

ROBERTS, J. DONTAE'. Ph.D. Exploring the Effects of Racial Discrimination on the Mental Health and Parenting Satisfaction of African American Fathers: A Mixed Methods Study. (2024) Directed by Dr. Jay Poole. 141 pp.

Purpose: This study explored the effects of racial discrimination on the mental health and parenting satisfaction of African American fathers. Secondary data was used using the ADD Health dataset; mental health was operationalized as depression and anxiety ($n=146$). Standardized scales were used for both. Through qualitative methods, this study sought to explore how their mental health is affected when exposed to racism, how African American fathers define racism, and the use of racial socialization ($n=15$).

Methods: This two-phase, sequential explanatory study used secondary data and qualitative data collection and analyses. The study's first phase was twofold: (a) to determine if racial discrimination affects mental health (stress and depression), and (b) to determine if racial discrimination affects parenting satisfaction when mental health is impacted ($N=146$). In the study's second phase, qualitative interview methods were employed with a subsample ($N=15$) of participants.

Data Analysis: SPSS version 22 was used to analyze quantitative data. The reliability of each measure for the population was determined by re-establishing psychometric characteristics for all scales. The confidence in the reliability of the instruments had an internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of $\alpha \geq .70$ or higher.

I used multivariate multiple regression analysis (MRA) in phase I on both quantitative questions. Using the secondary dataset, ADD Health, I explored the relationship between the independent variable, racial discrimination, and the dependent variables, stress, depression, and parenting satisfaction. I also analyzed the role of the covariates income and education.

The qualitative phase was also twofold: (a) to further explore and uncover how the significant factors identified in phase I of the study contributed to (i.e., supported or impeded) African American fathers' mental health, and (b) to provide a means for "showing the human faces behind the numbers" (Patton, 2002, p. 152) in a way that is contextually grounded and sensitive to the complex circumstances that shape the experiences of African American fathers (Conner & White, 2006; Cabrera et al., 2004), and to provide participants with an opportunity to share their lived experiences as African American fathers that have experienced racism.

Results: Descriptive statistics revealed that the final sample consisted of 146 African-American males with children with varying education levels and income ranges. Bivariate analyses showed significant positive relationships between racial discrimination, perceived stress, and depression. However, racial discrimination was not significantly related to parenting satisfaction.

The results indicated that racial discrimination is significantly related to perceived stress and depression while controlling for education level and income. Research Question 2 focused on whether mental health mediates the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction. Sobel tests were conducted but did not yield statistically significant mediation effects for either perceived stress or depression.

Thematic analysis revealed five themes: (a) experiences of racial discrimination in various life domains; (b) impacts on parenting discussions about race; (c) experiences of racism influencing outlooks; (d) impacts on family dynamics, relationships, and social interactions; and (e) emotional responses to racism leading to seeking control over self/environment.

Implications: The analysis of laws and policies related to African American men raises concerns regarding insufficient representation and input of African American fathers in decision-

making processes. This lack of diverse perspectives can lead to policies that fail to fully address the challenges faced by African American fathers and their families. Racial bias and discrimination within these policies perpetuate disparities within the criminal justice system, resulting in overrepresentation, harsher treatment, and longer sentences for African American fathers. The overemphasis on punitive measures limits opportunities for familial connection and support. African American men also face racial profiling, biased policing, and sentencing disparities, particularly due to policies like the War on Drugs that disproportionately target communities of color. Mass incarceration further hinders stable family relationships and economic stability for African American fathers. Concerns arose around policies such as The Welfare-Child Support System and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which lack comprehensive support tailored to the unique needs of African American fathers. These policies inadvertently reinforce systemic barriers, limiting access to education, employment, and housing. The recommendations for TANF include establishing a federal minimum benefit, barring mandatory work requirements, and addressing funding inequities. Addressing these issues requires acknowledging the historical context, community mobilization, policy reform, and implementation to promote equality and fair treatment. Policy efforts should focus on criminal justice reform, employment discrimination, healthcare access, and education. Additionally, support in economic empowerment, healthcare access, and culturally competent therapy can contribute to positive mental health outcomes for African American fathers. By dismantling systemic barriers and promoting inclusivity, social work can better support African American fathers, strengthen family dynamics, and foster community resilience.

EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ON THE MENTAL HEALTH
AND PARENTING SATISFACTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FATHERS:
A MIXED METHODS STUDY

by

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Dr. Jay Poole
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DEDICATION

From the start of this process, I lost both my biological parents and my last two living grandparents. This dissertation is, first and foremost, devoted to my heavenly father, the singular God. This would not have been possible without you. Throughout this road, there have been many moments when I've felt worn out and like I could not go on. I am a better person now that I let your might rest on me, and you stretched and tugged me in so many different directions, revealing aspects of myself that I never knew existed. You miraculously demonstrated the strength of love, the grit of tenacity, the importance of discipline, and the reward reserved for those who persevere through to the end. You prepared me for everything that would come with traveling a unique route and chasing something that is merely a dream for so many people because you knew from the beginning that this would be my fate. Additionally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Olive West, my biological father, and James "Pete" Roberts, who raised me. During my darkest time as a father, I never thought of giving up because you both were there.

APPROVAL PAGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES viii

LIST OF FIGURES..... x

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION1

 Introductory Statement..... 1

 African-American Fathers.....2

 Scope and Prevalence Related to the Research Problem3

 Effects of Racial Discrimination on Mental Health3

 PTSD and Stress on Parenting.....4

 Statement of the Research Problem7

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS8

 Factors Impacting the Health and Mental Health of African Americans8

 Discrimination8

 Racial Discrimination10

 Racial Discrimination and Stress..... 13

 Racial Discrimination and Mental Health Correlates.....14

 Racial Discrimination and Health Correlates15

 African American Veteran Fathers and Racial Discrimination.....16

 Racial Discrimination and the Makeup of African-American Families.....18

 The Presence of the Father in African-American Communities20

 The Link Between Fathers’ Mental Health and Their Children’s Outcomes21

 Protective Factors.....23

 Racial Socialization23

 Coping with Racial Discrimination.....23

 Positive Self-Esteem24

 Gaps in the Literature25

 Theories and Frameworks25

 Ecological Systems Theory (EST) Framework.....26

 Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory [RECAST]26

 Race-Base Traumatic Stress (RBTS)27

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS).....	28
Kindling.....	29
Conceptual Framework	30
CHAPTER III: METHODS	31
Purpose and Goals of the Study	31
Research Questions	31
Review of Mixed Methodology	32
Overview of Research Design Strategies	34
Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design.....	34
Phase I: Quantitative (Quant) Study	37
Design	37
Secondary Data Set—ADD Health	37
Participants	38
Measures.....	38
Independent Variable	38
Racial Discrimination.....	38
Dependent Variables	39
Depression.....	39
Stress	40
Parenting Satisfaction.....	40
Covariates.....	41
Income.....	41
Education.....	41
Quantitative Data Analysis Plan.....	41
Phase II: Qualitative (Qual) Study	42
Strategy of Inquiry	42
Features and Underlying Assumptions of Empirical Phenomenology	43
The Role of the Researcher and Researcher Biases	45
Recruitment Strategy	46
Qualitative Study Incentives	46
Data Collection Procedures	47
Sampling Methods	47

Sample Size and Saturation	47
Instrumentation/Data Recording Procedures	49
Plan for Qualitative Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Presentation of Findings	50
Procedures for Validating the Accuracy of Study Findings	52
Protection of Human Subjects	52
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS	54
Introductory Statement	54
Quantitative Data Analysis	54
Descriptive Statistics	54
Bivariate Analyses	56
RQ 1: Is there an association between racial discrimination and the mental health of African- American fathers?.....	58
Racial Discrimination and Perceived Stress.....	58
Racial Discrimination and Depression	59
RQ 2: Does mental health mediate the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction?.....	60
Ancillary Analysis	61
Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction.....	63
Racial Discrimination, Perceived Stress, and Parenting Satisfaction.....	64
Racial Discrimination, Depression, and Parenting Satisfaction	65
Perceived Stress Mediating the Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction	66
Depression Mediating the Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction	66
Qualitative Data Analysis	67
RQ 3: Have you ever been treated differently because of your race and ethnicity; if so, how do African American fathers experience racism?.....	71
Theme 1: African American Fathers Experienced Racial Discrimination in All Facets of Life	72
RQ4: How does experiencing racism influence African-American fathers' mental health and parenting?	75

Theme 2: The Emotional and Psychological Impacts of Racial Discrimination Led Participants to Seek Control over Self and Environment	76
Theme 3: Racial Socialization with Children	79
RQ5: How does racial socialization relate to African-American fathers' mental health?	83
Theme 4: Most Participants Reported Minimal Talk about Discrimination from Parents Beyond Descriptive Stories and Practical Advice	84
Theme 5: The Impacts of Racial Discrimination Led to Changes in Family Discussions, Relationships, and Social Interactions.....	87
Summary	91
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION	93
Summary of Findings	93
T-test	93
Chi-Square.....	95
Pearson Correlation	96
The Numbers: Discussion of Quantitative Study Results	96
Beyond the Numbers: Discussion of Qualitative Study Results	99
Limitations of the Study	106
Implications for Theory.....	107
Recommendations for Future Research	108
Practical Implications	110
Conclusion.....	117
REFERENCES	120
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL	141

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. ADD Health Longitudinal Study	38
Table 2. Reductions in Dataset	55
Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages for Nominal-Level Variables	55
Table 4. Summary Statistics for Perceived Stress and Depression	56
Table 5. Pearson Correlation Between Perceived Stress and Depression	57
Table 6. Independent Sample t-test for Perceived Stress and Depression by Perceived Discrimination	57
Table 7. Independent Sample T-test for Perceived Stress and Depression by Parenting Satisfaction	58
Table 8. Chi-Square Test of Independence between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction	58
Table 9. Results for Linear Regression with Racial Discrimination and Perceived Stress While Controlling for Education and Income	59
Table 10. Results for Linear Regression with Racial Discrimination and Depression While Controlling for Education and Income	60
Table 11. Sobel Test Parameters to Test Mediating Relationship of Perceived Stress on Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction	62
Table 12. Sobel Test Parameters to Test Mediating Relationship of Depression on Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction	62
Table 13. Results for Logistic Regression with Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction While Controlling for Education and Income	63
Table 14. Results for Logistic Regression with Racial Discrimination and Perceived Stress on Parenting Satisfaction While Controlling for Education and Income	64
Table 15. Results for Logistic Regression with Racial Discrimination and Depression on Parenting Satisfaction While Controlling for Education and Income	65

Table 16. Themes and Codes Emergent from Interview Data... 68

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.....	30
Figure 2. Visual Model of Mixed Methods Research Design Procedures	36
Figure 3. Procedures for Conducting Empirical/Transcendental Phenomenological Data.....	51
Figure 4. Structure of Thematic Networks.....	52
Figure 5. Hypothesized Path Model for Perceived Stress Mediating Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction	61
Figure 6. Hypothesized Path Model for Depression Mediating Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction	62

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introductory Statement

Discrimination refers to an individual or group's unjust and unfavorable treatment based on identifying factors such as sex, disability, or ethnicity (Dovidio et al., 2010). Race is a social construct that categorizes people based on physical appearance, while ethnicity pertains to a shared culture and identity derived from common heritage, ancestry, or nationality. Racism, which stems from hostility towards individuals based on their race and/or ethnicity (R. T. Lee et al., 2019), is pervasive in society and can cause stress and harm mental health (Carter, 2007; de Freitas et al., 2018; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995). Racial discrimination inflicts emotional distress with severe and long-term psychological consequences. This paper explores the impact of racial discrimination on the mental health of African-American fathers.

Historical slavery has had a profound psychological impact on African Americans. These effects may manifest as physiological issues such as high blood pressure, cancer, and diabetes (Higgins, 1995). Cooper et al. (2015) found that race-related experiences among African-American fathers are connected to complex discussions about race with their sons and daughters. Although research does not explicitly focus on how racial oppression or trauma affects African-American fathers' experiences, it is evident that both phenomena influence African-American men. According to NPR's report on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's study conducted in collaboration with Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health in 2017:

- Around 60% of African Americans reported mistreatment or being stopped by police due to their race, compared to lower percentages for Hispanics (27%), Asians (13%), and Whites (6%).

- In terms of workplace discrimination related to pay or promotions:
- Approximately 57% of African Americans cited differences compared to lower percentages for Hispanics (32%), Native Americans (31%), Asians (25%), and Whites (13%) (R. T. Lee et al., 2019).

The impact of racial discrimination is extensive and affects general health, life satisfaction, happiness, prevalence of depressive disorders, and blood pressure levels among African Americans (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002; Steffen et al., 2003; Utsey et al., 2000; Williams et al., 2008).

African-American Fathers

African-American fathers are often stereotyped as absent and unsupportive. Studies have shown that White individuals perceive African-American fathers as uninvolved, financially irresponsible, and hypermasculine. However, research has also indicated that African-American men fulfill their parental responsibilities similarly to Hispanic or White fathers (Smith et al., 2005). The pressure to defy negative fatherhood stereotypes and being seen as an inadequate long-term partner can induce stress.

Moreover, African-American men appear particularly susceptible to the adverse psychological and physical effects of racism (Williams, 2018). However, there is limited data on how race and gender interact in producing stressful situations for African-American men (Perry et al., 2013). Race and gender are prominent components of social identities frequently used for classification purposes. Previous studies exploring the intersectionality of race and gender have primarily focused on women rather than men. Nonetheless, research suggests that compared to African-American women, African-American men report experiencing more instances of racism (Williams, 2018). Dr. Carter developed a measure called gendered racism stress specifically for

African American men with an intersectionality approach to test its psychometric properties (Cole, 2009). Racial discrimination is increasingly recognized as a determinant of racial/ethnic health disparities, with solid evidence linking it to adult mental health outcomes (Hudson et al., 2016).

Scope and Prevalence Related to the Research Problem

Numerous studies found that experiences of racial discrimination were associated with increased psychological distress among African-American fathers. This included symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Discrimination-related stressors were found to contribute significantly to these adverse mental health outcomes. Racial discrimination also had implications for parenting stress among African-American fathers. The constant exposure to discriminatory experiences resulted in heightened levels of parenting stress, affecting their ability to engage with their children and provide emotional support effectively.

Studies explored coping mechanisms employed by African-American fathers facing racial discrimination. Some individuals utilized adaptive coping strategies such as seeking social support or engaging in activism, which appeared beneficial for their mental well-being. However, others resorted to maladaptive coping mechanisms, including substance abuse or withdrawal, which further exacerbated mental health challenges. The intersectionality of race and gender was also examined concerning the mental health of African-American fathers. Findings suggested that experiences of racial discrimination interacted with societal expectations of masculinity, leading to unique stressors and challenges for these fathers.

Effects of Racial Discrimination on Mental Health

Experiences of racial discrimination, whether occurring once, repeatedly, or over an extended period, have varying impacts on individuals. However, many African Americans

experience symptoms that do not meet diagnostic criteria but still have significant effects like those seen in people living with PTSD. The impact of discrimination can range from mild to severe. The effect of an event depends on multiple factors, such as personal characteristics, the nature and characteristics of the events themselves, developmental mechanisms, and the emotional significance of the trauma (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2014). Regardless of their intensity, the effects of racial discrimination can extend beyond the individual who experienced it and affect those connected to them in some way, such as their children (Christie et al., 2019).

PTSD and Stress on Parenting

Parental stress refers to the negative psychological response that individuals experience upon becoming parents. This stress is linked to parenting behaviors and child outcomes (Deater-Deckard, 1998, p. 315). Racial discrimination also has implications for parenting stress among African-American fathers (McAdoo & Younge-Andrews, 2020; Neblett et al., 2016). The constant exposure to discriminatory experiences results in heightened levels of parenting stress, affecting their ability to engage with their children and provide emotional support effectively (Hudson et al., 2019). Scholars such as Suttora, Chemtob, and Salloum have studied the impact of PTSD on parenting stress. They have looked explicitly at traumatic events during childbirth and other mixed traumas (such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and physical abuse), finding that fathers are disproportionately affected by this type of stress (Chemtob et al., 2013; Salloum et al., 2015; Suttora et al., 2014). If left unaddressed, these fathers can pass down their suffering through learned behavior and epigenetic processes. Furthermore, research suggests that it is not uncommon for PTSD symptoms to remain dormant until a man becomes a father.

One study analyzed data from over 100,000 veterans and discovered that those with dependent children were 40% more likely to receive a PTSD diagnosis within the first year of returning home from military service compared to non-parents (Vinopal, 2017). Additional data from a smaller sample showed that being a father increased the likelihood of experiencing more severe PTSD symptoms (Vinopal, 2017). In another study conducted by Jordan et al. (1992), veteran fathers with PTSD reported lower parental satisfaction levels than veteran fathers without PTSD. Fathers diagnosed with PTSD also rated their parenting satisfaction considerably lower than those without it. Similar findings were reported by Samper et al. (2004) when investigating associations between PTSD symptoms and parenting satisfaction using a five-item measure in male veterans' samples. Wilson et al. (2017) examined mother-child dyads who experienced mixed trauma and found a moderate relationship between parenting stress scores and PTSD symptoms.

Chemtob et al.'s (2013) study compared different diagnostic groups, including those without any diagnoses, those with only PTSD, those with only depression, and those with both depression and PTSD. They used questionnaire scores in a community sample of mothers who reported trauma exposure. The study found that parental stress levels were elevated across all diagnostic groups, suggesting stress affects parents regardless of their diagnosis.

While existing literature recognizes the presence of full-blown PTSD in some women and mothers (Ayers & Pickering, 2001), limited information is available regarding fathers affected by PTSD related to racial discrimination. Meta-analyses have indicated that factors such as age, sex, socioeconomic status, education level, and race can influence the likelihood of experiencing PTSD within the African-American community (Brewin et al., 2000). However, these individual-level risk factors only account for approximately 20% of the variance in PTSD (Brewin et al.,

2000). Researchers are now starting to incorporate macro-level factors into their studies on PTSD. This includes examining how community conditions can predict racial discrimination leading to the development of PTSD among African American men. A study utilizing participatory research provides a context for various potentially traumatic events that increase the risk of developing PTSD (Breslau et al., 2009). More recent research has shown that urban communities pose a higher risk for exposure to racial discrimination and subsequent development of PTSD due to incidents like community violence (Gillikin et al., 2016).

Effects of Racial Discrimination on Fatherhood

Racial discrimination harms fathers' physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being. Although there is a high lifetime risk of experiencing racial discrimination events in the United States, these experiences do not always result in the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Wagner et al., 2016). Kessler and Wang (2008) found that 60.7% of men and 51.2% of women have been exposed to racial discrimination, but the lifetime prevalence rate of PTSD is only 7.8%. The National Comorbidity Survey-Replication reported a slightly lower lifetime prevalence rate of 6.8% 20 years later (Kessler & Wang, 2008). Existing research on father involvement primarily focuses on white, middle-class fathers (Baker, 2017), neglecting the impact racial discrimination may have on parenting for non-white or non-middle-class individuals. While it remains unclear how many fathers struggle with trauma, considering that nearly half of all American men are fathers, it suggests that approximately two million fathers could be experiencing violent flashbacks, intrusive memories, debilitating panic attacks, and other symptoms (Vinopal, 2017). This research study aims to investigate the mental health and parenting satisfaction among African American fathers as they have been affected by lifelong experiences with racial discrimination.

Statement of the Research Problem

The experiences of racial discrimination have been extensively studied concerning mental health outcomes, but there is a growing need to understand its specific impact on African-American fathers' parenting stress. Despite the recognition that racial discrimination can significantly affect individuals' mental well-being, there is limited research focusing on how these experiences specifically contribute to parenting stress among African-American fathers. Therefore, this literature review aims to address this gap by synthesizing and analyzing recent studies conducted within the past 10 years that investigate the effects of racial discrimination on African-American fathers' parenting stress. By examining this research problem, we can gain insights into the unique challenges faced by African-American fathers and identify potential interventions and support systems that can mitigate these effects and promote their overall well-being.

This chapter provided a descriptive profile of how racial discrimination affects African American fathers, statistical data highlighting what they face within their community, a brief discussion on underlying trends that have influenced family structure over time, an explanation of the research problem being investigated, and an overview of existing literature. In Chapter II, we delve into the historical background of African-American families and fatherhood to establish a theoretical framework for analyzing modern literature.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This chapter will provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature on the effects of racial discrimination on African-American fathers' mental health and parenting stress. By examining studies conducted within the past years, this literature review aims to synthesize current research findings and identify key themes related to the impact of racial discrimination on African-American fathers. Additionally, this chapter explores relevant theoretical frameworks that can help contextualize and understand these effects. By delving into this body of knowledge, I can gain a deeper understanding of how racial discrimination influences African-American fathers' mental health outcomes and parenting stress levels. This knowledge will contribute to developing effective interventions, support systems, and policies that address their specific needs to promote their overall well-being.

Factors Impacting the Health and Mental Health of African Americans

Discrimination

According to a recent poll conducted by KFF in 2020, most African Americans (71%) have experienced racial discrimination or mistreatment at some point. Additionally, nearly half (48%) of them felt their life was in danger due to their race. This discovery comes as protests against racial bias in law enforcement and other sectors continue to gain momentum. The poll also revealed that 41% of African Americans believe they have been stopped or detained by the police because of their race, while 21% claim to have experienced police violence. In comparison, a much smaller percentage of White people (3%) and Hispanics (8%) reported similar negative experiences with the police throughout their lifetimes.

Furthermore, African Americans are significantly more likely than Hispanics or Whites to report being denied housing they could afford or job opportunities for which they were qualified.

Specifically, 40% of African Americans claimed housing denial compared to only 15% among Hispanics and 8% among Whites. The same pattern is observed when it comes to unjust treatment during traffic stops and other encounters with the police within the previous year: 30% of African Americans reported such incidents compared to just 3% among White Americans and 11% among Hispanic Americans. The poll investigated issues related to racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination. It examined the national conversation on race triggered by recent incidents involving African American deaths at the hands of the police and subsequent protests. Despite significant ideological differences, most Americans view racism, police brutality, and violence caused by protestors as problems plaguing the country today.

Moreover, most African Americans do not hold high hopes for changes within political systems, economic structures, or healthcare during their lifetimes, with percentages standing at around 63% and 62%, respectively, according to Pew Research Center's (2022) findings. Assari, Lankarani, and Caldwell's (2018) research suggests that various restrictions on African American men's lives coupled with structural obstacles to parenting, such as disproportionate incarceration, limited access to services, and the criminalization of poverty, contribute to the continued dehumanization experienced by this demographic into adulthood. It is worth noting that research on this topic is only beginning to address the concerns of African-American men who are middle-class or wealthy, LGBTQ+, or from other diverse backgrounds. As a result of this ongoing dehumanization, effective African-American fathering often goes unnoticed despite being an integral part of African-American family systems, according to Hines and Boyd-Franklin (2005) in their works Allen (2016), Mandara (2006), and Roy and Burton (2007).

Racial Discrimination

Racism-related stress, as defined by Harrell (2000), refers to the tensions and challenges that arise from interactions between individuals or groups and their environment due to the dynamics of racism. These transactions are perceived to exceed existing individual and collective resources or threaten overall well-being. Racism, on the other hand, is a structured social system in which the dominant racial group categorizes people into “races” based on an ideology of inferiority. The dominant group uses its power to devalue, disempower, and unfairly distribute societal resources and opportunities among groups it considers inferior.

The cultural institutions within a civilization propagate beliefs that non-dominant racial groups are inferior. This viewpoint fosters differential treatment towards members of stigmatized racial groups through negative stereotypes, prejudiced attitudes, and discriminatory encounters. Notably, racism can persist in political and institutional practices even without explicit expressions of racial prejudice from individuals (Williams et al., 2019). Bowleg et al. (2014) investigated the association between common racial discrimination and sexual HIV risk behaviors in a predominantly low-income sample of 526 urban African American heterosexually identified men, 64% of whom were unemployed, and 55% reported a history of incarceration. This was done considering evidence that racial discrimination and post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) are neither rare nor extraordinary for many African-American urban men. They investigated whether PTSS would mediate between regular racial discrimination and sexual risk. The ages of participants in the urban sample, primarily low-income, ranged from 18 to 45 ($M=28.80$, $SD=7.57$). The mediational model of the study was tested using three multiple regression models. The connection between commonplace racial discrimination and sexual risk behaviors was mediated by PTSS, as predicted. Most interviewees (97%) mentioned encounters

with regular racial discrimination. The hypothesis that racial discrimination-based traumatic stress is a conduit to African American heterosexual men's higher sexual risk behaviors is supported empirically by the results. The results also emphasized significant demographic variations, with older men reporting less PTSS and sexual risk behavior than younger men. The relationship between incarceration and PTSS and sexual risk highlights the potential contribution of imprisonment to the poor health outcomes of African-American heterosexual men. To fully comprehend the nature of PTSS in African-American heterosexual men and processes like substance use that may link traumatic events with sexual risk, more qualitative and quantitative research is required, as shown by this study.

To uphold a racial hierarchy, racism operates as a structured system that interacts with other social institutions while also being influenced by them. It consists of interconnected components or subsystems reinforcing one another in a reciprocal causal relationship perpetuating imbalances across various societal domains. Consequently, structural racism exists within multiple systems, including housing, employment, credit markets, criminal justice education, and healthcare. The concept encompassing racial discrimination includes both notions of racial superiority (racism) as well as societal structures and interpersonal behaviors associated with oppression and dominance (Pieterse & Powell, 2016). Racial discrimination manifests differently among individuals, institutions, and the dominant culture but ultimately leads to the denial of resources and opportunities, shaping reality for people of color (Neville & Pieterse 2009). Racial discrimination is essentially the behavioral manifestation arising from the conjunction of power with prejudice—essentially, what drives racism itself.

In a study by Carter et al. (2016), racial discrimination is categorized into three types: avoidance, hostility, and aversive. Avoidance refers to the rejection or ignoring of individuals

based on their race. Hostility involves using derogatory words and non-verbal cues to belittle or intimidate people because of their race. Aversive hostility is characterized by barriers that limit opportunities for certain racial groups. Structural and institutional racism plays a significant role in perpetuating housing, income, and educational inequalities (Carter et al., 2016). These persistent stressors can affect biological systems independently or combined with individual discrimination and other forms of stigma (Hatzenbuehler, 2016). For example, cumulative experiences of racial discrimination at the personal, institutional, and structural levels can lead to changes in brain networks associated with threat vigilance and behavioral inhibition. In addition to affecting mental wellness, gene expression, and psychophysiological reactions are also impacted.

Marginalized and minoritized communities who experience stigma, discrimination, and intergenerational trauma endure various physical and mental health disparities (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2016). Chronic exposure to stigma can lead to detrimental effects on physical and psychological health. According to Solomon et al. (2019), African-American men reported experiencing institutional racism in their segregated neighborhoods. Living in racially segregated environments limits access to vital resources for maintaining good health while increasing exposure to unhealthy products. The presence of abandoned or neglected community institutions is a constant reminder of institutional racism.

Interpersonal racism further contributes to daily stressors faced by African-American men constantly made aware of their race in society (Solomon et al., 2019). Commercial industries often target African-American men explicitly when marketing products such as alcohol and unhealthy foods. Overall, structural and institutional racism, as well as interpersonal racism, have

profound effects on marginalized communities. These issues contribute to various health disparities and ongoing challenges for individuals facing discrimination based on their race.

Racial Discrimination and Stress

Pieterse et al. (2010) studied African-American college students and found that racial discrimination better predicted trauma-related symptoms than general life stress. Although the correlations were weak, these results support a systematic review by Kirkinis et al. (2021), which showed that people of color experience more traumatic stress than the general population in response to significant life events. Roberts et al. (2011) also confirmed these findings; even after controlling for the total number of reported stressful incidents throughout their lives, African Americans still had slightly higher rates of PTSD (8.7%) compared to Whites (7.4%).

According to Carter (2007), race-based traumatic stress is a unique form of trauma caused by emotional distress due to racial discrimination rather than violent or life-threatening incidents. Carter and Forsyth (2010) observed that people of color who experienced racism had higher anxiety levels, guilt/shame, avoidance/numbing, and hypervigilance, suggesting that race-based traumatic stress may be like PTSD. Interpersonal race-based traumas have been found to elicit more severe emotional reactions compared to impersonal traumas such as natural disasters or automobile accidents (Courtois, 2004). This is significant because racial discrimination can have a greater impact on the mental health of African-American individuals compared to natural disasters.

Pieterse et al. (2010) examined the relationship between racial and ethnic segregation, racial environment, and trauma-related symptoms among racially diverse college undergraduates. They found that college students reported experiencing racial discrimination based on their ethnicity. D. L. Lee and Ahn's (2011) study showed a small average correlation between

perceived racism and psychological distress among Asian and Asian American students ($r=.23$). However, this study did not separate the effects of racial discrimination from other forms, such as gender discrimination.

Pascoe and Smart Richman's (2009) research found a negative small average correlation ($r=-.16$) between perceived discrimination and mental health across 105 studies. Similarly, Harrell's (2000) analysis showed that Asian and African American students experienced prejudice more frequently than White students, but African American students perceived the racial environment on campus as more harmful. A hierarchical regression study by Pieterse et al. (2010) revealed that experiences of injustice significantly explained the variability of trauma-related symptoms in African-American students when controlling for general life stress. While these findings suggest a significant link between perceived discrimination and mental health among marginalized groups, they do not provide evidence for the association between perceived racism and mental health, specifically among Black Americans.

Racial Discrimination and Mental Health Correlates

In psychiatry and psychology, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) refers to distressing psychological reactions after experiencing a traumatic event (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Feelings of powerlessness, anxiety, and exposure to events like violent or accidental death, catastrophic injury, or threat of sexual assault characterize PTSD. However, it is essential to note that the diagnosis and criteria for PTSD have been criticized for not considering the impact of racial discrimination and racism-related stressors (Butts, 2002; Carter, 2007). As a result, research on the connection between racism-induced stress and psychological disorders is growing. Racial discrimination also has implications for mental health among African-American fathers (Hudson et al., 2020; Paradies et al., 2015). Experiences of racism are associated with

increased psychological distress symptoms such as depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse (Borrell et al., 2007; Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

According to the Pew Research Center (2022), African Americans are well aware of the challenges they face due to racism and have specific goals for reducing it through reforms. These goals include changes in the criminal justice system and law enforcement practices, increased civic engagement, and reparations for descendants of enslaved people in America. While African Americans have clear visions for social change in these areas, only a few believe complete equality will be achieved. Just 13% feel it is exceptionally or very likely compared to 38% who consider it expected (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Racial Discrimination and Health Correlates

Chronic stigma-fueled racism can cause severe suffering and dysfunction, affecting emotions, behavior, quality of life, and brain health. Early stigma and prejudice have long-term ramifications. Associative fear learning and pattern completion networks may ‘encode’ societal stigmas and racial discrimination may impact threat-responsive areas and circuits (Ruvolo Grasser & Jovanovic, 2022). Negative life experiences and prejudice reduce race-related variations in brain function and threat circuitry structure. Discrimination and stigma can chronically activate the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) and sympathetic-adrenal medullary (SAM) axes, causing physical health inequalities in marginalized populations. We conclude with models for ecological system interventions and societal-level methods to develop resilience and posttraumatic growth (Ruvolo Grasser & Jovanovic, 2022).

Several studies have found that experiences of racial discrimination are associated with adverse physical health outcomes among African-American fathers (Assari et al., 2018; Clark et

al., 2019). Discrimination-related stressors contribute significantly to conditions such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and overall poor self-rated health (Gee et al., 2012; Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

Studies have explored the impact of racial discrimination on health behaviors among African-American fathers. Discrimination experiences are associated with unhealthy coping mechanisms such as smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and poor diet (Assari et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2019). These behaviors contribute to the development of chronic health conditions. Racial discrimination also influences healthcare access and utilization among African-American fathers. Discrimination experiences lead to mistrust in healthcare systems, lower rates of seeking medical care, and disparities in receiving quality healthcare services (Gee et al., 2006; Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

This review demonstrated a clear correlation between racial discrimination experiences and adverse health outcomes among African-American fathers. The findings emphasize the importance of recognizing and addressing these issues within clinical practice, public policies, and community initiatives. Further research is needed to explore protective factors and develop effective interventions that promote resilience among African-American fathers facing racial discrimination.

African American Veteran Fathers and Racial Discrimination

Further research conducted within the Veteran population has revealed that the strongest positive correlations were found in samples consisting solely of veterans who may have experienced trauma from combat and racial trauma. To differentiate between the effects of race-related stressors and trauma symptoms resulting from combat exposure, military rank, psychological distress, and PTSD, Loo et al. (2001) and Zamon Williams (2007) conducted

studies with Asian-American veterans using the modified Race-Related Stressor Scale and African American veterans using the Vietnam Racial Stressor Scale. Both studies emphasized the importance of controlling for racial discrimination when examining race-based trauma by excluding participants who had previously experienced trauma or had been diagnosed with PTSD. Swift (2010), on the other hand, attempted to control for different types of traumas that could potentially inflate connections. Comparing veterans with fewer race-related stressors to those with more stressors, Loo et al., Fairbank, and Chemtob (2005) found that having experienced race-related stressors was associated with more severe PTSD outcomes. This highlights the significance of considering racial discrimination in future research on race-based discrimination.

Furthermore, Swift's (2010) study on a non-veteran population considered various traumatic factors; this study showed moderate to strong correlations between oppression and self and other safety concerns as measured by Trauma Attachment and Beliefs (TABS) subscales. It underscores the link between experiences of racialization and concerns about safety. To test their hypothesis regarding transdiagnostic factors mediating discrimination's impact on disorders, Rodriguez-Sijas et al. (2015) conducted a quantitative analysis involving 12 common diagnoses assessed in a nationally representative sample of African American and Afro-Caribbean adults in the United States from NSAL (National Survey of American Life). Latent variable indirect effects modeling demonstrated significant mediation by transdiagnostic factors for nearly all associations examined. Perceived discrimination was found to be positively associated with various forms of psychopathology and substance use disorders.

According to Bardol et al. (2020), their systematic review and meta-analysis identified a significant correlation between perceived ethnic discrimination (PED) and both psychotic

symptoms and psychotic experiences (PS and PEs). This finding could help explain why individuals from ethnic minorities have historically been at a higher risk for these symptoms. The effect was observed for delusional and hallucinogenic symptoms, with a stronger correlation in delusional symptoms. Additionally, this connection remained consistent across all ethnic groups regardless of the individual's ethnicity. The role of collective self-esteem, social support, and ethnic identification in mitigating the link between PED and PS/PEs had limited evidence supporting their moderating effects. One study suggested that sensitivity to race-based discrimination partially moderated this indirect effect. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting the results of secondary outcomes due to the limited number of studies included in the analysis (Bardol et al., 2020).

Racial Discrimination and the Makeup of African-American Families

African-American families have often been portrayed as unstable due to deviations from societal norms regarding marriage, non-marital relationships, and childbearing (Moynihan, 1965). This instability has been linked to historical events such as racial discrimination (Lu et al., 2010). For many years, it was widely believed that the slave system caused immobility within African-American families and placed African-American males in a disadvantageous position (Lu et al., 2010; Toldson & Morton, 2012). Scholars like E. Franklin Frazier (1939) furthered the idea that enslavement and integration into American society contributed to instability in African-American families.

Frazier's (1939) book *The Negro Family in the United States* focused on the challenges faced by liberated African Americans and the disruptive effects of freedom. His work was influenced by sociologist Robert Park's (1950) race relations cycle theory and emphasized assimilationist ideals. Frazier argued that as African Americans transitioned from slavery to

freedom, their African heritage eroded due to exposure to dominant cultural influences. He pointed out how slavery disrupted familial bonds, except for those between mothers and children, resulting in a pattern of female-dominated African-American families.

It was commonly believed that after emancipation, formerly enslaved people struggled to adapt to newfound freedom, leading to chaos and instability within African-American family life (Ricketts, n.d.). These debates contributed to a negative perception of African-American households originating from the Moynihan Report 1965. The report characterized the African-American family as dysfunctional based on indicators like marriage rates and out-of-wedlock childbirths. However, historians such as Gutman (1976) and scholars specializing in African American family dynamics like Billingsley (1968; 1974), Hill (1972), and Nobles (1978) highlighted their strength, resilience, and preservation of African cultural heritage in contrast to the assimilationist viewpoint. They argued that African-American families exhibited stability and commitment to marriage and family during slavery and after gaining independence.

Over time, various historical events have significantly impacted African-American men's composition, functioning, and role within their families (Lu et al., 2010). The cultural explanation is often used in literature and public debates to account for modern African-American households' organizational and behavioral patterns. It suggests that economically marginalized African Americans possess distinct values diverging from societal dominance (Staples, 1999a, 1999b). These values are believed to contribute to characteristics such as female domination, sexual promiscuity, poor work ethic, and a weakened nuclear family unit (Staples, 1999a, 1999b; Staples & Johnson, 1993), which are considered factors contributing to the instability experienced by African American families. This argument is rooted in the "culture of poverty" hypothesis, which takes a pathological perspective on African Americans (Staples,

1999a, 1999b; Staples & Johnson, 1993). However, this viewpoint ignores other social and economic variables that also impact the well-being of African-American families (Staples, 1999a, 1999b).

The Presence of the Father in African-American Communities

Gutman (1976) states that most African-American households between 1865 and 1866 had a husband and wife or two parents and children. In addition, it was found that most African American families with formerly enslaved people had a male head of household, and single parenthood was relatively uncommon. Just 15 years after slavery was abolished, data from Billingsley and Morrison-Rodriguez (2007) and Ruggles (1994) show that 90% of African American families comprised two-parent households in 1880. Franklin (1997) further supports this by stating that in 1925, a father or a husband could be found in six out of seven African-American homes. Even as late as 1950, two-parent households comprised 91% of the African-American family structure (Conner, 2011). This demonstrates that African-American family life in America during this period was considered “solid” (Conner, 2011). According to Franklin’s (1997) research, until the late 1960s, an impressive majority—approximately three fourths of African-American families included a husband and wife.

However, significant changes occurred between the years 1970 and 1990. The nuclear family structure declined in popularity as female-headed households became more prevalent during the latter half of the 20th century (Kreider & Fields, 2005). Glick’s findings indicate significantly fewer two-parent households by 1980 than the previous year’s statistics. In fact, according to an independent examination conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey in 2011, more African American children resided in mother-only households than in homes with both parents.

Hogan-Garcia's research also reveals that by 1990, only half—a reduction of 18% from 1970—of African-American families had two parents. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted to explore how the larger racial context affects the mental health and socialization methods of African-American fathers (Cooper et al., 2015). Existing parenting models suggest that their developmental histories and social experiences significantly influence fathers' parenting practices. For instance, Abidin's (1992) parenting stress model suggests that high levels of parental distress, perceived child difficulties, and parent-child dysfunctional interactions increase hostile parenting behaviors. However, it is essential to note that this model has primarily been tested with mothers and is not gender specific.

The Link Between Fathers' Mental Health and Their Children's Outcomes

The mental health of parents is believed to have a significant impact on the outcomes of their children in several ways: (a) through inheritability, (b) prenatal exposure in utero, (c) indirect adverse effects on couple relationships and family stress levels, (d) modeling of detrimental cognitive coping styles and emotional responses, and (e) direct adverse effects on parenting behavior and the quality of care provided to children (S. Goodman & Gotlib, 1999). Studies have linked early emotional and behavioral problems in children to mental health issues in fathers (Ramchandani et al., 2005; Ramchandani et al., 2008), but further attention is needed to understand how fathers' mental health affects their children's outcomes. While there is existing research on the connection between parenting, postnatal mental health, and child outcomes (Lovejoy et al., 2000), more studies are required to explore these findings related explicitly to fathers. The current study aims to investigate the relationship between parenting and fathers' mental health. Mental health issues in fathers may harm their ability to interact with their children effectively and practice consistent discipline techniques. This idea aligns with

developmental models of emotional and behavioral disorders in children and social learning and attachment theories (Cicchetti et al., 1998; Patterson et al., 1989).

Depression rates among African-American men range from 1% to 25%, with a meta-analysis of 43 studies yielding an average estimate of 10.4% (Paulson & Bazemore, 2010). Estimates for anxiety disorders range from 10% to 17% (Ballard & Davies, 1996; Matthey et al., 2003). Nevertheless, limited research examines the links between paternal depression, parenting capacity, and child outcomes. Among the few existing studies, the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study (Davis et al., 2011) found that significant depression one year after childbirth was associated with parenting stress and agitation, even after adjusting for maternal depression and other socioeconomic factors like education level and poverty status (Davis et al., 2011). Depressed fathers were less likely to engage in activities such as reading aloud to their children, singing songs, or telling stories, and more likely to admit to using spanking as a disciplinary measure.

For example, a study of 8,431 families from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children found that even after controlling for maternal depressive symptoms and concurrent paternal depression, fathers' postnatal depressive symptoms were related to emotional and behavioral difficulties in children at ages 3 and 7 years (Ramchandani et al., 2005; Ramchandani et al., 2008). Children whose fathers experienced depressive symptoms were more likely to develop social, emotional, and behavioral problems at age 5, even after adjusting for mothers' and fathers' mental health during the same period. This growing body of research underscores the critical role of paternal mental health in the well-being of children.

The socioeconomic position is crucial when examining the connections between fathers' mental health, parenting, and child outcomes. As previously mentioned, socioeconomic

disadvantage is associated with higher rates of paternal sadness, and socioeconomic status explains the link between parental depression and various effects on children's health and development (Mensah & Kiernan, 2009; Turney, 2011). In addition, this study will explore how father's mental health, parenting, and child outcomes are related among families from different socioeconomic backgrounds. It is expected that there may be stronger associations between paternal depression, poorer parenting practices, and adverse child outcomes within low socioeconomic backgrounds compared to higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

Protective Factors

Racial Socialization

Racial socialization (RS) refers to the communication between families and youth regarding racial experiences through verbal and nonverbal means (Lesane-Brown, 2006). Although there have been inconsistencies in the RS literature over the past four decades, one consistent finding is that parents who frequently engage in RS significantly impact various aspects of youth well-being, including psychosocial, physiological, academic, and identity factors (Hughes et al., 2006). Previous research has focused on examining how the frequency of specific types or combinations of RS messages predicts outcomes such as externalizing behavior (Rodriguez et al., 2008), educational aspirations (Wang & Hughley, 2012), self-esteem (Murry et al., 2009), and racial identity (McGill et al., 2012; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009). However, this study will specifically explore the role of RS within a mental health context.

Coping with Racial Discrimination. Previous historical literature conceptualizes coping as “the cognitive and behavioral effort(s) made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them” (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, p. 223). More recently, literature has operationalized coping with racism as the belief or confidence in one's ability to

overcome racially tricky circumstances (e.g., Schwarzer & Renner, 2000). Research shows that prejudiced experiences shape parents' interactions with their children about race, culture, and unfairness, a process known as ethnic-racial socialization (Berkel et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2006). Parents' racial discrimination experiences were positively connected to cultural socialization, discrimination awareness, and preparation for sons, but not daughters, according to Saleem et al. (2016). If coping is how people manage themselves during or after a racially difficult situation, coping is also what they do to show that they are positively dealing with racism. I plan to operationalize coping as the father's ability to recognize that they have experienced a racially charged event and be intentional about handling their thoughts and emotions after the undesired event. Additionally, fathers will be able to effectively manage racism by using RS to discuss their experiences while maintaining a healthy relationship with their families.

Positive Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is assessing a person's value based on their interactions with others (Ford & Collins, 2010). Previous research has shown that African Americans may have equal or higher self-esteem levels than other racial/ethnic groups (Twenge & Crocker, 2002). However, it is suggested that perceived racism can lower self-esteem in this population (Seaton et al., 2008; Szymanski & Gupta, 2009), although factors such as racial/ethnic pride and racial socialization can mitigate this association (Pieterse et al., 2012).

Moreover, an individual's self-esteem can influence social interactions and how they perceive threats in social settings (Chao et al., 2014). Additionally, one's self-esteem can impact their parenting style and subsequently affect the well-being of their children. Previous studies have also indicated a link between low self-esteem and feelings of shame (Greene & Britton,

2013; Reilly et al., 2014). Furthermore, coping strategies related to shame, such as withdrawal and avoidance, are negatively associated with self-esteem (Ellison & Partridge, 2012). Therefore, for African Americans who experience guilt due to racist encounters, self-esteem may play a crucial role in their psychological well-being.

Gaps in the Literature

The literature has not explored how racial discrimination impacts African-American fathers' mental health. Further, we do not understand how African-American fathers cope with racial discrimination. From the perspective of African-American fathers, we do not know how they would want to be supported or how their families are affected. We do not know if racial trauma is causing deficits in their mental health. By understanding the effects of racial discrimination, we can increase support for fathers, thus supporting the father-child and father-mother relationships.

Furthermore, we do not know if racial discrimination has negatively affected fathering. The literature does not fully explore African American fathers' risk and protective factors who have experienced racial trauma. The literature does not explore how racial socialization can empower African-American fathers and the idea of legacy vs. literacy. Finally, we do not fully understand how the fathers' mental health affects the family functioning.

Theories and Frameworks

More literature is needed on the proper application of theory in mixed-methods research. Specialists suggest that the theoretical approach should be guided by the study's basic technique (Johnson et al., 2007). For example, Creswell (2003) states that mixed methods research can use theory deductively to test and verify or inductively develop an emergent theory or pattern. "The emphasis on quantitative or qualitative approaches in a mixed methods study will determine how

theory is applied” (p. 136). In this investigation, which follows a mixed methods approach, the theories used to guide the study and explain its findings will be applied to future studies to test and verify theories.

Ecological Systems Theory (EST) Framework

The ecological systems theory, also known as human ecology theory or development in context, explores how an individual’s environment influences their development. Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner initially developed this theory to examine the connections between community relationships and the formation of personality traits during childhood (Ungar, 2002). The ecosystems framework is significant in social work as it illustrates how individuals interact with and are impacted by various levels of their environments, such as family, community, and society (Ungar, 2002). The Ecological Systems Theory (EST) framework will help analyze how factors at different levels, such as individual, family, community, and societal contexts, influenced their encounters with racial discrimination. This theory emphasizes considering multiple layers of influence when examining the impact on their well-being and development.

Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory [RECAST]

According to the Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST), racial socialization (RS) plays a role in moderating the relationship between racial stress and self-efficacy, which impacts coping and overall well-being. Understanding the impact of discriminatory racial encounters (DREs) on well-being highlights the importance of RS processes and social development for men facing past, present, and future racial discrimination. Long-term racial prejudice can harm the mental health, behavior, and physical health of children and people of color. Research shows that race-based traumatic stress can result from both direct

and indirect DREs. Many parents of color utilize RS to prepare their children to avoid negative consequences associated with DREs.

This model can offer a framework for understanding how African-American fathers appraised and coped with racially stressful encounters. It explained their cognitive appraisal processes when encountering racism and how they employed managing strategies effectively. [RECAST] focused on understanding how individuals developed an awareness of racism through socialization processes within families and communities. Applying this theory can shed light on how African American fathers were socialized regarding race-related stressors like the racial discrimination they faced.

While research on RS has demonstrated its associations with indicators of youth well-being (such as psychosocial, physiological, academic, and identity-related outcomes), most findings have focused on retrospective accounts of RS frequency rather than how it is transmitted or received in real-time encounters or used to reduce racial stress and trauma through clinical processes. Intentional practice is suggested to improve RS competency. Additionally, there is a discussion about proposed measures related to RECAST that could be utilized in trauma-focused therapeutic techniques and interventions aimed at family-led healing.

Race-Base Traumatic Stress (RBTS)

Race-Based Traumatic Stress (RBTS) explores psychological distress resulting from exposure to race-based traumatic events or chronic experiences of racism. This framework will help explain the emotional impact that racial discrimination can have on African-American fathers' mental health and overall well-being. Such race-based traumatic stress can be due to direct and vicarious DREs (Carter et al., 2013; Jernigan & Daniel, 2011). Research has demonstrated a link between race-related stress and anxiety disorders (Soto et al., 2011),

cardiovascular reactivity (Williams & Leavell, 2012), poor immunological functioning (Sawyer et al., 2012), and various facets of sleep disturbance (Adam et al., 2015), all symptoms that can impact daily functioning and parenting. I will be modeling depression, stress, and parenting satisfaction as a *proxy* for RBTS because, unfortunately, The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (ADD Health) does not include the RBTS scale. These are suitable proxies because of the specific nature of the relationships between the stress of racial experiences (i.e., three classes of racism stress reactions) and RBTSS scale scores.

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS)

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is a condition that exists because of centuries of chattel slavery followed by institutionalized racism and oppression, resulting in multigenerational adaptive behavior via epigenetics and through socialization; some positive reflecting resilience, and others harmful and destructive behaviors (DeGruy, 2005). Vacant esteem, a construct of PTSS, is described as an aspect of PTSS in which the individual has feelings of hopelessness, depression, and a general self-destructive outlook; marked propensity for anger and violence, which are extreme feelings of suspicion, perceived negative motivations of others; and racist socialization which is literacy deprivation, distorted self-concept, and antipathy for one's own identified cultural, moral and customs, and physical characteristics.

Using this theory, I will examine intergenerational trauma resulting from slavery's historical legacy and its ongoing effects on African Americans at that time. Applying this framework allowed for an examination of how historical trauma may have contributed to systemic barriers faced by African-American fathers due to racial discrimination in contemporary society.

Kindling

Kindling is a psychological concept that suggests repeated exposure to stressors could lead to heightened sensitivity and increased vulnerability to subsequent stressors. It refers to “a progressive increase in neural sensitivity and responsivity” (McKenna, 1994, p. 115). It has been cited as a mechanism that “might permanently alter ... the patient’s inner emotional life” (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998, p. 180). Kindling has been implicated as a treatment issue in substance abuse (Davis, 1996) and has long been theorized to be an “active agent” in the development of major depression (Perris, 1984). Empirical support for this contention has emerged (Kendler & Thornton, 2000). Van der Kolk and van der Hart (1984), Terr (1991), and Niehoff (1999) have applied the kindling hypothesis to the issue of psychological trauma, essentially hypothesizing that multiple more minor traumas occurring over time can result in a clinical trauma reaction. According to Waller (2002), the kindling hypothesis could substantially influence how African Americans conceptualize the long-term global effects of racism. The kindling hypothesis describes how repeated electric shocks to the brain can cause seizure activity. The same phenomena have been used to study affective disorders and psychological trauma in the context of mental health. A series of little traumas that repeatedly happen over time could lead to clinical threshold depression and trauma (Waller, 2002).

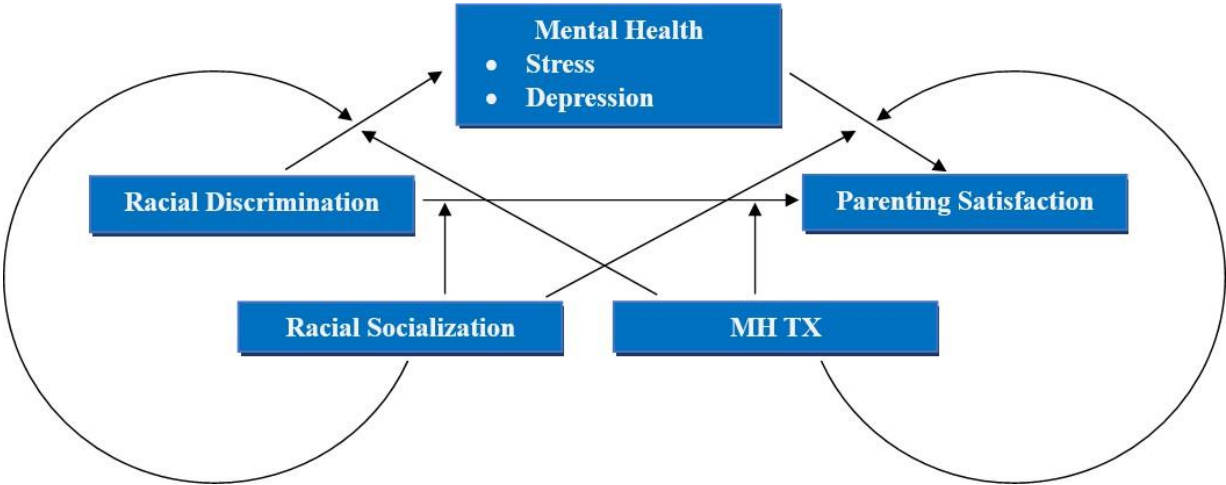
Even more, due to the neuropsychological effects of racial trauma, African-American fathers could become overly reactive or emotionally disengaged with their families. Some health indicators are linked to evidence of increased levels of anxiety among African Americans. The mechanism that causes the gradual intensification of indicators with the time leading to the delayed onset of PTSD involves the process of sensitization and kindling (McFarland, 2010). The development of traumatic memories at the time of stress exposure (birth of a child)

represents a significant susceptibility through the repeated environmental triggering of the increasing dysregulation of an individual’s neurobiology (McFarland, 2010).

Conceptual Framework

This study explored the effects of racism on African-American fathers’ mental health and parenting satisfaction.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



CHAPTER III: METHODS

This chapter comprehensively reviews the methodology used in the quantitative and qualitative research study. After recapitulating the study's primary research questions, an explanation of the precise research technique and design methods is presented. A description of the sampling methods and a detailed outline of the conceptual and operational definitions for each variable examined is provided in the quantitative phase, followed by an articulation of the data collection procedures and data analysis techniques used to answer quantitative research questions. For the qualitative phase, a complete description of the research technique used—Phenomenology—is supplied, articulating the strategy's essential elements and underlying assumptions. In addition, an explanation of the researcher's function biases is provided. This chapter discusses the qualitative sampling methods, data-gathering procedures, data analysis tools, and tactics used to verify the correctness of qualitative research findings.

Purpose and Goals of the Study

This two-phase, sequential explanatory mixed methods study used secondary data quantitatively and analyses followed by qualitative data collection and analyses. The study's first phase is twofold: (a) to determine if racial discrimination affects mental health (stress and depression), and (b) to determine if racial discrimination affects parenting satisfaction when mental health is impacted ($N=146$). In the study's second phase, qualitative interview methods will be employed with a subsample ($N=15$) of participants.

Research Questions

Phase I

- 1) Is there an association between the effects of racial discrimination on the mental health of African-American fathers?

- 2) Is there an association between the effects of racial discrimination on parenting satisfaction and mental health?

Phase II

- 3) Have you ever been treated differently because of your race and ethnicity; if so, how do African American fathers experience racism?
- 4) How does experiencing racism influence African-American fathers' mental health and parenting?
- 5) How does racial socialization relate to African-American fathers' mental health?

Fathers, particularly African American fathers, are often structurally excluded from research versus men without children (Cooper, 2015). In one study, Davison et al. (2012) reported that over 80% of parenting studies found that fathers are underrepresented in research because they are not requested to participate. The most often proposed recruitment venues included community sports activities (52%), social service organizations (48%), and the Internet (60%). Non-white fathers chose public transportation (19% vs. 10%), playgrounds (16% vs. 6%), and barber shops (34% vs. 14%) as recruitment sites, while white fathers recommended doctors' offices (31% vs. 43%) (Davison et al., 2012).

Review of Mixed Methodology

Although the literature is sparse, some researchers have sought guidance and insight into the most effective ways for a mixed-methods researcher to combine sample procedures and tactics to produce the highest possible inference quality and solid study findings (Kemper et al., 2003; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). According to the current literature, mixed methods studies typically employ random and purposive sampling approaches (Kemper et al., 2003; Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Mixed methods used in studies with African American fathers, such as Tate (2018), used a convergent parallel mixed methods study to fill a gap in the literature by looking at jailed African American males' intentions to seek treatment in general and for mental health reasons once released into the community. This approach entailed gathering and evaluating the quantitative and qualitative strands in one step, then integrating the results at the interface point for a final interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Furthermore, both data sources had comparable importance and priority when determining the intent of jailed African-American men to engage in community-based help-seeking activities (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Many studies (e.g., Hanson et al., 2005; Luzzo, 1995; Samuels, 2015) have used this mixed methodological approach to investigate understudied and marginalized populations, demonstrating the growth of mixed methodological approaches among social work researchers. One hundred forty-four jailed African American males completed survey measures in the quantitative part of the study, which looked at the predicted correlations between age, gender role conflict, self-stigma, attitudes toward mental health care, and plans to seek therapy in the community. Participants who endorsed low intentions of seeking psychological help or counseling in the community and agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview were randomly selected to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. The qualitative interviews allowed for additional interpretation grounded on the lived experiences of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Lemmons (2015) used a sequential explanatory research design in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed before qualitative data were collected and analyzed. This mixed methods study was used to determine which factors (developmental history, parenting self-efficacy, child age, child sex, parental relationship status, parenting self-efficacy) best predicted

father involvement among a sample ($N=110$) of non-resident African American fathers using quantitative methods. Utilizing qualitative approaches, this study looked at how the statistically significant factors from the quantitative analysis contributed to (i.e., supported and hampered) father participation using a subset of participants ($N=8$) from the quantitative portion of the study. The Father Presence Questionnaire—Feelings About the Father Scale (FPQ) (Krampe & Newton, 2006), The Parenting Alliance Inventory (PAI) (Abidin, 1988), The Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC)—Efficacy Scale (Johnston & Mash, 1989), and The Julion Index of Paternal Involvement, Demographic Questionnaire were used to collect data in the quantitative phase (Julion, 2002). Data were obtained in the qualitative phase using an interview technique devised by an expert group of practitioners, researchers, and academics.

The study will implore a mixed-method approach to determine if experiencing racial discrimination influences mental health and parenting satisfaction. The qualitative approach allows fathers to articulate their experiences with racial discrimination and how that has impacted them.

Overview of Research Design Strategies

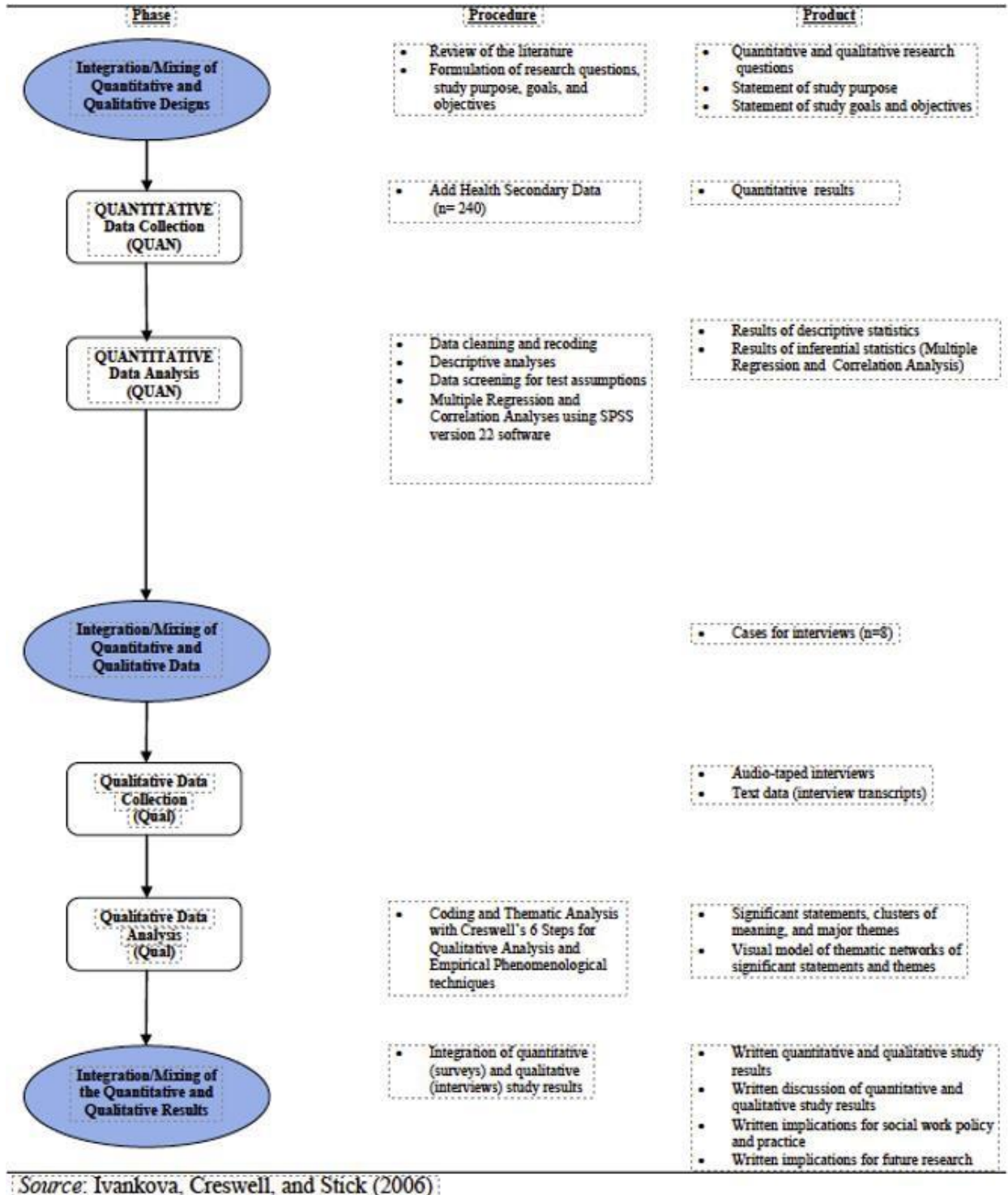
Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Design

This investigation will use a sequential explanatory design as the mixed method technique (Creswell, 2006a; Ivanova et al., 2006). This type of mixed methods design is also referred to as a thoroughly mixed sequential dominant status design by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2009), which is a study that mixes qualitative and quantitative data within one or more of or across the stages of the research process ... the quantitative and qualitative phases occur sequentially at one or more stages or across the stages ... either the quantitative or qualitative phase is given more weight” (p. 271). According to Ivankova et al. (2006), the researcher must

consider three methodological issues while using this design: (a) the order or weight in which each approach will be implemented, (b) the sequence for implementing each method, and (c) the stage or stages of the research process at which both methods will be mixed or integrated. The quantitative analysis will come first in this study, followed by the qualitative data collection and analysis, because the researcher would like to follow up the quantitative results with qualitative data related to racism. The secondary dataset did not collect data on racism. Furthermore, quantitative procedures were given precedence or weight. As a result, quantitative methods will be dominant, whereas qualitative methods will be less dominant.

To provide a nexus between the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study, the researcher will present the ADD Health question about racism to African American fathers in interviews as part of a line of inquiry about how fathers think about and experience racism. Should there not be a statistically significant relationship in the ADD Health data, incorporating ADD health in the interviews can help explain why racism is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon that should be explored in large-scale surveys like ADD Health.

Figure 2. Visual Model of Mixed Methods Research Design Procedures



Source: Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2006)

Phase I: Quantitative (Quant) Study

During Phase I, I explored the following two questions:

1. Is there an association between parenting satisfaction and African American fathers' mental health?
2. Is there an association between African American fathers' mental health and how they are treated due to race?

Design

The quantitative, cross-sectional portion of this study employed Wave IV archival data from the Add Health longitudinal data set to evaluate the role of the independent variable racial discrimination on African American fathers' mental health and dependent variables parenting satisfaction, stress, and depression.

Secondary Data Set—ADD Health

The ADD Health longitudinal study was initially designed as a school-based study collecting data on adolescents' social, emotional, and health-related behaviors. The ADD Health survey was intended to include a nationally representative sample stratified by region, urbanicity, school type, ethnicity, and size. Approximately 15,000 of the original 20,000+ respondents from Wave I were followed longitudinally to Wave IV. The present study primarily utilized the publicly available data from Wave IV ($N=5114$), and the values hereafter reflect the data made publicly available for research use. Data from Wave I was used to match participants from Wave IV to gather demographic information regarding race and ethnicity, as this was not collected at the time of Wave IV. Other variables from Wave I, such as income and education, will be used for the Multivariate Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA).

ADD Health also includes data on many health and background characteristics such as race, gender, education, health habits, and psychological distress. The present work is interested in primary dependent variables of young adult outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, history of abuse, and other psychosocial outcomes related to adjustment.

Table 1. ADD Health Longitudinal Study

Wave	Year	Participants	Type of Collections
I	1994–1995	7th – 12th Grades, parents, and administrators	In-home interview
II	1996	Students and administrators	In-home interview
III	2001–2002	Students and parents	In-home interview
IV	2008	Students (now adults)	In-home interview
V	2016–2018	Students (now adults)	In-home interview

Participants

The Add Health survey included a nationally representative sample stratified by region, urbanicity, school type, ethnicity, and size. The present study utilized the publicly available data from Wave IV ($N=270$). Those who had missing information on wave IV and who did not meet the criteria of being an African-American father were not used. Participants had to select being African American or Black when asked about their ethnicity to be considered African American. Additionally, participants had to select having at least one biological child.

Measures

Independent Variable

Racial Discrimination. This researcher could not identify any studies using variables related to ADD Health related to racism. Using wave IV, this researcher will use the variable “main reason for being treated differently.” The responses were your “ancestry,” “national origin,” and “your gender.”

“your age,” “your religion,” “your height or weight,” “your sexual orientation,” “your education or income,” “a physical disability,” “race,” “nationality,” and “color of my skin.” The researcher used race, nationality, the color of my skin, and ancestry. A dummy variable (Racism=1 and Other=0) will be used. The research did not just use race because some participants did not identify their race as a problem; however, they believed they were being treated differently due to the color of their skin or where their ancestors were born.

Dependent Variables

Depression. The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), a widely used and validated measure of depressed symptoms, was adapted into a ten-item form for use in Add Health Wave IV (Perreira et al., 2005; Radloff, 1977). The following symptoms are asked about in terms of frequency during the last 7 days: “Things bothered you that normally don’t bother you,” “You believed you were just as good as other people,” “you had difficulties focusing on what you were doing,” “you felt unhappy,” “you felt that you were too exhausted to do things,” “you felt cheerful,” and “you could not shake off the blues, even with aid from your family and your friends.” “You felt happy,” “you felt depressed,” and “you sensed people didn’t like you.” Participants answered on the following 4-point Likert scale: (0) *Never or rarely*; (1) *Sometimes*; (2) *A lot of the time*; and (3) *Most of the time or always*. As required, items were reverse-coded. This modified version of the CES-D offers final scores ranging from 0 (no depressed symptoms) to 30 (maximum). According to earlier studies employing this CES-D scale, scores more than or equal to 10 were regarded as highly or “seriously depressed” (Musliner & Singer, 2014). This score split is also suggested by comparable CES-D studies that used this version (Andresen et al., 1994). Wave IV employed a 10-item version of the CES-D instead of the 19-item version in earlier Add Health waves. Wave IV has been used in published

research in a variety of ways, including all ten items (Harry & Crea, 2018; Musliner & Singer, 2014), nine items (Wilkinson et al., 2016), and five items (e.g., Krueger et al., 2018). There was no formal validation study for this CES-D version—the adjusted CES-internal D’s consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) in the current study was $\alpha = .836$.

Stress. The Cohen Perceived Stress Scale’s four-item variant was used to measure stress in Add Health (PSS-4) wave IV. The following items are intended to measure the frequency of symptoms during the previous 30 days: How frequently in the past 30 days have you felt that you had no control over the significant aspects of your life? How frequently have you felt confident in your capacity to handle your personal issues? How frequently have you felt that things were going your way? And how frequently have you felt that the challenges you were facing were mounting to a point where you could not overcome them? A 5-point Likert scale with the following options was used to collect participant responses: (0) never, (1) practically never, (2) sometimes, (3) pretty often, and (4) very often. As required, items were reverse-coded. Total scores are determined by adding the four-item scores ranging from 0 (low stress) to 16 (high stress). A strong association between the PSS-4 and the longer 14-item and 10-item Perceived Stress Scales lends credence to the PSS-4’s validity (Cohen et al., 1983; Cohen & Williamson, 1988). According to reports, the PSS-4’s Cronbach’s alpha is 0.67 (Ezzati et al., 2014). Cronbach’s alpha indicated that the internal consistency reliability in the current study was equivalent to .708. For PSS-4, there are no minimum or maximum scores (Warttig et al., 2013). Higher scores are taken as representing more stress.

Parenting Satisfaction. This study analyzed one outcome at Wave IV of the survey: parenting satisfaction. Parenting satisfaction is measured with a single-item indicator. Parents were asked, “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am happy in

my role as a parent.” They were given five response options (“*strongly agree*,” “*agree*,” “*neither agree nor disagree*,” “*disagree*,” and “*strongly disagree*”). Given that 80% of parents selected “*strongly agree*,” this item is dichotomized (1 = *strongly agree*, something else = 0) (McWhirter & McIntrye, 2021).

Covariates

Income. In Wave III, parents were asked, “What is your best guess of your total personal income before taxes?” They were given the following options: \$10,000 to \$14,999, \$15,000 to \$19,999, \$20,000 to \$29,999, \$30,000 to \$39,999, \$40,000 to \$49,999, \$50,000 to \$74,999, and \$75,000 or more. A dummy variable was used (\$10,000 - \$29,999, \$30,000 - \$49,999, \$50,000 - \$69,999, and \$70,000 or more).

Education. In Wave I, parents were asked, “How far did you go in school?” They were given the following options: 8th grade or less, more than eighth grade. Still, they did not graduate from high school, went to a business, trade, or vocational school instead of high school, high school graduate, completed a GED, went to a business, trade, or vocational school after high school, went to college, but did not graduate, graduated from a college or university, professional training beyond a 4-year college or university, and never went to school. A dummy variable (Less than high school, High school diploma or GED, Trade school, some college, AA degree, BA degree, or Graduate College) was used.

Quantitative Data Analysis Plan

SPSS version 22 was used to analyze quantitative data. Data cleaning was done with the help of preliminary analyses, which checked the reliability of measures, reviewed the distributions of individual variables, and identified outliers. The reliability of each measure for the population will be determined by re-establishing psychometric characteristics for all scales. I

was confident in the reliability of the instruments if constructs of interest had an internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of $\alpha \geq .70$ or higher.

The multivariate multiple regression analysis (MRA) will be run on both quantitative questions in phase I. This detailed analysis is chosen to see if there is an association between the variables (Afifi et al., 2004). I was interested in determining the relationship between racial discrimination, mental health, and parenting satisfaction. Using the secondary dataset, I will explore the relationship between the independent variable, racial discrimination, and dependent variables, stress, depression, and parenting satisfaction. I will also analyze the role of covariates income and education.

Phase II: Qualitative (Qual) Study

Strategy of Inquiry

Phenomenology will be the specific method of inquiry used in the qualitative portion of this study. One of the main objectives will allow participants to express their experiences as fathers of African Americans who don't live nearby. This tactic is considered the best course of action, given the phenomenological tradition's emphasis on the substance of the lived experience (Creswell, 2006d; Creswell et al., 2007). Phenomenology offers a rich framework for moving beyond numerical data to a deeper understanding of social problems and the many socio-cultural-historical situations in which they occur because of its focus on highlighting the intricacies within the context of a life lived. Additionally, this strategy explains to professionals, politicians, and other essential stakeholders the shared or common experiences that define the problem of non-resident African-American parenting (Creswell, 2006d). Such information can significantly accelerate the creation of father-friendly, research-based practices, programs, and policies.

The purpose of the qualitative phase was twofold: (a) to further explore and uncover how the significant factors identified in phase I of the study contributed to (i.e., supported or impeded) African American fathers' mental health, and (b) to provide a means for "showing the human faces behind the numbers" (Patton, 2002, p. 152) in a way that is contextually grounded and sensitive to the complex circumstances that shape the experiences of African American fathers (Cabrera et al., 2004; Conner & White, 2006), and to provide participants with an opportunity to share their lived experiences as African American fathers that have experienced racism.

Features and Underlying Assumptions of Empirical Phenomenology

German mathematician Edmund Husserl invented phenomenology, the "science of consciousness" (Hein & Austin, 2001; Creswell, 2006d; Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). Existential philosophy, which seeks to "understand the human condition as it is revealed in our actual living circumstances," inspired Husserl (1969, 1970) to theorize about the human experience (Valle & King, 1978, as cited in Hein & Austin, 2001, p. 4). This view requires reflection on living conditions and behaviors to articulate, understand, and study human experiences (Husserl, 1969; Hein & Austin, 2001). This method examines a phenomenon or event as lived by individuals (Creswell, 2006d). Husserlian phenomenology holds that awareness is always purposefully directed toward an object like a person, imagination, or emotion (Hein & Austin, 2001; Husserl, 1969).

Thus, life is lived mindfully. Subject-object dichotomy, the belief that an object exists only in the subject's consciousness, is connected to intentionality (Creswell, 2006d; Husserl, 1969). Thus, subject and object are inseparable. It is also assumed that stream-of-consciousness representations of lived experiences can be rigorously and systematically explored (Hein &

Austin, 2001). Husserlian phenomenology also suggests that invariant structures of consciousness, called “essence or eidos” (Husserl, 1931, as cited in Hein & Austin, 2001, p. 4), can be created from common or characteristic components of every experience.

Phenomenology focuses on finding, describing, and understanding a phenomenon’s universal essence (Creswell, 2006d; Hein & Austin, 2001). Thus, communal lived experiences are prioritized. Empirical phenomenology has been used in psychological and methodological literature since Husserl (1969, 1970). Giorgi (1970) and the Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology, which used Husserl (1969, 1970) as a framework, developed this method (Hein & Austin, 2001; Creswell, 2006d). Methodological differences between the two “schools” include data sources, data analysis, presentation of research findings, and emphasis on descriptive and/or interpretative processes in data representation and participant narratives. Empirical phenomenology relies on participant accounts of their experiences (i.e., interview transcripts). These texts emphasize facts, notably the participants’ statements and actions.

This study’s quantitative approaches complement transcendental phenomenology’s positivist research paradigm. The transcendental phenomenologist’s primary duty is to describe participant experiences, but the psychological literature has also recognized that this technique has interpretive features (Creswell, 2006d; Hein & Austin, 2001). In transcendental, “everything is viewed anew, as if for the first time” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34, as cited in Creswell, 2006d, p. 60). This phenomenological branch also emphasizes bracketing or epoché.

The researcher will use all philosophical traditions of phenomenology in the interviews because the Existential facet will allow the participants to describe their experiences as they see them. The Empirical aspect will enable the participants to describe their experiences and not the experiences of other fathers, Husserlian allows the participants to express their emotions towards

the questions, and Transcendental will enable the research to describe the participants' experiences in the bracketing process.

Bracketing is “a process of rigorous self-reflection” (Hein & Austin, 2001, p. 5) in which the researcher examines all natural and uncontested systems of belief about the universe and reality, especially those related to the topic of inquiry. To open participants to life, biases and predispositions are reduced and transcended. The following section discusses researcher biases and the importance of bracketing in transcendental phenomenology. Although bracketing is not attainable (Creswell, 2006d; Hein & Austin, 2001), explicitly identifying beliefs that may impact interpretative and analytic techniques is essential to phenomenology and qualitative research.

The Role of the Researcher and Researcher Biases

My interactions as an African-American father can affect how I perceive African-American fathers who have experienced racism. Additionally, I have experienced racism many times before and after becoming a father. Additionally, I have encountered other African-American fathers who will similarly share. Nevertheless, going through the experience of enduring racism has opened my eyes to the plight of many fathers who suffer from this. The following section will describe the function of the researcher and researcher biases, considering the significance of bracketing within the transcendental phenomenological tradition. While complete bracketing is impossible (Creswell, 2006d; Hein & Austin, 2001), phenomenology and the entire qualitative research method nevertheless value explicitly articulating beliefs that might affect interpretative and analytical approaches.

My life experiences have made me more aware of how racism can affect African-American fathers' mental health. I understand the father's position and viewpoint on this study. I also bring some biases and presumptions to the study due to my experiences. Despite my efforts

to maintain objectivity, these biases can affect how I perceive, comprehend, and evaluate the facts I gather. According to Hein and Austin (2001), bracketing is “a process of rigorous self-reflection” (p. 5) where the researcher considers all uncontested, natural systems of belief about the universe and reality, especially those that impact the area of investigation. To clear the way for openness and receptivity to life as experienced by participants, every effort will be made to lessen prejudices and transcend ingrained predispositions. A systematic investigation of the underlying structure of participant narratives is part of the analytic data techniques, which will also be structured and follow a step-by-step process. Replicability and verifiability will be the main objectives of this rigor’s design. Following these goals, the phases of the data analysis process will be publicized. The results will be presented as themes built on meaning-rich clusters or units drawn from participants’ noteworthy comments.

Recruitment Strategy

Fathers will be recruited using Facebook using a recruitment post on The African American Community (TAAC), a page associated with the Triad area in North Carolina, and the YMCA in Greensboro, NC. Ten African American fathers will be recruited, in addition to race inclusion criteria will consist of fathers who have biological children over the age of 0. Exclusion criteria will include fathers with stepchildren, God children, adopted children, men without biological children, and non-African American fathers.

Qualitative Study Incentives

Participants received a reward after each qualitative interview. Due to the time required for the interview phase, the incentive was a \$25 Visa gift card. Thus, agency executives at the YMCA gathering site discussed the incentives’ suitability and changed the incentive amount.

Data Collection Procedures

Dey (1993) stated that context is essential in understanding data because it offers a way to place behavior. As a result, the interviews provided access to the participants' thought stream and context for understanding behaviors and experiences (Seidman, 2006). Boyce and Neale's (2006) recommendations were followed throughout the data-gathering procedure. For each interview, these rules were followed to guarantee the reliability and consistency of the results. Two scripts were used for consistency between interviews: one for scheduling and one for direction during the interviews. The entire treatment was finished in less than an hour (see interview protocol and description of qualitative study procedures in Appendix A).

Sampling Methods

Sample Size and Saturation

Quantitative study sample size focuses on representativeness, generalizability, and statistical power. In qualitative research, the sample size is related to saturation or the point at which no new information or themes can be found in the data, according to Guest et al. (2006). Qualitative research literature implies that sample size is becoming clearer. The research question and method of qualitative inquiry determine sample size, according to Creswell (2006c) (i.e., narrative research, ethnography, phenomenological, case study, etc.).

Guest et al. (2006) interviewed 60 women in two West African nations and described their saturation methods. They discovered saturation within 12 interviews. However, essential themes were present in 6 interviews. Following these parameters, a subgroup of 8 quantitative important informants was interviewed. In sequential explanatory mixed methods designs, Creswell (2006c) advises including the same people in the quantitative and qualitative strands to

use the qualitative results to comprehend the numeric data better. Thus, all first-phase study participants were eligible for the second phase.

The second phase of this study was non-probability purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is “a non-probability sampling method in which items are selected for a purpose, usually because of their unique positions” (Engel & Schutt, 2005, p. 122). Qualitative studies rarely select instances randomly (Polkinghorne, 2005; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Instead, they are selected for in-depth research (Creswell, 2006c). Thus, this study required data sources that could provide many different and original descriptions of the experience of interest (Polkinghorne, 2005). This study’s qualitative sample was chosen to provide information-rich accounts that would enhance knowledge of the topic under study (Polkinghorne, 2005).

In qualitative research, various purposive sampling methods have been identified (Creswell, 2006c; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007a, 2007b; Polkinghorne, 2005; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Polkinghorne (2005) and Teddlie and Yu (2007) list six sample strategies: maximum variance, homogeneous, typical, extreme/deviant, critical, and criterion. The research strategy relies on the goal (Creswell, 2006c): 2) to investigate exceptional or unique cases. This study chose a representativeness or comparability strategy.

That is, to compare “across different sorts of examples on a dimension of interest” (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 80). Maximum variation sampling was used, a common purposive sampling method (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007a, 2007b). This strategy selected people with the most varied perspectives (Creswell, 2006c; Polkinghorne, 2005) to explore both differences and similarities in experiences (Creswell, 2002; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007a, 2007b; Polkinghorne, 2005). Creswell (2006c) states that maximizing variation depends on the study’s purpose; however, this study differentiated by age, marital status, employment status, education, and

income. Convenience sampling was used where needed. This was especially true when purposively selected participants were unavailable.

Instrumentation/Data Recording Procedures

An interview technique was used as the data-gathering tool during the study's qualitative phase. In the beginning, a sample interview protocol was developed that contained the kinds of questions interviewees would answer because the result from the quantitative phase is required for formulating the precise questions that would guide the interview process in the qualitative phase. The methodology may be altered after considering the actual data on how African-American fathers' mental health affects their families (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The dissertation committee was consulted during the creation of the final interview procedure to make sure that the interview questions were adequate and appropriate for the demographic being studied.

The committee comprised academics, researchers, and practitioners to get a variety of viewpoints. The difficulties of interviewing communities, such as men, were also considered. Cultural expectations of masculinity that affect how men "do gender" and portray themselves in interview settings were considered (Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2002). Additionally, it was anticipated that some interview questions, particularly those that touched on the participant's memories of their father as a child, would delve into touchy subjects and elicit strong feelings. Considering this, the researcher created interview questions to promote emotional transparency while not endangering the participant's male identity or revealing personal weaknesses (Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2002). Finally, the interview protocol included elements created to extract succinct accounts of circumstances, keeping with the recommendations Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2002) made for interviewing men.

Plan for Qualitative Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Presentation of Findings

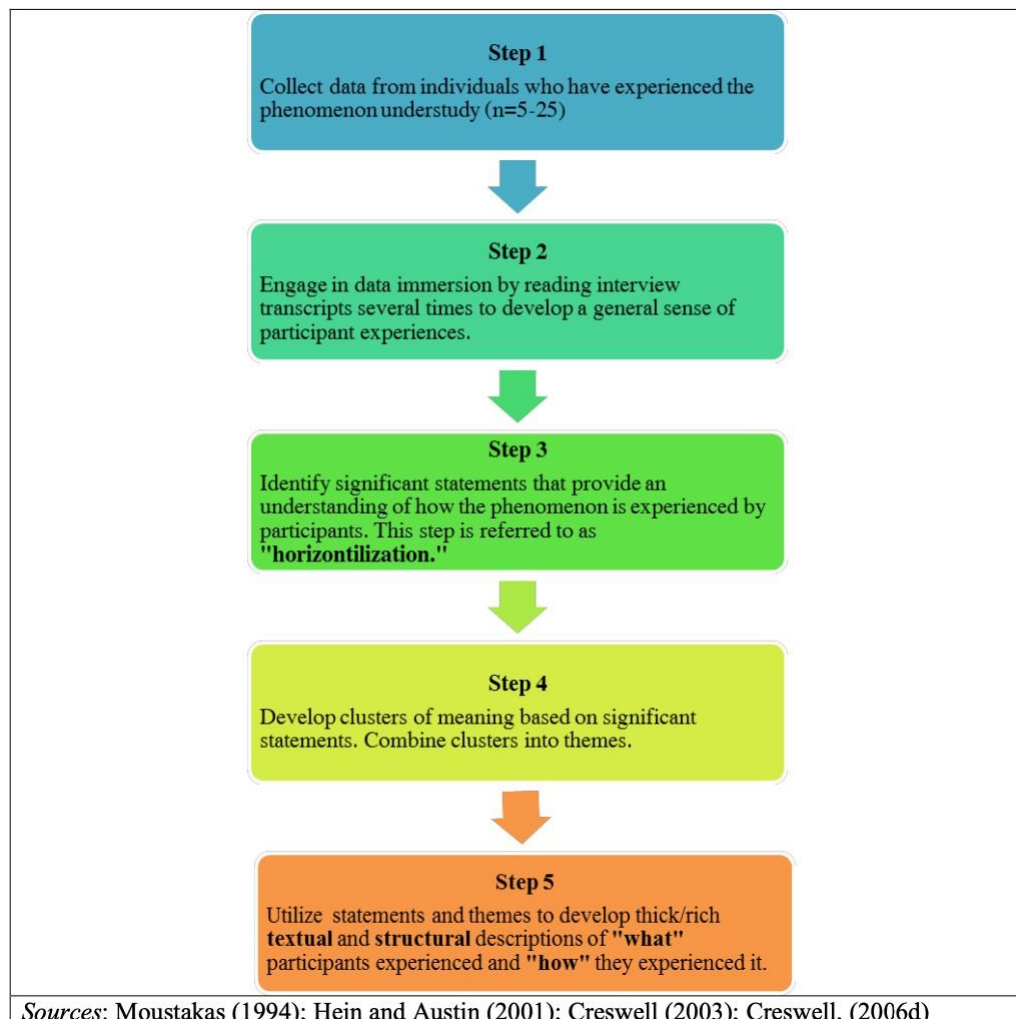
The qualitative phase of this study will use phenomenology. Participants will be encouraged to share their experiences as African-American fathers who have experienced racism. The phenomenological tradition emphasizes the essence of lived experience (Creswell, 2006d; Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007), making this strategy the best choice. Phenomenology provides a rich framework for understanding social problems and their socio-cultural-historical contexts by illuminating life's complexities. This approach also helps practitioners, policymakers, and other stakeholders understand the common experiences of African-American fatherhood (Creswell, 2006d). This information can inspire father-friendly, race-friendly, evidence-based practices, programs, and policies.

A simple thematic analysis is described by Creswell (2003). All qualitative data analysis methods used these phases. Creswell (2003) stated, "An ideal condition is to integrate the generic processes with the individual research design steps" (p. 191). Thus, generic thematic analysis and empirical or transcendental phenomenological analytic tools were combined. This approach's data analytical methods were derived from Moustakas's (1994) principles. In the initial step, data were obtained from ($N= 8$) people who have experienced this phenomenon (Figure 3). Data were organized and analyzed after collection.

Interviews were transcribed using TranscribeMe. All transcripts were read line-by-line in the second stage to understand participant experiences, the text, and its significance. This is when data impressions were produced. During Step 3, I started inductive coding. This study identified noteworthy participant statements and quotes that capture their experiences with the investigated topic. Moustakas (1994) called this process "horizontalization." Step four analyzes the "units of meaning" or "clusters" from Step 3. Data reduction will involve organizing statements into

themes. Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic networks analytic tool will show the relationship between relevant statements and themes and how the study's findings were developed to promote transparency in data analysis and interpretation (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Conostas, 1992). (See Figure 3).

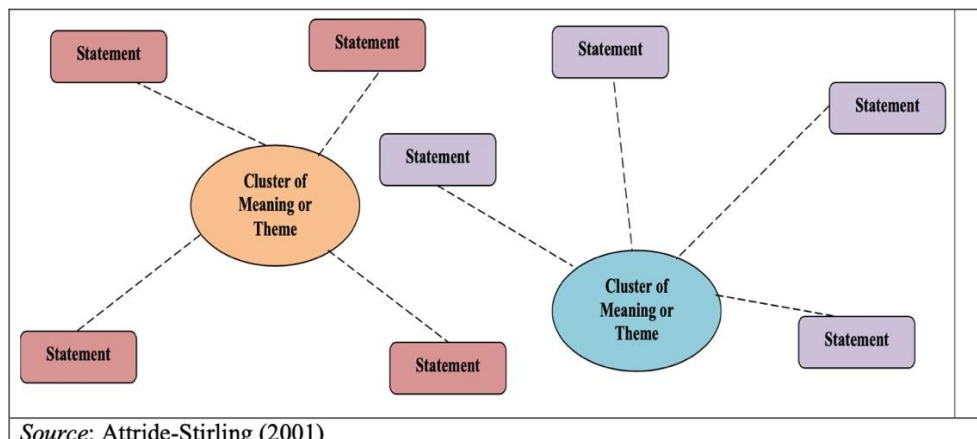
Figure 3. Procedures for Conducting Empirical/Transcendental Phenomenological Data Analyses



In the fifth step of the analytic process, statements and themes will be used to create thorough accounts of what participants experienced (textual description) and how they

experienced it (structural description). Step 6 offered the “essential, invariant structure” by combining textual and structural descriptions to describe and interpret the phenomena as uniformly perceived by participants. This study may use a mixed methods strategy, integrating quantitative results as needed. Word 2010 and NVivo 10 helped with data analysis.

Figure 4. Structure of Thematic Networks



Procedures for Validating the Accuracy of Study Findings

Qualitative validity includes trustworthiness, rigor, reliability, transferability (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Golafshani, 2003; Onwuegbuzie & Burke Johnson, 2006), authenticity, goodness, adequacy, and plausibility (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Onwuegbuzie & Burke Johnson, 2006). Burke Johnson (1997) lists five categories of validity crucial to qualitative research: Descriptive, interpretative, theoretical, internal, and external validity.

Protection of Human Subjects

Before starting each focus group, the principal investigator will describe the study’s purpose to the participants. During this period, participants can ask questions about the research, the interview, or the focus group. They will be informed that inclusion in the focus group and

completing the questionnaire were voluntary. All data collected from participants will be classified as personal, and all materials will be stored in a secure file.

Of critical importance in the racial and ethnic discrimination literature is understanding how the stress associated with racial trauma might evolve into a response consistent with traumatic stress, emotional injury, or psychopathology (Carter, 2007; Williams & Mohammed, 2009). Thus, examining variables that might moderate the association between discrimination and trauma-related symptoms would be essential. The constructs of spirituality (Hunter & Lewis-Coles, 2005), resilience (Franklin, 2004), racial socialization (Bynum et al., 2007), income, and education are examples of variables that could warrant further investigation when examining racial and ethnic trauma-related symptoms.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Introductory Statement

This chapter presents the results of this study. A discussion of the qualitative results will follow a discussion of the quantitative results. In this chapter, the findings of the secondary data analyses will be presented using ADD Health, followed by a discussion of the various data evaluation and cleaning procedures undertaken and the test assumptions examined before submitting the data to inferential statistical tests for analysis. Frequencies and percentages will be used to explore the nominal-level variables. Means and standard deviations will summarize the trends in the continuous-level variables. Correlation and regression analyses will test the variables' associations and potential mediating relationships. Finally, the results for each research question are presented. For the qualitative phase of the study, an overview and description of the sample's demographic characteristics and a thematic analysis of the interviews are provided, along with a textual and structural synopsis that articulates what participants experienced, how they experienced it, and the overall essence of these experiences.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The purpose of the quantitative phase of the study is twofold: (a) to determine if racial discrimination affects mental health (stress and depression), and (b) to determine if racial discrimination affects parenting satisfaction when mental health is impacted.

Descriptive Statistics

The initial sample size consisted of 5,114 participants. After accounting for removals due to the inclusion criteria and non-responses, the final sample consisted of 146 African-American males with children. Table 2 presents the removals due to the inclusion criteria and non-responses.

Table 2. Reductions in Dataset

Initial Sample Size	$n = 5114$
Removals for females	$n = 2761$
Removals for Race	$n = 4$ non-responses, $n = 1717$ White participants, $n = 18$ American Indian/Alaskan Native participants, $n = 80$ Asian/Pacific Islander participants
Removals for not having children	$n = 43$ participants
Removals for non-responses to discrimination	$n = 203$ participants
Removals for non-responses to stress	$n = 1$ participants
Removals for non-responses to parental satisfaction	$n = 127$ participants
Removals for non-responses to income	$n = 14$ participants
Final sample size	$n = 146$ participants

The sample's education level was widely distributed, with many participants having "some college" experience ($n=59$, 40.41%). Most of the sample ($n=84$, 57.53%) earned \$0-\$29,999. A total of 66 participants (45.21%) experienced racial discrimination. Most participants ($n=90$, 61.64%) strongly agreed with their parental satisfaction. Frequencies and percentages of the nominal-level variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages for Nominal-Level Variables

Variable	n	%
Education		
Less than high school	23	15.75
High school diploma or GED	36	24.66
Trade school	14	9.59
Some college	59	40.41
Bachelor's degree	7	4.79
Graduate degree	7	4.79
Income		
\$0-\$29,999	84	57.53
\$30,000-\$49,999	42	28.77
\$50,000+	20	13.70
Racial discrimination		

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Experienced racism	66	45.21
Did not experience racism	80	54.79
Parenting satisfaction		
Strongly disagree	16	10.95
Strongly agree	120	83.54

Note. For parenting satisfaction in the regression models, the strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, and agree responses were merged into one category, “Other.”

Composite scores were generated for perceived stress and depression by calculating an average of Likert-scale responses. Perceived stress consisted of four Likert-scaled items (ranging from 0-4), and depression consisted of 10 Likert-scaled items (ranging from 0-3). Perceived stress scores ranged from 0.00 to 14.00, with $M = 5.39$ and $SD = 3.07$. Depression scores ranged from 1.00 to 20.00, with $M = 7.90$ and $SD = 3.98$. Table 4 presents the summary statistics for perceived stress and depression.

Table 4. Summary Statistics for Perceived Stress and Depression

Variable	<i>n</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Perceived stress	146	0.00	14.00	5.39	3.07
Depression	146	1.00	20.00	7.90	3.98

Bivariate Analyses

A Pearson correlation examined the bivariate association between perceived stress and depression. There was a significant, strong positive association between perceived stress and depression, $r = .55$, $p < .001$. Exploring the correlation between two dependent variables provided insights into the underlying mechanisms and processes. By examining how changes in one variable relate to changes in the other, I identified potential mediating factors that influence the association. See Table 5 for the Pearson Correlation Between Perceived Stress and Depression

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Between Perceived Stress and Depression

Variable	Depression	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Perceived stress	.55*	< .001

*Denotes a significant relationship at .05 level

Two independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine if there is a difference in perceived stress and depression based on perceived discrimination and parenting satisfaction. The findings of the independent sample *t*-test were statistically significant for perceived stress by perceived discrimination, $t(144) = 4.19, p < .001$, with participants who experienced racial discrimination ($M = 6.50$) scoring significantly higher on perceived stress than participants who did not experience racial discrimination ($M = 4.48$). The findings of the independent sample *t*-test were statistically significant for depression by perceived discrimination, $t(144) = 4.69, p < .001$, with participants who experienced racial discrimination ($M = 9.48$) scoring significantly higher on perceived stress than participants who did not experience racial discrimination ($M = 6.59$). Table 6 presents the findings of the independent sample *t*-test.

Table 6. Independent Sample t-test for Perceived Stress and Depression by Perceived Discrimination

Variable	Experienced racism (<i>n</i> = 66)		Did not experience racism (<i>n</i> = 80)		<i>t</i> (144)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Perceived stress	6.50	3.04	4.48	2.79	4.19	<.001
Depression	9.48	4.11	6.59	3.36	4.69	<.001

The findings of the independent sample *t*-test were statistically significant for perceived stress by parenting satisfaction, $t(144) = 2.38, p < .001$, with participants who had low parenting satisfaction ($M = 6.14$) scoring significantly greater on perceived stress than participants who had high parenting satisfaction ($M = 4.92$). The findings of the independent sample *t*-test were not statistically significant for depression by parenting satisfaction, $t(144) = 0.33, p = .741$.

Table 7 presents the findings of the independent sample *t*-test.

Table 7. Independent Sample T-test for Perceived Stress and Depression by Parenting Satisfaction

Variable	High parenting satisfaction (<i>n</i> = 90)		Low parenting satisfaction (<i>n</i> = 56)		<i>t</i> (144)	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Perceived stress	4.92	3.03	6.14	3.00	2.38	.019
Depression	7.81	4.06	8.04	3.87	0.33	.741

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to assess if there is a relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction. The finding of the chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 0.84, p = .359$, indicating no significant relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction. Table 8 presents the findings of the chi-square test of independence.

Table 8. Chi-Square Test of Independence between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

Variable	Parenting satisfaction		$\chi^2(1)$	<i>p</i>
	High	Low		
Racial discrimination			0.84	.359
Experienced racism	38 (26.0%)	28 (19.2%)		
Did not experience racism	52 (35.6%)	28 (19.2%)		

RQ1: Is there an association between racial discrimination and the mental health of African-American fathers?

Two linear regressions were conducted between racial discrimination and perceived stress to address Research Question 1. The independent variable was racial discrimination; coded 1 = experienced racism or 0 = did not experience racism. The dependent variables were perceived stress and depression. The control variables were education level and income.

Racial Discrimination and Perceived Stress

The overall linear regression model results were statistically significant, $F(8, 137) = 3.72, p < .001, R^2 = .18$, indicating that collectively, education level, income, and racial discrimination are significantly related to perceived stress. Approximately 18% of the variance in perceived

stress could be explained by educational level, income, and racial discrimination. Racial discrimination ($B = 1.86, t = 3.86, p < .001$) is significantly related to perceived stress while controlling for education level and income. The findings indicate that participants who experienced racial discrimination scored approximately 1.86 units higher on perceived stress. Possible scores for perceived stress could range from 0 to 16. Table 9 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 9. Results for Linear Regression with Racial Discrimination and Perceived Stress While Controlling for Education and Income

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Education level (reference: less than high school)					
High school diploma	-0.48	0.78	-0.07	-0.61	.543
Trade school	-1.84	1.00	-0.18	-1.84	.067
Some college	-0.17	0.71	-0.03	-0.24	.811
Bachelor's degree	-1.90	1.29	-0.13	-1.48	.142
Graduate degree	0.14	1.27	0.010	0.11	.911
Income (reference: less than \$30,000)					
\$30,000-\$49,999	-0.50	0.56	-0.07	-0.90	.369
\$50,000+	-1.25	0.75	-0.14	-1.67	.098
Racial discrimination (reference: did not experience racism)					
Experienced racism	1.86	0.48	0.30	3.86	< .001

Note. Overall model fit: $F(8,137) = 3.72, p < .001, R^2 = .18$

Racial Discrimination and Depression

The overall linear regression model results were statistically significant, $F(8, 137)=3.24, p=.002, R^2=.16$, indicating that collectively, education level, income, and racial discrimination were significantly associated with depression. Approximately 16% of the variance in depression could be explained by educational status, income, and racial discrimination. Racial discrimination ($B=2.78, t=4.38, p<.001$) was significantly associated with depression while

controlling for education level and income. The findings indicate that participants who experienced racial discrimination scored approximately 2.78 units higher on depression. Possible scores for depression could range from 0 to 30. Table 10 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 10. Results for Linear Regression with Racial Discrimination and Depression While Controlling for Education and Income

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Education level (reference: less than high school)					
High school diploma	-0.32	1.02	-0.03	-0.31	.756
Trade school	1.27	1.31	0.09	0.97	.334
Some college	-0.01	0.94	-0.01	-0.007	.995
Bachelor's degree	-1.87	1.69	-0.10	-1.11	.269
Graduate degree	-0.09	1.67	-0.01	-0.06	.956
Income (reference: less than \$30,000)					
\$30,000-\$49,999	-0.18	0.73	-0.02	-0.24	.811
\$50,000+	-0.76	0.99	-0.07	-0.77	.442
Racial discrimination (reference: did not experience racism)					
Experienced racism	2.78	0.63	0.35	4.38	< .001

Note. Overall model fit: $F(8,137) = 3.24, p = .002, R^2 = .16$

RQ2: Does mental health mediate the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction?

To address Research Question 2, a series of linear and logistic regression models were conducted to assess whether mental health (perceived stress or depression) mediates the relationship between racial discrimination and parental satisfaction. The independent variable was racial discrimination. The dependent variable was parenting satisfaction. The mediator variables in two separate models were (a) perceived stress and (b) depression. The control variables were education level and income.

Baron and Kenny's (1986) methods were used to test the mediating relationships. Testing mediation is achieved through three regression models:

1. IV (racial discrimination) predicting Mediator (perceived stress and depression) – presented for RQ1 in Tables 9 and 10.
2. IV (racial discrimination) predicting DV (parenting satisfaction) – presented in Table 13.
3. IV (racial discrimination) and Mediator (perceived stress and depression) predicting DV (parental satisfaction) – presented in Tables 14 and 15.

Ancillary Analysis

A Sobel test was conducted to verify the mediation analysis findings further. A Sobel test is a test of significance that examines whether a mediator significantly carries the influence of a predictor variable to a criterion variable (Sobel, 1982). An online calculator was used for the Sobel test (Soper, 2020).

The findings of the Sobel test were not statistically significant for assessing perceived stress as a potential mediator of the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction (Sobel test statistic = -1.78, $p = .076$). Figure 5 presents the path diagram of the relationship. Table 11 presents the findings of the Sobel test.

Figure 5. Hypothesized Path Model for Perceived Stress Mediating Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

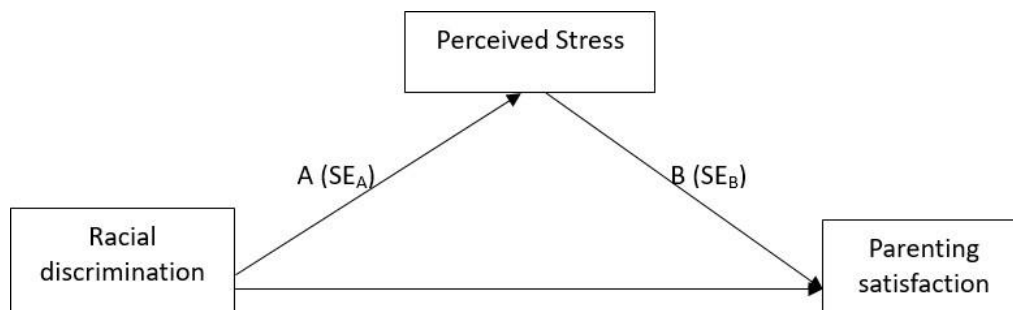


Table 11. Sobel Test Parameters to Test Mediating Relationship of Perceived Stress on Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

Parameter	Value
A	1.86
B	-0.14
S _A	0.48
S _B	0.07

Note. Sobel test statistic= -1.78, $p = .076$.

The findings of the Sobel test were not statistically significant for assessing depression as a potential mediator of the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction (Sobel test statistic = 0.20, $p = .842$). Figure 6 presents the path diagram of the relationship and Table 12 presents the findings of the Sobel test.

Figure 6. Hypothesized Path Model for Depression Mediating Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

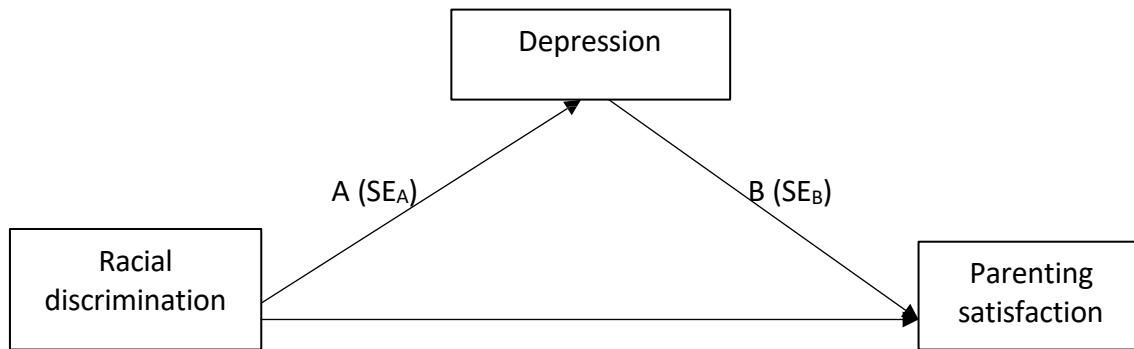


Table 12. Sobel Test Parameters to Test Mediating Relationship of Depression on Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

Parameter	Value
A	2.78
B	0.01
S _A	0.63
S _B	0.05

Note. Sobel test statistic= 0.20, $p = .842$.

Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

A logistic regression model examined the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction while controlling for education and income. The overall logistic regression model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(8) = 3.98$, $p = .859$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .04$, indicating that collectively there was not a significant association in this model. Approximately 4% of the variance in parenting satisfaction could be explained by education level, income, and racial discrimination. Racial discrimination (Wald = 0.69, $p = .406$, $OR = 0.75$) had no significant relationship with parenting satisfaction. Table 13 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 13. Results for Logistic Regression with Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction While Controlling for Education and Income

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>	<i>OR</i>
Education level (reference: less than high school)					
High school diploma	0.55	0.56	0.97	.325	1.73
Trade school	0.08	0.71	0.01	.912	1.08
Some college	0.46	0.51	0.82	.364	1.58
Bachelor's degree	0.58	0.97	0.36	.551	1.78
Graduate degree	-0.55	0.91	0.37	.541	0.57
Income (reference: less than \$30,000)					
\$30,000-\$49,999	0.15	0.41	0.14	.710	1.16
\$50,000+	0.35	0.56	0.38	.536	1.41
Racial discrimination (reference: did not experience racism)					
Experienced racism	-0.29	0.35	0.69	.406	0.75

Note. Overall model fit: $\chi^2(8) = 3.98$, $p = .859$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.04$.

Racial Discrimination, Perceived Stress, and Parenting Satisfaction

A logistic regression model examined the relationship between racial discrimination, perceived stress, and parenting satisfaction while controlling for education and income. The overall logistic regression model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 8.62, p = .473$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .08$, indicating that collectively there was not a significant model.

Approximately 8% of the variance in parenting satisfaction could be explained by education level, income, racial discrimination, and perceived stress. Racial discrimination (Wald = -0.05, $p = .893, OR = 0.95$) had no significant relationship with parenting satisfaction. Perceived stress (Wald = -0.14, $p = .035, OR = 0.58$) had a significant relationship with parenting satisfaction, indicating that with every one-unit increase in perceived stress, the odds of participants indicating agreement with parenting satisfaction decreased by approximately 42%. Table 14 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 14. Results for Logistic Regression with Racial Discrimination and Perceived Stress on Parenting Satisfaction While Controlling for Education and Income

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>	<i>OR</i>
Education level (reference: less than high school)					
High school diploma	0.51	0.57	0.80	.371	1.66
Trade school	-0.18	0.73	0.06	.803	0.83
Some college	0.46	0.51	0.79	.375	1.58
Bachelor's degree	0.32	0.99	0.10	.748	1.37
Graduate degree	-0.56	0.92	0.37	.542	0.57
Income (reference: less than \$30,000)					
\$30,000-\$49,999	0.09	0.42	0.05	.830	1.09
\$50,000+	0.21	0.58	0.13	.721	1.23
Racial discrimination (reference: did not experience racism)					
Experienced racism	-0.05	0.37	0.02	.893	0.95
Perceived stress	-0.14	0.07	4.46	.035	0.58

Note. Overall model fit: $\chi^2(9) = 8.62, p = .473$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.08$.

Racial Discrimination, Depression, and Parenting Satisfaction

A logistic regression model was conducted to examine the relationship between racial discrimination, depression, and parenting satisfaction while controlling for education and income. The overall logistic regression model was not statistically significant, $\chi^2(9) = 3.99$, $p = .912$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .04$, indicating that collectively there was not a significant association. Approximately 4% of the variance in parenting satisfaction could be explained by education level, income, racial discrimination, and depression. Racial discrimination (Wald = -0.31, $p = .408$, $OR = 0.73$) was insignificant to parenting satisfaction. Depression (Wald = 0.01, $p = .888$, $OR = 1.07$) had no significant relationship with parenting satisfaction. Table 15 summarizes the results of the regression model.

Table 15. Results for Logistic Regression with Racial Discrimination and Depression on Parenting Satisfaction While Controlling for Education and Income

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Wald	<i>p</i>	<i>OR</i>
Education level (reference: less than high school)					
High school diploma	0.55	0.56	0.97	.324	1.74
Trade school	0.07	0.71	0.01	.922	1.07
Some college	0.46	0.51	0.82	.364	1.58
Bachelor's degree	0.59	0.97	0.37	.544	1.81
Graduate degree	-0.56	0.91	0.37	.541	0.57
Income (reference: less than \$30,000)					
\$30,000-\$49,999	0.15	0.41	0.14	.708	1.17
\$50,000+	0.35	0.56	0.39	.530	1.42
Racial discrimination (reference: did not experience racism)					
Experienced racism	-0.31	0.38	0.68	.408	0.73
Depression	0.01	0.05	0.02	.888	1.07

Note. Overall model fit: $\chi^2(9) = 3.99$ $p = .912$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.04$.

Perceived Stress Mediating the Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

The findings of the first regression model indicated a significant relationship between racial discrimination and perceived stress. The results of the second model noted that racial discrimination did not have a significant relationship with parenting satisfaction. In addition, the findings of the third regression model did not indicate a significant relationship between racial discrimination and perceived stress on parenting satisfaction. Therefore, there was not sufficient evidence that perceived stress mediates the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction.

Depression Mediating the Relationship between Racial Discrimination and Parenting Satisfaction

The findings of the first regression model indicated a significant relationship between racial discrimination and depression. The results of the second model noted that racial discrimination did not have a significant relationship with parenting satisfaction. In addition, the findings of the third regression model did not indicate a significant relationship between both racial discrimination and depression on parenting satisfaction. Therefore, there was not sufficient evidence that depression mediates the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction.

Qualitative Data Analysis

I recruited and interviewed 15 participants. However, saturation was met after 10 interviews. Once the interview transcripts had been reviewed for accuracy, the researcher uploaded them to NVivo for data management to aid in thematic analysis. This process began when the researcher immersed himself in the corpus of data, reading the transcripts three times while making notes on interesting statements and repeated ideas that may be important in the analysis.

I used all philosophical traditions of phenomenology in the interviews because the Existential facet allowed the participants to describe their experiences as they see them. The Empirical aspect will enable the participants to describe their experiences and not the experiences of other fathers, Husserlian allows the participants to express their emotions towards the questions, and the Transcendental will enable the research to describe the participants' experiences in the bracketing process (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34, as cited in Creswell, 2006d, p. 60).

Bracketing is “a process of rigorous self-reflection” (Hein & Austin, 2001, p. 5). I examined all-natural and uncontested systems of belief about the universe and reality, especially those related to inquiry. Bias and predispositions are reduced and transcended to open participants to life. Subsequently, the process involved formulating initial codes and marking data segments that held potential significance or conveyed similar ideas. This phase encompassed a systematic approach, where patterns were recognized and codes were assigned. The initial phase of coding produced 56 codes.

The generated codes were subsequently collated and reviewed to ensure consistency and coherence. Through this iterative process, the researcher refined the codes, noting that some

codes, initially kept as separate statements, had similar content and could thus be grouped. After completing this process, 51 codes emerged before the researcher began grouping the codes into more significant categories to form the themes.

The researcher began grouping the codes into more significant categories or themes. The researcher examined the content of the coded excerpts to determine the content’s similarity to group them into more significant categories. For example, coded excerpts that spoke on anxiety, fear, depression, flashbacks, and defensiveness were grouped as “Trauma Responses,” as their excerpts described participants’ emotional responses to specific events and similar situations that triggered emotions. Like coding, this is an iterative process where more significant categories are reviewed and revised to assess their relevance, consistency, and depth. This comprehensive review necessitated critically examining each theme’s coherence and alignment with the dataset. Themes were refined, redefined, or merged to capture the essence of the data accurately. The relationships between themes were also scrutinized, ensuring a clear and robust thematic map reflecting the data’s complexity and nuances.

As the analysis proceeded, the researchers consolidated the refined themes, seeking to generate a comprehensive and coherent narrative that encapsulated the essence of the dataset. This phase demanded a delicate balance between extracting overarching themes and maintaining the richness and diversity of the original data. After the final refinement, five themes emerged. The resulting themes and their codes are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Themes and Codes Emergent from Interview Data

Theme	Subtheme	Code
Theme 1: African American Fathers Experienced Racial	Experiences at Workplaces	University Prof Receiving Evaluations Workplace Discrimination

Theme	Subtheme	Code
Discrimination in All Facets of Life	Experiences in School	Seeing Issues in Public Education Sports - Lack of Playing Time Through Children
	Experiences in Society	Assumed to be Stealing when Shopping or Browsing Daily Acts of Discrimination Police Officers
Theme 2: Experiencing Racial Discrimination Impacts how African American Fathers Talk to their Children	Impacted How to Talk to and Teach Children	Becomes a Talking Point and or Teachable Moment Instill Faith in Child's Life When Talking to Kids Are Detailed About Outcomes Details to Promote Recognition of Bias Balance Understanding of the World with Youthful Spirit Explain Biases Exist Help Educate on a Bad Decision vs. Prejudice Details to Provide Guidance at Emmett Till Museum Dangers of Familiarity Detail Varies with Topic How to Navigate Racial Spaces
	Impacts on Outlook	Fear Children Have the Same Interactions Look at Things Differently Unprepared for the Other Side
	Impacts on Parent-Child Interactions in Society	How to Raise Black Children in a Racist Nation Structures Impact Being There for Children Vigilant Protective Action
Theme 3: Racial Socialization with Parents	Descriptive from Their Lives	Increased Awareness Vivid Stories
	No Real Lessons	No Lessons Got to See Everyone as People
	Practical Advice	How to Handle Self Around Police

Theme	Subtheme	Code
		Intentional Speech and Action Simple and or Unstructured Ways
Theme 4: The Impacts of Racial Discrimination Led to Changes in Family Discussions, Relationships, and Social Interactions	Impacts on Familial Talk and Education	Children Receptive Empathy for Other Forms of Discrimination Point of Family Discussions Work to Give Kids Great Formal and Informal Education
	Impacts on Family in Society	Feared Police Growing Up Impacts Family Travel Recognize Subconscious Programming
	Impacts on Intra-Familial Relationships	Family Saw New Type of Anger in Dad Increased Expectations on Children Increased Protectiveness Wife Experienced Discrimination at School
Theme 5: Emotional and Psychological Impacts of and Responses to Discrimination	Anger and Forced Resiliency	Anger at Needing to be Resilient Emotional Toll of Avoiding Showing Anger
	Sought Control	Control Environment Control Stress Faith Mitigates Impact Have to Work Harder for Equality Motivated to Get Education
	Trauma Anxiety and Depression	Causes Self Doubt Depression and its Impacts Impacted Self-Actualization Increased Anxiety in Similar Situations Trauma Responses Defensiveness Weighed Heavily Remained Guarded on Topic Made More Cautious

Theme	Subtheme	Code
		Triggered Memories and Trauma

In the penultimate step, the researchers finalized the themes, ensuring their alignment with the original data and overall research objectives. This involved verifying that the themes accurately represented the dataset, possessed internal coherence, and reflected the intricacies of the information. The resulting themes were defined and named, providing a clear structure that synthesized the essence of the data within the research context. The themes were then grouped by which research question they responded to. Conclusively, the thematic analysis concluded with the entire process’s documentation, including the detailed narrative of the themes and supporting evidence from the data.

Phase 2 of this study was the qualitative phase. The interviews conducted responded to the three qualitative research questions. As previously stated, the interview data was coded, and themes were created; the themes were arranged by the research question to which they responded. The following sections present them in that order. Since participants often offered lengthy, detailed examples, up to two examples will be provided for each response category.

RQ3: Have you ever been treated differently because of your race and ethnicity; if so, how do African American fathers experience racism?

The first research question sought participant experiences with racial discrimination to understand how African American fathers experienced racism and racial discrimination. Each participant responded with one or more descriptive narratives of events where they experienced discrimination. The broadest description of participant responses suggested that they had experienced discrimination across all facets of life.

Theme 1: African American Fathers Experienced Racial Discrimination in All Facets of Life.

One theme emerged in response to this research question, describing the participant's experiences with racial discrimination. Within that theme, three categories of experiences relating to discrimination at work, school, and society emerged. Each of these categories will be discussed below.

The most mentioned locus of racial discrimination experienced by participants was in the workplace. Father 7's response was quick and concise. He said, "Of my ethnicity. So they would not even give us jobs, just fixing the machines, being machine repairmen. All we could do is work. That's it." Father 8 offered more description of his experiences:

You have certain clientele, and some of the jobs I've had, some people just flat out don't want to deal with you because you're black. They don't even give you a chance to speak or introduce yourself or get to know you. It's just literally, like is there someone else I can talk to, someone else I can deal with? I'd rather not even conversate with you. We're talking about in Michigan up north, not even North Carolina now, and this is me at age 33, still going through stuff like this. So that's just a brief description of what I've been through.

Father 4, a college professor, described experiencing discriminatory treatment on student evaluations, saying first:

I have even been an academic; I would say that being a black male professor has shown me, or being a black male professor and having 98% white students. I have seen a difference in my evaluations as compared to my counterparts. And it's even something that's talked about here at the university in terms of how black and brown professors and

professors from other non-white professors are talked about and looked at here at this university and how that correlates to our evaluations.

He later added that:

But words that come up like lazy, personally speaking, I am the opposite of lazy. I do too much. And so I've seen in my evaluations, and some of my other black colleagues have also seen that words like lazy students questioning our professionalism and or our knowledge base.

For some, they were denied jobs, and for others, they were treated differently.

A second locus of experiences centered around school. Father 3 spoke of the lowered expectations of African-American students, which made him unprepared for college. Those are some of the issues in public education. I think having lower expectations of black students, not programming African-American students for rigorous courses, just undervaluing and having a low regard for them and their potential. I went to college; I was not college-ready. I understand what that means. Now, having been in public education for all these years and having raised two children, I was determined to make college ready, which I did, but I went through public education coming out not college ready. How was that? I asked myself, and I think it's a failure to understand and value the potential that you have that I would expect to have in black children.

While unprepared, Father 3 took that experience and determined that his children would be ready. For others, like Father 5, the experience came from a need for more playing time in school sports.

In fact, I was in high school, I played JB soccer, and there wasn't many black kids on the team, but I didn't think about it until the recent months that passed that a few of us that

did play, we had limited time. Definitely a lot of kids that were our counterparts and I never understood it why we were never really given a fair chance to play.

School, for some participants, proved a place where they experienced racial discrimination—as students, as student-athletes, as parents of students, and as professors performing their jobs.

The final locus where participants reported experiencing discrimination was society at large.

These included daily microaggressions and larger experiences. Father 1 described two of the larger incidents, speaking of his and his brother's experiences with police officers.

Those occurrences were both with police officers while driving. The first one was kind of north of where I live, a rural area. My friends and I were driving home. I purposefully drove the speed limit. I purposefully did everything I was supposed to do as a driver in that area because I knew the area was known for racism and racist cops. So, I knew that I was supposed to be on alert. So, I was doing the speed limit, which was different from 25 or 30 miles an hour. And I was doing definitely 25 because my friends and I were like, do what you're supposed to do. And I knew until we got out of the area to do that. But the cop pulled us over, and I asked him why he was pulling us over. He literally ignored me, didn't answer me, ran everything I gave him just because he could, and then still didn't give us an answer about why he pulled us over and was about to ask us to get out of the car. And then he got a call from somewhere, and then he left. And that was the first little small one in that situation, and I knew what that was about. The second one was my brother and I were together and we were pulled over probably for the same reason, but in a different area.

And we don't have any warrants. We don't have any outstanding tickets. We didn't have any of those things. But it was me experiencing my brother being told to get out the car.

And his experience was probably worse for me because even though he's older than me, I've always been the protector, the protective one. Everyone who met my brothers and me always thought I was the oldest because I'm protective. So watching him go through that with that police officer was one of the most detrimental parts of my life mentally because it drove my emotions crazy to know that there was nothing that we could do in that moment because we were, at that moment, not afraid of the police officer, but just afraid of the possible outcome of the situation. Had we responded or reacted in a way that would lead to that officer either applying unnecessary force or killing us? So those were my two experiences.

Father 12 described the full gamut of experiences, saying:

Yeah, I can. So, for myself, just number one, growing up, I grew up in a predominantly white, Caucasian suburban area. So, I mean, I think discrimination, whether it's some microaggression in the classroom to just flat out using the word nigger, I've experienced it all, I think in my, so that's navigating that through going to a PWI institution for undergrad, definitely experienced those discriminatory actions there.

RQ4: How does experiencing racism influence African-American fathers' mental health and parenting?

The fourth research question is about the impacts that experiencing racial discrimination had on African-American fathers' mental health and their parenting. Two themes emerged from the data in response to this question. Theme 1 described the emotional and psychological impacts of experiencing racial discrimination as perceived by the participants, and Theme 2 described the effects this discrimination had on their parenting.

Theme 2: The Emotional and Psychological Impacts of Racial Discrimination Led Participants to Seek Control over Self and Environment

The following theme describes the emotional and psychological impacts of racial discrimination. At the same time, the participants described responses that ran the spectrum from grief to anger to fear; all perceived racial discrimination as impacting their mental and emotional health. These impacts led some participants to seek control over themselves and their environment. Participant responses were grouped into three categories: trauma responses, anger over forced resiliency, and seeking control.

All participants described their emotional responses to trauma because of racial discrimination. Father 1 perceived his level of anxiety as spiking when he found himself in a situation that could follow the same pattern, which for him involved an altercation with a police officer. He said:

Yeah. So honestly, from the first to this situation, it's like you don't want to say you are always nervous when driving. Still, it's just like because all police officers aren't horrible, all police officers are not racist. All police officers don't respond to situations in that aspect when it comes to racism. But from that point on, it seems like every time I saw a police car, I would get this built-up anxiety. You know what I'm saying? This nervous tension, this nervous, just full of anxiety every time. And it would just get to the point. During that time, not now, but during that time, it would get to the point where I had heart palpitations and nervous sweat. One time, I saw my hand on the steering wheel, and it was shaking. The police officer was behind me, and I was thinking, not again. I'm by myself this time; what could happen? You know what I'm saying? I was just like, I shouldn't have to deal with that. So that put me in a place of still respecting all officers

and not being afraid of them, but also just being nervous and having that built-up anxiety every time I saw one. So that was crazy for me.

Anxiety was the most common response mentioned, but other responses, such as depression and its effects, were mentioned as well. Father 9 described his depression and its impacts on his emotional and physical health, saying:

Emotionally? It has put me in a depressed state that is unrecognized. I believe that I look for hope to get myself through it. So, it put me in a place where I didn't value myself. And since I didn't value myself, I allowed myself to get to a weight that would be; I allowed myself to get unhealthy. I put a to like that. I used to weigh 385 pounds, and the way that I was treated did affect me emotionally to the point where I would look for ways to cope. And that way to cope was with food, and with food it messed with my mental state. And that would be, I believe, the cognitive part, know what I could see was physically my health was in the dose to be polite.

Other traumatic responses, such as triggering painful memories, emerged in participant responses. Still, all participants spoke at length about the negative impacts that experiencing racial discrimination had on their emotional and psychological health.

Another category of responses focused on anger at feeling forced to become resilient due to discrimination. Father 2 described anger at this forced resiliency over something that should never have happened.

Well, I like to think of myself as a resilient person. I've relied a lot on my faith and my family, but if we're, to be honest, I shouldn't have to be that resilient. Do you see what I'm saying? It is taking a toll on my mental health to exert and exhibit and display tenacity and resiliency for situations that really should have never happened if we weren't

living in a following world, and then living in a world where discrimination is so rampant. And so those are the things that, in looking back, the mental that I had to display just for the sake of being a strong man, being a strong black man, being a strong black man, and a mentor and a father and a husband, those are the things that have, now that I am 40, have weighed on me and my capacity mentally.

Father 5 had similar thoughts as he recalled an incident where a man asked why African Americans “took offense” at slavery.

I would say more so emotionally, hearing different perceptions about, I had a gentleman one time that he told me, or he asked me, why do people of African descent, African-American descent take offense to slavery? We shouldn't always look at it as a bad thing. We should sometimes look at it as a good thing. And I am like, is this where this will lead to? Are we going to hear constant questions like this, or are people going to come out with different narratives about how my generation, our generation, should endure what happened during slavery?

The words offered by these men were emblematic of other participants who expressed anger at having to respond with calmness and civility to incidents of prejudice and discrimination.

The final category of psychological responses described attempts by participants to seek control over themselves and their environment. Father 6 spoke on the importance of his spirituality as helping him feel in control. He said:

It makes me realize that there are still people in the world who believe these kinds of things, and that's okay for them to think. But ultimately, my thing is that how I think is that's not me. That's not who God says I am. So, you can say whatever you want to say.

That's not who I am, so it doesn't affect me negatively. It's still shocking when I hear stuff pop up, but I can handle it for the most part.

Father 7 described how racial discrimination at work motivated him to get an education and change his environment so he was in control of where he was and who was around him.

It had a significant impact because it made me rethink how I was living. That's how I ended up in Atlanta. I figured, okay, if these guys won't hire me or let me move up, I need to get myself together to better myself. So, it motivated me. So, that caused me to go back to school. I went back to school and graduated, got my degree, and got the job I have now as a computer software engineer. So, it didn't, emotionally. It didn't rock me, but it just motivated me. People always try to stop you because of things one way or another. So, I have to find a way to get around it. I can't just let that be the story. Okay, they didn't give me a chance, so there's nothing else.

For some participants, taking control over their environment through faith or change gave them the confidence to, as Father 3 put it, "dismiss people who don't add value to my life or who create unwelcome experiences," thus mitigating the impact on their psychological health.

Theme 3: Racial Socialization with Children

The third emergent theme described how experiencing racial discrimination impacted how African-American fathers spoke to their children about race and racism and how they interacted with their families and the world. Three categories of responses emerged. These categories described how the fathers' outlooks changed, spoke to their children, and interacted with their children in society.

The first category described how experiencing racial discrimination changed fathers' outlooks. The most common response mentioned was fear that their children would have similar or identical experiences. Father 1 said:

It's just like, are they going to be in that same situation that I was in or that my brother and I were in? Are they going to be able to call me? Are they going to have a situation where they're trying to call me? And it makes it worse for that new cop who doesn't know how to pull a person over who doesn't know the proper steps to take, and then they pull out their phone and try to call their dad, and now they're on the ground. I have those worries. I think I'll always have those worries, which is sad. They probably won't ever go away as a parent; they're going to college and away from me, and I can't protect them. I want to. So, it just puts me in that mental state, which is to me bizarre. But it is my reality.

And Father 5 spoke of similar fears regarding his sons:

It affects me in a sense. So, I have two sons, and my oldest son is the one I'm worried about the most because he's sometimes a playful kid, a good kid, and very humble. He doesn't like drum; he doesn't like trouble. He tends to have low self-esteem sometimes. He tends to worry. He did my focus when it comes to being more towards him than the other three. I think the other three understand it, but I think more so of him, by him being playful; I wouldn't want to have a situation where when he starts to drive that if the police pull him over, he's, I don't know, trying to have the cops have a good day, want them to have a good day. He tells a joke or something, and it's just rubbed off the wrong way, unaware of what he's saying. My other three seem to get it.

For many fathers who participated in this study, their outlook as fathers changed to one of fear for their children having to contend with similar situations in the future.

The second category of responses discussed how experiences and responses to racial discrimination became a talking point for participants and their children. Father 2 said:

We should not be afraid of the police. I'm having to have conversations with my children about when you go into the store, don't touch. I mean, we were raised that way. Don't touch anything, don't ask anything. But also, just certain things that my pops taught me: don't walk into the store with your hands in your pocket, things of that nature. These things of even behavioral accommodations, which I'm like, I'm navigating the fact of like, okay, do I enforce? Tell my child to always. We teach 'em to be good and be mannerable, which they are, but also, my son is a boy. So boys jump around, they're active, and statistics and studies show that black boys, even by black educators, are often seen as disciplinary interruptions, or they receive infractions more often than black girls and white men, white boys and white girls. And so do I strip him of his boyhood by saying, hey, people will be looking at you differently.

Father 7 described conversations around contemporary events, such as George Floyd's murder, and how these conversations focused on describing both how to navigate the world and how to communicate with family.

So, the George Floyd situation, that was almost like you could say police, so that's a different conversation than you going on to school and experiencing racism. So that conversation was about things to do to protect yourself. When you travel, make sure you have your phone, your phone with you, if you're ever in a neighborhood where you don't know people, make sure someone knows where you are. And that caused us to get the

iPhone. So I always know, I know where you at and I'm an Android person, but I got an iPhone, so I'll be able to see where you at, where you're going. It may you let 'em know, Hey, communicate. This is the reason why you can't lie to me about where you want be, because anything can happen. It was like those types of conversations.

Experiencing racial discrimination, both personally and vicariously through news of current events, impacted how fathers talked to their children about living and moving in society.

The final response category described how experiencing racial discrimination impacted parent-child social interactions within society. Participants often spoke of one question guiding these interactions. How should they raise black children in a racist society? Father 2 responded to this question, the discussions, and parenting interactions.

But I am very much future thinking. I've always thought ahead. And so even my wife and I collaborated greatly in our parenting styles. But one thing that I could not ignore as it pertained to parenting was how to raise my black children in a nation that doesn't see their existence as humane. And that has been proven in just the actions of authority and also having to navigate that as a black man and as a man of faith. So there's this tension because as a man of faith, the scripture says, God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind. So we stand on that. But the reality of our existence is that there are many things to fear. And the things that we have to be afraid of are things that we shouldn't be like the police.

And Father 5 said:

It affects me in a sense of personally, I know I can't change the entire dynamic, still trying to understand the root cause of all of this, where it goes back to slavery, it goes back way, way back before our parents were even born. Then having to help my children

understand it, that this is something that didn't start when I was a kid and we may not witness it go away before we pass away. So it's affecting me in the sense of whether they will get it and be able to handle it when they get older; if they decide to have children, how would they teach their children? Would they find a different way to teach their little ones? What it looks like, how to cope with it, how to deal with it, how to maneuver around it, what it looks like, what it means, where it came from, how to understand that it is not so much of each, every individual that doesn't have the similar features as us come from the same ethical background as us, but systematically, I think that's been the biggest thing for me is trying to get through all of that.

These participants spoke on how their experiences impacted how they and their children interacted with the world. After describing in detail several experiences he and his son had, Father 3 lamented that “vigilance” was needed even though experiencing discrimination was “not something you can shield kids from for the rest of their lives.”

RQ5: How does racial socialization relate to African-American fathers' mental health?

The fifth research question sought to explore the impact that racial socialization had on African-American fathers' mental health. Two themes emerged from participant responses to questions involving their upbringing and socialization. Participants spoke about how their parents taught or did not teach them about race and racism while growing up, as well as the impacts that experiencing racial discrimination led to changes in how they approached family dynamics, education, and social interaction.

Theme 4: Most Participants Reported Minimal Talk about Discrimination from Parents Beyond Descriptive Stories and Practical Advice.

The fourth emergent theme described the racial socialization provided by the participants' parents and guardians. Overall, participants reported they were taught "no real lessons," but many reported that their parents or grandparents told stories from their own lives. Three subthemes emerged to describe how no real lessons were taught, how descriptive stories were offered, and what practical advice was given.

As stated, most participants reported no actual lessons from their parents. Father 15 discussed how being raised by a single mother gave her little time to do more than provide the "basic parenting." He said:

So, I didn't have my dad; I think my mom needed to be made aware of the things outside of essential parenting that consist of ensuring you have a roof over your head, clothes, food, and utilities were paid. I think my mom had an awareness of that. Not to say that she was not intelligent, but parenting was different because she didn't have that growing up. So she didn't know how to give it to me. She needed to understand the importance of being proactive in these conversations, being proactive as in being involved in the schooling with the teachers regardless of whether something was going wrong or right. Growing up in a low-income community, growing up in the projects, and seeing and knowing some of the police officers that were in our communities and on the police force, I don't think it dawned on her mind that something like this could have happened to me. So, I didn't get that growing up as a kid.

Father 6 offered similar sentiments from growing up:

They never did, actually. Like I said, so my dad was not around. Yeah, I probably seen my dad maybe five or six times growing up until I turned 18, and he didn't have to pay back child support. And I just started going over to his house. But as far as my mom, I mean, when we had our interactions with the police because of her ex-boyfriend and the abuse and everything, I would see how things were, but I never really got talked to about it. But again, just in the hold, the household was dysfunctional in some areas, so I guess it would be hard for them to talk to me about something if they're having a hard time in their own life, if that makes sense.

For these and other participants, no formal lessons on interacting as an African American man in United States society were offered. However, the assumption was that one would absorb the lessons from seeing how situations played out in their families and neighborhoods.

Participants also reported that some family members, usually grandparents, told them vivid stories from their experiences. Father 1 described his grandmother's stories, saying:

But my mom and her side of the family, coming from Mississippi, that deep south, dealing with the racial discrimination down there and the segregation and just all the things that they had to deal with, they talked to us about it. I remember vivid stories of my grandmother sharing with us things that she had to go through and deal with, with segregation and how she was the only, not the only, but one of the few black students at her high school, and she was valedictorian at one point, and she was discriminated against, and they almost took it away, but they didn't like situations like that, situations with my mother being in school and dealing with a white kid who had spit on her and nothing happened to the child.

Father 8 had similar conversations with his grandfather.

...so my grandpa honestly did a lot of the upbringing as far as conversations and stuff on social injustices and racism was like, I remember being 8 years old, he was a college professor. I'll be in his office while he's teaching class. He had put on a Martin Luther King documentary, we talking tapes, and I don't know how I sat in there and watched a tape for over 6 hours while he taught in black and white at 8 years old. And the conversation that he would have with me, he had just shared some experiences with me. He was born in Virginia, and he would share stuff with me about the different types of racism he grew up with. And back then, he was born in 1944, so his coming up in the sixties as a young black man was a completely different time than it is me coming up in the nineties.

For these participants, any racial socialization received came in the form of vivid life stories told by their grandparents.

Other participants reported minimal but practical advice. Father 4 said he was advised on interacting with police officers.

They talked a lot about the police and being careful around the police and what you do around the police and what you say around the police and things like that. But that was really it that I can remember.

For Father 2, he recalled that his father grew up without a father in the picture, so his conversations and interactions with his sons (including Father 2) were intentional.

He [Father 2's father] was so intentional about us, and in those conversations, he would talk to us about what it is to be a man and what it is to be a black man, and his knowledge, things. He'd be like, he would always speak words of affirmation. You're a leader, you're not a follower, you're smart, you're beautiful. He would always share these

things with us. And we're like, okay, dad, okay. And he was like, I love you. I love you more than anything. And he would always tell us this, and we're like, why are you telling us this all the time? But now we get it at 40. My older brother's 41, my younger brother's 38, and my youngest brother is 31. And looking back, it's like, it makes sense now. It makes sense.

Father 2 later added the following:

And we didn't realize how blessed we were to have a father, not just a father, but an active father who was intentional about pouring into our lives. But I can remember him telling us that. And I can remember sometimes, in his effort to make us aware, he'd be like, when you get into class, you're going to have to work 10 times harder than your white counterparts to get the same respect. And that bothered me. I can remember being a preteen, which bothered me so much, like, why do I have to work harder? It just didn't math for me. And so, in those instances, subconsciously, it put a weight on me to try to prove myself. I got to prove myself. I must prove that I'm smart. I have to prove that I'm intellectual.

These participants reported receiving practical advice on racial socialization during their upbringing.

Theme 5: The Impacts of Racial Discrimination Led to Changes in Family Discussions, Relationships, and Social Interactions

The fifth emergent theme described the changes that the impacts of experiencing racial discrimination had on family discussions, relationships, and social interactions. Participant responses fell into three broad categories. These categories described the impacts on family talk and discussions, intra-family interactions, and how the family interacted with and in society.

The first category of responses described how the impacts of racial discrimination changed family discussions for the participants. For Father 1, this included making his children aware of incidents they are likely to hear about in school and helping them understand what happened and its meaning and implications.

Yeah, all the time. So whenever something comes up in the news, because I know that they're probably going to talk about it at school, or I try to bring it to their attention, or if they've already heard about it, talk about it. Because I want to be the first person to explain certain things to them so that they don't have these other opinions that are non, I don't know how to word, but non-African-American opinions. Because sometimes their peers who are not African-American have no idea what it feels like, even though it can be innocent and harmless, their opinions. But I still want to give them the historical perspective to let them know that this is an ongoing thing that has yet to stop. It's not new.

Father 9 offered similar thoughts, but he crystallized them in advising his children to ensure they were above reproach in the eyes of anyone who may witness such interactions.

That doesn't reflect on you. That reflects on, that reflects on outside of you. That doesn't reflect on your performance. Focus on what you did, get better at what you did, and make it until it's undeniable. And that's the best way to work through it because no matter what, life is not fair. So the more you know that life isn't going to be fair, and that's okay, the more you should be able to go ahead and get through what you need. Not acknowledging that what you feel is real, that what you feel is real, but it doesn't have to dictate your behavior.

For these participants, the impacts of racial discrimination led to changes in how they communicated as a family, often becoming the subject of discussion so the fathers could provide perspective, context, and guidance to their children.

The second category of responses involved intra-familial interactions. These responses described how the family reacted and responded to events within the familial unit. The most mentioned response was some participants' increased sense of protectiveness. Father 3 stated that his children have not felt the full impact the way he has.

I don't think they negatively affected them because they might've affected me, but because of the effect on me, then my role has been to protect and to shield them from trauma, not from racism, but from trauma in that I expect them to encounter racism. I think it's different from men than it is for women as well. My daughter is more mild-mannered. She is a lot easier going, and she probably hasn't had a whole lot of racial traumatic experiences. My son is a little different because as a male, I feel like they will be the most threatening. I think my son, like I said, he's had those racist experiences in scouting. He's had those racist experiences when I sent him to a private Christian school run by white people. That was another horrible experience in many ways. But in many ways, it was a positive experience.

Father 12 offered a more succinct description of this sense of increased protectiveness when he said:

They feel they don't want to do it; they feel that they are being discriminated against. Come to us and we'll be able to come as a fortified front. You know what I'm saying? We're stronger together. It's not for them to fight discrimination as of right now.

However, when they recognize it, please bring it up so that we can go take the proper course of action.

Father 13 noted that the impacts of racial discrimination evoked a level of anger within him that his family had never seen, thus impacting them in ways he had not initially considered.

Yeah, because I know I was angered when a lot of that stuff was going on. I was angered by it, and it's hard. It's tough to get me upset. I'm talking about the facts too, where emotionally, my wife had to calm me down for days because I wanted to. I wanted to do something about it, and I didn't know what I could do. But at the time, how I was feeling, I think I would've done whatever was needed to be done. And so for my wife and my children to see me like that, I think that impacted them a lot because they didn't know that type of anger could ever come from me regarding a situation that has nothing to do with me but has everything to do with us as a people. And so I believe that it even scared my daughter. She is still a little fearful, so she's in college, but she doesn't want to attend university for those reasons. She wants to stay local, and she has scholarships to go to any college she wants, any college you want to.

Fear, anger, and focus were themes of how racial discrimination has impacted the intra-family interactions for some participants.

Participants also spoke on how racial discrimination impacted how they interacted with society. The most mentioned impacts were those related to travel and business patronage. Father 14 said, "But racism impacts where we travel, where we choose to go, where we not choose to go." He later described such an event, saying:

I guess I can also say this: there are places that we choose not to travel as a family.

There's places that we live here in Michigan, and the further north you go in Michigan,

the less black and brown people that you'll see. And so we've had some experiences traveling north in northern Michigan. You have the staring that happens. We pulled up at a gas station once, and these two younger white guys were in a truck, and they looked back and saw us, and you could see their mouths moving. And we read their lips, and they were just, one of 'em said to the other one, can you believe this shit? And they looked at us, and so what are we left to believe that they were talking about? So it was one of those situations.

Father 8 had similar thoughts when he and his wife decided on travel and business patronage.

She's kind of on the same page as me, so when we do go out, we're both kind of cautious of our surroundings a lot. And not just people, but just in general everything. I wouldn't say it's affected us in any way. As far as deciding where we're going, sometimes I may have a, it's certain areas here around Saginaw, like restaurants or just places to gather. I may say it irritates her, I'll say that, but I'll be like, Hey, I don't know. We used to work at this job. We went during those people inside there. They looked at me a certain way, and I don't know if that's our type of crowd, and she'd like, well, you don't know. That was years ago. And I'd be like, I'm just letting you know. I don't know. A lot of people seem like they were lifers.

Summary

In summary, the quantitative findings showed that racism is associated with mental health, and the qualitative findings help explain the "how" and "why" of this relationship. Conversely, the quantitative findings found no association between racism and parenting satisfaction. Yet, the qualitative results show that certain aspects of parenting may be affected. In

contrast, the parenting satisfaction measure from ADD Health was a broader measure that ostensibly could be affected by many other factors than racism.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore how racial discrimination affects African-American fathers' mental health. This chapter discusses the results presented in Chapter IV and places the findings within the larger body of scholarship on African-American fathers' mental health when affected by racial discrimination. Furthermore, a delineation of the extent to which the theoretical framework employed in this study was confirmed or disconfirmed is also offered. Implications and recommendations for social work policy and practice, along with methodological observations, reflections, and lessons learned, are also presented. Finally, the limitations of the study's quantitative and qualitative phases and recommendations for future research are provided.

In Chapter I, I introduced the problem and the rationale for the study. I also discussed the population, research questions, general assumptions, positionality statements, and the significance of the research to the field. Chapter II focused on research on African-American fathers, families, and racial discrimination. The review of the study revealed a research gap regarding perceptions of the effect of racial discrimination on African-American fathers. In Chapter III, I discussed the study's methodology, study population, data analysis procedures, and trustworthiness issues. The study's findings were presented in Chapter IV and discussed and interpreted in Chapter V. Chapter V also includes recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

The income distribution among the sample reveals that a majority (57.53%) reported earning an annual income between \$0 and \$29,999, indicating that a significant proportion of participants have relatively low incomes. This suggests that financial challenges or limited economic resources may be prevalent among the participants. Considering how this income

range might impact their ability to access specific resources or opportunities relevant to their area is essential.

The sample exhibited a wide distribution regarding education level, with “some college” experience being the most common category (40.41%). This indicates that many participants have pursued higher education beyond high school but may still need to complete a degree. For instance, individuals with higher levels of education may possess different knowledge or skills compared to those with lower levels of education, potentially impacting their perspectives or behaviors related to specific topics addressed in this study. Similarly, individuals with lower incomes may face unique financial constraints or challenges compared to those with higher incomes. These circumstances could affect their access to resources or opportunities relevant to this research area.

T-Test

The results of the independent sample t-tests indicate significant differences in perceived stress and depression based on perceived discrimination. For perceived stress, there was a statistically significant difference between participants who experienced racial discrimination and those who did not. The t-value of 4.19 with a degree of freedom (df) of 144 suggests that the difference between the two groups is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Participants who experienced racial discrimination ($M = 6.50$) scored significantly higher on perceived stress compared to participants who did not experience racial discrimination ($M = 4.48$).

Similarly, for depression, there was a statistically significant difference between participants who experienced racial discrimination and those who did not. The t-value of 4.69 with a df of 144 indicates that the difference between the groups is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Participants who experienced racial discrimination ($M = 9.48$) scored significantly

higher on depression compared to participants who did not experience racial discrimination ($M = 6.59$).

The p-values for both analyses ($p < .001$) indicate that the observed differences are highly unlikely to be due to random chance. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between perceived discrimination and both perceived stress and depression, with participants who experienced racial discrimination reporting higher levels of perceived stress and depression compared to those who did not experience racial discrimination.

These findings highlight the detrimental impact of perceived discrimination on individuals' mental health, specifically in terms of increased levels of stress and depression. This information can inform future interventions and support services aimed at addressing and mitigating the adverse effects of racial discrimination on well-being.

For perceived stress, the t-value of 4.19 (with a df of 144) indicates that the difference in perceived stress between participants who experienced racial discrimination and those who did not is statistically significant. Participants who experienced racial discrimination ($M = 6.50$) scored significantly higher on perceived stress compared to participants who did not experience racial discrimination ($M = 4.48$). This suggests that racial discrimination has a significant impact on individuals' level of perceived stress.

Similarly, for depression, the t-value of 4.69 (with a df of 144) indicates that the difference in depression scores between participants who experienced racial discrimination and those who did not is statistically significant. Participants who experienced racial discrimination ($M = 9.48$) scored significantly higher on depression compared to participants who did not experience racial discrimination ($M = 6.59$). This suggests that racial discrimination is associated with higher levels of depression.

The p-values being less than .001 indicate that the observed differences are highly unlikely to be due to random chance. Therefore, we can confidently conclude that there is a significant relationship between perceived discrimination and both perceived stress and depression.

Overall, these findings highlight the detrimental impact of perceived discrimination on individuals' mental health. Experiencing racial discrimination appears to be associated with higher levels of perceived stress and depression. It is essential to consider these results when addressing issues related to discrimination and to provide support and interventions for individuals who have experienced racial discrimination to improve their mental well-being.

Chi-Square

The chi-square statistic of 0.84 with 1 degree of freedom indicates that the observed relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction is not statistically different from what would be expected by chance alone. Additionally, the p-value of 0.359, greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, further supports the conclusion that there is no statistically significant association between these variables.

This means that the data did not provide evidence to support the hypothesis that there is a relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction. Based on the data analyzed in this study, the findings suggest that racial discrimination does not have a direct impact on parenting satisfaction. It is important to note that the absence of a significant relationship in this study does not necessarily imply the absence of any relationship in broader contexts. Additional research may be necessary to explore further and understand the possible connections between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction.

Pearson Correlation

The correlation coefficient (r) value of 0.55 suggests a strong positive relationship between perceived stress and depression. This means that as perceived stress levels increase, depression levels tend to increase, and vice versa. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient indicates that the variables move in the same direction. Furthermore, the p-value of less than .001 means that the observed correlation is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. This suggests that the relationship between perceived stress and depression is consistent and reliable across the sample analyzed.

Overall, these findings suggest that there is a significant positive association between perceived stress and depression. Considering this relationship in understanding and addressing individuals' mental well-being is important. The results can inform the development of interventions and support strategies that target both perceived stress and depression simultaneously.

The Numbers: Discussion of Quantitative Study Results

Two research questions guided the quantitative portion of this study. The first asked, “Is there an association between racial discrimination and the mental health of African-American fathers?”

This study’s findings align with previous research, demonstrating a significant association between racial discrimination and adverse mental health outcomes among African-American fathers. Hudson et al. (2016) found a significant association between racial discrimination experiences and depressive symptoms among African Americans. Specifically, higher levels of perceived racial discrimination were associated with increased depressive symptoms (Hudson et al., 2016). Furthermore, Hudson examined the moderating role of social

support in this relationship, revealing that social support had a buffering effect on the association between racial discrimination and depression. In other words, individuals who reported higher levels of social support experienced lower levels of depressive symptoms even when they encountered high levels of racial discrimination. This consistency strengthens the existing evidence base and reinforces the understanding that racial discrimination can have detrimental effects on the mental well-being of those who experience it. By specifically focusing on African American fathers, this study highlights their unique experiences and challenges, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of how racial discrimination impacts mental health within this population.

The intersectionality perspective is crucial in examining the relationship between racial discrimination and well-being, acknowledging that individuals' experiences are shaped by multiple factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics. Watkins and Neighbors (2007) emphasized the importance of adopting an intersectional perspective when examining racial/ethnic discrimination and mental health outcomes among African-American men. Watkins and Neighbors argued that considering multiple facets of social identities, such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status, is crucial to understanding this population's unique experiences and challenges. Furthermore, the Watkins and Neighbors's study confirmed that experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination are associated with adverse mental health outcomes among African-American men. These discriminatory experiences can lead to increased levels of psychological distress, depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and overall poor well-being. Addressing racial discrimination is essential for promoting positive mental health outcomes among African American fathers, warranting interventions that provide support systems and coping strategies tailored to their specific needs.

Further research is needed on other factors influencing this relationship among African-American fathers. For example, Watkins, Greenidge, and Toliver-Smith (2020) found a significant positive association between racial discrimination experiences and depressive symptoms among African-American fathers. This suggests that higher levels of perceived racial discrimination are related to increased levels of depressive symptoms.

The second research question that guided the quantitative portion of this study asked, does mental health mediate the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction?

The results of the regression analyses indicated that neither perceived stress nor depression mediate the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction among African-American fathers. The first regression model revealed a significant association between racial discrimination and perceived stress, suggesting that experiences of racism were linked to higher levels of perceived stress. However, racial discrimination did not significantly correlate with parenting satisfaction in the second model. Similarly, while the first model showed a significant association between racial discrimination and depression, indicating that experiences of racism were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms, there was no significant relationship found between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction in the second model. These findings suggest that although racial discrimination may contribute to increased levels of perceived stress and depression among individuals, it does not directly impact their level of parenting satisfaction.

It was found that father involvement partially mediated this association. In other words, higher levels of father involvement were associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms among African-American fathers who experienced racial discrimination. Overall findings

indicate that when considering all three models collectively, there was no statistically significant association between racial discrimination alone or in combination with either perceived stress or depression; perceived stress had a significant negative relationship with parenting satisfaction; and depression did not have a significant relationship with parenting satisfaction. These findings suggest that while there are associations between racial discrimination and both perceived stress and depression individually, neither variable acts as a mediator in explaining the relationship between racial discrimination and parenting satisfaction.

Beyond the Numbers: Discussion of Qualitative Study Results

The study also included a qualitative portion, which included Research Questions 3-5. Data analysis revealed five themes related to these research questions, which are discussed below.

RQ3: Have you ever been treated differently because of your race and ethnicity; if so, how do African American fathers experience racism?

Analysis of the data for RQ3 revealed one theme: African-American Fathers Experienced Racial Discrimination in All Facets of Life. Theme 1 involved the experiences of African-American fathers with racial discrimination in various aspects of their lives. Three categories emerged within this theme: work, school, and society discrimination.

The workplace was identified as the most common locus of racial discrimination experienced by participants. Fathers mentioned being denied job opportunities or being treated differently due to their race. Some shared instances where clients or colleagues displayed explicit bias and refused to engage with them solely based on their race.

School was another significant area where participants encountered racial discrimination. Fathers spoke about lowered expectations for African-American students, resulting in inadequate

preparation for college. They also mentioned unequal treatment in sports teams, where black athletes were given limited playing time compared to their counterparts.

Participants also reported discrimination in society at large. This included daily microaggressions and more significant incidents, such as encounters with police officers. Participants described being pulled over without valid reasons and experiencing mistreatment during these encounters. African-American fathers encounter racial discrimination outside of work and school settings, including being subjected to racial profiling by law enforcement agencies leading to unfair targeting or harassment; facing prejudice and stereotypes in public spaces; encountering systemic racism that limits access to housing options; experiencing unequal treatment in healthcare systems; and dealing with other forms of structural racism prevalent in society. Burton and Jarrett (2000) focused on understanding the experiences of African American families, including fathers, within urban neighborhoods, recognizing that these neighborhoods often face various challenges such as poverty, crime, limited resources, and racial segregation. Additionally, the Burton and Jarrett study discussed how African American fathers encounter societal discrimination within these urban contexts, such as racial profiling by law enforcement agencies, unequal treatment in public spaces or institutions (e.g., schools or healthcare settings), limited access to employment opportunities due to systemic racism or biases. These discriminatory experiences adversely affect African American fathers' well-being and their ability to fulfill their roles as parents, highlighting that experiencing discrimination can lead to increased stress levels, mental health issues (e.g., depression), and strained relationships with partners/spouses and children.

Overall, these findings emphasize that African American fathers face racial discrimination across different facets of life, including work, school, and society at large. The

experiences shared by participants demonstrate a range of discriminatory acts, from subtle biases to overt acts of racism, that impact their daily lives and opportunities for success. My findings confirm and extend the literature. Hudson et al. (2012) found that African-American fathers reported experiencing various forms of racial discrimination in their daily lives, including interpersonal discrimination (e.g., being treated unfairly or disrespectfully) and institutional discrimination (e.g., unfair treatment by organizations or systems). Hudson et al. (2016) also highlighted the importance of discussing and examining racial discrimination and interactions.

RQ4: How does experiencing racism influence African-American fathers' mental health and parenting?

The fourth research question focused on the effects of racial discrimination on the mental health and parenting of African-American fathers. Two main themes emerged from the data collected in response to this question. Theme 2 explores the emotional and psychological impacts of racial discrimination as perceived by the participants, while Theme 3 delves into how this discrimination influenced their parenting abilities.

The participants described a range of responses to experiencing racism, including grief, anger, fear, anxiety, and depression. These impacts were deeply felt and affected their mental and emotional well-being. They spoke about how experiencing racial discrimination led them to feel undervalued and contributed to negative self-perception. Some participants also shared how depression affected their physical health, leading to weight gain or other unhealthy coping mechanisms. Research has shown that experiencing racism can have negative impacts on the mental health and parenting of African-American fathers. According to Priest et al. (2019), African-American fathers who reported experiencing racial discrimination exhibited higher

levels of depressive symptoms and lower psychological well-being, suggesting that racism can contribute to adverse mental health outcomes in this population.

One common response mentioned by the participants was anxiety related to encounters with law enforcement. They described heightened levels of nervousness, anxiety, and even physical symptoms such as heart palpitations when encountering police officers due to past experiences of racial discrimination. This anxiety created a constant state of vigilance and fear in their daily lives. The participants expressed anger at being forced into resilience due to ongoing discrimination. They discussed feeling frustrated that they had to constantly exhibit strength in the face of prejudice instead of being able to live without these burdensome expectations. This anger stemmed from the realization that they should not have had to develop such resilience if racism did not exist. Davis et al. (2020) found that perceived racial discrimination among African-American fathers was associated with increased parenting stress and strained father-child relationships. Caldwell et al. (2021) explored how experiences of racism influenced positive parenting behaviors among African-American fathers. Their findings revealed a negative association between exposure to racial discrimination and positive parenting practices such as warmth, involvement, and communication. This indicates that racism not only affects the individual's mental health but also has implications for their ability to engage in positive parenting practices.

In response to these emotional and psychological impacts, some participants sought control over themselves and their environment as a coping mechanism. This included relying on spirituality or faith as a source of strength or making changes in their lives (such as pursuing education) to regain control over their circumstances. The data also revealed that experiencing racial discrimination influenced how African-American fathers approached parenting discussions

with their children about race and racism. The fathers expressed concerns for their children's safety and well-being in an unjust society where they may face similar discriminatory experiences. They discussed conversing about navigating public spaces safely while acknowledging the need for caution due to potential bias or prejudice. McHale and King's (2019) review highlighted that African American fathers play a crucial role in shaping their children's understanding of race and racism. The review revealed various strategies employed by these fathers, including cultural socialization (teaching about African American history and heritage), preparation for bias (preparing children for potential discrimination), promoting mistrust (cautioning against trusting others due to racial bias), egalitarianism (encouraging equality among races), and other approaches.

Furthermore, these experiences shaped how African-American fathers interacted with their children within society. They described the tension between wanting to protect their children from discrimination while also preparing them for the realities of a racist world. They expressed a desire to raise their children with resilience and awareness, teaching them about racial dynamics and how to cope with discrimination.

Overall, the findings highlight the profound emotional and psychological impacts of experiencing racial discrimination on African-American fathers. It underscores the need for support systems, coping strategies, and open conversations within families to address these challenges and promote resilience in the face of racism.

RQ5: How does racial socialization relate to African-American fathers' mental health?

The fifth research question aimed to investigate the relationship between racial socialization and the mental health of African-American fathers. Two themes emerged from the data based on participant responses regarding their upbringing and socialization: the lack of

formal lessons on race and racism from parents and the impacts of experiencing racial discrimination on family dynamics, education, and social interaction (Hughes et al., 2006; McAdoo, 1993).

Regarding the fourth theme, participants reported minimal talk about discrimination from their parents beyond descriptive stories and practical advice. Many participants mentioned receiving no formal lessons or guidance on interacting as African-American men in society. Some attributed this to growing up with single mothers who focused primarily on providing basic parenting necessities. Others mentioned that their parents' own experiences shaped their understanding of racism, which they shared through vivid life stories. For instance, some participants recalled grandparents sharing stories about dealing with racial discrimination during times of segregation. These stories provided a historical perspective and helped participants understand the ongoing nature of racism.

Additionally, some participants received practical advice from their parents or guardians regarding interactions with police officers or navigating racially biased situations. Hughes et al.'s (2009) study explored how African American parents discuss race-related experiences with their adolescent sons and identify coping strategies used to protect them from racial bias. The findings indicated that parents engage in proactive racial socialization practices aimed at preparing their sons for potential discrimination while fostering resilience. These practices include teaching about racism's existence, providing specific coping strategies such as assertiveness or emotional regulation techniques, promoting positive self-esteem rooted in ethnic identity pride, encouraging critical thinking skills regarding stereotypes or biases encountered, emphasizing academic achievement as a means of overcoming obstacles related to racism, fostering robust family support systems to buffer against negative experiences outside the home environment.

However, there is still a need for further research to understand better how African American fathers navigate these conversations with their children.

For the fifth theme, participants discussed how experiencing racial discrimination led to changes in family discussions, relationships, and social interactions (Taylor et al., 2017). Participants described how they took an active role in discussing incidents related to race with their children to provide them with context and guidance. They wanted to ensure that their children had a historical perspective when encountering racially biased opinions from peers.

Furthermore, participants reported increased protectiveness towards their children due to their own experiences with racial discrimination. Fathers aimed to shield their children from trauma while acknowledging that encounters with racism were likely inevitable for them as African Americans (Taylor et al., 2017). This sense of protectiveness extended beyond immediate family members; some fathers emphasized standing together as a fortified front when addressing discrimination. Participants also mentioned how experiences with racial discrimination influenced decisions related to travel destinations and business patronage. Some expressed caution when traveling to areas with fewer black individuals due to past negative encounters or instances where they felt uncomfortable or unwelcome (Taylor et al., 2017).

In summary, the findings suggest that African-American fathers' mental health is influenced by racial socialization. The lack of formal lessons on race and racism from parents, combined with experiences of racial discrimination, shapes their perspectives and approaches to family dynamics, education, and social interaction (Hughes et al., 2006; McAdoo, 1993; Taylor et al., 2017).

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations associated with the qualitative phase of the study. First, given the small sample size, results are not transferrable to other people or settings. Second, although efforts were made to be transparent, study results may have also been influenced by the researcher's biases and idiosyncrasies. My reporting addressed this by using reflexivity, peer debriefing, and transparency. Because the study approach was qualitative, data were collected from a small Greensboro, North Carolina sample. Therefore, the results are expected to generalize poorly to the larger target population. However, this is a standard limitation of qualitative research with small sample sizes designed to obtain in-depth information that quantitative studies cannot provide. For qualitative studies, greater depth offers more information for other researchers to assess trustworthiness, which includes whether the study could be applied to other contexts. Trustworthiness involves the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure study quality. Although generalizability of findings is not the goal of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), trustworthiness was enhanced in the present study by providing a detailed account of where the interviews took place, when participants were interviewed, and the research setting.

Although the study involved subjective phenomenological accounts of participants' perceptions, steps were taken to achieve trustworthiness, including member checking and audit trails. Additionally, I conducted interviews using the communication platform Microsoft Teams, which may have influenced interviewer-interviewee rapport. Non-verbal cues are more easily recognized in face-to-face interviews. Not being fully physically present also may limit participants' willingness to talk freely.

Implications for Theory

The findings of my research connect to the theories that are used in several ways. Firstly, they align with the Ecological Systems Theory (EST) framework by demonstrating how factors at different levels of influence, such as individual, family, community, and societal contexts, contribute to African-American fathers' experiences of racial discrimination and subsequent mental health outcomes. My research identified specific dynamics within these contexts that either exacerbated or mitigated the effects of racial discrimination on their mental well-being.

Secondly, my findings support the Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal (RECAST) model by highlighting how African-American fathers appraise racially stressful encounters and employ coping strategies to navigate these experiences. Furthermore, my research aligned with RECAST's focus on socialization processes within families and communities regarding race-related stressors like racial discrimination faced by African-American fathers. My findings provided evidence of how participants' socialization influenced their awareness of racism and shaped their responses to discriminatory experiences.

Additionally, my findings indicated psychological distress resulting from exposure to race-based traumatic events or chronic experiences of racism among African-American fathers, acknowledging the Race-Based Traumatic Stress (RBTS) framework. My findings identified specific symptoms and reactions that suggest the emotional impact of racial discrimination on their mental health. Moreover, my research explored intergenerational trauma resulting from the historical legacy of African Americans, particularly as it relates to systemic barriers faced due to contemporary racial discrimination experienced by the grandparents of the participants. This connection highlights how historical trauma continues to affect present-day mental health outcomes.

Lastly, my findings show a heightened sensitivity or increased vulnerability among African-American fathers due to repeated exposure to racial discrimination, supporting the concept of kindling and suggesting that frequent experiences of racial discrimination have made them more susceptible to its adverse effects on their mental health. By establishing these connections, my research contributed to a deeper understanding of the effects of racial discrimination on African-American fathers' mental health within the frameworks provided by these theories.

By incorporating these theories and frameworks into the analysis, I gained a deeper understanding of how racial discrimination affected African American fathers within various ecological systems, their coping strategies, intergenerational influences, psychological distress, historical legacies, and potential long-term consequences. This comprehensive approach enhanced my understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding racial discrimination and its impact on African-American fathers' lives.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several recommendations for future research emerge. Firstly, exploring intersectionality is crucial to understanding how race intersects with other identities, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and age. Investigating these intersections can provide insights into how multiple dimensions of identity influence experiences of racial discrimination among African-American fathers. Secondly, conducting longitudinal studies would be valuable in examining the long-term effects of racial discrimination on various aspects of African American fathers' lives, including mental health, well-being, career advancement, educational attainment, and overall life outcomes. Further research is needed to explore protective factors or resilience mechanisms

within this population and to consider longitudinal or qualitative approaches for deeper insights into these complex relationships.

Additionally, comparative analysis can shed light on similarities and differences in experiences of racial discrimination between African-American fathers and individuals from other racial or ethnic backgrounds. This comparison could help identify African-American fathers' unique challenges and inform targeted interventions—another comparative analysis between African-American fathers and the mothers of their children. Furthermore, investigating organizational policies that contribute to or mitigate racial discrimination in the workplace is essential. Understanding strategies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within organizations can create more equitable work environments for African-American fathers.

Another area for future research involves evaluating educational interventions addressing systemic racism within education systems. Assessing programs designed to increase college readiness among black students while reducing disparities in academic achievement would be valuable in promoting equal opportunities for African-American students. Community engagement initiatives should also be explored to empower African-American fathers through support networks and resources that help navigate systemic barriers while providing opportunities for advocacy against racial discrimination at both individual and collective levels.

Examining policy implications stemming from these findings is crucial as well. Informing policymakers about necessary changes in legislation or enforcement practices can help combat racial discrimination faced by African-American fathers across various domains. Furthermore, researching coping mechanisms employed by African American fathers when facing racial discrimination across different contexts (workplace, school, society) will provide

insights into effective strategies they utilize to navigate these challenges while maintaining their well-being.

Understanding how experiences with racial discrimination impact parenting styles among African-American fathers is another critical area of research. Exploring how they navigate conversations about race with their children while promoting resilience and positive racial identity development can contribute to the well-being of both fathers and their children.

Lastly, developing and evaluating supportive interventions that provide resources, support, and tools for African-American fathers to cope with and overcome the effects of racial discrimination in their daily lives is essential. These interventions can help foster resilience and empower African-American fathers in navigating systemic barriers. These recommendations aim to expand our understanding of the experiences of African-American fathers with racial discrimination across various domains. By addressing these research areas, we can inform strategies for creating more equitable environments while supporting the well-being and empowerment of African-American fathers.

Implications and Recommendations for Social Work Practice

The study results have several ramifications for social work practice with African American fathers and men. In general, social workers should create thorough intervention plans that consider African American fathers' experiences on multiple levels. Assessing their unique cultural experiences and challenges is crucial when providing clinical approaches for African American fathers. Culturally competent therapy that acknowledges and respects the impact of race, discrimination, and systemic factors is essential to understanding issues such as disenfranchised grief. Therapists would require skills in emotional processing and regulation of traumatic responses to support African American fathers. It is worth noting that disenfranchised

grief should be explored in more detail as it pertains to African American fathers.

Disenfranchised grief intersects with the experiences of African American fathers in various ways. African American fathers encounter disenfranchised grief when dealing with losses within the criminal justice system, such as the loss of a loved one due to police violence or incarceration. These losses often go unrecognized or downplayed by society, leading to a lack of support for African American fathers and their families.

Additionally, the systemic racism and racial trauma that African American fathers face can contribute to disenfranchised grief, as society overlooks or invalidates the losses and emotional impact of these experiences. Socioeconomic inequities also play a role, as African American fathers grieve the limited access to resources and opportunities, yet that grief is not acknowledged or understood. Stigmatization of mental health and emotional expression can further disenfranchise African American fathers' grief, as societal expectations around masculinity and the history of disregarding Black male emotional vulnerability make it difficult for them to express their emotions and seek support openly. Lastly, the lack of culturally responsive support structures exacerbates the disenfranchisement of African American fathers' experiences, as mainstream systems do not recognize or adequately address their unique cultural contexts. Addressing these intersections involves creating safe spaces that validate their grief, promoting awareness and understanding, and advocating for equitable access to supportive resources and services that honor and address their grief experiences inclusively.

A strengths-based approach can also empower African American fathers by recognizing their skills, abilities, and cultural assets, fostering their self-esteem and motivation to navigate challenges. Group therapy or support groups specifically tailored for African American fathers can create a sense of connection and support, allowing for shared experiences and strategies to

address societal, familial, and personal issues. Considering the impact of trauma is also vital, and trauma-informed care can provide a safe and supportive environment that acknowledges and addresses racial trauma and systemic oppression. Implementing specialized fatherhood programs can offer resources, education, and support on father-child bonding, positive parenting techniques, and family relationships tailored to the needs and experiences of African American fathers. Collaborating with professionals in the community, such as educators, healthcare providers, and social workers, can create a holistic support system. Furthermore, research indicates that men are more likely than women to be sensitive to their surroundings as they grow up, which frequently manifests as behavioral problems, lower educational attainment, lower wages, and other issues. Therefore, there should be more investment in neighborhoods to address some of these negative consequences for African American men.

Addressing economic challenges through resources for employment support, job training, entrepreneurship opportunities, and financial counseling is crucial for African American fathers' and their families' overall well-being and stability. Economic inequality is prevalent, with African American fathers experiencing disparities such as higher rates of unemployment, lower wages, and limited access to wealth accumulation. These financial challenges can impede their ability to provide for their families and perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Housing segregation and displacement further compound the struggles faced by African American fathers. Policies and practices like redlining, discriminatory lending, and gentrification disproportionately affect them, limiting housing options and contributing to residential segregation and displacement. By integrating these clinical approaches and structural interventions into the unique experiences of African American fathers, mental health professionals can provide effective and culturally sensitive support, promoting their well-being, family dynamics, and community resilience.

The fathers in the study discussed how they received little to no racial socialization from their mothers and fathers and saw it as a positive. However, they prepared their children for the realities of racial discrimination by teaching them how to respond to instances of racism (literacy), recognize racial stereotypes, develop resilience, and lastly, stories on how they navigated racial discrimination (legacy). Both approaches involved the transmission of cultural heritage and values to their children, fostering a strong sense of racial and ethnic identity. Additionally, African American fathers guided their children in navigating the complexities of dual identities, addressing the challenges that arise from being both African American and male or female in a society shaped by gendered and racial dynamics. African American fathers play a crucial role in promoting positive racial identity by instilling self-worth, knowledge of African American contributions, and challenging negative narratives.

Moreover, African American fathers emphasized the importance of education, hard work, and resilience to empower their children to overcome barriers and succeed. They also facilitated connections to African American communities, organizations, and institutions, fostering a sense of belonging and providing opportunities for cultural enrichment. Through these efforts, African American fathers contributed to their children's understanding of race, cultural pride, resilience, and preparedness to navigate racial challenges, ultimately empowering them to thrive in a racially diverse society. Therefore, social work educators and practitioners must create and discuss wide, all-encompassing, multigenerational frameworks and service models such as RECASTing and the Involved Fatherhood Model. Using this information, interventions that support establishing and maintaining healthy parenting can be developed.

Social settings have a significant impact on African American fathers. The study results show that social networks can support the consistent and long-term positive mental health of

African American fathers. To help African American fathers build relational networks that are supportive of and conducive to their role, social work practitioners should also conduct comprehensive assessments to identify environmental influences and the social relationships that facilitate and obstruct positive mental health. Social relationships can include their co-parent, immediate family members (mom, dad, and both maternal and paternal grandparents), and extended family members (such as uncles, aunts, social dads, sisters, and family friends). Such environments include barbershops, parks with their children, sporting events, and fatherhood programs. Therefore, social work practitioners should endeavor to collaborate with local fatherhood programs and work with clients to set therapeutic goals that promote psychological well-being.

Implications and Recommendations for Social Work Policy

An analysis of laws and policies pertaining to African American men raised several concerns. One primary concern is the insufficient representation and input of African American fathers in the decision-making processes that shape these policies. The lack of diverse perspectives often results in policies that fail to fully understand and address the unique challenges faced by African American fathers and their families. Racial bias and discrimination within these laws and policies are another source of criticism. Disparities within the criminal justice system, for example, lead to the overrepresentation of African American fathers and perpetuate systemic biases that result in harsher treatment and longer sentences. The overemphasis on punitive measures within criminal justice policies is criticized for perpetuating a cycle of incarceration and limiting opportunities for familial connection and support. African American men frequently encounter racial profiling, biased policing, and sentencing disparities, having been unfairly impacted by policies such as the War on Drugs. This led to aggressive law

enforcement and harsh sentencing for drug-related offenses, specifically targeting communities of color. The resulting mass incarceration of African American men has further exacerbated the challenges they face in maintaining stable family relationships and achieving economic stability.

There is concern that policies such as The Welfare-Child Support System and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) lack comprehensive support systems tailored to the unique needs and experiences of African American fathers, including accessible mental health resources, fatherhood programs, and parenting support (Floyd et al., 2021). Moreover, social workers argue that such policies inadvertently reinforce systemic barriers, such as limited access to quality education, employment, and housing, which restrict African American fathers' ability to provide for their families and actively engage in fatherhood. Throughout history, African American fathers have endured immense and systematic racial discrimination, resulting in policies that disproportionately harm them. Recommendations for TANF:

- Establishing a federal minimum benefit so that no family of any race falls below a certain income level.
- Barring states' mandatory work requirements.
- Barring behavioral requirements, time limits, and other eligibility exclusions such as:
 - Refocusing TANF agencies on helping families address immediate crises and improving long-term well-being.
 - Changing TANF's funding structure will retarget TANF resources to essential assistance, address funding inequities, and prevent erosion over time (Floyd et al., 2021).

Even after slavery was abolished, discriminatory practices persisted that marginalized African American fathers. Jim Crow laws, segregation, and racial profiling limited their access to

education, employment opportunities, and voting rights, perpetuating an ongoing cycle of inequality and hindering their ability to provide for their families. To rectify the harm caused by racially discriminatory policies, several crucial steps must be taken. First, there needs to be an acknowledgment and understanding of the historical context of racial discrimination and its impact on African American fathers. Additionally, community mobilization and advocacy are essential. This involves raising awareness about discriminatory policies and fostering change through protests, voting initiatives, and collaboration with civil rights organizations to advocate for policy reform. Policy reform and implementation are vital in addressing the challenges faced by African American fathers. Pressure must be exerted on policymakers to revisit or create policies that promote equality and fair treatment, specifically focusing on criminal justice reform, employment discrimination, access to healthcare and education, and other areas that disproportionately affect African American fathers. Compared to their white male colleagues, African American men typically face greater rates of unemployment, lower rates of labor force participation, and poorer earnings. These patterns indicate a decline in economic power, reduced social relationships, and access to high-quality healthcare, the latter of which is another concern. African American fathers encounter barriers to obtaining adequate healthcare, resulting in disparities in mental health outcomes. Limited access to quality healthcare and affordable insurance can adversely affect their overall well-being and ability to care for their families.

Ultimately, addressing the underlying issues stemming from racial discrimination requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses historical awareness, grassroots advocacy, policy reform, and education. By dismantling systemic barriers, society can work toward creating a fair and inclusive environment for African American fathers and their families. Compared to just 5% of White homes, 26% of African American households were located in

high-poverty neighborhoods in 2017. Poorer schools, fewer opportunities for employment, social networks, and health care, as well as greater crime rates, pollution, traffic, and noise, are all common characteristics of high-poverty communities (Casey et al., 2017).

In closing, the implications and recommendations for social work practice in working with African American fathers are multi-faceted. Social workers should create intervention plans that consider their experiences on multiple levels, incorporating culturally competent therapy that acknowledges the impact of race, discrimination, and systemic factors. Trauma-informed care is essential to address racial trauma and systemic oppression. Implementing specialized fatherhood programs, promoting economic stability through job training and entrepreneurship opportunities, advocating for fair housing policies, and addressing educational and healthcare disparities are crucial. Involving African American fathers in decision-making processes, promoting representation, and addressing racial biases within policies are also essential. Furthermore, community mobilization, advocacy, and policy reform can contribute to dismantling systemic barriers and creating a fair and inclusive environment for African American fathers and their families. By adopting these approaches, social work practitioners can better support African American fathers in their role, promote positive mental health, strengthen family dynamics, and contribute to community resilience.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results presented in Chapter IV and the convergence and divergence of quantitative and qualitative results, where applicable. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the association between racial discrimination and the mental health of African-American fathers. Quantitative analysis revealed a significant association between racial discrimination and adverse mental health outcomes, such as depressive symptoms.

Qualitative analysis further highlighted the emotional and psychological impacts of experiencing racism on African-American fathers, including feelings of anger, anxiety, depression, and grief. These experiences also influenced their parenting approaches and discussions with their children about race. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of considering intersectionality in understanding how multiple dimensions of identity shape experiences of racial discrimination among African-American fathers. It emphasizes that racial socialization plays a crucial role in shaping their perspectives on race and racism.

The implications for theory highlight how these findings align with existing frameworks such as Ecological Systems Theory (EST), Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal model, [RECAST], Race-Based Traumatic Stress (RBTS), Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS), and Kindling. By establishing these connections, my research contributes to a deeper understanding of how racial discrimination affects African-American fathers' mental health within various ecological systems. Practically, my study has several implications for organizations, educational institutions, policymakers, and practitioners working with African-American fathers. These include implementing diversity training programs to address racial discrimination in workplaces; reviewing policies to ensure equity; providing support programs tailored to the needs of African-American fathers; promoting mentorship opportunities; fostering inclusive organizational cultures through Employee Resource Groups (ERGs); offering cultural competence training for educators; engaging in policy advocacy efforts; providing access to culturally sensitive mental health resources; creating platforms for open dialogue about race-related issues in educational settings; and supporting initiatives that promote equal opportunities for African-American fathers.

Moving forward, researchers should explore intersectionality, conduct longitudinal studies to examine long-term effects, investigate protective factors or resilience mechanisms within this population, compare experiences with racial discrimination across different racial or ethnic backgrounds, evaluate organizational policies addressing racial discrimination in workplaces, assess educational interventions on systemic racism, examine coping mechanisms employed by African-American fathers in various contexts, and explore how experiences with racial discrimination impact parenting styles and conversations about race with children. Additionally, developing and evaluating supportive interventions tailored to the needs of African-American fathers is crucial.

Overall, this study contributed to our understanding of how racial discrimination affects the mental health of African-American fathers and provides practical implications for promoting their well-being and empowerment. By addressing these implications in practice settings and conducting further research in identified areas, we can work towards creating more equitable environments while supporting the resilience of African-American fathers.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The purpose of the study is to explore how racial trauma affects African American fathers' mental health.

1. How have you experienced racial discrimination? Can you describe this experience(s)?
 - a. **(Another way to ask this question)** How have you been treated differently due to your race, ethnicity, or skin color?
2. How did this experience(s) affect you?
 - a. Probe: How did the experience affect you mentally and emotionally?
3. How do you feel your current and past experiences with racial discrimination affect you as a father?
4. How does awareness of current and historical racial injustice affect you and your family?
5. How did your parent(s) or guardian(s) talk to you about racial discrimination as a child?
 - a. How did your parent(s) or guardian(s) teach you to respond to or cope with experiencing racial discrimination?

Child Rearing (fathers with school-aged children over the age of 5)

6. How do you discuss racial discrimination with your child(ren)?
7. What advice or guidance do you give your children about racial discrimination?