

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIA INFLUENCE AND ETHNIC IDENTITY
DEVELOPMENT AMONG LOW-INCOME AFRICAN AMERICAN AND WHITE
ADOLESCENT GIRLS

By

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To my parents, Henry and Barbara Byrd, and my sister Kimberly Bratton, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to you.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between media influence and ethnic identity among low-income African American and White adolescent girls. According to the U.S. Census (2008), 98% of Americans have a television in their home. Prior research suggests that low-income African American adolescents are exposed to more media influences than their White counterparts (Gordon, 2008). This research study used a previous data set collected by Ward and colleagues (2004) to assess the relationship between ethnic identity and media influence for low-income African American and White adolescents. For the purpose of this study, only low-income African American and White adolescent girls were used in the analyses. This study also sought to examine the differences between the two groups of girls. Womanist theory was utilized to assess the intersectionality of gender and ethnic identity. The results of the multiple regression analyses found that there was no relationship between ethnic identity and media influence for low-income African American or White adolescent girls. However, among the low-income African American girls in the sample, there was a significant correlation between having a television in the bedroom and types of

television shows watched. This suggests that low-income African American adolescent girls may have poor media utilization habits that could include influence their socio-emotional development and academic achievement. Recommendations for counselors suggest this information can be used to intervene with adolescent girls, parents, and teachers about healthier media habits for youth. Areas for future research include a replication study with a larger sample size that utilizes original data rather than an existing data set. Additionally, there is a need to conduct more studies on the relationship between media influences and ethnic identity development in low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the US, 98% of Americans have a television in their home (U.S. Census, 2008). Adolescents spend on average about 35 to 55 hours a week in front of the television (Klein, Brown, Childers, Oliveri, Porter, & Dykers, (1993). The media is the most under recognized influence on adolescents (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999). Media consists of but is not limited to television, radio, advertisements, internet, and other technological advances (Dixon, 2008). Adolescents are a population in which the media links closely aligned (Jacob & Yoo, 2010). On average, they are exposed to more television than the average adult. Research suggests this generation is slowly assimilating to television and the messages displayed (Wright, 2009)

The connection between television influences and adolescent identity development has been inconsistent (Botta, 1999). According to Strasburger (2009), the influences from television are substantial and have been dismissed over the years. Some television programs target specific audiences in an attempt to gain control over thoughts and feelings of the target audience (Ward, 2004). Literature also has focused on the socialization of African American adolescent girls (Durham, 1999) as it pertains to television influences. His findings support the notion of how television could affect perceptions of adolescent development.

In investigating the effects of the media on low-income African American and White adolescents, the researcher will utilize a womanist lens. Viewing the effects of the media through a womanist lens will facilitate an understanding of race, class, gender, oppression, and marginalization of low-income African American and White adolescent

girls and how it correlates to their identity development. Womanist theory examines all influential cultural concerns of minority women in an attempt to aid in the understanding of identity development in African American and Latina adolescent girls.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Self-perception and cognitive development is a key element in adolescent development. Studies suggest that it could be influenced by high rates of television exposure (Wright, 2009). The purpose of this study is to explore what factors play a role in the construction of identity development for low-income African American and White adolescent girls through a womanist theoretical framework.

Media influences have had a direct effect on societal views of women as well as images for young girls. Some researchers suggest socio-cultural issues influence body image through television exposure (Botta, 1999). Since the literature shows inconsistent results regarding the relationship between media influences and low-income African American and White adolescent identity development, this study will provide an extensive review of the literature. The purpose of this study will be to determine the relationship between ethnic identity and media influences for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to fully understand the effects of media on low-income African American and White adolescent girls and their identity development, these three research questions will be addressed.

1. What is the relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?
2. What is the relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?

3. Does the relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differ by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls?

1.4 Hypotheses

Below are three null hypotheses created for the three research questions for this study. The implications for this study are that identity is not affected by exposure to television but a host of other outlying variables.

Ho1: There is no relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure.

Ho2: There is no relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure.

Ho3: There is no relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differ by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Below are definitions to terms found in the study.

IDENTITY. A complex ideal that is a continuing process of development throughout one's life span (Erikson, 1959).

AFRO-CENTRIC. Cultural view is an outcome of their experiences, and thoughts on different issues that comprise who they are and their own identity (Jamison, 2008).

SOCIALIZATION. The process of social conditioning through which children learn the established language, customs, and cultural ideologies (Sanders and Bradley, 2005).

RACIAL SOCIALIZATION. Parental strategies that convey explicit and implicit messages regarding intergroup protocol and relationships (Brown, 2008).

ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION. The explicit and implicit messages regarding intragroup messages about what it means to be a member of a particular ethnic group (Brown, 2008).

LOW-INCOME. Earning \$45,000 or less annually per household (US Census, 2002).

TELEVISION. Music videos, sitcoms, and commercials (Dixon, 2008).

ADOLESCENTS. The transition stage between childhood and adulthood (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2009). For the purposes of this study, an adolescent will be defined as a child between the ages of 13 and 18.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT. How well students perform on standardized tests (School-Counselor.org, retrieved 2013).

WOMANIST THEORY. A self-avowed consciousness and identity characterized by Black women's subjectivity, communal action, self-love, and continual critique (Walker, 1983).

CULTURE. The learned and shared behavior of a community of interacting human beings (Useem & Useem, 1963).

AFRICAN AMERICAN. Having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa (U.S. Census, 2010).

WHITE. Having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as "White" or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, or Caucasian (U.S. Census, 2010).

1.6 Significance of the Study

Researchers suggest adolescents are exposed to more television influences than any other population. Estimates are that adolescents spend six to seven hours engaged in television exposure per day (Brown, 2002). Ethnic identity development during this stage is very important. Gender issues are a common theme within this time period as well. According to Gordon (2008) adolescents are more likely to have increased risks and are considered vulnerable. Past research has discussed certain risk factors, which could aid in identity development. Recently, studies have begun to view exposure to television as a factor that could play a role in adolescent identity development (Manganello et al., 2010). Some studies have linked adolescent violence, drug use (Comer et al., 2008), educational achievement (Kirkorian, Wartella, & Anderson, 2008), and mental health (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011) to the effects of television.

The adolescent period is referred to as a “troubled crossing” period as girls develop through psychological and emotional issues (Durham, 1999). Since they are exposed to more images found on television such as images of beauty and how a woman’s identity should be defined, many researchers conclude high exposure to television could affect low-income African American and White adolescent girls’ perception of identity. In particular, researchers have yet to make a consistent connection between media influence and the development of African American adolescent girls (Ward, 2004).

African American adolescent girls are exposed to twice as many television influences as any other cultural group (Gordon, 2008). From these alarming rates, African American adolescents are twice as likely to be influenced by television and the images displayed (Ward, 2004). Compared to their White counterparts, on average, African American adolescents watch more television and are exposed to more media influences. Researchers have focused on the vulnerability of African American adolescents but have yet to explore how the portrayals of African American women on television affect African American adolescent girls’ view on stereotypes and identity development pertaining to beauty (Gordon, 2008).

Studies that have involved culturally diverse adolescents have primarily utilized a Eurocentric approach. Western or European values cannot be culturally generalized to adolescent girls from other cultural groups because these values are often in conflict with African American worldviews, for example. In addition, gender issues have been the focus of some studies wherein researchers examine issues of identity using gender as a framework. However, it has been argued that feminist perspectives negate the

cultural aspects of identity. Womanist theory is offered as a lens to investigate the current study because it encompasses some aspects of feminist theory and also addresses cultural values (Harris, 2007). By exploring at these populations through a womanist lens, the researcher hopes to provide new knowledge about marginalized adolescent females and their identity.

1.7 Delimiters

This study will use a national data set attained from a scholar who conducted a research study on the topic with low-income African American and White adolescents in a suburban area of the Midwest (Ward, 2004). Due to the nature of this study, there are some aspects of the design worthy of discussion. First, findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population of low-income African American and White adolescent girls. The data from this study was not collected from every region of the U.S. Secondly; socioeconomic status of the participants of the study may not be represented equally. Thirdly, the assessments used to collect the data may not have a culturally sensitive lens, which could skew the results of the data. Lastly, because this study was based on a previous data set, questions pertaining to why certain questions were asked or the way the data was collected and analyzed may have an effect on the outcome of the results.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Most studies about adolescents have focused on middle-class White Americans. Studies that have focused on culturally diverse adolescents focus on ethnic group comparisons (McHale, Updegraff, Kim, & Cansler, 2009). While there is insufficient research that investigates the developmental experiences of low-income African American adolescent girls, what is known is that their academic performance has been persistently lower than their White peers over the past two decades (West-Olatunji et al., 2010). According to Cousins and Mabrey (1998), African American adolescent girls have higher rates of teen pregnancy, substance abuse problems and gang membership involvement than their White counterparts. Latina adolescent girls also have high rates of delinquency, substance use, and sexual behavior (Vega & Sribney, 2003). Further, researchers noted that African American (Cooley-Quill, Boyd, Frantz, & Walsh, 2001) and Latina (Gonzales, Knight, Birman, & Sirolli, 2004) adolescent girls experience higher rates of internalizing behaviors, such as anxiety and depression, than their White peers. Conversely, African American adolescent girls have lower rates of smoking than their White peers (Wallace, Bachman, O'Malley, Schulenberg, Cooper, & Johnston, 2003), and have higher graduation rates than their African American male counterparts (Davis, Ajzen, Saunders, Williams, 2002). Moreover, given their socio-cultural challenges due to racism and sexism, African American adolescent girls have demonstrated resilience in the face of these obstacles (Aronowitz & Morrison-Beedy, 2004). Understanding identity development is key to understanding human growth and evolution (Wolff & Munley, 2012).

Thus, in this chapter, I review the extant literature on identity development and the impact of media on low-income African American and White adolescent girls. Included is an overview of identity development theory and provide a discussion on ethnicity, class, and gender in relation to identity development, particularly for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

2.1 Low-Income African American Adolescent Girls: A Status Report

African American students, in general, are overrepresented in mentally retarded, learning disabled and emotionally disturbed categories and underrepresented in gifted programs (The Civil Rights Project, 2003; U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], Office of Special Education Programs [OSEP], 2002). These students also experience high rates of school suspension, corporal punishment, and other behavioral referrals. Such disciplinary actions undermine African American students' self-esteem and can lead to underachievement and even dropping-out altogether (Townsend, 2000; Steele & Aronson, 1995). For low-income African American students, research has shown that poverty is associated with low school achievement. According to a report by the National Science Foundation [NSF] (2003), there is a high correlation between children's socioeconomic status and mathematics achievement. Moreover, it has also been shown that poverty can have an impact on students' physical health and cognitive functioning (Aber, Jones, & Cohen, 2000; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). While there have been some gains in improving educational attainment, particularly in mathematics and science areas, for girls, notable differences in academic performance persist when gender is examined (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2003). For African American adolescent girls, little is known how their intersected identities (culture, gender, and class) impact their ability to self-actualize.

Some scholars have suggested that racism and sexism may increase low-income African American adolescent girls' subjective experiences of stress, depression and anxiety (Goodman, Miller, & West-Olatunji, 2011; Hammack, 2003; Pryor-Brown, Powell, & Earls, 1989). Moreover, for African American adolescent girls living in impoverished communities, high contextual risk factors, such as violence, drugs, and community violence, can have undue effects on their psychological development and mental health (Belgrave, Brome, & Hampton, 2000; Wallace & Carter, 2003).

2.2 Identity Development

Several decades ago, Erikson (1968), known for his creation of the psychosocial development theory, posed that identity is a complex ideal that is a continuing process of development throughout one's life span (Goth, Foelsch, Schluter-Muller, Birkholzer, Jung, Pick, & Schmeck, 2012). Moreover, Erikson asserted that identity plays a significant role in many different aspects of one's life, such as social interactions, autonomy, and self-esteem can effect identity development. Therefore, identity is posited as essential to understanding an individual's self-concept. Erikson's theory focuses on the exploration and revolution of identity development (Umaña-Taylor, Vargas-Chanes, Garcia, & Gonzales-Backen, 2008). He identified eight different developmental stages through which individuals progress (Hamman & Hendricks, 2005). These stages include:

1. Trust vs. mistrust: when one begins to trust
2. Autonomy vs. shame: when one becomes a creative individual or dependent
3. Initiative vs. guilt: when one becomes curious and begins to explore
4. Industry vs. inferiority: when one begins to gain approval from others
5. Identity vs. identity confusion: when personal identity is develop

6. Intimacy vs. isolation: once identity is formed during this stage intimacy emerges to enhance social bonding
7. Generativity vs. stagnation: focuses on adult life and formation of family and sustainability
8. Integrity vs. despair: this is the final stage in development. During this stage, human life is appreciated from all previous experiences.

While it has been suggested that all individuals go through these stages, individuals progress through these stages at their own pace (Sneed, Whitbourne, & Culang, 2006). During the adolescent phase, in particular, teenagers are faced with the challenge of constructing who they will be as adults.

2.3 Adolescent Identity Development

At no other place in the span of human development are individuals at risk on so many levels, such as physically, socially, cognitive, and morally, than during adolescence (Brittian, 2012; Daughtery, 2011; Olatunji, 2000). Physically, adolescents experience drastic hormonal transformations and become aware of their sexual drive without the necessary allied emotional development. Socially, adolescents are apt to test the limitations of their interpersonal relationships and social situations. Cognitively, adolescents move out of concrete thinking into abstract thought. As independent beings, adolescents explore the real world in an experiential way and are actively involved in their learning. Morally, adolescents shift from the acceptance or repudiation of moral slogans from their parents/caregivers, the media, or their peers to the development of their own moral code of behavior. Several risk factors are associated with adolescence, including substance use, academic failure, and trouble with the law (Moffit, 1993). Conversely, Duerden, Taniguchi, and Widmer (2012) concluded that

outdoor recreational activities with other youth and have a positive effect on identity development.

Although Erikson's model is a starting point for a general overview of adolescent identity, it does not sufficiently address the developmental concerns of diverse adolescents (Daughtery, 2011). Multicultural scholars have suggested that psychologically fit individuals have an affirmative attitude toward themselves and others within their reference group (Brittian, 2012; Jamison, 2010; Kwate, 2005; Phinney, 1988; Sue & Sue, 2008). This is of significance when considering the developmental challenges facing adolescents who are confronted with additional concerns, such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and other forms of social marginalization in the U.S. (Cholewa & West-Olatunji, 2008; Goodman et al., 2011; West-Olatunji, Shure, Pringle, Adams, Lewis, & Cholewa, 2008). For African American and Latina adolescents, cultural and racial factors play a significant role in their identity development.

2.4 African American Adolescent Identity Development

African American identity development is a topic that has been heavily researched with much of the research focusing on racial identity (Brittian, 2012; Daughtery, 2011) and socialization (Sanders & Bradley, 2005; Scott-Jones & Peebles-Wilkins, 1986). Early models of racial identity focused on African Americans' experiences with racism (Jackson, 1995; Cross, 1978). These models assumed that similarities exist in the way that socially marginalized individuals respond to the experience of racism and oppression within society (West-Olatunji, Frazier, K., Smith, Clay, Guy, & Breaux, 2007).

Some scholars have asserted that understanding African American identity development can best be explained through various psychological models centered in African/African American ideals (Jamison, 2010; Kwate, 2005). Jamison (2008) describes Kambon's (1992) Afro-centric view as one's own worldviews and experiences. In this context, each African American's cultural view is an outcome of their experiences, and thoughts on different issues that comprise who they are and their own identity. According to Jamison (2010), the African American worldview consists of four elements, including oneness/harmony with nature, survival of the group, collective responsibility, and spiritualism/understanding. By incorporating these elements in an understanding of African American identity development, scholars can better understand the nuanced differences in identity development among diverse individuals, particularly between African American adolescents and their White counterparts.

In addition to advancing research that focuses on African American racial identity, scholars have focused on the role of socialization in identity development (Sanders & Bradley, 2005). Socialization can be defined as the process of social conditioning through which children learn the established language, customs, and cultural ideologies (Sanders & Bradley) wherein parents are the first to introduce their children to the essence of socialization (Scott-Jones & Peebles-Wilkins, 1986). Later, the definition of this term was separated into two separate terms, racial and ethnic socialization. Racial socialization refers to parental strategies that convey explicit and implicit messages regarding intergroup protocol and relationships (Brown, 2008). These messages include teaching youth about racial barrier awareness, how to cope with racism and race-related discrimination, and promoting cross-racial relationships.

Sanders and Bradley (2005) define racial socialization as the process by which African American children learn how language, customs, and cultural practices affect their experiences as African Americans in a society demarcated by race. Thus, parents who educate their children about the racial contexts in which they live, arm their children against adversities, such as cultural marginalization and stereotyping (Mandara, 2006; West-Olatunji, Sanders, Mehta, & Behar-Horenstein, 2010). Ethnic socialization refers to the explicit and implicit messages regarding intragroup messages about what it means to be a member of a particular ethnic group (Brown et al., 2008). This includes the socialization of youth regarding African American cultural values, African American cultural embeddedness, African American history, celebrating African American heritage, and promotion of ethnic pride (Brown & Krishnakumar, 2007). According to this perspective, by incorporating these experiences, African American adolescents can have a healthy identity.

Racial/cultural identity development is of concern for various marginalized adolescents in the U.S. (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006). Umaña-Taylor et al. (2008) concluded the Latino adolescents in their study struggle with racial identity that may cause them to have low self-esteem. In addition, it has been suggested that many Asian American adolescents struggle with their racial/cultural identity as they try to fit into a Eurocentric society (Chen, Lephuc, Guzman, Rude, & Dodd, 2006; West-Olatunji et al., 2007). According to Nguyen, Cohen, and Hines (2012) Vietnamese adolescents that have a westernized influence struggle with their culture of a multigenerational family. With Vietnamese adolescents, peer influences and relationships have a positive influence on identity development. While looking at some

of the similarities across cultural groups, African American adolescents share some of the challenges with their culturally marginalized peers.

According to Brittian (2012), African American adolescents who feel that society has a negative view of them are more likely to experience racial discrimination. These experiences can have a dynamic impact on the identity development of African American youth. Specifically, due to racial disparities in society, many African American adolescents can begin adolescence with low self-esteem (French, 2006). As these youth begin to reevaluate their identity and what it means to be in a Eurocentric society, African American adolescents can employ coping strategies to protect themselves from cultural hegemony. One of these coping strategies is to be more involved in community-based programs (Ginwright, 2007). This helps adolescents to learn more about themselves and their heritage. African American adolescents with a positive view of themselves have been shown to have a healthy identity.

In looking at identity development and mental health, several scholars have asserted that adolescence is an emotional time (DeCarlo, 2005; Greig (2003). During this time, youth are likely to have aggression towards one another as well as explore illicit substances. The literature on African American adolescent girls focuses more on identity development and the themes that aid in addressing this construction (Greig, 2003). Though this time is an important developmental stage in this population, it has not been well documented. African American adolescent girls are more at risk due to the presenting issues of adolescent development as well as issues with gender, race and ethnicity (Sanders & Bradley, 2005).

2.5 Identity Development & Low-income African American Adolescent Girls

Identity development among African American adolescent girls can be different than that of adolescent females of other ethnicities. According to Daughtery (2011), African American adolescent girls are being socialized into a society that devalues their culture and their identity. Some scholars have asserted that the media has a negative impact on African American adolescent identity development (Spencer et al., 2003). According to Brittian (2012), an overrepresentation of images of White Americans may cause African American adolescents to believe that their culture is undervalued. Over time, over exposure to these types of images could affect how African American adolescents perceive themselves and their culture. One developmental factor that is often neglected in the literature on African American adolescents is the spiritual component (Daughtery, 2011; Spencer et al., 2003).

Although discrimination and prejudice actions can have an effect on African American adolescents' identity development, socioeconomic status can have a significant effect on the identity development of African American girls. Growing up in a high poverty and crime area, these girls are exposed to many issues that facilitate positive and negative views on their community and surroundings through the images displayed by society. These images could have a lasting effect on the growth of African American adolescent girls' identity development. Research has shown that young girls growing up in low-income areas have a lower success rate than other African American girls of the same age (Harley et al. 2002). Disparities in success rates could be products of educational school systems, the environment, and life experiences.

2.6 The Impact Of Television On Identity Development

Media is characterized as music videos, commercials, radio, television, advertisements, and magazines (Dixon, 2008). According to the US Census, 98% of Americans have a television in their house (Comer, Furr, Beidas, Babyar, & Kendall, 2008). Further, 184 billion classified advertisements, 12 billion newspaper, 6 billion magazines and periodicals, 2.6 billion commercials on the radio, and 330 million commercials are displayed through the media everyday (Plous & Neptune, 1997). For the purpose of this literature review, media will be defined as television, (Dixon, 2008).

In the early years of the expansion of the media, for example, television shows like Sesame Street were great learning tools for children and adolescents (Lesser, 1972). However, television exposure has been linked to declines in academic achievement and cognitive development (Anderson, Huston, Schmitt, Linebarger, & Wright, 2001). Several studies have assessed the relationship between media usage and adolescent development. One study stated that 20% of youth between the ages of 2 and 17 watch more than 35 hours of television a week (Gentiles & Walsh, 2002). Another study asserted that the average time spent watching television for ages 11-14 is three hours and thirty minutes (Comer et al. (2008). Regarding the internet, Jung, Lin, & Kim, (2012) found that White and Asians spend more time on the internet than African Americans and Latinos. Some studies have found that violent content on television could have a negative effect on academic achievement and GPAs (Graber, Nichols, Lynne, Brooks-Gunn, & Botvin, 2006; Tan & Gunter, 1979). However, a study in 2008 contradicted these findings by stating television usage has no significant effect on academic achievement among adolescents (Schmidt & Vandewater, 2008).

Further, African Americans are more likely to watch television for something to do rather than for the content (Albarran & Umphrey, 1993). In general, African Americans are also more likely to watch certain genres, such as comedies, sports, health guidance, and game shows. African Americans are not as likely to use the internet as their White peers, but when they do, they tend to view sites that are African American based. The results of one study showed that African Americans prefer watching television to using other media sources, such as the internet (Gordon, 2008). Furthermore, African American adolescents are exposed to more television influences that could have an effect on how they view themselves, academic achievement, as well as construction of their identity (Albert, 2008).

Although the literature is mixed about the influences television has on African American adolescents, Albert and Jacobs (2008) stated that, for the market of advertising, television only displays somewhere between 4 and 8 percent of their advertisements containing culturally and ethnically diverse individuals. Dixon (2008) conducted a study that examined whether or not racial stereotypes of African Americans on television affect the perceptions of the population as a whole. Dixon introduces the term modern racism that he defined in three parts: (a) anti African American emotional hostility towards African Americans, (b) resistance to the political demands of African Americans, and (c) the belief that racism is dead and racial discrimination no longer inhibits African Americans. Studies have shown that African Americans, more so than their White counterparts, have been victimized by a plethora of poverty- and drug-related roles in the media, (Bullock, Fraser Wyche, & Williams, 2002). Scholars have suggested that the negative stereotypes on African Americans play a significant role in

how African Americans are viewed on television by themselves and others. African American adolescents watch an average of six hours of television compared to a little over three hours for their White counterparts (Gordon, 2008). Moreover, one study showed that African American adolescents are subjected to more television influences than any other ethnic group (Albert & Jacobs, 2008).

2.7 African American Adolescents And Television

For centuries, African American women have been objectified, denigrated, and misunderstood in American media (Gordon, 2008; Littlefield, 2008). Their skin, the shape of their bodies, their hair, and personalities are attributes that have been misrepresented in the media (Gordon, 2008). As a result, African American women have been frequent victims of sexually implicit and explicit television content, including music videos, commercials, movie roles, and advertisements (Littlefield, 2008). This misrepresentation has bred wide scale stereotyping about this population. Sexually implicit and explicit advertising involving African American women engages its viewers and communicates to African American adolescent girls, and others, a message about what draws attention from the opposite sex (Stokes, 2007). Such negativity on television does not come without a cost. African American girls use the television as a way of finding themselves in a racialized society. Additionally, advertising techniques condition African American girls to accept Eurocentric notions of beauty while subconsciously forcing them to reject non-Eurocentric concepts of beauty (Gordon). Due to the onset of perceived psychological risks and vulnerability for girls, these risks can also be in combination with low self-esteem and depression for these girls (Heilman, 1998; Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994). Phinney (1990) stated that adolescence is a critical time for girls to conform to what society has defined as a woman. Development for African

American adolescent girls is critical due to the press to crystallize positive racial and gender identities within a more global personal identity.

Although some researchers suggest television influences have a negative effect on adolescents, there have been recent studies to suggest otherwise. Ward (2004) suggested that when African American adolescents, in particular, have a strong religious background and ethnic identity there is no significant relationship to television usage. Other scholars have suggested that a strong racial and ethnic identity can serve as a coping strategy for African American girls (Seaton, Yip, & Sellers, 2009; Gandy, 2001). Although there is not an abundance of literature on the effects of television exposure on African American adolescent girls, there have been some studies that look at the effects of television exposure on college-aged African American female students. For instance, it has been shown that, in comparison to African American women, television impacts White females' body image and self-identity more than their African American female peers (Jefferson & Stake, 2009).

In this study, Gordon (2008) sought to clarify the sexual objectification of African American women on television, based on the frequency of television exposure to African American sitcoms and music. The study found that the girls in this study chose sitcoms that displayed positive images of African American women. Though exposed to more television images with negative connotation, these African American girls were able to identify with the positive roles of African American women on television. The results suggested that African American adolescent girls may not be as influenced by the predominant White woman image as previously believed. However, according to Harrison (2006) aesthetic images can influence the way adolescent girls view

themselves and their roles as women. Television shows, advertisements, commercials, and music videos may all play a role in the stigmatization of this population. Many youth have latched on to the stereotypic television portrayal of the African American woman. Gentles and Harrison (2006) stated that insufficient research has been conducted on African American adolescent girls and their perceptions of body and beauty image on television.

The literature on the effects of television exposure on African American adolescent girls is confounding (Gordon 2008). There have been a few studies that suggest television does not have an effect on African American adolescent girls because they do not compare themselves to the White images they see on television (Duke 2000; 2002; Ward, 2004). These studies aver that African American adolescent girls also do not believe that society is defining who they are through these images. However, some researchers suggest television does have an effect on African American adolescent girls. According to a study conducted by Botta (2000), African American and White girls are negatively affected by television images of women. This study found that the number of hours watching music videos was positively correlated to perceived importance of weight and image in ninth grade girls. This correlation was especially strong among African American adolescent girls. While African American adolescent girls are exposed to more intense television images of African American women than their White peers, the bulk of the literature suggests this population is not directly affected by the images.

Finally, parents from all ethnic and racial groups transmit messages to children about issues such as cultural heritage and group social status, including discussions

about the prevalence of stereotypes and discrimination based on phenotypic characteristics, language competencies, and other group characteristics (Hughes et al., 2006; Mandara, 2006; West-Olatunji et al., 2010).

2.8 White Adolescent Identity Development

White adolescent identity development is a topic that has yet to be sufficiently researched within counseling literature. While studies on ethnic identity among adolescent members of marginalized cultural groups within the U.S. abound, studies focusing on White adolescent ethnic identity are lacking (Grossman, & Charmaraman, 2009). Within the existing literature on White adolescents, scholars have focused on issues of self-esteem (Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz, 1997), body image (Dohnt, & Tiggemann, 2005), sexuality (Martino, Collins, Kanouse, Elliott, & Berry, 2005), ethnic identity (Brown, Spatzier, & Tobin, 2010), and domestic violence (Weis, 2001). However, other issues may influence self-esteem had been shown to have negative effects on White adolescent identity development. Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz (1997) explored group identity as a predictor of self-esteem and demonstrated that White adolescents have lower levels of self-esteem than African American adolescents. In their study, White adolescents also demonstrated a stronger connection to their American identity than did African American adolescents. The results of their investigation suggested that White adolescents who have a higher level of ethnic identity also have higher levels of self-esteem. Conversely, White adolescents who have lower levels of ethnic identity also have lower levels of self-esteem. Thus, White adolescents with higher levels of ethnic identity may feel more of a sense of belonging to their ethnic group that could then directly affect their self-esteem in a positive direction. Ethnic identity, consisting of a sense of belonging, positive attitudes,

commitment, and involvement with one's group, was shown to have a significant impact on White adolescents.

Brown, Spatzier, and Tobin (2010) found that White adolescents view their ethnic identity in three different ways: (1) as White Americans, (2) through their European ancestry with a hyphenated identity, such as Italian-American, and (3) as non-ethnic. In comparing ethnic identity among White, Latino, and African American adolescents, researchers found that White adolescents who identified as biracial, hyphenated American, or identified themselves with an ethnic, cultural, or religious label had a positive outlook on their ethnic identity. These adolescents were also more aware of discrimination (Brown, Spatzier, & Tobin, 2010). Furthermore, Brown and colleagues found that White adolescent girls who were at a predominantly White schools identified as White whereas White adolescents in schools where the majority of the population are students of color, identified as members of ethnic groups. It should be noted that some White adolescents felt that acknowledging their ethnic or cultural identity would make them racist (Grossman, & Charmaraman, 2009).

2.9 Identity Development & Low-income White Adolescent Girls

Several issues can effect identity development in low-income White adolescent girls, such as poverty and domestic violence. As a result, research has shown that these youth can feel disconnected from mainstream society (Weis, 2001). These issues may have a significant effect the identity development among low-income White adolescent girls.

Through out the decades, there has been a fluctuation in the poverty level of low-income Whites. A research study by Fine and Weis (1998) showed the poverty levels for Whites have been increasing over the past decade. White women in low-income

areas have expressed feeling under siege in their neighborhoods. White women, in particular, tend to express concerns about race when discussing their communities. Moreover, not only are White women in low-income areas facing higher levels of poverty, but this population also experiences domestic violence issues.

Compared to their African American and Latina counterparts, low-income White women reported more domestic abuse in their home. Domestic violence in the low-income White community is not reported as much compared to low-income African American and Latino communities. This could be due to the fact that low-income White women do not openly discuss domestic violence in their homes (Weis, 2001). Looking at the high levels of domestic violence, White adolescent girls living in these environments could be negatively affected by these events as well as playing a role in their identity development (Bertram, Hall, & Fine, 2000). This could also have an effect on the identity of these adolescents and how they view their role as women (Weis, Marusza, & Fine, 1998). However, evidence shows that community groups focused on young girls can help facilitate conversation about domestic violence and educate these young girls on the lasting effects (Bertram, Hall, Fine, & Weis, 2000).

According to Weis and Hall (2001), issues involving low-income areas for White adolescent girls have not been a major focus in the literature. To date, there is little to no research discussing the effects of living in low-income areas and identity development among low-income White adolescent girls. It has been suggested that White adolescents who live in low-income areas have lower levels of self-esteem (Fu, Hinkle, & Korslund, 1983). While studies have shown that middle-class White adolescent girls struggle with mental health disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia

(Kaplan, & Cole, 2003), little discussion has focused on the mental health needs of low-income White adolescent girls.

Scholars have also investigated ethnic identity among low-income White adolescent girls. White adolescents in low-income areas have a better understanding and outlook on ethnic identity while people of higher economic status were unaware of their Whiteness (Grossman, & Charmaraman, 2009). Although there is some research pertaining to middle-class and low-income White adolescent girls, the literature is scarce on this population in relation to identity development.

2.10 White Adolescents And The Media

The literature on media exposure for White adolescents is very different from that for African American adolescents. For example, African American adolescents watch more television than their White counterparts when there is no father in the home (Brown, 1986). Also, African American adolescents are more likely to watch family oriented television shows than their White counterparts (Fletcher, 1969). A study in 1990 revealed that White adolescents are less exposed to media, such as television or radio, regardless of age, gender, or parent education, than African American adolescents (Brown, Childers, Bauman, & Koch, 1990). This study also revealed that White adolescent girls spend more time listening to the radio than African American adolescent girls.

Another study focused on racial/cultural differences and peer and media influences among adolescents and revealed that White adolescents are more influenced by the media and their peers than their non-White counterparts (Gibbons et al., 2010). However, ethnicity was not a factor among White, African American, and Latina adolescent girls when viewing images of women in magazines. Most of the girls

related to values of self-worth and femininity (Bell Kaplan, & Cole, 2003). Exposure to the media also can have negative and lasting effects on adolescents. For instance, negative television exposure can have an effect on adolescents' cognitive and behavioral development (Bissell & Hays, 2010). It has been noted that different types of content in the media can influence White adolescents, in particular. In particular, sexual interactions with their mate (Jackson, Brown, & Pardun, 2008), body image (Brown & Pardun, 2003), illicit drugs (Jackson, Brown, & Pardun, 2008), and depression (Henderson, 2007) have been shown to have significant effects on this population. For the purpose of this review, body image and sexual issues will be addressed.

A great number of studies on White adolescents and media exposure have focused on body image issues. These studies have found that media exposure can have a negative impact on White adolescent girls and how they view their bodies (Brown & Pardun, 2003). The literature on White adolescents and the media focuses on the importance of being thin and mimicking body images they see on television. Although many studies compare African American and White adolescents, the literature focused on the influence of the media on White adolescents is centered on body image issues and sexual activity. According to Brown, L'Engle, Pardun, Guang, Kenneavy, and Jackson (2006), White adolescents are influenced by sexual content in music, magazines, movies, and television. These influences could have an effect on the identity of White adolescent girls.

Not only can the media influence thin ideals, drugs, and depression, but also adolescent sexual interactions. A study conducted to explore the influences on television about sex found that White adolescents were more influenced by content

focusing on safe sex encounters. The results showed that White adolescents who watch this type of programming feel they can also embrace safe sex ideals (Martino, Collins, Kanouse, Elliott, & Berry, 2005). Another study conducted on the influences of television showed that most White characters on television are not overweight. This then has had an influence on White adolescents' body image. Moreover, White adolescents more than their African American counterparts are influenced by television to be thin. This thin ideal has also been associated with White adolescent girls and eating disorders (Botta, 2000; Henderson, 2007). Furthermore, White adolescent girls in comparison to their African American adolescent counterparts are more inclined to participate in sexual activity sooner (Brown, L'Engle, Pardun, Guang, Kenneavy, & Jackson, 2006). However, one study revealed that White adolescents do not learn as much from television compared to Latino and Asian adolescents (Lariscy, Reber, & Paek, 2010). Although much of the literature about White adolescents and the influence of the media discuss issues of sexual interactions with their mate, body image, illicit drugs, and depression, the literature is still lacking in exploring other aspects of the media and how other media sources can influence White adolescents (Brown, & Pardun, 2003).

2.11 White Adolescents Girls

Gender bias and White adolescent girls are an important piece of identity development that has not been a focus in the literature (Weis, 2001). Literature about gender biases in the literature is focused on adult White females and males. According to Brown, Alabi, Huynh, and Masten (2011), White adolescents are more aware of gender bias than ethnic bias and White adolescent girls notice more gender bias than White adolescent boys. Research on the influence of gender in the media on White females is a topic that needs further investigation (Brown, & Pardun, 2003). Diverse

populations and races can internalize gender differently (Ward, 2002). Further, some scholars have suggested that adolescent girls have multiple identities to live by. An adolescent girl is not defined by just her ethnicity but also by her family and social identities as well, such as being a daughter or student, simultaneously (Boyd, Reynolds, Tillman, & Martin, 2011). This intersectionality of identity is lacking in the exploration of these youth.

It has also been suggested that girls are more likely to retain health information from watching television than boys (Lariscy, Reber, & Paek, 2010). White adolescent girls also have been found to have lower levels of self-esteem than African American girls. Research shows that White middle class girls are pressured to be thin more than any other low-income adolescent population group (Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997). White adolescent girls engage in weight loss practices more than their African American and Latina counterparts in response to images in magazines and television (Boyd, Reynolds, Tillman, Martin, 2011).

Additionally, it has been shown that White adolescents are also highly influenced by their peers on their body image (Dohnt, & Tiggemann, 2005). Thus, research on White adolescents and the influence of the media is saturated with sexual and body image influences. Yet, the literature is lacking on identity issues for White adolescents from various socioeconomic backgrounds.

2.12 Womanist theory

Womanist theory focuses on the gender, cultural concerns, and empowerment of minority women (King, 2003). African American and White adolescent girls face many different issues that can be addressed within the womanist construct using evidence-based interventions through a womanist lens. Alice Walker, a pioneer for womanist

thought, defined the term, womanism, in her seminal writings in 1983 (Westfield, 2006; Williams, 2005; Floyd-Thomas & Gillman, 2005; King, 2003; Banks-Wallace, 2000). This theory originated from African American women folk culture implemented from a commitment to survival and wholeness of self (Williams, 2005). Alice Walker defined womanist theory as a self-avowed consciousness and identity characterized by Black women's subjectivity, communal action, self-love, and continual critique. Walker also made reference to the similarities and differences between African American and White women and their struggle for liberation. Walker's reasoning for the term was to examine African American women from a disenfranchised position in response to historical White privilege (Floyd-Thomas & Gillman, 2005). King (2003) defined womanism as the integration of ethnic and feminist consciousness among women of color. Core themes of womanism include: empowerment of all women, men, and children; the struggles against sexism, racism, and classism, and the importance of recognizing their interactive effects, particularly in the lives of women of color, and the conviction that women should not have to choose among different aspects of their identity.

Harris (2007) introduced the term womanist humanism that offers a modern look into womanist identity by giving voice to minority women through their spirituality and womanhood identity. Womanist theory grew out of the work of feminist scholars with theological, historical, and sociological backgrounds who explored racist, sexist, and classist thought through Black liberation and feminist perspectives (Collins, 2000). These scholars highlighted the Eurocentrism in theology and how it perpetuates cultural oppression. Womanist theory is multi-layered because it not only focuses on gender, but race and class as well. Womanist thought seeks to unveil societal imbalances with a

focus on how dominant cultures aid in the oppression of the African American, Latinos, and other marginalized cultures (Banks-Wallace, 2000).

Within the African American community, Womanist theory expresses the importance of justice. Womanist theory is divergent from feminist ideology and incorporates issues of racial oppression, classism, heterosexism, and the challenges that women of color, face in formulating intersected identities (Banks-Wallace, 2000; Collins, 2000). Further, Womanist theory takes into account African American and White women's ability to construct knowledge within their own historical, cultural, and spiritual context.

The womanist model (Helms, 1990), influenced by the Negro-to-Black conversion (Cross, 1971; Ford, Harris, & Schuerger, 1993), examines the identity development of women. Helms' womanist model is comprised of four stages. These four stages include: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, and Internalization. Carter and Parks (1996) conducted a study in which they looked at the relationships between womanist identity attitudes and aspects of women's self-report of a number of psychological symptoms. At the results of this study showed that there was a significant difference in responses between African American and White women related to womanism identity development suggesting that there may be racial differences between women of color and White women.

Feminism plays a role in gender performance of African American and White women but typically does not integrate the cultural factors. This is the focus of Afrocentric counseling. Through this type of counseling, Afrocentric ideals are combined with feminist ideals to create a more holistic understanding of African American women

in the clinical setting. African-centered counseling consists of the use of African/African American values, such as spirituality, communalism, emotional expressions, harmony with nature, fluid time orientation, and interdependence. Through the utilization of these values, researchers believe that counselors can protect African Americans from negative psychological effects and racism. Although these approaches seek to address sexism and racism, they still do not fully address all aspects of African American women's identity (Williams, 2005).

Womanism focuses on empowering minority women while Afrocentric and feminism theories focus on inherent themes. According to Banks-Wallace (2000), feminist theory is defined as an outgrowth of women's self-conscious struggles. Neither Afrocentric nor feminist theory can explain the effects of being both an African American or White and a woman. Womanist theory creates a connection between Afrocentric theory and feminism by accounting for racism, sexism, and other societal influences, such as oppression and marginalization in everyday situations (Banks-Wallace, 2000). Due to the frequent assumption that gender is the only factor in counseling African American and White women and adolescent girls, this population has been underserved by the lack of theoretical and cultural considerations (Sanders & Bradley, 2005).

Much of the focus in existing literature related to identity development and African American adolescent girls is on prevention efforts (Sanders & Bradley, 2005). Theoretical frameworks utilized with this population range from child development and psychology to group intervention techniques (Ford, Harris, & Schuerger, 1993). The incorporation of womanist interventions with African American and White adolescent girls is an area that has not been sufficiently explored. Using womanist interventions

may help to empower African American and White adolescent girls to cope with issues related to gender, oppression, identity development, and marginalization. King (2003) conducted a study to explore group consciousness and African American women's perceptions of prejudice. The results of this study suggest that ethnic and womanist consciousnesses are important variables among African American women.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Media influences on low-income African American (Gordon, 2009) and White adolescent girls have not been a focus in the literature nor, has the impact of media influences on the construction of ethnic identity (Weis, 2001) for these populations. There are many different speculations on how the media can potentially affect each of these populations but there is no definitive answer. Influence of the media could affect each of these populations differently when constructing their ethnic identity. This study will analyze how the media influences the development of low-income African American and White adolescent girls and how they differ by group comparisons. This study can also potentially provide specific information about the influences of the media on ethnic identity development within this population. The purpose of this section is to give a synopsis of the study design, including the setting, participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

3.1 Setting

The research design of this study will employ secondary analysis of an existing dataset. This data set was retrieved from the lead author of a research team that created the questionnaire and conducted the data for the initial study (Ward, Day, & Thomas, 2010). The lead scholar was contacted via email for permission to gain access to the dataset. This dataset consists of middle school students from an ethnically diverse middle school. Maternal education served as proxy for low-income SES status. The data was collected from students in grades 6, 7, and 8 in a suburban area in the Midwest.

3.2 Participants

The participants in the study are representative of some low-income suburban Midwest African American and White adolescent girls in the U.S. The students ranged in age from 10 to 15 years old. The mean age for the students was 12.47 years old. The participants of this study consist of 139 African American students (75 girls and 64 boys), and 82 White students (45 girls and 37 boys). According to Ward, Day, and Thomas (2010), the sample derived for the study was fairly representative of the community in which the school was located. Although this particular study consisted of both low-income African American and White adolescent boys and girls, the secondary analysis will focus specifically on the low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

3.3 Operational Definition of Variables

The following are variables to be examined in the study: race/ethnicity, adolescent, gender, media, culture and identity. Definitions of each variable are stated below.

MEDIA. Refers to music videos, television, magazines, Internet, radio, and video games.

ETHNIC IDENTITY. A sense of belonging, positive attitudes, commitment, and involvement with one's group.

GENDER. Indicating if the participant identifies as male or female.

RACE/ETHNICITY. Indicates how the participants define themselves within the seven major categories which include White, African American, Latino and Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and students that prefer not to pick just one category that are multiracial.

ADOLESCENT. A child between the ages of 13 and 18.

LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS. This indicates the parent's occupation, education, and parental income per year.

All of the above variables are measured within this study. The thesis of this study is that low-income African American adolescent females' identity (dependent variable) is not solely influenced by the media (independent variable) but rather by a combination of variables. Gender and ethnicity are held constant as variables that could impact the relationship between ethnic identity and media.

3.4 Instrumentation

During this study, there is one method that will be utilized for the assessments of this study, that is the data collected from a survey administered to student participants. The 21-page survey consisted of 126 items and asked a broad range of questions focusing on media exposure, ethnic identity, and feelings about one's self. The survey items resembled a Likert-scale with ranges of "never" to "always" or "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." There were several questions that pertained to the amount of hours of media exposure. These questions consisted of a dropdown menu to choose the number of hours of media exposure.

To accommodate each construct area, the researchers developed separate measures for each construct area, consisting of media exposure, media involvement, ethnic identity measure, religiosity, and parental involvement. Media exposure was first explored by assessing popular prime time television shows. The researchers chose a mixture of twenty-one shows were chosen as an outcome of their pilot investigation and consisted of all White and all African American casts. The participants were then asked how often they watched these particular shows using a Likert-scale with ranges from 0 (never) to 4 (every time it is on). The researchers then assessed the amount of time spent using several types of media: television, music videos, video games, music, and computers. To assess these amounts, the researchers asked each participant to

indicate how many hours on a typical weekday would they engage in these forms of media. The participants were given a scale of 0 hours to 10 hours. Sports programming was another area that was measured with a scale of 0 hours to 10 hours. The last media exposure area focused on movie viewing. Participants were asked how many movies they saw at the movie theater within a month. The scale ranged from 0 (none) to 4 (five or more movies). Participants were also asked how many movies are watched on analogue video or DVD within a month. The scale ranged from 1 (none) to 5 (10 or more movies). These items were significantly correlated, ($r = .28, p < .001$); the researchers took the mean of the two for the overall movie exposure for the month.

The next measure of the media was media involvement. The researchers assessed media involvement in several ways. The first approach was to ask the participants about perceived realism of television content. One sample item on this questionnaire was "TV content reflects everyday life." This scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The participant's level of agreement entered an alpha level of .07 from the Perceived Realism Measure (Rivadeneyra & Ward, 2005). The next assessment of media involvement is music video imagery. A sample item for this measure is "Music videos present relationships between men and women that are similar to those in real life." This was measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). For these three items, the alpha level was .71. The next measure of media involvement was music video content. A sample question for this measure was "Music videos should be criticized for the way that men and women act with each other." This was measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). For these items, the alpha level was .51. The next measure assessed the participant's

identification with a television character. The participants were first given an open-ended question pertaining to their television character. Then, they were given a 7-point scale to assess questions about the television character. This scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The alpha levels for this assessment were .94. The next assessment in media involvement was identification with a favorite music artist. The participants were first given an open-ended question pertaining to an artist. A sample question was "This artist is the kind of person I would like to be." Then the participants were given a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The last assessment of media involvement was identification with a popular music artist. The participants were given a list of 16 music artists drawn from the Top 100 Billboard chart. The participants were then given a scale that consisted of 1 (do not identify at all) to 4 (totally identify with). The hip-hop artist had an alpha level of .95 and the rock/pop artist had an alpha level of .90.

The next assessment used was the ethnic identity measure. This measure was based upon the Affirmation and Belonging Subscale of the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). The participants were to indicate how they identified with their ethnic group. A sample question for this measure was, "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group." A mean score was computed at ($M=1.83$; $\alpha=.95$). Participants were also asked how many of their friends were African American. The scale for this assessment ranged from "none" to "a lot." With the incorporation of these items, this research has helped to connect womanist theory (that focuses on culturally diverse women and identity) to media exposure and identity development among low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

The independent variable, media, is identified within the dataset and items concerning the media are sufficiently presented. Some questions include “TV content reflects everyday life.” and “During the school year, how many hours a week do you watch television?” The follow up questions on the survey ask how the student feels about herself. By looking at the amount of media exposure during the week in relation to the responses about how the student feels about herself, the effect of the media on identity development can be identified.

3.5 Measure of Existing Variables

The existing variables used in this study were from a reliability analysis. Variable names for each are found in parentheses. There were a few variables that measured different types of media influences. These variables include: (PI1) having a television in your bedroom, (PI2) having a computer with internet access, and (MEDIASHW) for different television shows selected by the research team to measure how often the participants watch these particular shows. Ethnic identity was measured using the code, (ETHN), to find out the attitudes of the participants about their own ethnic group. The control factor within this study was race (RACE). The fixed factors for this study were gender; all participants in this selection were females, and socioeconomic status that was low-income African American and White adolescent females. More details on these variables are found in Table 3-1 at the end of this chapter.

3.6 Measure of Media Influence

Media influence was measured using existing variables from the survey assessment. The influence of the media was present using specific variables on the survey to ask questions concerning influence of the media. The first measure of media is labeled: parental involvement in your media use (PI). Each question in this section is

as follows: television in your bedroom (PI1) and computer with internet access in the home (PI2). How often the participants watch certain television shows was indicated by the following (MEDIASHW): Family Guy (FAMGUY), The Simpsons (SIMPSNS), Rap City (RAPCITY), 106th and Park (SIXTHPRK), Drake and Josh (DRAKEJOS), I Love New York (ILOVENY), Everybody Hates Chris (EVHATECH), All of Us (ALLOFUS), The Parkers (PARKERS), Heros (HEROS), America's Next Top Model (TOPMODEL), South Park (SOUTHPK), The Real World (REALWRLD), The Hills (THE HILLS), The Fresh Prince of Bel Air (FRESHPRN), Futurama (FUTURAMA), The Jamie Foxx Show (JAMIEFOX), My Super Sweet 16 (SWEET16), College Hill (CLLGEHIL), That's So Raven (RAVEN), and WWE Raw (WWERAW). All these variables were found to indicated media influence and exposure for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

3.7 Measure of Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity was measured using existing variables from the survey assessment. Ethnic identity was present using specific variables on the survey to ask questions concerning construction of ethnic identity. Attitudes about one's ethnic group they identified with are indicated: I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to (ETHID1), I have a strong sense of being in my ethnic group (ETHID2), I feel uncomfortable hanging out in groups of people solely in my ethnic group (ETHID3), I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments (ETHID4), I feel a strong attachment to my ethnic group (ETHID5), and I feel good about my cultural and ethnic background (ETHID6). By investigating these variables, it could indicate how low-income African American and White adolescent girls construct and feel about their ethnic identity.

3.8 Weights

The data set uses a t-test design to analyze the data. Weights are included to account for this particular sampling design. Adding weights to descriptive designs are applied to account for unequal probability of selection and disproportionate samples. These weights are added to produce estimates for the population represented (Hahs-Vaughn, 2005). Varying sample fractions can improve the efficiency of the design and also accounts for relatively small population subgroups. Since each stratum can vary, weights of each individual will be proportional to the inverse of the sample fraction in the respective group. Calculating these weights gives each stratum the same relative importance as it exhibits in the population (Cesar & Carvalho, 2011).

3.9 Data Collection

The research team created the survey that was given to the middle school students. The team sent home a packet of information that consisted of a description of the study, a parental consent form, and a student assent form. After one week, the students who returned the package with consent forms attached were able to participate in the study. The participants were given the survey via computers in classrooms or the library. Each survey took approximately 45 minutes for each participant to complete. Upon completion of the survey, each student was given a debriefing sheet and a free movie ticket (Ward, Day, & Thomas, 2010).

3.10 Data Analysis

The statistical program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to analyze the data. The demographics for each group were similar between low-income African American and White adolescent girls. In the study, there were more African American adolescents (n=68) than White adolescent girls (n=45).

3.11 Analysis of Differences

When conducting this study, the three research questions were:

1. What is the relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?
2. What is the relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?
3. Does the relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differ by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls?

The relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure and the relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure will be address using a multiple regression analysis. Preliminary steps in the analysis consist of running the frequencies of all variables in the study. The descriptive statistics will also be ran for the variables separating low-income African American adolescent girls from low-income White adolescent girls. Then an item analysis (reliability analysis) was conducted on all six questions on ethnic identity to assess internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha will be used to examine if the scale is reliable. The cases were then sorted by ethnicity to see the difference by ethnicity for the relationship between ethnic identity and media influences for low-income African American and White adolescent girls. Correlations were conducted to examine relationships between ethnic identity, television shows watched, having a television in the bedroom, and having a computer with internet access.

My hypotheses for the analysis are:

- There is no relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure.

- There is no relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure.
- There is no relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differ by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

A multiple regression analysis will be completed to see the relationship between media exposure on ethnic identity in low-income African American adolescent girls and low-income White adolescent girls. This analysis intended to explore how low-income African American and White adolescent girls differ by group for relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity by group.

For the purpose of this secondary analysis, data on low-income African American and White adolescent girls will be sorted from the initial dataset composed of low-income African American and White middle school boys and girls. When reviewing the results of the analyses, a womanist lens was used to analyze the data. With this dataset, gender will be sorted out from the data as well as media exposure to account for the low-income African American and White adolescent girls and their media exposure. By looking at these variables, they gave answers on what variables related to ethnic identity as well as the influence of the media for low-income African American and White adolescent girls. The fixed variables in this study were race, socioeconomic status, and gender.

My hypothesis for this study is that the media does not have a relationship between low-income African American and White adolescent girls ethnic identity. The implications for this study are that the media is not a singular influence on low-income African American and White adolescent girls ethnic identity but rather there are a host of other influencing variables. My research questions for this study are:

1. What is the relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?
2. What is the relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?
3. Does the relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differ by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls?

These research questions will be addressed using a quantitative approach research method. Through these measures, socioeconomic status, gender, race, age, media influence, and ethnic identity will be the variables in analyzing the data.

Table 3-1. Measuring of Existing Variables

Measure	Exploratory Variables
Having a television in the bedroom	PI1
Having a computer with internet access	PI2
Attitudes about your own ethnic group	ETHN
Race: low-income African American adolescent girls and low-income White adolescent girls	RACE
Age	AGE
Television shows watched	MEDIASHW

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Prior research studies focused on the effects of media exposure on the adolescent population given their developmental challenges (Albert, 2008). Other studies have explored the role of ethnic identity among adolescents. This study used an existing data set (n=113) of which 68 were African American and 45 were White adolescent girls to examine the relationship between ethnic identity and media exposure among low-income African American and White adolescent girls. The research questions were:

What is the relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?

What is the relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure?

Does the relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differ by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls?

The hypotheses for this study were:

Ho1: There is no relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure.

Ho2: There is no relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure.

Ho3: There is no relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differs by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

The results from the analyses follow.

4.1 Frequencies for Low-income African American Adolescent Girls

When examining the descriptive statistics on low-income African American adolescent girls, there were several items of importance. First, while the mean age among low-income African American adolescent girls in the sample was 12.63 with a standard deviation of 1.18, two outliers (one 10-year-old and one 15-year-old

participant) could have skewed the mean age variable (See Table 4-1). Second, parental care was another variable that should be noted (See Table 4-2). In this sample 92.6% (n= 63) of the participants were in the care of their mother, while only 26.5% (n= 18) of the participants were in the care of their father. Also, only 44% (n= 30) of mothers had a high school/GED education while 38.2% (n= 26) of fathers had a high school/GED education and 32.4% (n= 22) of fathers were college graduates. Third, 64.7% (n= 44) of low-income African American adolescent girls noted that they have a lot of African American friends and only half (50%, n= 34) say they only have a few White friends. Another variable of note is ethnic identity. About 95.5% (n= 65) of low-income African American adolescents girls had pride in their ethnic group. Additionally, 95.6% (n= 65) indicated that they feel good about their cultural or ethnic background. Among the media variables, low-income African American adolescent girls in the sample watched more television shows geared towards music (See Table 4-3). For example, 54.4% (n= 37) reported watching “106 & Park” every time it came on and 20.6% (n= 14) indicated that they watched this show often. This group also watched more television shows focused on African American families and cast members. About 44.1% (n= 30) noted that they watched “The Parkers” every time it came on and 32.4% (n= 22) watched it often. When considering the show, “The Fresh Prince of Bel Air”, 51.5% (n= 35) of the sample reported they watched it every time it is on. For “The Jamie Foxx Show”, 48.5% (n= 3) of respondents indicated that they viewed it every time it comes on. For this group, 58.8% (n= 40) watched “College Hill” every time it was on. Finally, 41.2% (n= 28) indicated that they watched “That’s So Raven” every time it came on.

Parental involvement in media use was another variable with interesting results. Eighty-two percent (n= 56) of low-income African American adolescent girls reported having a television in their bedroom and 61.8% (n= 63) reported having a computer with internet access. As far as parental involvement in media use, 55.9% (n= 38) of low-income African American adolescent girls reported that their parents do not limit their time watching television and 51.5% (n= 35) indicated that their parents don't limit the time spent playing video games. Also, 55.9% (n= 38) of girls reported that their parents did not limit the type of video games played by their adolescent girls (See Table 4-4). Lastly, the girls also reported identifying more with African American music artists. For example, 55.9% (n= 38) of low-income African American adolescent girls identified with Ciara, 58.8% (n= 40) identified with Beyonce, 54.4% (n= 37) identified with Chris Brown, 51.5% (n= 35) identified with Alicia Key, and 51.5% (n= 35) identified with Mariah Carey.

When examining these descriptive statistics, it seems that low-income African American adolescent girls watched more television focused on African American casts and music videos. Additionally, for this group, parental guidance on the limit of television and video game usage as well as limiting the type of television and video game usage could be something further to consider.

4.2 Frequencies for Low-income White Adolescent Girls

When examining the descriptive statistics on low-income White adolescent girls, there were a few items of importance. First, while the mean age in the sample of low-income White adolescent girls was 12.29% with a standard deviation of .91, 35.6% (n= 16) of the sample was 12 years old and 33.3% (n= 15) were 13 years old. Second, parental care was another variable that should be noted for this group. Eighty percent

(n= 36) of the participants were in the care of their mothers, while 55.6% (n= 25) of the participants were in the care of their fathers. It should be noted that the percentage of the participants that were in the care of their father was higher among low-income White adolescent girls than among low-income African American adolescent girls. Participants reported that fifty-one percent (n= 23) of their mothers had a high school/GED education while 42.2% (n= 19) reported that their fathers had a high school/GED education. These figures were also higher for White participants than for their African American counterparts. The percentage reported for fathers who were college graduates was about the same as that for the father of African American adolescent girls 31.1% (n= 14). Next, 42.2% (n= 19) of low-income White adolescent girls reported having a lot of White friends and 42.2% (n= 19) reported having a few African American friends.

Of note, 66.7% (n= 30) of low-income White adolescent girls sometimes felt they were worried they will not succeed. This descriptive was not shown to be of importance in low-income African American adolescent girls. Another variable to mention was ethnic heritage. Approximately 64.4% (n= 29) of low-income White adolescents girls indicated pride in their ethnic group with 53.3% (n= 24) reporting they felt good about their cultural or ethnic background. This percentage was lower than in low-income African American adolescent girls, suggesting that low-income White adolescent girls may have some ethnic identity issues that warrant further exploration. Another variable to consider was parental involvement in media use (See Table 4-4). Of the low-income White adolescent girls in the study, 89.9% (n= 40) reported having a television in their bedroom and 68.9% (n= 31) reported having a computer with internet access. As far as parental involvement in media use, 46.7% (n= 21) of low-income White adolescent girls

reported their parents do not limit their time watching television and 53.3% (n= 24) indicated that their parents do not limit their time spent playing video games. Also, 53.3% (n= 24) noted that their parents do not limit the type of video games played. Lastly, the girls identified with many different music artists. These music artists include: Ciara 44.4% (n= 20), Christina Aguilera 40% (n= 18), Beyonce 40% (n= 18), Chris Brown 42.2% (n= 19), Green Day 44.4% (n= 20), Gwen Stefani 44.4% (n= 20), and Kelly Clarkson 42.2% (n= 19). This was different from low-income African American adolescent girls who identified mostly with African American music artists.

When investigating these frequency statistics, it is evident that low-income White adolescent girls have a higher percentage of fathers in the home. Also, low-income White parents in this study had a higher percentage of education with finishing high school/GED and college than their African American counterparts. However, low-income White adolescents reported being more afraid of not becoming successful. It is possible that, with a larger sample size, significant findings might be evident when tested statistically.

4.3 Item-analysis

After completing the frequencies and descriptive information, and item-analysis for ethnic identity was run to see if there were any extraneous items that could skew the analysis. From this, the third item in ethnic identity had a correction item total correlation of (.002). This item scored significantly lower than all other items. Item three on ethnic identity with a corrected item-total correlation of .002, was omitted from the scale due to the low item discrimination. The item analysis was run again. Once this item was omitted, the Cronbach's alpha then showed that the ethnic identity scale was found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .76$).

4.4 Creation of Scale

Once the item-analysis was complete, a scale was created for the remaining items for ethnic identity. The ethnic identity scale consisted of 5 items ($\alpha = .76$). The corrected item-total correlation for item one on ethnic identity was .605, item two on ethnic identity was .448, item four on ethnic identity was .453, item five on ethnic identity was .617, and item six on ethnic identity was .571. The mean and standard deviation for the scale statistic ethnic identity was in low-income African American adolescent girls ($M=14.43$, $SD=1.81$) and in low-income White adolescent girls ($M=13.24$, $SD=1.84$).

4.5 Correlations

Once the scale was completed, the correlations were run for both groups. The mean and standard deviation for low-income African American adolescent girls for having televisions in the bedroom was ($M=1.88$, $SD=.33$) and for having a computer in the house with internet access was ($M=1.67$, $SD .48$). The results show in low-income African American adolescent girls, there was no significant relationship found between ethnic identity and types of television shows watched, ethnic identity and having a television in the bedroom, ethnic identity and having a computer in the house with internet access, types of television shows watched and having a computer in the house, and having a television in the bedroom and having a computer in the house with internet access. However there was one correlation that was found to be significant. The correlation between having a television in the bedroom and types of television shows watched was significantly correlated, $r = .369$, $p < .01$ level (See Table 4-5). The mean and standard deviation for low-income White adolescent girls for having televisions in the bedroom was ($M=1.89$, $SD=.32$) and for having a computer in the house with internet access was ($M=1.69$, $SD .47$). In low-income White adolescent girls, there was

no significant relationship found with any of the variables. The final step in the analysis was a multiple regression test. The multiple regression tests were run to examine the relationship between the influence of the media on ethnic identity development in low-income African American and low-income White adolescent girls.

4.6 Relationship Between Low-income African American Adolescent Girls' Ethnic Identity Development and Media Exposure

The first research question was: What is the relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure? From this analysis, there was no relationship with media exposure and ethnic identity in low-income African American adolescent girls ($F(3,49) = 1.01, p = .395$). From the results of the multiple regression analysis, there was no significance overall. Therefore, there was no relationship between ethnic identity development and media exposure in low-income African American adolescent girls. Prior research studies discuss how media could play a role in ethnic identity development, but there is not sufficient literature on the topic (Gordon, 2008), particularly regarding African American girls. Prior studies focusing on media influences on ethnic identity development found that low-income African American youth who have a strong ethnic identity and a strong sense of spirituality, were less affected by the media (Ward, 2004). Thus, the results in this study supported the first hypothesis regarding low-income African American adolescent girls, that there is no relationship between media and ethnic identity for this population. However, it is of interest that two items significantly correlated: having a television in the bedroom and the types of television shows watched (Table 4-5). Prior research suggests that low-income African American adolescent girls watched more television than their White counterparts (Albert, 2008, Gordon, 2008). More research needs to be

conducted on this population to explore their selection of television shows, amount of television exposure, and intersected identity (including class, gender, and ethnicity).

4.7 Relationship Between Low-income White Adolescent Girls' Ethnic Identity Development and Media Exposure

The second research question was: What is the relationship between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure? There was also no relationship with media exposure and ethnic identity in low-income White adolescent girls ($F(3,68) = 1.71, p = .915$). From the results of the multiple regression analysis, there was no significance overall. Therefore, there was no relationship between ethnic identity development and media exposure in low-income White adolescent girls. Prior research studies have not focused on ethnic identity development with low-income White adolescent girls (Grossman, & Charmaraman, 2009). Much of the literature that was discussed focused on self-esteem (Phinney, Cantu, and Kurtz, 1997) and body images (Dohnt, & Tiggemann, 2005) of White adolescent girls. Thus, the results of this study conflicts with earlier findings suggesting that White adolescent girls are influenced by the media (Gibbons et al., 2010). Since the sample size for low-income White adolescent girls was small, this could have had an effect on the results of the study. Having a larger sample size could predict better outcomes for the relationships examined between the variables in the study. Also, more nuanced measures of ethnic identity for low-income White adolescents could also strengthen the research methodology.

4.8 Relationship Between Media Exposure and Ethnic Identity Differ By Group For Low-income African American and White Adolescent Girls

The third research question was: Does the relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differs by group for low-income African American and White

adolescent girls? The final research question was not tested because there was no significant relationship found in the two previous analyses. Therefore, this study suggests that there was no relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differed by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

4.9 Limitations

The limitations of this study include using a previous data set, generalization on the entire population, and using a culturally diverse assessment. Due to the lack of data sets that explore the effects of the media on low-income African American and White adolescent girls, a previous data set was used to analyze these populations looking at media exposure and how it could effect the construction of their ethnic identity.

Location is also one of the limitations to this study. This assessment was given to students only in the Midwest part of the US. This information cannot be generalized over the entire population of low-income African American and White adolescent girls since this was not a national data set. Not all low-income African American and White adolescent girls were examined, thus this information cannot be generalized across the entire population. Finally, the researchers did not offer information about this particular assessment as being culturally sensitive to non-White populations. More assessments may need to be created using a culturally diverse lens on low-income African American and White adolescent girls in order to understand the full spectrum of ethnic identity development on these populations.

4.10 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between ethnic identity and media exposure for low-income African American and White adolescent girls. With question one, there was no relationship found between low-income African

American adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure. For question two, the results show there was no relationship found between low-income White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure. For the third and final question, the results show there as no relationship found between media exposure and ethnic identity differed by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

After examining the multiple regression analyses, there was not significance in all research questions. The overall results suggest there is no relationship between low-income African American and White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development and media exposure and there is no relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity differed by group for low-income African American and White adolescent girls. These results support prior research in this area about low-income African American adolescent girls (Ward, 2004). The results for low-income White adolescent girls conflict with prior research showing that ethnic identity is affected by the media (Gibbons et al., 2010). However, there was one item of significance that confirmed previous literature that suggested there is a relationship between low-income African American adolescent girls and television shows watched.

Table 4-1. Frequency age for low-income African American adolescent girls

	Frequency	Percent
10 years old	1	1.5%
11 years old	14	20.6%
12 years old	15	22.1%
13 years old	18	26.5%
14 years old	19	27.9%
15 years old	1	1.5%

a. Race = African American

Table 4-2. Parental care and education

Parent	Number	Percent
African American mother care	63	92.6%
African American father care	18	26.5%
African American mother education high school/ GED	30	44%
African American father education high school/GED	26	38.2%
African American father attend college	22	32.4%
White mother care	36	80%
White father care	25	55.6%
White mother education	23	51%
White father education	19	42.2%
White father attend college	14	31.1%

Table 4-3. Media variables for low-income African American adolescent girls

TV show	Watch often	Watch every time it is on
106 & Park	14 (20.6%)	37 (54.4%)
The Parkers	22 (32.4%)	30 (44.1%)
The Fresh Prince of Bel Air	12 (17.6%)	35 (51.5%)
The Jaime Foxx Show	10 (14.7%)	33 (48.5%)
College Hill	9 (13.2%)	40 (58.8%)
That's So Raven	17 (25%)	28 (41.2%)

a. Race = African American

Table 4-4. Parental involvement in media use for low-income African American adolescent girls

	Number	Percent
TV in bedroom	56	82%
Computer at home	63	61.8%
Parents don't limit TV time	38	55.9%
Parents don't limit video game time	35	51.5%
Parents don't limit type of video games	38	55.9%

a. Race = African American

Table 4-5. Results of correlations with low-income African American adolescent girls

		Different television shows
PI1-BedTV	Pearson Correlation	.369**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	56

**Correlation is significant at the .001 level (2-tailed)

a. Race = African American

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This study sought to explore the relationship between media influence and ethnic identity among low-income African American and White adolescent girls. This relationship was observed by conducting a multiple regression analysis using an existing data set. The results of this study suggested there is no relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity among low-income African American and White adolescent girls. Prior research investigating ethnic identity with youth and media (Ward, 2004) suggested there was no relationship between the two for both boys and girls. While the results from this study support previous research conducted by Ward, the same data set was used in both studies. Using a larger sample of low-income African American and White adolescent girls may, in fact, show a relationship between media influence and ethnic identity among low-income African American and White adolescent girls.

Past studies have looked at media exposure in youth which included girls and boys in the population but have yet to focus on low-income African American adolescent girls alone. In addition to this, there has not been much research that focuses on the intersectionality of identity. Exploration of identity, gender, and the media intersectedly, is another area of research that is underdeveloped.

Low-income African American adolescent girls have not been the focus of the literature to explore ethnic identity development and media exposure. The current study is different from Ward's because it focuses on low-income African American adolescent girls that have yet to be researched independently. The present study suggests that disaggregating the sample to narrowly focus on African American adolescent girls is

warranted. Low-income African American adolescent girls may be getting lost in the literature because many of the samples are disseminated by either gender in which the data is not disaggregated by ethnicity or by ethnicity wherein the data is not disaggregated by gender. This does not paint a clear picture of how different factors affect African American adolescent girls. Disaggregated data has been shown to be an important element when investigating culturally diverse girls (Malcolm, Hall, & Brown, 1976). A few studies have looked at this population and found many interesting results that may not have been noticed in previous studies that focus on either gender or ethnicity alone. One example is a recent project conducted by Pringle, West-Olatunji, and Adams that was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and explored how educators positioned low-income African American primary school girls as mathematics and science education learners. Several publications from this study suggest that educators have lower expectations for these girls (Pringle, Brkich, Adams, West-Olatunji, & Archer-Banks, 2012; West-Olatunji, Shure, Pringle, Adams, Lewis, & Cholewa, 2010). Because this study focused on the intersectionality of identity for the participants (class, gender, and ethnicity), the researchers were able to see what factors played a role in the positioning of low-income African American girls as mathematics and science learners. As a result, researchers now have a better understanding of the specific factors that play a role for low-income African American girls and how they are positioned as mathematics and science learners that was not found in previous studies. This shows the importance of disaggregating the data to really focus on what factors are specific to low-income African American adolescent girls.

The present study also opens discussion for new areas of research related to low-income African American adolescent girls, in particular. Narrowing the lens to look at only low-income African American girls can then create a better understanding of the population and the factors that play a role in their adolescent development. By looking at just low-income African American adolescent girls, we may be able to find key elements that could show a relationship between ethnic identity development and media exposure.

5.1 Recommendations

The results from this study support prior research suggesting that low-income African American adolescent girls watch more television than their White counterparts. This study also found correlation between having a television accessible to them in their bedrooms and types of shows watched. Also, prior studies have suggested that having a television in the bedroom could impact media exposure for low-income African American adolescents (Albert, 2008). Thus, exploring ways to keep these girls active and not exposed to as many media influences could mediate some of the negative effects. The use of groups, community involvement, and psycho-educational groups are just a few ideas that could help to keep these girls active and not exposed to as much media. Recommendations for practitioners, mental health counselors, and marriage and family counselors to address media exposure with this population are discussed below.

5.1.1 School counselors

School counselors are the focal point in educating parents, teachers, and the girls themselves about media exposure on ethnic identity development. School counselors can first focus on how to educate the parents about media exposure. Creating parent education workshops at the school can do this. During these

workshops, school counselors can set up activities and seminars on media exposure and on ethnic identity development. There can be interactive activities where parent share their thoughts about media exposure and how it has affected their lives as well as their family. At the workshop, the leaders of the workshop can educate the parents about the research thus far on media exposure and on ethnic identity development for low-income African American adolescent girls by handing out fact sheets to take back home and share with their daughters. During these workshops, a signup sheet can be made to solicit contact information from parents who may be interested in getting involved in future research studies focused on media exposure and ethnic identity development. These workshops can also create better relationships between parents and school personnel in working to help the girls gain access to other activities outside the home away from the television. Furthermore, these workshops can provide vital educational information about media exposure, ethnic identity development, and other useful topics about low-income African American adolescent girls.

School counselors can also create monthly parent groups. In these groups, school counselors can facilitate conversation about what is working for each parent and how they have been getting their daughter more active outside of the home. Here, parents can then learn from one another and create relationships with other parents that are going through the same transition with their daughters. Group activities can help to facilitate conversation between the parents with sharing ideas that have been successful in their home with the girls. By connecting with other parents in this group, more conversation and ideas can arise which could help create more conversation and exploring different options for their daughters outside of the home.

Not only can school counselors work with parents in educational workshops and parent groups, but also in parent-teacher association (PTA) groups. The PTA meetings can be used to educate parents on the effects of media exposure and getting them interested and involved in activities that could aid in better health habits. By completing these educational meetings, parents can then learn what healthy habits they can introduce their girls to as well as get the girls more active and not being exposed so many media influences.

School counselors could also connect with parents by creating a newsletter. This newsletter could highlight new research on the effects of the media on low-income African American adolescent girls. This newsletter could also display success stories from other parents on how they have found new activities for their daughters to keep them busy and not as exposed to the media. The newsletter could also invite the girls to share what activities they enjoy doing now that they are not home watching as much television. By including the girls in the newsletter, it creates a partnership between the parents and the girls. The newsletter created by the school counselors could aid in connecting the parents and the girls together on ways to effectively keep the girls active and not being exposed to as many media influences.

Lastly, school counselors can also create a web page that highlights all the important elements involving the improvement of media exposure in low-income African American adolescent girls. The web page could work as a connecting piece to all the above information. On the web page, there could be announcements on parent educational workshops, parent group meetings, PTA meetings, and when the next newsletter is to be sent home with the girls. The web page could also be used to

provide links to research articles and studies on the effects of the media on low-income African American adolescent girls. By creating this web page, school counselors could connect the parents to information they need.

5.1.2 Teachers

Teachers can also aid in developing better habits for the girls. School counselors can assist teachers through professional development workshops, consultations, in-class modeling, and distribution of a school-wide fact sheet. Professional development workshops for teachers could consist of school counselors educating teachers on the affects of healthier habits and activities once students are out of school. These workshops could also discuss how developing competence in this area could aid in classroom management for teachers, which could raise levels of achievement. Teacher consultations with the students could enhance relationships in the classroom setting and making the girls feel as though the teacher is there to help them succeed. These relationships can enhance classroom management as well as communication between the teachers and the girls.

With this new knowledge, teachers can help students how to think critically and making good choices for the type of television shows watched. For example, teachers can encourage the girls to join an after school activity, such as a sport or a club. By teaching the students to think critically about their time spent watching television could lower the amount of television and other media influences with low-income African American adolescent girls.

In-class modeling is a very important aspect of what the school counselors can do to help teachers to improve media habits for girls. School counselors can go into classrooms and model effective interventions for teachers. Such interventions can make

the girls feel that their teachers believe in them and would like to see them succeed. This again aids in building the lines of communication and building lasting relationships between the teachers and the students. Last, a fact sheet can be created by school counselors and distributed to the teachers to educate the, about media influence and girls. It can also detail what healthier activities can replace television viewing at home. Reviewing the information on the fact sheet can help to educate the girls on healthier activities in the community and away from the media.

5.1.3 Low-income African American adolescent girls

Interventions can also be focused specifically on low-income African American girls. These recommendations could include groups, psycho-educational workshops, whole classroom guidance, a web page, and assemblies. Groups have been found to work best with low-income African American adolescent girls because it gives the girls a chance to talk with other girls like themselves and bond over similarities in experiences (Ford, Harris, & Schuerger, 1993). During these group sessions, the girls can discuss what attracts them to the media, specific shows, and how they feel about themselves after they watch them. The girls would have the opportunity to discuss how they think African American women are viewed in the media and how that affects their outlook on African American women. The groups could also discuss ethnic identity and what that means to each girl. The group can also discuss involvement in other activities, such as school clubs and sports as other means of interaction as opposed to watching television. Furthermore, the creation of groups with low-income African American adolescent girls can enhance conversation and create bonds between the girls over similar experiences.

Psycho-educational workshops for low-income African American girls could enhance their knowledge on the media and its affects. These workshops could be offered monthly as after-school programs in which the girls can learn about new research on low-income African American adolescent girls and the effects of media exposure. The workshops can also include healthy activities for the girls to get involved in after school. These workshops can also display information about the amount of media adolescents are exposed to as well as how much media low-income African American adolescent girls are exposed to. By educating the girls on the effects of media exposure through psycho-educational workshops, low-income African American adolescent girls could learn how to get involved in activities outside of the home.

Whole classroom guidance is also another way girls can learn about media exposure, school counselors can come into the classroom and educate the class on media exposure. These classroom educational sessions could provide more understanding of the media and how it affects each person in the class. The school counselors could discuss with the class all the different types of media such as, television, newspapers, magazines, the internet, and social media sites and how often each student interacts with each. The students can then learn how to get more involved in other activities that are not fueled by the media. Some of these activities can include arts and crafts, sports, different clubs at school, or getting involved in community service projects. Moreover, with the girls learning more about different types of media and how much they consume every day, whole classroom guidance could aid in their understanding.

A web page focused on low-income African American girls could connect these girls together as well as girls from around the world. The web page could display information about current and past research on media exposure and its effects. Gaining access to this information could explain how important it is for girls all over the world to be more active and not be exposed to as many media influences. Also on the web page, the girls could tell their success stories of how they cut out some of their media exposure and have been involved in other positive activities after school. The web page could also display a student of the month. This student can be highlighted for finding new inventive ways to be active in the community as opposed to sitting at home and watching television or surfing the internet. By creating this web page, it could excite the girls and also teach them the effects of media exposure on a global level.

Lastly, assemblies for the girls could also enhance learning the importance of media exposure on this population. The school could invite important people in the community, such as community leaders, athletes, the superintendent, and the mayor to speak to the girls on the importance of media exposure. Inviting these community leaders to the assemblies to discuss media exposure could enhance the importance by having someone outside of the school setting show interest in the students. At these assemblies, the girls can learn the journey of each community leader and how media affected them when they grew up. With the incorporation of community leaders sharing their stories on media exposure and the effects could enhance the importance of media exposure and getting more active within the community.

5.1.4 Mental health counselors

Mental health counselors can also play a role in the recommendations for low-income African American adolescent girls. Mental health counselors could create after

school programs, rites of passage programs, and partner with community organizations. After school programs that mental health counselors could provide includes counseling groups and individual sessions with girls to learn more about how they media is affecting their lives. These sessions could be fueled by activities that have each student document how much television they watch and learn different ways to replace those with healthier and more involved activities. Also, mental health counselors could have the girls create a collage using popular celebrities they identify with and discuss how and why the girls identify with these particular celebrities. With the incorporation of after school programs, mental health counselor can increase awareness of media exposure among girls.

Mental health counselors can also create rites of passage programs for low-income African American adolescent girls. Rites of passage programs are typically culturally-specific and focus on improved self-concept, the development of ethnic identity, and self-sufficiency (Brooks, West-Olatunji, 2005). Warfield-Coppock (1992) identified six formats for rites of passage programs: community based, agency or organizationally based, school based, church based, therapeutic, and family based rite-of-passage programs. Through a rites of passage program, the girls can learn globally how the media affects African American women as well as other African American adolescent girls. This rites of passage program could expand over several years to enhance the girls' development and knowledge over time about the effects of the media for girls. Different activities, such as a ropes course or martial arts, could build confidence, self-esteem, and relationships with the other girls in the program, and challenge them outside of their comfort zone. By completing activities such as this, the

girls can then connect what they are learning to how the media effects them in their everyday life. This program could teach them to be more comfortable with who they are. Once girls have completed the program, they are likely to feel more confident in their gender and demonstrate increased self-esteem as well as better know how to effectively use their time other than watching television, reading popular magazines, and connecting to the internet.

Lastly, mental health counselors can partner with community organizations. One example is to partner with surrounding community centers. Mental health counselors can partner with community centers to help provide a safe place for the girls to go after school and interact with other adolescents. At this community center, the girls can be involved in arts and craft projects and tutoring where the staff and personnel at the community center can assist in learning and recreation. Getting the girls to participate in a sport could teach them how to take care of themselves, interact with other adolescents, and remove them from watching so many media influences.

Mental health counselors could also work with local sorority groups. Within each sorority group, there is a level for adolescents. Through these programs, the girls learn table etiquette, educational opportunities, and complete many hours of community service. The community service projects could include feeding the homeless, road clean ups, working with Habitat for Humanity, delivering food to retirement homes, and joining the step team for competitions. Some sororities also give out scholarship money for college for the girls that have shown dedication to the group. Through working closely with a local sorority, low-income African American girls can be around other girls just like them and build lasting relationships with the girls as well as the older sorority

members. By engaging in this type of club once a week, the girls can learn how to use their spare time to work on community-based projects as opposed to watching television. Last, mental health counselors can also form a relationship with civic organizations, such as Girls Scouts of America. Girls Scouts of American allows different girls from all ages to learn and work together as a team to reach each goal set by the group. Other activities could include working on new badges, learning about wildlife and survival tactics, and building community relationships with the staff and the girls. In sum, mental health counselors can expand their partner with community centers, local sororities, and civic groups, such as Girl Scouts, to promote making better choices with low-income African American adolescent girls.

5.1.5 Marriage and family counselors

Marriage and family counselors are also a very important piece of the puzzle. Marriage and family counselors can offer counseling sessions that focus on building mother daughter relationships. This can be achieved by having weekly sessions with mothers and daughters. Different activities focused on relationship building could aid in the understanding and growth of their relationship. Marriage and family counselors can also hold group sessions with mother-daughter couples. This group could help to facilitate conversation on how the media affects each one personally and provide a better understanding about mother and daughter relationships. This then gives the girls a better model for social interaction than the images they see on television. Also individual sessions with the mother and the daughter could help to understand each individual's perspective and learn how to cohesively create that relationship between mother and daughter. These group sessions, individual sessions, and dyadic sessions could all enhance the relationship with the mothers and the daughters.

5.1.6 Counselor educators

Counselor educators can disseminate knowledge on media influence and girls at national and state-wide counselor conferences. Organizers of counseling conferences can also dedicate a portion of their conferences to the effects of media exposure for low-income African American adolescent girls, in particular. Counselor educators can promote a better understanding of media exposure and low-income African American adolescent girls.

Another recommendation for counselor educators is to learn more about intersectionality theories, including Womanist Theory, and how to incorporate these theories into graduate programs. Incorporating womanist ideas could start at the beginning of training for future counselor educators and practicing counselors. This can begin by incorporating womanist theory into the course study of master's and Doctoral level counseling programs. Adding womanist theory to a theories course can help facilitate conversation about different gender-based theories that can be helpful with female clients. Also, incorporating womanist theory in an advanced theory course could also enhance the learning experience for future counselor educators.

5.2 Implications for Future Research

Future research of this topic is vital in learning more about the effects of the media on overlooked populations. Although the media is a topic that has been researched in the literature, the effects of the media on low-income African American (Gordon, 2008) and White (Grossman, & Charmaraman, 2009) adolescent girls and ethnic identity development is scarce. Some of this could be due to the fact that ethnic identity development is hard to measure. There are different ways ethnic identity can be measured but it would involve in-depth questions about perceptions from other ethnic

groups, which might cause other underlying issues to rise to the surface. Gathering information of this magnitude can also play a role in studying identity with these populations. Due to issues with low-income populations and working with minors, researchers revert to adults rather than the population where the research is needed. To conduct this research, scholars must survey this population throughout the United States as well as have group debriefing after the surveys to fully gather the feelings and emotions from this population.

Since the literature is lacking about the effects of media exposure on low-income African American and White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development, this study could be replicated. By replicating this study and collecting original data, researchers could produce new information about these populations. Also construction of an ethnic identity scale that was ethnically sensitive to low-income White adolescent girls could aid in the understanding of ethnic identity development and what factors contribute to this development. Lastly, when replicating this study with an ethnic identity scale sensitive to low-income White adolescent girls, a larger sample size would likely result in significant findings.

There is also a gap in the literature when focusing on the media and its effects. The literature is out of date as technology is moving rapidly ahead. Research needs to be conducted on the effects of commercials, music videos, radio, internet, texting, and social media and how it effects ethnic identity development. There are only a few studies that have discussed the importance of this research but researchers have yet to fully understand how these factors will be measured or how the data will be collected. Furthermore, the importance of this research is essential because of how fast

technology is moving and how the research on this topic is lacking. By conducting these essential studies, scholars can then speak to the influence of the media on low-income African American and White adolescents as a whole. Since technology is a constantly developing field, this means research should also grow.

5.3 Conclusion

This study sought to analyze the influence of the media on low-income African American and White adolescent girls. Prior studies have shown a relationship between media exposure and ethnic identity for African American youth (Ward, 2004). However, no prior studies investigated African American girls alone or to compare them to their White counterparts. Through the results of this study, the media was shown to not have a relationship to low-income African American and White adolescent girls' ethnic identity development. These results contradict prior research in this area for both the African American youth and White girls. Although the media was shown to not have an overall significance on the sample of African American girls, there were some items found in the frequencies differed between groups. Specifically, African American girls are more likely to be raised by single mothers and watch television in their bedrooms. This study is essential in the training and understanding of low-income African American and White adolescent girls because it disaggregated data on African American girls. Learning more about this population can strengthen future and practicing counselor educators in building relationships within this clinical population, in particular. Recommendations for practice included working with parents, teachers, the girls, and counselor educators to increase knowledge about the effects of media exposure for girls. Suggestions for future research focus on replicating this study with a larger sample size using original data.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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