporter for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others.

How will personal information be protected?

Data collected from your child may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from your child is shared, any information that could identify your child, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of participant numbers. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

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

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect you or your child's current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to allow your child to participate, your child is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your child from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Bernadette Ward. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at (202) 957-5536 or via email at ███████████. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Krystal Clemons, at ███████████.

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

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University

Your Consent

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

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

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record my child as part of her participation in this study.

_____

Printed Child's Name

_____

Parent's Printed Name & Signature   Date

_____

Minor's Signature   Date

Appendix F

Screening

Preliminary Survey Questions

1. What is your age range?
   Under 18
   18-25
   26-33
   34-41
   42-50
   51 and over

2. What is your race?
   American Indian/Alaska Native
   Asian
   Black or African American
   Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
   White/Caucasian
   Multiracial

3. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?
   Yes
   No

4. Do you have a daughter?
   Yes
   No

5. What is your daughter's age range?
   0-3
   4-7
   8-11
   12-14
   15-17
   18-21
   22-29
   30 and over

6. Did you reside with your mother at least until age 18?
   Yes
   No

7. Have you and/or your mother experienced a traumatic event?
   Yes

No
Not Sure

8. Is your daughter (or mother) willing to participate in the study?
   Yes
   No

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

The purpose of this proposed study is to understand and describe how generational trauma impacts the mother-daughter relationship in the African American community. The research questions guiding the study are: "How does generational trauma impact the mother-daughter relationship?", "How does the mother-daughter relationship influence a woman's romantic and nonromantic relationships?" and "What are the significant connections between generational trauma and a daughter's self-identity?" The participants in this study will be African American women. I will begin each interview by introducing myself and explaining the study. I will ask if the interviewee has any questions and then proceed with the questions listed below:

1. What was your mother's parenting style with you?

    (Prompt: Was she strict, fun, attentive, etc.)

2. Describe your relationship with your mother going back to your younger years.

    (*Prompt: Age 5 and above)*

3. What two words would you use to describe you and your mother's relationship, and why?

    (Prompt; Words that describe the overall relationship, are you close, distant, etc.)

4. What were the most important lessons your mother taught you?

5. If you could change anything about you and your mother's (daughter's) relationship, what would it be?

    (Prompt: Change the amount of communication, time spent, less arguments, etc.)

6. Who taught you about sex, menstruation, and romantic relationships? How were you taught?

7. Describe some of the relationships you have witnessed your mother involved in. These should be romantic and nonromantic.

(Prompt: Did you witness your mother with close friends, how was she with her significant other, etc.)

8. Explain your father's role in your upbringing.

9. How did your father engage in disputes with you and your mother?

10. To your knowledge, has your mother (daughter) experienced any traumatic incidents that you have witnessed or been made aware of?

   (Prompt: Traumatic incidents can include directly or indirectly experiencing an accident, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, natural disaster, neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, living with family with MH/SA disorders, separation, racism, war, etc.)

11. What was her response to the trauma?

   (Follow up: How do you know this?)

12. Have you experienced any traumatic incidents? If so, did your mother witness the trauma or was she made aware of the trauma?

13. What was your response to the trauma?

14. What was your mother's response to your traumatic event?

15. Have there been any traumatic events that have impacted your family as a whole?

   (Prompt: Caused a separation, legal issues, mental health services for the family, etc.)

16. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate your self-esteem?

17. How do you describe yourself?

18. How do you describe your mother?

19. How would you describe your current romantic relationships?

   (Follow up if not present: what are you looking for in a partner and why?)

20. How would you describe your current platonic relationships?

   (Follow up: Friendships with men and women.)

21. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Some questions may be added throughout the interview for clarity or further information. At the

end of the interview, I will ask if there are any questions and conclude by thanking the

interviewee for her participation.

Appendix H

Participant Demographic Overview

Participant	Age Range	Role Within Duo
2A	51 and over	Mother
2B	30 and over	Daughter
4A	34-41	Mother
4B	12-14	Daughter
5A	34-41	Mother
5B	15-17	Daughter
7A	34-41	Mother
7B	18-21	Daughter
8A	51 and over	Mother
8B	30 and over	Daughter
9A	34-41	Mother
9B	12-14	Daughter
11A	51 and over	Mother
11B	30 and over	Daughter
12A	51 and over	Mother
12B	30 and over	Daughter
15A	51 and over	Mother
15B	30 and over	Daughter

Appendix I

Follow-Up Email to Participants

Hello All,

Thank you all for your interest thus far. To keep all identities hidden, the survey that was included in my first email is not linked to your name or email. Please send me an email stating you have completed the survey. Once an email is received, I will send you consent forms to review. If your daughter is a minor, you will have to sign her consent for which gives her permission to participate. Once I receive a signed consent form, we can schedule your 90-minute interview. Thank you again and please do not hesitate to reach out to me with questions or concerns.

 Bernadette Ward, B.S., M.A., LPC, NCC

Appendix J

Second Follow-Up Email

Hello,

Thank you for your willingness to participate and thank you for completing all the previous requirements. From here on out, you will be referred to as Participant [Insert Number]. Please utilize the link below to schedule your 90-minute interview. If there are not any suitable times, please give me a call █████████ and we can find a time slot that is best for you. Thank you in advance.

https://calendly.com/bwardresearch/research-interview

Bernadette Ward, B.S., M.A., LPC, NCC

Appendix K

Within Case Display

Participant Characteristics	Communication	Inadequate Knowledge	Relationships	Trauma Acceptance
Duo 1 ~Age Range: **51 and over** ~Gender: **Female** ~Race: **African American** ~Role: **Mother** ~Age Range: **30 and over** ~Gender: **Female** ~Race: **African American** ~Role: **Daughter**	**Verbal Communication** *Increase* **Desired to communicate more open ** Wanted to communicate earlier **Active Listening** *Manner* **None Reported	**Women's Bodies and Wombs** *Sex and Reproductive Education* **Vague conversation about menstruation **Taught about sanitary napkins but self-taught about tampons **No formal talks about sex **Love and Marriage** *Romance* **No formal conversations about romantic relationships **Daughter open to dating *Marriage* **Mother divorced **Daughter never married **No mentions of marriage	**Black Women in Friendships** *Model* **Mother and Daughter saw examples of healthy friendships **Daughter reported to have branched out to school friends **Friends become family **Relationship with Yourself** *Comfortability* **Good self-esteem reported **Mom and grandmother are similar	**Identifying Trauma** *Denial or Uncertainty* **Mother and Daughter avoided concrete language **Withholding Information** *Secrecy* **Found out about half-sister years later **Mother had a miscarriage **Daughter impacted by divorce and self-coped

Vitae

Bernadette Denise Ward earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Howard University in 2010 and a Master of Arts in Professional Counseling from Liberty University in 2012. She is a nationally certified counselor, a certified clinical trauma professional, and a licensed professional counselor in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Ms. Ward has worked in the mental health field for twelve years. Within these twelve years, Ms. Ward has worked for two community service boards, and has managed three regional programs. Ms. Ward has also worked a significant amount of time in crisis programs. Ms. Ward provides clinical supervision for residents in counseling. Ms. Ward's specialty is working with women and children who are victims of human trafficking, rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

Ms. Ward is a member of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Tidewater Chapter. It is also significant to note that Ms. Ward is a Full Spectrum Doula. She is making a conscious effort to increase, promote, and support Black infant and maternal health.