RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR AND HAIR SATISFACTION, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESISTANCE, SOCIAL APPEARANCE ANXIETY, AND SOCIAL NETWORKS AMONG BLACK WOMEN: A MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Black women in the United States face “multiple jeopardy”, or multiple oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism in conjunction with pressures to meet white American beauty standards. Using a mixed method research design, 259 black women were surveyed to examine the relationships among skin tone and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, social networks, and psychological resistance among black women. This study adds to the literature of colorism and psychological resistance, and is one of the first research efforts to investigate the impact of skin color and hair satisfaction on social appearance anxiety among black women. Noteworthy quantitative and qualitative results suggest the following: a) skin color hue group differences in skin color satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and optimal and suboptimal psychological resistance; b) the positive association of suboptimal resistance with social appearance anxiety; c) the inverse relationship between skin color satisfaction and social appearance satisfaction; d) the endorsement of hair satisfaction; and e) the influence of social networks on anxiety about skin color and hair appearance.
DEDICATION

To Chelsea and all the other magical black girls.
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Beauty and Body Dissatisfaction among Black Women

Beauty has functioned as a pervasive, consistent, and prized value, especially for women throughout history. Beauty in its most complex form is a socially constructed aesthetic valuation system molded by societal structures and accomplished through embodied practices (Entwistle, 2000). The United States in particular, is well known for its standards of beauty displayed in popular literature, advertisements, television, and other forms of media. Fashion magazines and beauty experts tell women to look thinner, enhance physical attributes that are seen as beautiful, and draw attention away from those that are not (Sekyai, 2003). The dominant feminine beauty paradigm in the United States is racially and ethnically exclusive because it privileges Eurocentric ideals (i.e., white/light skin, straight hair, and what can be explained as, European facial features) (Hobson, 2005; Hunter, 2005; Tate, 2007).

From a young age, African American females learn from family, friends, and males the concept of “good” versus “bad” hair. Racial mixing of Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans created a variety of hair textures for African Americans. Black hair textures can range from tightly coiled to curly, wavy, to straight. Hair texture that resembles European or Native American hair (e.g., looser hair texture, wavy, straight hair) is considered “good” hair, while hair that is tightly coiled or kinky is considered “bad” hair. Hair is an important beauty determinant for all females as of function subjective beauty ideals that both men and women embody. Most white people have hair that is constructed as highly desirable and ideal in many societies like the
United States (Robinson, 2011). Among black females, hair occupies a central place for both external and internal valuations of physical attractiveness, given the enormous power that beauty holds for women. Beauty translates into desirability.

Although a number of black women have created their own standard of beauty, one that represents Afrocentric ideals, Eurocentric ideals appear to infiltrate these perceptions. According to some researchers, black women reject the idea of white beauty norms and do not view these as relevant in their personal ideas of beauty (Crocker et al., 2003; Greenwood & Dal Cin, 2012; Jefferson & Stake, 2000; Schooler et al., 2004; Rucker & Cash, 1992; Crocker & Major, 1989). Instead, it is proffered that black women tend to hold positive beliefs about in-group beauty values, relying on supports such as church and family for self-esteem (Greenwood & Dal Cin, 2012). Compared to white women, black women are less likely to evaluate their self-worth by how others’ perceive them (Crocker et al., 2003), have a tendency to internalize thin beauty ideals less (Jefferson & Stake, 2009), have more resistance to mainstream beauty norms (Rubin et al., 2002), and have higher levels of body satisfaction than white women (Botta, 2000; Schooler et al., 2004).

Several investigators and meta-analytic studies have questioned whether black-white differences in body dissatisfaction are substantially smaller than previously believed (Dolan, Lacey & Evans, 1990; Shaw, Ramirez, Trot, Randall, & Stice, 2004; Strigal-Moore, Sreiber, Pike, Wilfley, & Rodin, 1995; Wilfley et al., 1996; Shaw et al., 2004). In a meta-analysis that examined racial and ethnic differences in body satisfaction and eating disorders, Wildes et al. (2001) provided extensive evidence that black women were considerably more content with their bodies than white women. The 35 studies that were reviewed in this meta-analysis focused on
weight-related body image and eating disturbances measures and not satisfaction with skin color
and hair (Roberts et al., 2006).

Some African American scholars have challenged the belief that black women view their
physical appearance with the highest regard. Indeed, recent studies have determined that body
image is multidimensional (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002a, 2002b; Thompson, 2004). Non-weight
related aspects of body image such as facial features, skin color, hair length, and texture (Bond &
Cash, 1992) might influence body dissatisfaction as much as weight. Yet, many studies discount
these other physical aspects and target weight as the main reason for body dissatisfaction
(Altabe, 1996; Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002b).

Black women encounter concerns and dissatisfaction with non-weight related aspects of
body image. Greater satisfaction with weight more so than with other physical features has been
suggested (Neal & Wilson, 1989; Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Mosely, 2004). Acknowledging and
assessing non-weight related aspects of body image may help researchers and clinicians identify
sites of body dissatisfaction in black women. Moreover, such research may lead to the creation
of effective interventions that might help black women improve their self-appraisal.

Historically and in present times, women of African descent in the media, have generally
met Eurocentric ideals of body type, skin color, and hair texture. Recently, the media has begun
to portray more women of African descent as models of beauty or as sex symbols (e.g., Lena
Horne, Vanessa Williams, Halle Berry). These women closely approximate Eurocentric beauty
standards (Hill, 2002). Exceptions may be made for women of African descent who are
considered to have “exotic,” “jungle-like,” or “exaggerated” features. These features include
large lips, dark skin, and naturally coarse hair while maintaining a thin body. Although the
acknowledgment of beauty in women of African descent through media (e.g., commercials,
magazines, make-up advertisements) has increased over the years, beauty standards still include qualities and physical attributes that are far less naturally found in black women (Sekyai, 2003).

**Colorism, Black Hair, and Slavery**

Historically, the physical attributes of black women in the United States have been negativized. Colorism can be traced back to slavery. During this time there was a preference for lighter-skinned slaves by white male slave owners. These slaves were usually fathered by white male slave owners or had some European ancestry. Whites preferred the aesthetics of biracial and light skinned slaves, and believed they were more intelligent than dark-skinned slaves. Preference for lighter-skinned slaves was evidenced by the type of labor performed within the house whereas dark-skinned slaves toiled in the fields (Okawaza-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987; Hall, 1995). Not surprisingly, this preferential treatment gave birth to conflict and resentment between dark-skinned and light skinned slaves. After the abolition of slavery, discrimination and preferences of skin color permeated black communities (Okawaza-Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987; Hall, 1995).

Wallace Thurman’s, *The Blacker the Berry: A novel of Negro life* (1929) was the first novel to openly address colorism within the Black community. Written during the Harlem Renaissance, the novel explores the life of Emma Lou Morgan, a young African-American woman with dark skin. Morgan moves away from her lighter-skinned family and White community of Boise, Idaho, to the University of Southern California (USC), then to Harlem, New York in hopes of finding an African American community that accepts her. However, in both locations, she encounters discrimination by other African Americans who favor lighter skin, especially for women. Although controversial at the time of publication, *The Blacker the Berry: A novel of Negro life* opened the doors for other black popular media that discussed colorism
and hair texture discrimination such as: Toni Morrison’s novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Spike Lee’s movie *School Daze* (1988), Kiri Davis’s documentary *A Girl Like Me* (2005), Chris Rock’s movie *Good Hair* (2009), and Bill Duke’s and D. Channsin Berry’s documentary *Dark Girls*.

Similarly to skin color, hair valuations are associated with Eurocentric paradigms (Robinson-Moore, 2008; Robinson, 2011). Very few studies have focused exclusively on the relationship between black hair and beauty standards (Robinson, 2011; Tate, 2007). The value of hair can also be traced back to slavery and ideals of beauty that work against black women. White slave owners and society had a lack of appreciation for black women with highly textured hair. Hair maintenance for black women was practically non-existent due to insignificant hair tools, products, and lack of grooming time. Society considered the kinkiness of black hair as an imperfection that should be fixed or covered up. Some whites held such repulsion that in the mid-1800s, a city ordinance in New Orleans required black women with “coily” hair to cover it with a kerchief when in public. These policies and attitudes among others triggered African American women to view their natural texture as undesirable (Walker, 2007).

**Hair and Black Women**

In the 1900s Black women received a solution to their hair problems. Madame C.J. Walker, the first self-made female millionaire, created a successful line of hair products for Black women. Walker claimed that her “Wonderful Hair Grower” transformed Black hair into smooth, polished, and respectable hair. She designed the heated metal comb and multiple hairstyles that straightened and curled Black hair. Many women began to process and straighten their hair rather than wear their natural hair texture. Walker’s hair care system was marketed as a form of racial uplift; however, it appeased the White community who disapproved of Black
natural hair. These hair care services also influenced the belief that straight hair made Black people look sophisticated and dignified (Rooks, 1996).

**Psychological Resistance**

Black women in America face many challenges. From childhood through adulthood, black women develop racial identities, form attitudes and beliefs, and make lifestyle choices. These identity formations and self-creations are processed through a family and a community negatively impacted by a sociopolitical context framed by race, gender, and class oppression. In an effort to assist black adolescents and women to identify, name, and resist race, gender, and class oppression that press down on their lives while recognizing and avoiding suboptimal resistance, Robinson and Ward (1991) developed a theory of resistance. Two types of resistance are theorized: optimal and suboptimal. Derived from both Myer’s theory of Optimal Psychology and the Nguzo Saba value system, meaning “first fruit” in Swahili, seven principles are associated with optimal resistance that convey psychologically healthy attitudes and strategies for coping with environmental stressors and multiple forms of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, and classism). Optimal resistance strategies take a sociopolitical conscious stance towards oppression by naming and opposing it (Martin et al., 2013; Robinson & Ward, 1991). It is characterized by optimal behaviors and attitudes and requires the individual to be proactive in the community and utilize multiple resources: psychotherapy, pharmacology, exercise, and community and spiritual resources that may serve as preventions and interventions (Martin et al., 2013). While optimal resistance strategies require energy, these strategies also replenish energy (Robinson & Howard, 1994; Martin et al., 2013).
Conversely, suboptimal resistance is associated with survival or short-term, albeit numbing and soothing responses to oppression and pain (e.g., comfort eating, unprotected sex, drugs/alcohol; passive reliance on God). Suboptimal resistance strategies are associated with a disempowered state that is linked to a strong tendency to depression, feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and less gratification (Robinson & Kennington, 2002). Suboptimal or survival-oriented resistance refers to short-term dysfunctional, cognitive and behavioral adaptations to chronic stress and/or depression that do not serve women well in the long run, although they tend to have immediate and/or pleasure-inducing effects (Robinson & Ward. 1991). Black women may use both optimal and suboptimal resistance strategies, however, one modality of resistance is more characteristic of her life (Braithwaite-Hall, 2011; Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 1994; Martin, Boadi, Fernandes, Watt, & Robinson-Wood, 2014).

Psychological resistance is relevant for this study. While a woman’s physical appearance is important to her and others, black women co-exist in a society where a narrow range of beauty ideals exist and tend to exclude dark skin and Negroid features. Resistance theory may inform and perhaps predict skin color and hair satisfaction attitudes among black women.

**Social Anxiety**

Social Anxiety Disorder is characterized by significant and persistent fear of social or performance situations in which embarrassment or humiliation may occur (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders [5th edition], text version: American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Research shows that social anxiety can lead to lower quality of life, as well as, significant impairment in social and educational functioning for individuals (Hart et al, 2008).
Social anxiety has been widely studied with numerous development of measures over the last 30 years, including the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (Liebowitz, 1987), the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS), and Social Phobia Scale (SPS; Mattick & Clarke, 1998), the Social Phobia and Anxiety Inventory (SPAI; Turner, Beidal, Dancu, & Stanley, 1989), and the Interaction Anxiousness and Audience Anxiousness scales (Leary, 1983). Social Appearance Anxiety is a specific situational fear where one develops fear about being negatively evaluated for their appearance. These fears are highly relevant in understanding eating disorders, body dysmorphic disorders, and body image dissatisfaction (Hart et al, 2008). Few studies have investigated skin tone and hair, dimensions of the self that are linked to beauty among black women and anxiety. Doing so may reveal practice implications.

Social Network

Social support and networks are often considered a vital resource that influences one’s health (Ajrouch, Reisine, Lim, Sohn & Ismail, 2010). Positive social support can impact an individual’s psychological, physiological, and relational well being. Previous literature has found that social support can alleviate one’s stress, enhance self-esteem, and promote healthier coping behaviors like exercise and problem solving. Additionally social support can reduce blood pressure, susceptibility to illness, and play an instrumental role in maintaining healthy relationships. Unfortunately, not all forms of social network are positive or successful in providing support. In fact, some can increase levels of stress, blood pressure, and propensity to engage in unhealthy coping behaviors (e.g., alcohol and substance abuse). Previous research shows that black women with dissatisfaction towards their skin color and hair may have poor social networks, as well as low perceived social worth (Capodilupo, 2014). Whether intentional or unintentional, negative
forms of a social network can send insensitive and inappropriate messages that may be harmful to an individual (Hanasono, 2012).

*Family*

One of the most powerful forces in the lives of Black Americans is family (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Often black caretakers instill independence and self-esteem into their children and supply tools to fight against the external forces of racism (Suizzo, Robinson & Pahike, 2008; Wilder & Cain, 2011). “It is oftentimes within the family unit that Black consciousness and Black pride is learned and celebrated. At the same time however, Black families can simultaneously cultivate an internalized skin tone bias or colorism” (Wilder & Cain, 2011, p. 578). Family and other social networks (e.g., romantic partners, peers, social media, etc.) can influence one’s satisfaction with their skin color and hair.

*Black female friends*

Historically, black women have trusted each other as systems of support through various settings, such as, friends, church organizations, school, community, and workplace. It is assumed that feelings of attachment, nurturing, and loyalty to other black women are due to a shared common reality of oppression. This allows black women to rely on each other, especially during times of distress. Black women have been able to develop supportive networks consisting of other black women that provide assistance related to their struggles as black women and reduce feelings of stress (Peterson, 1997). However, these strong, trusting relationships can be hindered by the socialization of negative stereotypes regarding other black women and messages received regarding colorism, competition, and rejection that are often associated with black women (Christian et al., 2000; Williams, 1996).
Rockquemore’s study (2002) on racial identity construction among black/white biracial women found that participants reported a high frequency of negative encounters with mono-racial black women. These negative interactions with mono-racial black women were powerful experiences in biracial women’s lives. Some participants stated that mono-racial black women didn’t like them because they believed biracial women thought they were “all that” or conceited because of their light-skin, long hair, and attention from males. Additionally, biracial female participants stated that they were labeled as “stuck up,” “a bitch,” and black female friends, schoolmates, and even family members questioned their “blackness”.

Mate Selection

In terms of dating, mate selection, and romantic partners, research has consistently shown that lighter skinned black women are viewed as more attractive and successful than darker skinned black women (Brown, 1998; Hill, 2002a; Thompson & Keith, 2001; Wade & Bielitz, 2005). Community leaders, professional athletes, and other men of higher social or economic status are more likely to marry light skinned women than dark skinned women. Researchers have stated that this preference is due to lighter skinned black women being perceived as more attractive and honorable, making them more desirable marriage partners (Parmer, Arnold, Natt, & Janson, 2004; Russell, Wilson & Hall, 1992; Wade & Bielitz, 2005; Stephens & Thomas, 2012). This includes the African-American gay and lesbian community, which associates light skin and White mates with upper status (Russell, Wilson & Hall, 1992). In return, these preferences may influence black women’s romantic partner experiences, thus influencing their beliefs and attitudes towards skin color and hair.

Statement of the Problem
Despite the extensive literature on colorism to address the existence of internalized racism within the black community, there is limited understanding of black women’s skin color and hair satisfaction and the relationship with psychological constructs. This may be due to the focus on racial identity and self-esteem in previous colorism research studies. Psychologists have explored black adolescent females’ skin color and hair satisfaction and the utilization of resistance strategies (Brookins & Robinson, 1995; Robinson & Ward; 1991; Okazawa-Rey, Robinson & Ward, 1987). They have also investigated the relationship between optimal and suboptimal resistance and depression and attitudes about mental health (Braithwaite-Hall, 2011). However, there are no known studies that explore Black adult women’s skin color and hair satisfaction and the relationship to anxiety, psychological resistance, and social networks.

Black women are faced with multiple forms of oppression in their everyday lives. It is important to understand how one’s satisfaction with skin color and hair are influenced by family, peers, romantic partners, social media, and other social networks, as well as how their satisfaction impacts social appearance anxiety levels and utilization of resistance strategies.

As a result of consistent exposure to oppression, many black women risk the development of race-related and emotional stress, low self-esteem and self-worth, mental illnesses (e.g., anxiety, depression), food addiction, high blood pressure, substance abuse, and risky sexual behavior, among other psychological, physical, and social health issues (Marin et al., 2013; Robinson & Kennington, 2002; Brookins & Robinson, 1995). Many black women do not view colorism as an existing issue that affects their satisfaction with skin color, hair, and facial features, although they may readily acknowledge its historical importance, especially during slavery (Alford, 1997). This denial, that the sociohistorical context of colorism still influences the black community’s perception of beauty today, may lead to a deterioration of
health. Furthermore, black women may also resist seeking mental health services due to the inability to identify it as an issue of importance or mental health professionals’ lack of training in the area.

Theoretical Framework

*Optimal Psychology*

Myer’s (1988) Theory of Optimal Psychology is based on an Afrocentric worldview. In communicating the basic assumptions of her theory, she makes a comparison between a sub-optimal and an optimal worldview (Myers et al., 1991). The suboptimal worldview is parallel to the separation of spirit and matter. Self-worth is based on external validation; peace is found outside of oneself and existence is based on what can be seen and measured. The optimal worldview corresponds to an Afrocentric value system. Unlike the suboptimal worldview, there is a strong link between spirit and matter, and self-worth is highly valued. Myers theory focuses on an individual search to live in optimal conditions through self-knowledge. Optimal conditions are considered resources that contribute to one’s well being such as peace, joy, and harmony (Martin et al., 2013). In the optimal worldview, the “self… is seen as multidimensional encompassing the ancestor, those yet unborn, nature, and community” (Myers, et al., 1991, p.56).

For black women and other marginalized groups, positive self-identity is difficult to achieve in our culture. Myers (1991) considers the act of oppression a suboptimal socialized worldview that drives an individual into a broken sense of self, irrespective of racial and/or ethnic membership. This conceptual system predisposes individuals to numerous societal “isms” (racism, sexism, and ageism). Since there is a strong emphasis of external validation on self-worth, where oppressed individuals often feel defenseless and insecure. Therefore, the
conceptual system is a suboptimal system and all individuals that consciously or unconsciously adopt this system are oppressed. To survive in a harsh and oppressive environment, individuals may seek “quick-fix” strategies, such as emotionally driven eating and immediate sexual gratification in the absence of protection from pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases (Robinson & Ward, 1995).

Individuals of the suboptimal conceptual system become overly concerned with external standards such as physical attributes and materialism. In the suboptimal conceptual system, White skin and male sex characteristics are considered two important values in the system. Those who do not meet these criteria are left feeling inferior and inadequate. An optimal conceptual system or Optimal Psychology believes that a strong, whole sense of self derives from intrinsic feelings of worth and value (Myers, 1991; Myers, 2013).

**Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Model**

Another model that is useful in understanding the experiences of skin color and hair satisfaction among black women is Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological model (1979, 1994). Since the late 1970s Urie Bronfenbrenner’s original ecological systems theory has been extended to include developmental and biological traits of an individual. Bronfenbrenner’s biological model also includes time as an important component (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Collectively, psychological and biological traits and the environment facilitate human development (Flynn, Sanchez, & Harper, 2011). “Bronfenbrenner’s model canters around the idea that individuals’ experiences cannot be understood unless the settings that meaningfully influence their lives are also examined” (Flynn et al., 2011, p. 2).
Bronfenbrenner’s model (1979, 1994) includes five environmental systems with which an individual interacts: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and the chronosystem. At the center of the model is the developing individual. Biological traits and genetic aspects of the individual are acknowledged in the biological model; however, Bronfenbrenner focused more on the personal characteristics that accompany an individual to any social situation and/or interaction (Tudge, McKrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009). These characteristics were divided into three types: demand, resource, and force. Demand characteristics, also referred to as “personal stimulus” characteristics are those that act as an immediate stimulus to another person, such as age, gender, skin color and physical appearance. These types of characteristics may have impact on the individual’s initial interaction because often expectations are formed immediately. Resource characteristics relate partly to mental and emotional resources (e.g., past experiences, skills, and intelligence) and also social and material resources. Finally, force characteristics are related to variations in motivation, persistence, and temperament (Tudge et al., 2009). This study views the individual as a woman with phenotypic features that identify her as a person of African descent. Her mental and emotional resources stem from past experiences, education, and quality of caregivers as a child, as well as the influence of multiple systems upon her life.

The first interconnect system or structure is the microsystem, which consists of the individual and their immediate environment (e.g., home, school, work, religious institutions, neighborhood) and persons (e.g., family, romantic partners, friends) in which the individual spends a good deal of time engaging in activities and interacting. This study views the microsystem as the reciprocal relationship between the black woman and her immediate social network and its impact on her skin color and hair satisfaction. The second structure is the mesosystem, which involves the
interrelation between two or more microsystemic factors. For example, a black woman who has friends that insult her hairstyle may have anxiety about wearing a hairstyle to her workplace, out of fear of being negatively evaluated by her coworkers. The third structure is the exosystem, which involves a connection between the individual’s immediate context and a social setting in which the individual does not have an active role (e.g. political/education/government systems and structures, mass media). For example, a black woman may notice that in her community African American politicians and their spouses are considerably lighter skinned in comparison to her own skin color (Parmer, Arnold, Natt, & Janson, 2004; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992; Wade & Bielitz, 2005; Stephens & Thomas, 2012).

The fourth structure is the macrosystem, which consists of overarching influences or relationships such as societal norms, values, beliefs systems, and laws. In order to understand relationships among skin color and hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social appearance anxiety, and social networks among black women, one must understand the macro context. The macrosystem, specifically the cultural context refers to social norms and values that can best be described as multiple forms of conscious and unconscious racial bias and racism, sexism, oppression, class, and socioeconomic status for black people.

Lastly, the fifth structure is the chronosystem, which includes change or consistency over time in either or both the person and environment. Socio-historical events and circumstances are also included on the chronosystemic level (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Tudge et al., 2009; St. Vil, 2009). Similarly to the macrosystem, in order to understand the experiences of black women’s skin color and hair satisfaction, transitions and shifts in their lifespan and socio-historical context must be explored. Advances in technology make it easier for pictures to be taken of individuals and posted on the Internet, as well as easier access to Photoshop images of celebrities and
models with ideal beauty standards. Most importantly on the chronosystemic level lies the historical trauma of slavery (Ague, Pullman, Tropin & Pinto, 2012). White people’s preferential treatment and division of slaves by skin color perpetuated a color caste system that would still affect blacks 150 years after the abolition of slavery (Hunter, 2007).

**Significance of Present Research Study**

Awareness of skin color and hair satisfaction may help clinicians use specific theories and interventions that assist clients in working through issues of skin color and hair dissatisfaction. Mental health practitioners who are trained in Optimal Psychology and Resistance Theory may explore the use of suboptimal resistance strategies with a goal of understanding how utilization of these strategies interfere with black women’s satisfaction of skin color and hair (Martin et al., 2013). Additionally, black women may benefit from optimal resistance strategies within an oppressive society that evaluates them on a narrowly defined and white European beauty standard (Robinson & Ward, 1991).

Mental health practitioners need better awareness and understanding of issues surrounding skin color and hair satisfaction among black women, in order to create a safe environment where black women can discuss the contentious topic of colorism. Some black women may feel timid and uncomfortable about discussing such issues, especially if they feel a lack of empathy and/or knowledge of the topic from the listener. It is important for mental health practitioners not to minimize the importance of skin tone and hair in the lives of some clients. Ultimately, black women in treatment may be empowered by the clinician to reach an improved level of functioning and psychological well-being. Finally, it is my hope that this study will provide deeper insight into the effects of skin color and hair satisfaction and the impact of social
appearance anxiety among black women. The results from this study may be beneficial for future research studies’ exploration on this phenomenon.

**Rationale for Study**

The purpose of this study is two fold: 1) To examine the relationships among skin tone and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and psychological resistance among black adult women; 2) To qualitatively explore how family, friends, social media, and other social networks contribute to black women’s skin color and hair satisfaction. It is hypothesized that women with lower levels of skin color and hair satisfaction will have higher scores of social appearance anxiety; use more suboptimal resistance strategies, and have social networks that perpetuate skin color and hair texture dissatisfaction (Wilder & Cain, 2011). Additionally these women may use suboptimal resistance strategies due to an underdeveloped sense of self-worth, and racial and/or ethnic group hardships during childhood and adolescence (Ward, 1989). These individuals may lack a positive physical, social, and psychological development in an oppressive environment that has a history of contempt for their simultaneous blackness and femaleness (Brookins & Robinson, 1995; Thomas, Speight, & Witherspoon, 2008).

**Research Questions**

**Quantitative**

1. What strategies of resistance do black women describe and how are they used?
2. What is the relationship among skin color satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and strategies of resistance?
Qualitative

3. What social and environmental factors influence hair and skin satisfaction?

4. How does hairstyle choice contribute to social appearance anxiety among black women?

*Qualitative focus group interview questions*

1. Do you experience comments about your skin color from others, presently? What is said?
   Who says what?

2. Which populations tend to support your choices about your hair? Which populations do not? What is said?

3. Do you experience pressure from others and/or environments to wear certain types of hairstyles?

4. How has the media/social media (i.e. television, magazines, Facebook, Instagram, etc…) influenced your attitude towards your skin color and hair?

5. What messages did you receive about your skin color and hair growing up? From whom?
   What was said?

6. Have your attitudes towards your hair and skin color changed since childhood and/or adolescence? If so, what caused the change?

7. When are you most satisfied with your hair? Are you satisfied with your hair, currently?

8. Do you worry about what others think when you have a new hairstyle?

9. Do you avoid taking pictures or going out in public if you are dissatisfied with the state of your hair?

10. If your hair could talk, what would it say and to whom (Narrative Therapy Approach)?
Operational Definitions

*black women-* women of African descent. The terms black and African-American are used interchangeably. This serves to acknowledge that not all people who are black ethnically identify as African American (e.g. Africans, African Caribbean, Latinos of African descent).

*Colorism*- a term coined by Alice Walker (1982) and defined as “prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their color” (p. 290). Furthermore, colorism is defined as an “intraracial system of inequality based on skin color, hair texture, and facial features that bestows privilege and value on physical attributes that are closer to white.” (Wilder & Cain, 2011, p. 578).

*Non-weight related aspects of body image*- refer to a subjective picture or mental image of one’s physical characteristics (i.e. skin color, facial features, and texture and length of hair), other than body weight. Body image is multidimensional (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002a, 2002b).

*Social network*- A network of social interactions and personal relationships. In addition, a dedicated website or other application that enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc.

*Bad hair*- highly textured, tightly coiled hair, which is considered “coarse,” “nappy,” and/or “kinky.”

*Good hair*- straight or loosely wavy or curly hair that resembles hair of individuals with European or Native American ancestry.

*Natural hair*- hair whose texture has not been altered by, chemical straighteners, including relaxers, perms, and texturizers.
Relaxed/Permed/Texturized hair - chemically treated hair that permanently loosens the hair cuticle’s texture, resulting in a complete loss of a curl pattern (relaxer) or a looser curl pattern that is easily straightened.

Hair Extensions/Weaves - synthetic hair or human hair collected from other individuals that add length and/or fullness to one’s hair. Extensions are sometimes used as protective styles to give one’s actual hair a break from manipulation. Extensions can be integrated by clipping on, sewing in, glue bonding, braiding, etc.

Outline for Dissertation

This dissertation will be divided into five chapters with appendices. The first chapter will provide a brief introduction about beauty, body satisfaction, and the history of colorism, the rationale for this study, statement of the problem, and operational definitions. Chapter two will present a comprehensive review of the literature, focusing on black women’s mental health, skin color and hair, and social networks. Gaps in the research literature will also be identified. The third chapter will describe the research methods including how research participants will be selected, instrumentation used, and their psychometric properties, forms of data collection, data analysis, validation strategies to increase the validity and reliability of the study, potential ethical issues, and the role and background of the researcher. The fourth chapter will present the quantitative and qualitative results of the research as well as the analysis of the focus groups. Chapter five will discuss the results of the study, the implications for practice and future research, the strengths and limitations of the study, a conclusion, and lessons learned. An appendix section will include copies of the institutional review board approval form Northeastern
University, demographic questionnaire, measures used to conduct the study, informed consent forms, and focus group protocols.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Multiple jeopardy among Black women is defined and discussed. An overview of colorism and the historical contexts of skin color and hair among black women provide an in-depth exploration of colorism in America. Empirical research studies about skin color and hair satisfaction, colorism in black families, and stereotype images and colorism in the media are also reviewed. Finally, the gaps in colorism research end this chapter.

Black Women and Multiple Oppressions

Racial/ethnic minority women in the United States and abroad tend to reside in racist and patriarchal societies that expose them to various forms of racism, sexism, and classism within interpersonal relationships, at work, through the legal systems and from the media (American Psychological Association, 2007). American society in particular ascribes status, normalcy, and privilege to Whiteness (skin color), maleness, and wealth.

Along with racism, patriarchy, and classism are interlocking systems of both oppression and privilege (Landry, 2007) that operate in tandem according to immutable characteristics such as race, gender, and skin color (Landry, 2007; Robinson-Wood, 2009; 2014; Thomas, 2004). African American women are the only women of color whose members immigrated to America unwillingly (Greene, 1997). These multiple oppressions, often referred to as “multiple jeopardy,” can cause potentially damaging mental health consequences to black women (Szymanski & Stewart, 2010; Robinson-Wood, 2013). Multiple jeopardy refers to the several and simultaneous oppressions of racism, sexism, and classism that black women face (King,
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR HAIR

2007). These oppressions constitute as interdependent control systems. They are not only simultaneous oppressions but also have multiplicative and intersecting relationships. For example, black women during slavery endured the same demanding, strenuous physical labor and ruthless punishments as men, but were also subjected to rape as females. Black women also served to enhance the quantity and quality of the “capital” of a slave economy by reproducing and raising their own children to become slaves. Additionally, the exploitation of black women as concubines, mistresses, and sexual slaves to white men differentiates their experience from white females’ sexual oppression because this form of oppression can only exist interdependently through racism and classism (King, 1988; King 2007). As poet and black female scholar Maya Angelou (1989) stated: “Black women whose ancestors were brought to the United States beginning in 1619 have lived through conditions of cruelties so horrible, so bizarre, the women had to reinvent themselves” (p, 8). Essed (1991) coined the term gendered racism to refer to the racial oppression of black women that is influenced by narrow and biased views of gender roles. Many personal experiences of racism that black women encounter can be considered forms of gendered racism.

Sociohistorical context is essential to understanding the psychological well being of black women. Sexual exploitations of black women during slavery still have far-reaching consequences for their psychological adjustment and sexual health (Wyatt, 1997). Due to the mixing of races beginning during the slavery era, and the ostensible benefits of biracial and light-skinned African Americans, psychological and cultural issues surrounding internalized racism and colorism continue within the black community. Since physical appearance has always been a greater concern for women than men, skin color and hair satisfaction as well other facial features
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR HAIR

(e.g., nose, lips) play a major role in black girls and women’s conceptualization of their beauty, self-worth, and self-esteem (Thomas, 2004).

Today, black women deal with at least two sources of oppression in their everyday life: racism and sexism. While every black woman in the United States lives in a society that esteems whiteness and males, some black women have the additional burden of living with classism and/or heterosexism (i.e., discrimination against homosexuals and bisexuals). As these forms of oppressions arise, they influence black women on personal, institutional, and sociopolitical levels. These influences affect black women in both external (e.g., prejudice, harassment, and discrimination) and internalized (e.g. negative attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about one’s minority group) (Szymanski & Stewart, 2010; Cross, 1991).

Thomas (2004) defines the psychology of black women as a “systematic study,” one that acknowledges that the area should incorporate applications of rigorous, yet contextually relevant paradigms and scientific study. Recognition of the interlocking identities of black women leads to the development of a “diversity-mindfulness “ perspective in clinical practice, research, education, and training. According to Russo and Vaz (2001), diversity-mindfulness perceives and processes a multiplicity of differences among individuals, their social context, and their cultures. It is imperative that psychologists offer multifaceted conceptualizations of gender and new theories of difference that integrate an in depth understanding of black women’s historical, sociocultural, familial, and developmental heterogeneity, as well as their dislocation, fragmentation, diaspora, and journeying (Thomas, 2004; Russo & Vaz, 2001). The lives of black women cannot merely be compared to those of black men or white women, it is important to study and understand the strengths, resilience, struggles, and other unique experiences of black women (Thomas, 2004).
Overview of Colorism

Throughout history, skin color hue is a biological factor that has historically affected the physical, social, psychological, emotional, and economic lives of African-Americans. The skin color of black people and African-Americans range in color from very light (to the extent that some are able to pass for white) to extremely dark. Past intermixing with whites and Native Americans during the colonial era account for much of the wide variation in skin color. In addition to skin color, black people’s hair ranged in hair textures, ranging from very straight to very coarse, and different facial features that may be Afrocentric, or that may closely resemble facial features of persons who are European, Asian or of Hispanic descent. The union between biracial individuals (black and white or Native American) with each other and mono-racial black people also account for the diverse range of skin color and hair texture amongst blacks, especially throughout the Americas (Neal & Wilson, 1989; Russell et al., 1992). The term colorism, coined by Alice Walker in 1983, is defined as the internalized bias and favor for Eurocentric features meaning light skin, European facial features (e.g., aquiline nose, thin lips), and “good” hair (Wilder, 2010), where good hair refers to hair that is long and straight or wavy, rather than tightly coiled and/or kinky. Since this time, race scholars have defined colorism as the allocation of privilege and disadvantage based on one’s skin color, where additional factors such as hair texture, eye color, facial features, education, and income also shape perceptions of who is considered dark or light skinned (Burton, Bonilla-Silva, Ray, Bukelew, et. al., 2010; Hall 2010). A historical overview is necessary to fully grasp and understand the dynamic of colorism and its role in the satisfaction of skin color and hair among black women.

Historical Context of Black Women’s Skin Color

Intermixing with Native Americans and white people were easily tolerated when the first
groups of Africans arrived to the United States. This was because Africans often shared the same social status of Native Americans and indentured whites and the white female population of early colonial America was very small (Neal & Wilson, 1989). These unions resulted in the first generation of “mulatto” or mixed-heritage, black Americans. These individuals continued to procreate with other blacks, whites, and Native Americans as well as other mixed-heritage blacks. This resulted in a free society of lighter skin blacks (Hughes & Hertel, 1990).

When slavery became more prevalent and profitable in the colonies, many blacks lost their indentured servitude status and/or were considered low class citizens and unworthy of the same basic rights as whites (Neal & Wilson, 1989; Harvey, 1995). Although lighter-skinned biracial blacks remained free, they were in a state of constant anxiety about whether their skin color would lead them into slavery. A connection between lighter-skinned blacks, social status, and privilege emerged. However, laws were soon developed to eradicate free blacks and justify the existence of slavery. Legislators passed laws in states such as Maryland and Virginia that indicated mulattoes, quadroons (a person whose ancestry is one-fourth black), octoroons (a person whose ancestry is one-eight black), and any other person having just one drop of black blood would have the same legal status as a pure African. These persons were prevented from identifying as white even if they looked completely “white” in physical appearance. This statute became was known as the “one-drop” rule. By the 1700s this rule was well-established in the South and eventually reached locations in the North. Today, many Americans continue to define race according to the “one-drop” rule (Russell et al., 1993).

As mentioned earlier, during slavery labor was divided by skin color. Although laws were passed prohibiting sexual unions between races, white male slave owners continued to engage in sexual activity with black female slaves resulting in biracial offspring (Neal & Wilson,
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1989). These lighter-skinned individuals often received better living quarters, food, and clothing than their darker-skinned counterparts (Wade, 1996). The biracial offspring of white slave owners were also better educated (sometimes sent abroad for education), given opportunities for skilled labor or designated less strenuous positions on the plantation such as the cook, valet, housekeeper and driver (Boyd-Franklin, 1989; Hughes & Hertel, 1990; Neal & Wilson, 1989; Russell et al., 1993). Additionally, others were given freedom by their white slave owners/fathers (Russell et al., 1993). Because white slave masters considered mulattoes more intelligent, superior and capable than pure Africans who were thought to be stronger and better for doing work in the sun, dark skinned slaves endured physically grueling fieldwork on the plantations. Consequently, whites placed greater economic value on light-skinned slaves, demanded higher prices for them during auctions. In some parts of the South, biracial females were actually bred and sold for huge profit (Keith & Herring, 1991; Neal & Wilson, 1989).

As to be expected the preferential treatment of light-skinned slaves over dark skinned slaves divided slaves and created tension in their living quarters. At the end of the work day, “house slaves” returned to their living quarters from the “big house” imitating mannerisms of upper class white families and sometimes flaunting their education. This created envy and resentment on the part of the “field slaves,” thusly creating animosity within the black race for many years to come. Overall slavery took its toll on all slaves of African descent. The work in a slave owner’s home was often dangerous (especially for females who at any time could be a victim of rape), alienating, and monitored more than fieldwork, thus making house labor not necessarily a better option (Russell, 1992).

As a consequence of slavery, many light-skinned blacks began to internalize the idea that they were better than dark-skinned blacks (Graham, 1999). By the end of the Civil War, light-
skinned and biracial blacks that once enjoyed significant privileges because of their skin color were now at an equal status with darker, newly freed, less educated blacks (Russell et al., 1993). Individuals who were light enough to pass for white and possessed Eurocentric features did so. Some individuals passed for white with the intent to move into white society and completely deny any part of their African ancestry, while others decided to pass for white for financial reasons. The latter continued to return to black communities and remain connected. Although politics surrounded both decisions, others considered either decision a form of abandonment and racial self hatred (Harris, 2014).

While many individuals who could pass took advantage of this option, others chose not to and showed commitment to their fellow blacks and used their appearance and education to help them (Harris, 2014). W.E.B. Du Bois argued that 10 percent of the black population should become educated immediately, and assist the remaining 90 percent. He described this movement as “The Talented Tenth.” Although this proposal appeared to be altruistic and W.E.B Du Bois was among the first scholars to discuss skin color hierarchy in black communities, the individuals who were known as the ten percent were light-skinned and of upper class. The two political leaders of this time W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington were both mixed heritage. These individuals created middle class communities across the South, and married and procreated with other light skinned blacks creating lighter offspring every generation. Although the “Talented Tenth” sought to uplift the 90 percent, they were very selective about their offspring marrying the “right” kind of black folks (Harris, 2014)

Persons of African descent who wanted to preserve their privilege and social status, but couldn’t pass for white, segregated themselves into their own communities. This further alienated dark-skinned blacks and actively discriminated against them (Russell et al., 1993).
During the Reconstruction Era, myths and misconceptions about intelligence, class, and beauty continued to be based on one’s skin color, hair, and facial features. “Good” features were synonymous with Eurocentric characteristics and “bad” features were synonymous with Afrocentric features (Parks & Woodson, 2002). Various terms and nicknames were used to identify black people of different skin colors. Light-skinned people were often referred to as fair, bright, yellow; medium-brown individuals were called bronze, brown skinned; and dark-skinned people were called jet black, ink spot, or shine. Darker skinned individuals were considered ugly, mean, aggressive, and lower class (Parish, 1944). To further segregate from their dark-skinned counterparts, light-skinned blacks formed exclusive social clubs and societies, namely Blue Vein, Brown Fellowship, The Links and Jack & Jill; and colleges (including sororities and fraternities) and churches that required skin color comparison test to brown paper bag, pencils, rulers, and doors. Any individual that was darker than these objects were refused membership (Gatewood, 1990; Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992; Graham, 1999). Black women were especially targeted, as fraternities held parties that required members to pay for admission based on the skin color of their date. The darker the date’s skin color, the more the fraternity member paid for admission (Parks & Woodson, 2002). Memberships to these elite organizations were considered an honor (Russell, 1992). While light-skinned individuals were valued, skin that was “too light or white” was unacceptable, as it was a sign of illegitimacy and white blood. These individuals also experienced rejection and ridicule (Neal & Wilson, 1989).

The politics of skin color post emancipation and prior to the Civil Rights Movement were contradictory to the liberation of blacks in America. While it created access to education for persons who were legally classified as black, it encouraged dark-skinned blacks to devalue their skin and envy lighter hues and whiteness. In a paradoxical twist, it created racial pride for some
at the cost of racial self-hatred. Light-skinned blacks that were privileged and happy not to be dark, often helped their dark-skinned counterparts. However dark-skinned black seemed to be viewed as charity, which prevented light-skinned blacks from socializing or considering them of equal status, thus furthering identity formation, racial progress, self worth, class issues, and racial pride that began when the first Africans were brought to America (Harris, 2014).

By the 1960s and early 1970s the Black Power, Black Pride, and Civil Rights movements gained popularity and encouraged racial consciousness and black pride. These movements created a change in the belief systems of many blacks regarding appreciation for Blackness and African heritage (Hall, 1992). The Black Power and Civil Rights movements gave birth to the “Black is Beautiful” ideology, which encouraged black people to define their own standards of beauty and celebrate their own culture. Black people began to refute Eurocentric beauty standards and embrace Afrocentric features. Skin color bias and stratification appeared to diminish right along with the Jim Crow era. Prior to this movement using the term “Black” to describe an individual of African descent was considered derogatory and demeaning. Regardless of non-black people’s views, Afrocentric features such as dark skin, kinky hair, broad noses and full lips, began to be appreciated within the black community (Neal & Wilson, 2005). Both light-skinned and dark-skinned participants of these movements were more open to marrying dark-skinned partners and considered brown-skin as the best color (Goering, 1972). For the first time in black American history dark-skin and African features were celebrated. On college campuses, dark features and kinky hair were highly desirable (Hall, 1992). Conversely, the Black Pride movement brought about a major decrease in favoritism for lighter-skinned blacks (Neal & Wilson, 1989). Lighter skin complexions became less uniformly desirable (Bond & Cash, 1992). Ironically, light-skinned blacks often were excluded from various social and political groups that
were created to promote civil rights and Black awareness. The “Blackness” of light-skinned blacks was sometimes questioned with hostility (Russell et al., 1993). Though darker skin was appreciated in this era, similarly to the extremely light-skinned individuals of the early 1900s, very dark-skinned was undesirable and discriminated against in black communities (Bond & Cash, 1992; Neal & Wilson, 1989). Despite the efforts to maintain these movements, they were unable to permanently erase the age-old beliefs regarding skin color and features within the black community (Hall, 1992).

By the 1980s the ingrained beliefs and attitudes associated with Eurocentric standards of goodness and attractiveness returned (Neal & Wilson, 1989). A comparison of the main effects for skin color from 1950 to 1980 showed that the beliefs, attitudes, and effects of skin color have not changed greatly (Hughes and Hertel, 1990). Light-skinned African-Americans are still economically, vocationally, and educationally better off than dark-skinned African Americans. In 1991 the family income of a lighter-skinned African Americans was 50 percent greater than a darker-skinned African American family, and their personal income was 65 percent greater than that of dark-skinned African Americans (Keith & Herring, 1991). Furthermore, skin color predicts educational attainment, occupation, and personal and family income over and above socio-demographic variables like age, socioeconomic status, and parental background (Keith & Herring, 1991).

Colorism affects both black men and women, however it appears to have a stronger effect on women than men (Thompson and Keith, 2001; Neal and Wilson, 1989). This may be largely due to the importance of physical attractiveness and beauty imposed on and internalized by women living in a sexist, racist, and patriarchal society. In early studies dark-skinned women were viewed as having the fewest options for educational attainment and career advancement, least
marriageable, occupying the bottom of the social ladder, and more color conscious than dark-skinned men (Parrish, 1944). Empirical research studies conducted in separate decades during the 40s, 60s, 70s, and 80s indicate that both whites and blacks consider light-skinned black females to be more attractive than dark-skinned black females (Neal, 1988).

While some may believe skin color bias is thing of the past, more recent events surrounding colorism validate that more research is needed. For example, in October 2007, 27-year-old Ulysses Barnes, a Detroit party promoter, was reproached by the black community and anti-racism advocates for throwing a “Light-skin Bash,” an event guaranteeing all light-skinned women free entry. Due to the Internet, word of the party spread rapidly and black women across the country demanded the party be cancelled. When asked about his reasoning for throwing a gathering with such an offensive theme, Barnes quickly retorted that “it was a brilliant promotion at the time,” and there were also future plans for similar events for “chocolate” and “caramel” black women respectively (Retrieved August 28, 2014 from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21367799). Other examples are the statements and comments about skin color bias made on social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook). While a benefit of social media may be that people are relatively more comfortable making bold statements over the Internet than they would be in person, such expression can occur at the expense of others’ feelings. A twitter engine search typing the term “light-skin” or “dark-skin” would result in more party promotions about light-skinned girls being granted free entry, twitter pages named “team light-skin” and “team dark-skin,” men admitting their preference for lighter-skinned girls and thinking darker skinned girls look “weird,” and trending topics of disbelief that dark-skinned girls with long hair exist (Retrieved August 28, 2014 from http://www.newstatesman.com/society/2013/10/colourism-why-even-black-people-have-
**Historical Context of Black Women’s Hair**

Prior to the institution of slavery, hair was very important in Africa. African hair varied from tribe to tribe in texture, length, style, symbolism, and meaning. A person’s hair could indicate their marital status, geographic location, age, religion, ethnic identity, wealth, and rank within a tribe. These hairstyles included braids, beads, and plaits, patterns shaved into the scalp, shells, flowers, or strips of material woven into the hair. Specifically, both female and male devotees of certain Yoruba gods and goddesses required their hair to be braided in a specific style. Since hair is the most elevated point of the body it was considered the closest to divine. It was believed that communication from spirits and gods travelled through the hair to get to one’s soul (Byrd & Tharps, 2002). Most African captives’ hair was shaved off by slave owners for what they considered sanitary reasons, before arriving to America. During this period, hair was so valued to Africans that a shaved head was the equivalent of taking away someone’s identity (Byrd & Tharps, 2002).

During slavery, the once glorified curls and kinks of individuals in West African societies was replaced by shame and insecurity from terms used to describe African hair such as, “bad”, “nappy,” “wool,” and “wild.” The implication was that their tresses needed to be “fixed” or “controlled.” These slaves worked in the field all day, without much thought of their appearance. The combs and hair accessories that were available in their homeland were not readily available in America. Long, thick, and healthy tresses were now transformed to tangled and matted hair due to the inaccessibility of proper hair products and tools. The scarves that field slaves wore on their heads were not only for sun protection, but also to cover up hair that had become unsightly and unkempt (Thompson, 2009). On special occasions, field slaves used shears...
and axle grease to fix their hair, which caused hair to stretch and break (Russell, 1992). Conversely, mulattoes or slaves with some European or Native American ancestry who had similar hair textures to white people received terms such as “good,” “curly,” “soft,” “nice,” towards their hair. These slaves were made to feel superior because of their hair texture, while mono-racial slaves’ hair became a badge of racial inferiority (Banks, 2000). Light-skinned slaves were also more likely allowed to cornrow, braid, or plait their hair to look presentable (Byrd & Tharps, 2002). Slaves who worked in the “big house” were also likely to wear wigs or shape their hair as wigs like the upper class men of the 18th century. Additionally, white slave owners’ wives would shave off biracial female slaves’ hair as a form of punishment, especially if it resembled European hair (White & White, 1995). One can infer that this act intended to lower the status and value of these women by removing a trait that brought them closer to Whiteness. Such practice further distanced slaves from their African hair traditions.

By the time slavery was abolished, the elaborate and symbolic African hair designs were replaced by poorly imitated white people’s hair (Thompson, 2009). After the Civil War, mulattoes with straightened hair were seen as more fashionable and other Black women sought that same processed look (Russell, 1992). The benefits and privileges associated with European features seemed to outweigh black people’s appreciation of their naturally kinky-textured hair. Soon they began to use chemicals and heat based straightening tactics to alter their hair texture (Byrd & Tharps, 2002).

Madame C.J. Walker’s invention of the “pressing” comb and later chemical straightening cream assisted with these alterations. However, blacks in cities like Boston and Philadelphia were ridiculed in the theaters and on the streets, as well as satirized in the press in failed attempts to emulate white hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2002). Within the black community, black people found
themselves internalizing the concept of good hair/bad hair, and viewing dark-skinned blacks with kinkier hair as less attractive, less intelligent, and worth less than their light-skinned counterparts. While elite societies for light-skinned blacks gave perspective members skin color tests, they also administered hair texture test. In order to pass the “Comb test” individuals had to be able to pass a fine-toothed comb smoothly through their hair. If their hair was too “kinky” membership was denied (Byrd & Tharps, 2002). Even photographs of women in black colleges and universities formed in the 1800s (e.g., Howard University, Hampton University, Spelman University) appeared to have unspoken requirements for admissions that reflected hair texture and skin color that showcased some European ancestry (Rooks, 1996).

The early 1900s also focused on the belief that maintenance of proper conduct and appearance could uplift the status of the black race and ensure access to civil rights. Thus defining the notion of proper conduct and appearance became a major area of discourse among powerful leaders in the African American community (Tyler, 1990). Booker T. Washington, Alexander Crummel, and James Samuel Stemons were all advocates for African American women straightening their hair (Tyler, 1990). Straightening hair became synonymous with upper social class while nappy hair was associated with lower class (Banks, 1997). Crummel also advocated the assimilation of Victorian or White middle class values and codes of conducts for blacks because he believed European culture was the most advanced in the world (Tyler, 1990).

Throughout the early 1900s into the early 1960s hair straightening became a staple especially for black women. Black women continued to useperms and relaxers (i.e., chemical hair straighteners), despite the serious health implications. Sodium Hydroxide (lye) is the main ingredient in many chemical hair-straightening formulas. Lye is also used as an industrial chemical found in drain cleaners, oven cleaners, and soap. The use of more than 10 percent of
lye in household cleaners was banned due to the erosion it caused in drain pipes. The intentional use of lye based products on the hair can cause first to third degree burns, blindness, hair breakage, and dermatitis of the scalp, hair dryness, scalp irritation, and lung difficulty (Woodson, 2002).

The Black Pride, Black Power, and the Civil Rights movements represented a revolution in black attitudes about hair. For the first time in black American history large numbers of women stopped chemically straightening their hair and both men and women wore their hair untamed and free in a picked out round shape style known as the Afro (Russell, Wilson, & Hall 1992). As a manifestation of black pride and a clear choice for Afrocentricity instead of American mainstream standards, the Afro became personal commitment and symbol of ethnic identity, thus a political statement (Firth, 1973a). Looking “as black as possible” was now associated with higher status within the black community. Attempts to emulate European styles were associated with a rejection of one’s African heritage and resulted in lesser status. Moreover, preference for straighter hair was presumed to represent self-loathing (Greene et al., in press). In addition to Afros, other natural hairstyles such as curls, plaits, braids, ornaments in the hair and other styles that exemplified black beauty and creativity rose in popularity. These styles indicated that black natural hair was beautiful and empowering in spite of being socialized to believe it was unsightly and uncivilized (Bell, 2008). This political statement expressed through the hair was also worn by political figures and celebrities such as Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, Malcolm X, The Jackson Five, Pam Grier, and members of the Black Panther Party (Patton, 2006). Arogundade (2003) theorizes that a hairstyle never struck as much fear into white America as the Afro did during the late 1960s. News bulletins of angry-faced Afro-Americans, violent demonstrations and race riots threw the media into a tailspin of hysteria that succeeded in associating style with
militant behaviors. More than likely, these are attributes contributed to some perceptions held today toward such hairstyles.

Hair was important during the Black Power Movement because it resembled, “black self-determination, self-definition, and the active pursuit of freedom from oppression” (Bell, 2008, p.9). The Black Power movement critiqued black popular culture and demonstrated how the lives of black people in America had been marked by the slave trade and the dehumanizing effect of racism. It also exposed how black people’s actions in the past contributed to their own degradation as a people (Bell, 2008).

In the 1970s and 80s, the resistance to White power and hegemonic beauty standards through the Black Power Movement began to fade. Based on hiring and firing practices, Blacks learned that in order to obtain jobs and succeed, it was imperative to assimilate with respect to hairstyle and dress (Byrd & Tharps, 2002). Many African Americans accepted work-related dress codes as a suitable reason to forgo their natural hairstyles and return to chemically straightening their hair, donning wigs, and wearing weaves (Byrd & Tharps, 2002) which meant avoiding braids, Afros, dreadlocks, and other hairstyles perceived to have political overtones. Alternatively, the Jheri Curl, the “black” version of the curly perm, became very popular in the black community. Initially this hairstyle was supposed to be low maintenance; however, the chemical used for Jheri Curls were so harsh that it left the hair extremely dry. Jheri Curl wearers constantly needed to moisturize their hair with oils, creams, and sprays to hydrate (Byrd & Tharps, 2002). Additionally, Jheri Curl wearers began to be viewed as being ashamed of their blackness, ironically most often by women and men who had no ideological problems with perm relaxers (Byrd & Tharps, 2002). The Jheri Curl trend eventually faded and became taboo within the black community (Woodson, 2002).
By the 1990s and the 21st century, hair waves and perm relaxer continued to prevail into the millennium. Many African American women including celebrities like Janet Jackson, Diana Ross, Tyra Banks, and Naomi Campbell openly admit to wearing weaves (Thompson, 2009). According to Byrd and Tharps (2002), by the late nineties, 1.3 million pounds of human hair valued at $28.6 million were imported from countries (e.g., China, India, and Indonesia) where poor women sell their hair by the inch. Many African American women saw weaves as a way to achieve versatile looks and just-step-out - of -bed-and -go hair. The long-standing problem of not having long hair was effectively solved for many. However, weaves were generally looked down upon. Women who had naturally long tresses were again most desirable, especially among black men who complimented women with long hair yet questioned whether it was from a weave. Weaves served to revitalize the good hair versus bad hair conflict that became dormant during the Black Power movement (Byrd & Tharps, 2002).

Today hair continues to be important to African Americans especially women. The market research firm, Mintel, estimated that non-natural, Black hair-care is between a 1.8 billion and 15 billion dollar industry in America (Thompson, 2009). Although African Americans only comprise 12-13 percent of the U.S. population, Black women are the leading consumers of hair products that either temporarily or permanently alter the chemical structure, shape, texture and appearance of the hair, spending triple the amount of money that White women spend on their hair annually (Byrd & Tharps, 2002; Patton, 2006). African American nappy or kinky hair is still not a widely accepted symbol of “attractive” hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2002).

Black women’s hair has also been the topic of controversy in the last few years. For example, in 2007 a White radio host, Don Imus, infamously characterized a group of African American
female basketball players as "nappy-headed hos." Although the radio discussion was initiated in celebration of the team’s advancement to the NCAA Women’s Basketball Championship, negative racist sentiments about their hair and appearance became the subject of discussion instead. Imus later justified his remarks by explaining, “That phrase [nappy-headed hos] didn't originate in the White Community. That phrase originated in the Black community. Young Black women all through that society are demeaned and disparaged and disrespected by their own Black men, and they are called that name in Black hip hop" (Scarecrow Press, 2010). Evidence of disdain for kinky textured black hair in the black community was exemplified by mostly black women’s reactions to sixteen year old Gabby Douglass (who created history as the first U.S. Olympian to win two gold medals on the team and all-around Olympic competitions) in 2012. Douglass was inundated by the number of critical comments she discovered on social media websites (e.g., Twitter and Facebook) expressing disapproval and chastising her for her kinky textured hair (which was pulled into a bun with clips and gel) during the Olympic competitions. In an interview with the Huffington Post, Gabby responded to the hundreds of critical comments she received by stating, “What's wrong with my hair? …I just made history and people are focused on my hair?” Gabby’s mother also responded to her daughter’s hair critics by stating, "It hurt because it was coming from the community that should have upheld us the most. It was coming from within her own race, African-American women who are the people who are supposed to relate to her and be the happiest for her” (Retrieved August 28, 2014 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/07/gabby-douglas-hair-mom-responds_n_1751109.html). Unfortunately, these comments resurfaced four years later during the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. People, particularly black women criticized the Olympic gold medalist once again, for having “nappy” edges that were “unkempt,” and
“unsightly.” Douglas was also criticized for not placing her hand on her heart during the USA national anthem, appearing “bitter” that her other teammates placed higher than her, and placing eighth in the uneven bars competition (Retrieved on September 03, 2016 from http://www.latimes.com/sports/olympics/la-sp-oly-rio-2016-after-final-event-gymnast-gabby-1471216586-htmlstory.html ). Douglas response to the criticism on social media:

For me, when I read certain comments, I’m just like, ‘Whoa, whoa, whoa.’ That’s far from me and far from my personality,” she said. “It’s the comments and social media and people attacking you, ‘Your hair is like, blah, blah, blah.’


A number of people, including celebrities’ tweeted comments in Douglas’ defense. Cardi B of the real television show, ‘Love & Hip Hop’ created a video on Instagram in support of Douglas’ hair. She mentioned that black women’s natural hair tightens up in hot weather and when they sweat, why is that such a bad thing (Retrieved on September 03, 2016 from http://blackgirllonghair.com/2016/08/cardib-coins-the-term-blacklooksmatter-in-response-to-people-mocking-kinky-hair/)? In this video Cardi B coins the hashtag #blacklooksmatter and stated:

With as much heat as black women get about our “kitchens” and nappy edges, we get heat about the damage done to them as a result of trying to hide them with weaves. We just can’t win, can we? And we are the chief ones hating on Gabby Douglas’s hair. If black lives matter to you so much, then black looks, afro looks, should matter to you too.
Cardi B discusses something that occurs to many black women, especially those with natural hair. Curls become tighter from heat and sweat, especially when engaging in strenuous physical activities like Douglas in the Olympics. Research suggests one reason why black women have the lowest rates of exercising out of any other race and gender, is because of the concern about ruining their hair (Vesey, 2014; Hall et al., 2013).

Despite the stigma that persists regarding kinky hair, Fletcher (2009) argued that there has been an increase in African American women wearing and embracing natural textured hairstyles, evident through: (1) hundreds of internet blogs on Black women’s natural hair, (e.g., Curly Nikki, AfroBella, The Good Hair Blog, Newly Natural, and Afroniquely You), (2) over sixteen thousand YouTube videos on styling, or transitioning into wearing natural hair, and (3) the proliferation of salons specializing in natural hair styles (Fletcher, 2009). Although the trend in natural hair is arguably growing (Byrd & Tharps, 2002), Many African American women continue to alter the natural texture of their hair by using pressing combs, flat irons, perm relaxers, adding extensions and using a plethora of other means (Fletcher, 2009; Henton, 2011; Mosley, 2004; Patton, 2006).

**Skin Color Satisfaction among Black Women**
It is important to review empirical research of skin color and hair satisfaction among black women over the past 20 years for the present study. This allows the researcher to understand prior findings and trends, as well as gaps in colorism research.

In one of the first investigations to quantitatively study skin color satisfaction, Bond and Cash (1992) examined skin color and body image among 68 African American college women ranging from ages 18 to 37. The participants completed the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) and Skin Color Questionnaire (SCQ; Bond & Cash, 1992). Using the Skin Color Assessment Procedure (SCAP), participants were asked to choose the skin color shade which: resembles their actual facial skin color, their personal ideal skin color, and the color they believed African-American males would find most attractive. Primary findings showed that: (1) Overall, the majority of participants reported skin-color satisfaction, with medium-skinned participants feeling the most comfortable with their skin color, (2) dark-skinned women reported being the least comfortable with their skin color, (3) more women indicated that they would make their skin lighter than darker if given a chance, (4) the majority of women in the study believed that black men found lighter-skinned women more attractive than darker-skinned women, and (5) dissatisfaction with skin color was found to be related to more negative overall body image evaluations and less satisfaction with facial features.

An extended version of the SCQ, the Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS) was developed by Falconer and Neville (2000) to study general and cultural factors associated with body image appraisals of 124 African American college women, between the ages of 18 and 51, attending a large southern historically Black university. Consistent with Bond and Cash’s (1992) study, the participants who were less satisfied with their skin color were also less satisfied with their overall appearance. Additionally, participants who were dissatisfied with their skin tone
expressed similar internalization of European American standards of beauty. Using the Self-Perception Survey (SPS; Mucherah & Fraizer, 2013), which combined items from the Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS; Bond & Cash, 1992; Falconer & Neville 2000), Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ; Mazzeo, 1999), and Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965; Snook & Hall, 2002), to analyze the relationship between skin color, body satisfaction, and self-esteem among black women with diverse ethnicities; Mucherah and Fraizer (2013) examined skin color satisfaction among 328 women across the African diaspora (Africa, the United States, and the Caribbean). Also consistent with Bond and Cash’s study (1992), Mucherah and Fraizer found that light-skinned, biracial participants were the most satisfied with their skin color.

*Self Esteem*

An individual’s self-esteem is influenced by the social comparisons they make of themselves to others and the reactions people have towards them. Black women will compare themselves to other black women within their community. The heterogeneity of skin color and colorism create a dissonant racial environment and become a source of low levels of self-esteem (Thompson & Keith, 2001). Thompson and Keith (2001) found that skin color was a significant predictor of the self-esteem for black women, but not black men. The authors concluded that for the black women in their study, self-esteem increased as skin color becomes lighter among participants, even after taking into account education and other body image characteristics. Robinson and Ward (1995) also found that a positive relationship existed between black students’ satisfaction with their skin color and self-esteem. Similarly to these two studies Coard, Brelan, and Raskin (2001) found that a significant relationship existed between perceived skin color and self-esteem for all skin color groups. However, contrary to prior research studies, the
researchers found that dark-skinned participants had significantly greater levels of skin color satisfaction, but lower levels of self-esteem than light-skinned participants. This finding suggests that although some black women may accept their skin color, they may not be truly satisfied with it. Additionally, some black women may develop a false sense of satisfaction for their skin color as a defense to others negative attitudes towards it.

**Racial Identity**

Makkar and Strube (1995) found that black women with high African self-consciousness or positive racial identity rated their own attractiveness higher than the attractiveness of white women, suggesting that black women who do not embrace their own racial identity may be more susceptible to white standards of beauty. These findings also suggest that African self-consciousness or positive racial identity may serve as a protective factor for black individuals against colorism ideologies. In their study, Smith, Burton, and Lundgren (1991) found that participants with more African facial features and higher levels of Black consciousness were more satisfied with their overall appearance than participants with more African facial features and lower levels of Black consciousness. More recently, Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams, and Belgrave (2014) found that skin color satisfaction was positively related to racial identity. Their investigation found that darker-skinned participants with higher levels of skin color satisfaction had more positive racial regard or identity beliefs than both lighter-skinned and darker-skinned participants lower in skin color satisfaction.

**Hair Satisfaction among Black Women**

In 2007, Bellinger examined the definition of “good hair” according to African American women in order to understand the reasons young African American women choose to change their hair from its supposed “natural” state. The qualitative study consisted of 15 African
American women who were friends and peers of the researcher from different universities. Participants ranged in age from 16-18 years old. Findings from the group open-ended interviews showed: (1) that participants agreed that “good hair” was a myth, but continued to try to attain this ideal; (2) The majority of participants stated that they wore their hair chemically straightened or natural because their mothers did the same in their childhood; and (3) Some participants stated that wearing their hair chemically straightened was more manageable than wearing it natural, and wearing chemically straightened hair gave them more opportunities for new jobs and promotions.

Using a Social Comparison theory framework, Thompson (2009) explored black women with chemically straightened hair perceived beauty and perceptions of hair. Supporting Bellinger’s (2007) study, participants chemically straightened their as an easier option or quick “fix.” The women of this study also believed that it was better to wear your hair straight or in a weave for work. One participant stated that she believed her White male coworkers would distance themselves from her [if she wore an Afro or another natural hairstyle] because they would think she was some kind of radical. Another woman discussed aspirations to wear her hair in a natural hairstyle once she advances in her career. Thompson concluded that until Black women collectively agree (not sure what this would look like) that hair alternation stunts (?) any potential to overcome the legacy of slavery and a multi-generational pathology of self-hatred, hair will always be a contentious (and debated) issue (2009).

White’s 2005 study also sought to understand black women’s perceptions of beauty and hair, however an Afrocentric-feminist critical framework was used and the participants of this study all had natural hair. Participants discussed initially developing a sense of shame about having “nappy” hair. They received messages that “nappy” hair was undesirable and negative
from many sources: (1) The lack of Black women figures in the media, (2) Lack of beauty salon’s specializing in natural-textured hairstyles, and (3) Positive feedback received when wearing their hair straight were all reported as means of socialization that influenced participants’ rejection of their natural hair. When these women decided to wear their hair natural they received negative reactions from others such as: (1) being told they were unapproachable; (2) people made assumptions about their sexuality (they thought they were lesbians) and political views (people thought they were militant, Afrocentric, and maintained cultural politics, (3) received less romantic attention from men; and (4) faced discrimination in the work place. Despite negative consequences, the majority of study participants’ decision to wear natural hair was a process of re-negotiation and self-discovery. They felt it created a sense of pride, strength and even reconnection with self. A 28-year-old accountant shared a feeling of empowerment with deciding to go natural: “It made me feel more confident, I am the one who has to make a decision on how I want to wear my hair. I decided I wanted it cut. I didn’t want any chemicals in my hair. I want to experiment with my natural hair. I feel liberated. I am not confined to tradition. I am able to do more things with my hair - there are so many options. I am making my own rules. I am deciding for myself” (p. 304).

Robinson (2011) examination of the relationship between race, Black female beauty, and hair texture in her qualitative study also supported prior research on black women’s hair that found that “good” and “bad” hair valuations were taught to black women from an early age, black women had experiences where males favored females with longer, straighter hair over those with shorter, nappy hair, and to have “good hair” signified lower maintenance, less time-consuming, inexpensive hair that could be easily restyled after showers, workouts, and swimming. Additionally, Robinson’s biracial participants discussed the downside to their so
called “good” hair. These participants stated that their non-black mothers and grandmothers were unfamiliar with how to maintain black hair. Their textures often prevented them from wearing envied black hairstyles. Finally, two participants with dark skin and long hair discussed others minimizing their African ancestry. People assumed they are biracial; dark skin with long hair suggests a racial mix in Black women. Robinson concluded that regardless of its relation to race, beauty, or maintenance, good and bad hair are psychologically and aesthetically harmful for Black females. Hair valuations that idolize wavier, straighter textures promote and perpetuate racialized beauty standards, while also devaluing kinkier hair texture common among Black females.

**Colorism in Black Families**

In her 2004 investigation, Parmer defined physical attractiveness as “a cultural standard of beauty involving an assessment and evaluation of aesthetic quality based on body type, hair texture, skin color, and facial features” (p. 230). It is then that aesthetic preferences are developed from the combination of these characteristics. Within a cultural context these aesthetic preferences may become noticeable in a particular group or family. The projection of physical attractiveness as a process of internalized oppression has been prevalent throughout family systems for generations in African American communities. Parents and caregivers who show aesthetic preferences towards children may affect an individual’s life well into adulthood. According to Lewis (1999), “an adult’s recollection of statements made about racial aspects of skin color, hair texture, and nose and lip size may constitute an additional index of assessment of feelings of parental acceptance, rejection, or denigration” (p. 508). Although other cultural groups have physical attractiveness issues, the stigma of physical attractiveness as asserted by Eurocentric notions of beauty has been adopted in African American families for generations.
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR HAIR

(Parmer, 2004). Specifically, skin color and hair texture issues have painful roots in both societal attitudes and black families (Boyd-Franklin, 1991).

While the skin tone of black parents and their children may not be the most predominant aspect of child rearing, it is an important element that is commonly ignored in black American culture. The topic of aesthetic preferences and colorism within black families is often kept a secret. The acknowledgement of personal struggles associated with attractiveness often remains undisclosed (Parmer, 2004). Instead, these unspoken family secrets related to aesthetic preferences are acted on through cultural nuances such as metaphors, jingles, and wives tales (Russell, Wilson, & Hall, 1992). Greene (1990) supported the idea that differences in skin color can create difficulty among family members. She addressed the issue of skin color between mothers and children, specifically preferential treatment towards light-skinned children or an intense level of protectiveness toward dark-skinned children. These practices take place within a sociohistorical racialized hierarchy of skin color, hair texture, and facial features for black families (Boyd-Franklin, 2003). Additionally this hierarchy often affects more females than males (Parmer, 2004). Parmer’s (2004) findings suggest the negative correlates of physical attractiveness continue to serve as a function of internalized oppression in African American families. It can be concluded that with the exception of body size, Eurocentric facial features, lighter skin color, and straight long hair continue to be factors in the oppression of African American families across generations. A child’s skin color may become as important as an individuals birth order or gender within black families (Burton, 2010).

Wilder and Cain (2010) found that black women’s families were the most influential force in shaping their views about themselves and others as it relates to skin color and hair. As one participant who identified as a “light brown” skin color explained: “I’ve always been
affected by colorism. The majority of the members of my family are light skinned; there are a couple [who] are dark skinned. It’s just always been a big issue” (p. 584). Overall women were open and honest about the color dichotomies and name references to skin color within their families (e.g. the “light side” and the “dark side”). In addition emphasis was placed on family members who had distinctive features that were considered good (e.g., cousins with curly hair or the beautiful nephew with the gray eyes). Many women in the study recalled learning early in life from their mothers, grandmothers, and other female family members to associate negativity with darkness, and to equate goodness with lightness. They recall lighter skinned mothers and grandmothers teaching them colorism by encouraging darker skinned daughters to bleach their skin, marry light-skinned men, or they held fewer expectations for them. However, some participants were unaware of the impact family members had on their views of skin color and normative ideas of colorism.

The researchers’ analysis suggests that black families can serve as sites for color reaffirmation and/or transformation. When the ideology of colorism is introduced there are influential experiences that can strengthen or shift a woman’s identity and level of color consciousness. Confirmations of negative stereotypes and behaviors from family members and/or events associated with normative colorism can reaffirm mainstream standards of beauty. Transformative moments can occur when family members and/or events change one’s understanding of colorism and color consciousness in a positive or negative direction. Some participants attributed positive transformative moments and satisfaction with their Afrocentric features to their paternal figures. Wilder and Cain believe the parental participants may be fulfilling an expected “protector” role for their daughters or instill positivity about their Afrocentric features because these features have less bearing in their lives. Lastly, the findings in
this study reveal a “race paradox” operating within the black familial structure: Participants are taught to celebrate their blackness and are shielded from the realities of externalized racism; however, families engage in practices of color socialization that simultaneously denigrate darkness (2010).

**Stereotype Images and Colorism in the Media**

Black women as well as other women of color have been subjected to a combination of racism and sexism in which they experience negative sexualized stereotypes that attack both their gender and racial identities (Brown, White-Johnson & Griffen-Fennell, 2013). These stereotypical images have depicted black women as oversexed, promiscuous, angry and loud (Brown et al., 2011; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). These stereotypical images are perpetrated in the media and circulate through black communities. Such negative representations may impact black female experiences, satisfaction with physical appearance, and behavior (Brown et al., 2011). Negative stereotypes and mass media can influence black women to endorse colorism.

Societal messages concerning culturally based physical images can also influence black women and adolescents’ sense of self. Societal messages can be conveyed through television, magazines, advertisement, and social media. These physical images are often stereotypes of African American females. As previously mentioned, during slavery and segregation, these negative stereotypes were often used to justify the mistreatment of African Americans. Historical stereotype images of African American women included: the promiscuous, light-skinned Jezebel; the asexual, dark-skinned, caretaker, Mammy; the disagreeable sapphire, and the breeding welfare mother. Although these names and images have become less popular over time, they have been replaced by contemporary stereotype images such as: “the gold digger” who uses her sexuality for economic and material gains; “the freak” who seeks attention from males and is
hypersexual; “the diva” who is light skinned with long straight hair and a slim build with a high social status. These contemporary stereotype images that are propagated in the media (including hip hop music videos) and society, have helped to shape the self-perceptions of today’s African American women and girls (Wallace, Townsend, Glasgow, Ojie, 2011). “Societal messages and media images that emphasize the appearance of women and girls are thought to foster self-objectification among adolescent girls and women” (Wallace et al., 2011, p. 1316).

In her 2010 study, Wilder reexamined Charles Parrish’s (1946) study “Color Names and Color Notions.” Parrish’s study examined the various names and labels that black youth used to describe light, medium, and dark skin tones, as well as the stereotypes associated with them. The results found 25 readily identifiable “color notions,” from high yellow to chocolate brown and a barrage of “color notions” connecting each skin tone to certain stereotypes and personality traits. Results showed that nine terms were an exact match to Parrish’s list in 1946. The majority of terms for dark skin were derogatory such as; burnt, charcoal, and darky point to a historical bias towards dark skin and reinforce controlling images for dark-skinned black women. Whereas the labels for light-skin women were rather positive with some exceptions such as being considered “stuck up.” However, women of medium skin tones had fewer names and these terms appeared to be neutral (brown skin, caramel, pecan, tan). Regardless of skin tone, all three group had at least one name that was linked to food; for example, vanilla for light skin women, caramel for medium tones, and chocolate for dark skin. This is indicative of the hypersexualized and eroticized images of all black women (Wilder, 2010).

Wallace, Townsend, Glasagow, and Olie (2011) found that young black female participants in their sample agreed with contemporary, sexualized, negative stereotypes of black women (e.g., diva, gold digger, freak). This finding supports previous research that has identified
contemporary stereotypes influenced by hip-hop culture and includes a strong focus on sexuality (Stephens & Few, 2007). As the researchers hypothesized, girls in the study who agreed with negative stereotype statements were more likely to endorse western standards of beauty. Identifying with stereotype images and western standards of beauty may not only influence black females self-concept, but also their decision making and behavior. The participants who endorsed western standards of beauty were more likely to report using substances than those who accepted an Afrocentric beauty standard. Since media tends to promote more western standards of beauty than African American features, the influence from such media images may lead to an increased desire in black females to look more Eurocentric (e.g., long hair, light-skin, other light/small facial features) in an attempt to blend in better with society’s views and preference (Wallace et al., 2011). Brown et al., (2011) also found that younger women (ages 18-34) exhibited significantly greater endorsement of negative black female stereotypes than older women (55 and older). However, both age groups along with the middle-aged group (35-54) were more likely to reject these stereotypes than to accept them. The researchers believe this rejection is due to education and an understanding of the sociohistorical context of such images, as well as high self-esteem and positive racial identity.

Beauty ideals are widely disseminated through various media outlets such as magazines, television, and movies (Rogers & Petrie, 2010). The influence of media is particularly important given that the beauty ideals communicated through the media are almost always White (Schooler, 2004) and when Black models and actresses are featured, they typically possess Eurocentric features (Perkins, 1994). While some research has noted that Black women do not compare themselves to White women in the media and actually exhibit healthier body image as a result of watching Black media (Schooler, Ward, Meriweather & Caruthers, 2004), this research
has been limited by its focus on weight-related body image. In a qualitative study by Oliver and Ancis (2011), Black women spoke explicitly about the major external influence of media depictions of Black women who reflect White standards of beauty (e.g., Halle Berry, Beyonce), as these women tend to possess more Eurocentric physical features (e.g., light skin, long hair). Content analyses have examined this trend over time. A content analysis of the Black magazine Essence in both 1985 and 2005 revealed a trend of predominately brown(medium) skinned models among 312 advertisements magazines (Njoroge, 2005). The researcher posited that brown skinned models serve as a happy medium to appeal to both Black and White communities. However, in a recent content analysis of Essence among several other Black magazines in United States and in Kenya, Wanjiru (2009) found that lighter skinned Black models were more common than darker skinned models, and 75 percent of the models had straight hair. Together these analyses suggest that racism and colorism continue to influence depictions of beauty though mainstream and Black-oriented media, making it imperative for research to examine the impact of exposure to such images on Black women’s body image.

*Hip-Hop music culture*

Another media outlet that has impacted colorism is the hip-hop music culture. While hip-hop music began with a focus on the empowerment and strength of black women, over time quite a few artists have moved to sexually objectifying black women. Black females may be especially bombarded with these images due to advances in technology and increased access to numerous forms of media (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) (Brown et al., 2013). The dignity of black women has been removed in many rap music videos. These women, or rather Video Vixens (scantily clad women who “dance” sexually, or stand suggestively around the rapper as his arm piece or status symbol) are objectified and only seen as body parts to fulfill
These depictions of black women in rap videos only perpetuate sexism, colorism, and expectations of Eurocentric beauty standards (Conrad, Dixon, & Zhang, 2009). Russell et al. (1993) described how such videos affect colorism: “The image of the octoroon beauty has also been resurrected in these videos. Rarely, if ever, are dark-skinned Black women with Negroid features and natural hair depicted in rap videos. Instead, longhaired Black women with Caucasian features strike provocative poses behind macho Black male rap artists” (p. 159).

Video vixens are not only objectified for her curvy voluptuous body, but also her skin color, length and texture of her hair, and color of her eyes (Russell et al., 1993). Though many of these video vixens most likely add hair extensions or weaves to their hair, the standard look is light-skinned, racially ambiguous beauty. These images are very similar to the light-skinned “Tragic Mulatto” archetype prevalent in films of the 20th century. In these films she was almost always troubled and had some type of issue to overcome. The “Tragic Mulatto” set the bar of the Black beauty standard in Hollywood, while her light skin and Eurocentric features were aesthetically pleasing to white audiences (Bogle, 2009).

Conrad et al. (2009) study which examined the occurrence of controversial themes, gender differences, and skin tone distortion in a content analysis of rap music videos aired on BET (Black Entertainment Television), MTV (Music Television), and VH1 (Video Hits 1). He acknowledged that today’s rap video show more of a variety of women with multiple skin tones. However, there were significant gender differences in the prominence of Afrocentric features. Males were more likely to have Afrocentric features, while females were more like to have Eurocentric features including aquiline noses, thinner lips, and straighter and longer hair. These females may have a negative effect on black female viewers and their body satisfaction as they
glorify the white beauty standard.

These findings support previous literature about colorism. Not only are self-esteem and body satisfaction of black women affected, black men are impacted as they accept Eurocentric standards as the real definition of beauty and use them to evaluate women. Thus, the primary perpetuators of Western standard beauty ideals are black men (do they own the major media outlets)?, excluding women with darker skin, kinkier hair, and more Afrocentric features (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

Gaps in the Research

It is imperative to recognize the limitations and weaknesses of colorism research to understand the value and significance of the present study. These limitations identify the gaps in the research and the need for future research in these areas in order to broaden the scope and refine the understanding of these processes.

A limitation in colorism research is the emphasis on the use of quantitative methods as opposed to qualitative methods, specifically for studies on skin color satisfaction and preference. In a quantitative study on skin color satisfaction, discussed earlier, Falconer and Neville (2000) lacked information about their participants’ cultural context and personal experiences towards body image and skin color satisfaction. The researchers believe qualitative in-depth interviews can be conducted in future studies to identify the potential role of cultural characteristics on how black women skin color, hair, and other areas of their body. The use of quantitative studies with standardized measures to assess skin color preference and satisfaction, is very helpful for examining large samples at once, and noticing trends and relationships within colorism research. However, the omission of qualitative methodology limits the richness of the data that can be found in colorism research. Colorism research benefits greatly from the use of qualitative data
collection and analysis as it provides a deeper story into black women’s experiences with their skin color and hair. These personal experiences with skin color and hair may vary from one woman to the next. Various factors such as family upbringing, peer and romantic relations, and media influences may vary broadly among black women and create similar or unique experiences for them. It is then that these experiences may impact one’s level of satisfaction for their skin color and hair.

As previously mentioned, there are no known studies that have explored the relationship between psychological resistance and black women’s skin color and hair satisfaction. In the review of colorism literature, none of the studies examined or discussed potential resistance factors that enable some black women to prevent and suppress oppression, which may lead to skin color dissatisfaction versus other resistance factors that do. It is important to investigate the kinds of optimal and suboptimal resistance strategies that are being used in black women who have high levels of skin color and hair satisfaction, as well as black women that have low levels of skin color and hair satisfaction. This investigation may contribute to colorism research by helping researchers and mental health clinicians understand the types of resistance strategies that can become interventions to increase black women’s levels of skin color and hair satisfaction.

Additionally, empirical research studies on skin color and hair satisfaction on black women have used Social Comparison theory, Afrocentric-Feminist Critical, Black-Feminist theory, and Intersectionality frameworks. While these frameworks have analyzed and produced significant findings for studies on skin color and hair satisfaction, the use of Optimal Psychology and the Ecological Model frameworks may offer an additional perspective and analysis. More specifically, these theories can explicate the effects of living in a multi-systemic and multiple
oppressive environments on black women’s perception of and satisfaction with their skin color and hair.

Another limitation in colorism research is that there are no known research studies that specifically examine the effects of social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter). As mentioned previously, technological advances have transformed the way the world socializes and receives information. Instagram has 200 million active users around the world per month (Digital Marketing Rambling, 2014). The number of active registered Twitter users is 645 million worldwide, with 135,000 users registering everyday. The total number of monthly active Facebook users is 1.32 billion. There has been a 22% increase in Facebook users from 2012 to 2013 (Statistics Brain Research Institute, 2014). These social media sites are where black women have access to positive and negative images, as well as where they may post images of themselves for millions to view. Future colorism research may benefit from exploring how the effects of social media influence one’s attitudes, beliefs, and experiences with colorism.

Finally, there is a substantial amount of skin color and hair satisfaction research that focuses on its relationship with self-esteem, self-efficacy, and racial identity. However, there is limited empirical research on skin color and hair satisfaction and its relationship with the psychological construct of social appearance anxiety or any other type of anxiety. The most current research shows that anxiety-physical health associations and symptomatology is not well understood within African American adults. Anxiety disorders may manifest differently in African Americans such that behavioral patterns, conceptualizations and cultural idioms of distress differ from European Americans (Carter & Walker, 2014). In terms of treatment, Black women specifically avoid seeking help for anxiety because they are afraid others will view them as weak (Neal-Barnett et al., 2011). As previously mentioned, colorism is a form of gender and
racial oppression. Black women’s experiences with skin and hair color satisfaction may cause them to develop fears of being negatively evaluated. The present study may contribute to colorism research by investigating its impact on anxiety among black women.
Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter will describe the research methods and instrumentation that will be used in this mixed methods research study. Psychometric properties are provided for each measure. The following sections will also describe the theoretical rationale for the research design, a description of the sample recruitment process, the informed consent process, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Theoretical Rationale of Design

The target sample chosen for this study was drawn from the population of black women in the United States between the ages of 21 to 39. The study sought to examine the relationships among skin color, hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social appearance anxiety, and social networks among black women.

This study used a mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). According to Creswell, Plano, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson (2003), mixed method research design can be defined as “the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of the data at one or more stages in the process of research” (p. 212). The rationale for “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative methods is that neither method can capture the trends and details of a situation independently. The combination of both methods enhance each other strengths resulting in a more comprehensive analysis and a better understanding of the research problem (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). In the last three decades mixed methods research has become increasingly popular in counseling
In quantitative research, large samples and mainly group-oriented studies are conducted. The researcher relies on numerical data and magnitude and directional relationships concerning specific constructs (Waszak & Sines, 2003). The researcher decides which variables to investigate and the types of instruments to use. Some researchers consider quantitative studies a “problem-oriented” rather than “process-oriented” (Brady & Collier, 2004; Wilson, Aaronson, & Carlsmith, 2010).

Alternatively, qualitative research often has small examples, are individual oriented, detail views and experiences of participants, and are predominately interested in the process of exploring a phenomena in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). Using more of a constructionist lens, participants’ perceptions and accounts of their world are valued and utilized in data analysis (Miller, 2000).

In mixed methods research the investigator utilizes pragmatism to build knowledge. Actions, situations, consequences, and other truths are “what works” (Creswell, 2003, p.11). The most appropriate approaches, techniques, and procedures are chosen to find an answer to the research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Pragmatism views both qualitative and qualitative methods to research as compatible. It allows the researcher to apply multiple methods, different worldviews, and various assumptions to mixed method studies. “Pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts. In this way mixed method studies may include a postmodern era theoretical lens that is reflective of social justice and political aims” (Creswell, 2003, p.12). Furthermore, mixed methods studies collect
data in both numerical (e.g., instruments) and text (e.g., interviews) forms, concurrently or sequentially (Creswell, 2003).

When designing a mixed methods study, the researcher should consider three important procedural issues: priority, implementation, and integration. Priority refers to which method (quantitative, qualitative, or both) will be given more emphasis in the study. The researcher may make this decision by considering the goals for the study. Implementation refers to how quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis will be performed. Data collection and analysis can be performed concurrently, one following immediately after the other, or sequentially. Integration refers to the mixing or connecting of the study’s quantitative and qualitative strands. There are four possible points of connecting these strands: (1) during interpretation at the final stage of the research process; (2) mixing both quantitative and qualitative research strands during data analysis; (3) mixing during the stage where the researcher collects a second set of data; and (4) mixing during the larger design stage of the research process (Ivankova, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

This study employed one of the most popular mixed methods design types among researchers, the sequential explanatory mixed method design (Creswell, 2003). This research design has two distinct consecutive phases within one study. Phase one begins with quantitative collection and analysis, then the qualitative collection and analysis follows. Priority is given to the quantitative phase as it usually addresses the research questions of the study. The quantitative results in the first phase may be explained and expanded upon by the qualitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Participants and Recruitment
This quantitative phase included a sample of 330 women who racially identify as black regardless of ethnicity. The age of the participants ranged from 21 to 39 years old. Participants were recruited from social media sites such as Facebook. At the end of the survey participants were asked to leave their email address if they were interested in being a part of the focus group.

**Administration**

The questionnaire was administered electronically via [www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com). The uses of a web survey questionnaire allowed me to easily and quickly obtain information about a large group of black women in a non-threatening way (Mertens, 2005).

**Instrumentation**

The constructs measured for the quantitative phase of this study were skin color, skin color satisfaction, psychological resistance, and social appearance anxiety.

**Skin Color Satisfaction**

The Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS) by Falconer and Neville (2000) was developed to examine various perceptual dimensions of skin color. A total of 124 African American women attending a historically Black college completed the measure. The first three items of the scale are based on Bond and Cash’s (1992) 3-item Skin Color Questionnaire (SCQ), which is designed to assess skin color satisfaction, self-perceived skin color, and ideal skin color. Falconer & Neville (2000) added four additional items to create a more stable measure of skin color satisfaction. Items were derived from conversations with Black women about their skin color satisfaction and related Black studies literature. The complete SCSS consists of 7 items on 9-point scale as follows: (a) “How satisfied are you with the shade (lightness or darkness) of your own skin color?” Responses range from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 9 (extremely satisfied). (b) “Compared to most African-American people, I believe my skin color is …” Responses range
from 1 (extremely light) to 9 (extremely dark); high scores indicate a perception that one’s skin color is darker or lighter than other African Americans. (c) “If I could change my skin color, I would make it lighter or darker.” Responses range from 1 (much lighter) to 9 (much darker); high or low scores are indicative of a desire to be a different skin color. The following items are also rated on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree): (d) “Compared to the complexion (skin color) of members of my family, I am satisfied with my skin color”; (e) “I wish the shade of my skin was darker”; (f) I wish my skin was lighter”; (g) “Compared to the complexion (skin color) of other African Americans, I am satisfied with my skin color.” Items (e) and (f) are scored in reverse so that an individual wishing to have either lighter or darker skin appeared dissatisfied with their skin color. The mean of the total scores is summed and averaged and thus ranges from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating more satisfaction with skin color. Falconer and Neville (2000) reported a reliability coefficient of Cronbach’s alpha of (.86).

Psychological Resistance

The Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI) by Robinson-Wood was created to measure the theoretical construct of resistance. There are two forms of resistance: optimal resistance and suboptimal resistance. Optimal resistance is defined as a sociopolitical consciousness that embodies an awareness of chronic environmental stressors and institutional oppression along with a deliberate strategy of push back through community connections, self-affirmation, and purpose. Suboptimal resistance is defined as short-term dysfunctional cognitive and behavioral or “quick fix” adaptations to chronic stress that although do not serve women well in the long run, have immediate, short term, numbing, soothing, and/or pleasure inducing effects (Robinson-Wood, 2014). The original inventory consisted of 40 items that measured suboptimal resistance
and optimal resistance. The sample was of 100 black, ethnically diverse college women, ages 18-25 (M = 20) enrolled in a private, predominately white, urban university in the northeast region of the United States. An exploratory principle components factor analysis was performed on 40 items of the RMI using an additional 106 ethnically diverse black Christian women from three churches in the northeast. Women ranged in age from 18-70 (M = 48) (Braithwaite-Hall, 2011). The total sample size was 206 black women. The procedure yielded 11 components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. A scree plot indicated that four components were interpretable. The four factors accounted for 32% of the common variance. The Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method was used. Extraction communalities or estimates of the variance in each variable accounts for by the components were provided. All of the extraction communalities were high (.41 -.71). This is an indication that the extracted components represent the variables well. Based on this factor analysis, 15 items were eliminated from the RMI, making the measurement 25 items. The revised RMI identified two subscales with two factors in each subscale Negative Gendered Press and Suboptimal Resistance is one scale and reflects the negative pressures of gender on black women’s lives. Race Salience and Optimal Resistance speak to the salience of race in black people’s lives. Moderate to strong correlation coefficients were desired and needed for a psychometrically sound instrument, (a minimum of .68 was regarded as acceptable.) Reliability coefficients for the original 40-item RMI were .73 and .70 for the revised 25-item RMI (Robinson-Wood, 2014).

Social Appearance Anxiety

The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS) developed by Hart, Flora, Paylo, Fresco, Holle, and Heimberg (2008), is a 16-item instrument used to measure anxiety about being negatively evaluated by others because of one’s appearance. Respondents indicate how
characteristic each statement is on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). It includes items such as: “I worry that others talk about flaws in my appearance when I am not around”, “I am frequently afraid I would not meet others’ standards of how I should look”, and “I worry that a romantic partner will/would leave me because of my appearance.” The SAAS was standardized on three different samples of participants from two large public universities, who volunteered for the study in return for credit toward their research requirement for an introductory psychology course. The first sample consisted of 512 participants (379 females, 132 males, and 1 did not report gender) with a mean age of 18.85, and a standard deviation of 3.15. Participants represented a broad range of racial/ethnic backgrounds (40.2% White, 33.2% African American, 13.3% Asian American, 9.9% Latino, and 3.4% Mixed or Other ethnic background). The second sample consisted of 853 participants (385 female and 468 males), with a mean age of 19, and a standard deviation of 2.9. Sample 2 was 69% White, 9% African American, 13% Asian American, 5% Latino, and 4% other or mixed background. The third sample consisted of 541 participants (376 females, 164 males, and 1 did not report gender) with a mean age of 19.01 and a standard deviation of 4.54. Sample 3 was 38.5% White, 25.5% African American, 7.0% Asian American, 4.4% Latino, and 25% Mixed or Other ethnic background. The SAAS score was positively correlated with measures of social anxiety, body image dissatisfaction, eating restraint, weight vigilance, fat anxiety, dieting, and depression. The SAAS was also related to feelings of unattractiveness. The SAAS demonstrated a unifactorial structure with high 1-month (33 days) test-retest reliability ($r = .84$) and high internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$).

*Skin Color*
The von Luschan Chromatic Scale developed by Austrian anthropologist, Felix von Luschan (1897; 1914), is an assessment used to classify human skin color. Originally called Hautfarbertafel, meaning skin color board or table, the scale was made of 36 standardized opaque, colored glass tiles arranged in a chromatic scale (Swiatoniowski, 2013). There are no direct instructions about how to use the scale in its entirety however, it is suggested that the first 6 tiles be used for anemic Europeans and the remaining 30 tiles for all degrees of pigmentation of normal individuals (Thomas, 1905). During the first half of the 20th century, von Luschan Chromatic Scale data were collected throughout the world including Africa, Europe, Australia and the South Pacific, North and South America, and mixed populations. Researchers relied on this scale heavily for race studies and anthropometry. The von Luschan Chromatic Scale provided a device for systematically measuring skin color, but their design presented a number of issues inherent in the tiles including surface imperfections and glare as well as challenges due to human observers such as reproducibility, variation in color perception, and variable lightening conditions. By the 1950s skin reflectance spectrophotometry, sophisticated instruments that provide objective, reliable, and valid evaluations of human skin color were used for anthropological field research and the von Luschan Chromatic scale was largely abandoned (Swiatoniowski, 2013).

More recently, researchers have been using the von Luschan Chromatic scale in comparative studies with reflectance spectrophotometry (e.g. Swiatoniowski, 2013; Treesirichod, Chansakulporn, & Wattanapan, 2014). Treesirichod, Chansakulporn, and Wattanapan, (2014) in a study with 52 participants who worked as volunteers in a medical center in Thailand were assessed for their skin color using the von Luschan Chromatic Scale and a narrowband reflectance spectrophotometer (Mexameter MX18). The majority of participants (19.2%) were
rated with the skin color scale at the number 16 (range 14-33). Skin color evaluation using the von Luschan Chromatic scale showed a high correlation with skin color evaluation done by the narrowband reflectance spectrophotometer. The correlation coefficient between the number on the von Luschan Chromatic Scale and the three indices of the Mexameter MX18 (Melanin plus Erythema, Erythema, and Melanin) were 0.90, 0.90 and 0.86, with a statistical significance of $p < 0.001$. The inter-rater reliability for the von Luschan Chromatic scale in this study was evaluated as ($r = 0.964$).

**Phase I: Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis**

*Power Analysis for MANOVA*

An a priori power analysis was conducted using the program G* POWER version 3.1 (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007; Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). A power estimate of .80 with an alpha level of .05, and an effect size of 0.25 (0.0625) was performed. No previous studies reported using a higher or lower effect size measure; therefore a moderate effect size was chosen. The corresponding Critical F for this test would be $F (6, 220) = 2.1399$ with a total sample size of $n = 114$, thus indicating the minimum $n$ for the target population.

*Multivariate Analysis of Variance*

After all data was collected, I conducted statistical procedures using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). I inputted all data collected and performed descriptive analyses to find general trends (means, standard deviation, variances of responses). Next, two separate one-way multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVAs) were conducted to answer research questions 1 and 2. A hypothesis was provided for the second research question.

**Research Question 1:** What strategies of resistance do black women describe and how are they used?
**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship among skin color hue (is that what you mean), social appearance anxiety, and strategies of resistance? see my comments from chapter 4 about the redundancy of chapters 1 and 3

**Hypothesis:** Women with lower levels of skin color and hair satisfaction will have higher scores of social appearance anxiety and use more suboptimal resistance strategies.

A MANOVA procedure is preferable rather than multiple analyses of variances (ANOVAs) because MANOVA takes into consideration the correlation among the dependent variables and minimizes Type I errors that might occur if multiple ANOVAs were conducted independently (Tabachnich & Fiddell, 2007).

**Variables in Quantitative Analysis**

The second research question (What are the relationships among social appearance anxiety, skin color satisfaction, and strategies of resistance?) predetermined a set of dependent variables for this study. The Skin Color Satisfaction (SCSS) measured skin color satisfaction. The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS) measured social appearance anxiety. The Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI) measured both optimal and suboptimal psychological resistance. The von Lushcan Chromatic Scale, a method for classifying skin color was used as the independent variable. Participants identified which skin hue best matched their own by number. Group I was named “Light” and corresponded with color chart numbers 6-26; Group II (“Medium”) 27, 28, 29, 30, 31; Group III (“Dark”) 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 (Kaur & Saraf, 2011; Treesirichod, Chansakulporn, & Wattanapan, 2014).

**Phase II: Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis**

*Focus Groups, Sample Size, and Participants*
For the second phase, participants were selected to provide data related to the research questions of this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Black women were selected to participate in semi-structured focus groups based on interest to participate. Focus groups are highly efficient qualitative techniques that collect a wide range of data from several on one occasion (Robinson, 2002). In populations where people are more likely to feel comfortable talking with others who share similar experiences, focus groups can be very useful when exploring sensitive issues such as; hair and skin color (Fossey et al., 2002).

The sample size recommendation for focus groups in qualitative research designs is 6-12 participants and 3-6 focus groups (Onweugbuzie & Collins, 2007). A focus group of less than six participants may make it difficult to achieve data and cause informational redundancy. In addition active group discussions in smaller groups may be difficult to maintain if participants are less engaged or have a low level of involvement with the topic. Conversely, focus groups with more than 10 or 12 participants may be more difficult to manage discussions especially when participants are enthusiastic and highly involved in the topic. Furthermore, large groups may easily break up into small conversations or participants may feel more inclined to talk simultaneously. Both of these issues may lead to a loss of important rich data (Morgan, 1997). There was one focus group in the study. The focus group consisted of 3 participants.

Setting

The focus group took place in New York City in a fully private meeting room in a public library.

Procedures

I began the focus group by assuring participants that they were in a safe environment where they can discuss topics that may be sensitive in nature. I then reviewed the informed
consent with the participants. Participants were asked to create their own pseudonyms in order to preserve confidentiality and improve accuracy of audiotape transcription. I asked each participant to share something interesting about themselves with the rest of the group. The purpose of this short “icebreaker” activity is to “warm-up” participants for discussion and encourages openness among the participants. The ten open-ended interview questions were separated into themed categories. The first category (interview questions 1-4) explored participants’ social network (e.g. family, romantic partners, friends, coworkers, schoolmates, social media membership/affiliation, etc.….) experiencing regarding their skin color and hair. This gave participants an opportunity to discuss social interactions about their skin color and hair, as well as, media and social media influences. The second category (interview questions 5-6) explored the childhood experiences regarding skin color and hair. This category gave participants an opportunity to discuss messages they received as a child about skin color and hair. The third category (interview questions 7-9) explored hair satisfaction and social appearance anxiety towards hair. This category helped the researcher qualitatively assess hair satisfaction among the participants. Currently there are no quantitative measures available that assess one’s satisfaction towards one’s hair. The participants had an opportunity to discuss any symptoms of anxiety or fear of being negatively evaluated because of their hair. Finally, the fourth category (interview question 10) takes a Narrative Therapy approach and asked participants to externalize and personify their hair, so “the hair” could have a voice. This category gives the participants an opportunity to distance themselves or de-identify with their hair (“the problem”). I learned how the persona (hair) dictated their beliefs, feelings, and actions. At the end of the focus group I debriefed participants and asked if they had anything else to add
to the discussion. I also mentioned that they could write down or contact me if they have questions and/or comments that they were not able to express within the focus group.

Data Analysis

Once the focus group was completed, I transcribed the audiotapes of the focus group interview into separate written Microsoft Word files. Separate files were created for observations and written memos of group dynamics of the focus group. All files were password protected and saved on my computer, as well as, an external storage device. Once transcribed, I conducted a preliminary exploration of the data by reading through the transcripts and written memos. I used a Thematic Analysis research methods model to identify and analyze themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Unlike other qualitative analyses, the Thematic Analysis is flexible and it can be used within various theoretical frameworks for multiple purposes (Braun & Clark, 2006). Braun and Clark (2006) define a theme as capturing “something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the dataset” (p. 10). I utilized the six distinct phases of the Thematic Analysis. In phase 1, the transcribed data were read and reviewed numerous times and initial thoughts and ideas were noted. In phase 2, segmenting and labeling the text generated initial coding of the data. During phase 3, similar codes were aggregated to develop themes. Phase 4 was used to review and refine candidate themes from phase 3. In phase 5 the themes were defined and named. Once the researcher had a set of fully worked-out themes, phase 6, which is the final stage began. Phase 6 was used to conduct a final analysis and construct a written analytical narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Validation Strategies
Validity and reliability measures for qualitative studies differ from quantitative studies. Through a process of verification, the researcher seeks plausibility, coherence, trustworthiness, and instrumental utility (Ivankova, 2006). Internal validity can be demonstrated by an analysis of the correspondence between participants’ perspectives and how the researcher portrays their viewpoints (Mertens, 2005). In terms of external validity, the uniqueness and small sample size of the qualitative phase prevents the study from being identically replicated in another context (Ivankova, 2006). To validate results or rather determine the credibility of the information and whether it matches reality, four primary forms of validity strategies were used in the qualitative phase of this study. (1) Data Triangulation, which involved multiple investigators evaluating the analysis process (Gulon, Diehl & McDonald, 2011). Although I was the sole investigator in the research study, I had a colleague with expertise in multicultural research serve as an evaluator for my findings and analyses. (2) Member checks, which involves getting feedback from the participants on the accuracy of the identified categories and themes. During each focus group I summarized or paraphrased what participants shared over the course of the session. (3) Theoretical saturation, which describes the point when no new information or concepts emerge from the data and when the themes that have emerged from the data have been well supported. I provided rich, thick descriptions to convey my findings. (4) External audit, which asks a person other than the researcher to conduct a thorough review of the study and report back. My mentor and colleague reviewed the entire study and provided feedback. This colleague was recruited based on their extensive marketing research on hair and cosmetics specifically for black women (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Miller, 2002).

**Ethical Considerations**
Treatment of participants in the study was in accordance to the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002, 2010). The researcher also complied with the guidelines put forth by the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) regarding the use of human subjects. The risks for the study were minimal; however, there were a few matters that were important to consider when working with marginalized populations. Discussion of issues of racism (both internalized and externalized) and gender oppression, and second, discussions of participants’ own physical attributes (i.e. hair and skin color) (incomplete sentence). Third, the survey questionnaire and focus groups required participants to disclose personal information about themselves and their social network. Participants may have been hesitant to “air their dirty laundry in public” to me and other participants. This phrase is an idiom that means to discuss personal matters with other people that should be kept private. However this was not the case; participants were fully disclosing and appeared comfortable discussing personal information about themselves and social network. These matters were taken into account when administering web-based survey questionnaires and conducting focus groups. Every precaution was taken to ensure the safety of the individuals participating in this study.

**Informed Consent**

An informed consent form was developed and stated the participants’ rights such as, confidentiality, and option to withdraw their participation at any time. For the quantitative portion of this study, a statement relating to informed consent was affixed to the web-based survey questionnaire and reflects compliance by participation. For the qualitative portion, the focus group was conducted with the assent of each of the participants. At the start of the focus group the informed consent was read and explained to participants. The purpose of the research and specifics of the group interviewing process were made clear to the participants. The risks of
participation were described to the participants in the informed consent letter, such as any psychological stress or discomfort that might be anticipated by the researcher. Participants were asked if the researcher had permission to audiotape their responses. Participants were made aware of their right not to participate. It was made clear that respondents had a choice as to the participation in the study, with no type of penalty for choosing against it.

Role of the Researcher

My involvement with data collection in the two phases of this study was different. In the first, quantitative phase, I administered the survey and collected the data via www.qualtrics.com. The data analysis was performed using rigorous statistical analysis techniques and the results were interpreted based on the established values for the statistical significance of the functions. In the second, qualitative phase, I assumed a participant role due to the dynamics of focus group(s) and personal involvement with the research topic. As a black woman, I am aware of my own beliefs, attitudes, and experiences with skin color and hair satisfaction. All of these introduce a possibility for subjective interpretations of the phenomenon being studied and create a potential for bias (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 2000). Throughout the study, I remained aware that although I share the same race and gender with my participants, we had various perspectives and experiences towards the topic. In addition to various perspectives and experiences, I was also aware that my own skin color hue might have an affect on my participants and influence their statements and comments in the focus group(s). I reminded my participants that although I may be a different or similar skin color to them, they are in a safe environment where they could discuss difficult topics. On the other hand, I was mindful about statements and comments by participants that may evoke certain feelings for me personally. I was encouraged to discuss these feelings, as well as potential biases and how they can influence
my study with my mentor and seek additional services if needed, however these feelings did not occur. I also reviewed relevant doctoral coursework about reducing experimenter bias. Additionally, as a graduate student who has completed several masters and doctoral practicums, I had over three years of experience facilitating groups with marginalized populations (including black women) and discussing sensitive issues. I also had a year of experience conducting individual interviews with black women in a substance abuse and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) study.

These arguments, although not strong enough to eliminate the biases, provide some reasons why I decided to neglect the warning not to conduct qualitative research “in one’s own backyard” (Ivankova, 2006). As mentioned earlier, extensive verification procedures, including triangulation, member checking, and thick and rich descriptions of the cases will be used to establish the accuracy of the findings and to control some of the “backyard” research issues. Furthermore, a careful audit was done by my dissertation chair on all research procedures and data analysis in the study (Ivankova, 2006).
Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the present study that examined the relationships among skin color and hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social appearance anxiety, and social networks in a sample of 259 participants for Phase I, and 3 participants for Phase II. As noted in chapter 3, this study used the sequential explanatory mixed method design, which has two distinct consecutive phases within one study. The quantitative data collection and analysis (Phase I) was given priority over the qualitative data collection and analysis (Phase II), however results from Phase I and Phase II inform each other. The findings of Phase I are organized into four major sections. First, demographic characteristics of the sample are presented using descriptive statistics. Second, the descriptive statistics of Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS), Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), and the Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI) are described. Third, findings related to the two quantitative research questions are presented. Phase II presents the data analysis of the focus group for the last section of the chapter. Six themes were identified from the data, which is an embodiment of statements, thoughts, and feelings. To preserve the richness of the data and illuminate the unique experiences that are best understood qualitatively, a phenomenological approach was chosen.

Phase I: Quantitative Results

Preliminary Analyses

A sample of 330 individuals participated in the study. Two hundred and fifty-nine participants (78.5%) completed the survey. Twenty-three participants (7.0%) had incomplete
surveys (i.e., responded to some demographic information and had missing values for all items of the SCSS, SAAS, RMI, and the von Luschan Chromatic Scale). Forty-eight (14.5%) respondents were found ineligible to the study due to gender, age, and non-residence in the United States.

Section One- Demographic Characteristics of the Study Sample

The demographic results are presented in tabular format. This information details the gender, race, Hispanic origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, number of children, and other demographic information. Results from questions about hair and its relation to the media are also included.

Table 4.1 indicates that Black/African-Americans constituted the largest percentage of the sample. There was one transgender (male to female) participant in the study. “Other (Please specify)” was a category placed into the racial background demographic question, as participants may identify with being of African descent, identify with Black/African American culture, or identify with “blackness” due to skin color. Eight women in the study endorsed “Other (Please specify)” for the racial background demographic question on the survey. Of the eight women; two women specified that they are “African or Afrikan;” another two specified that they are “Caribbean” or “Afro-Caribbean;” one woman specified that she is “Hispanic;” and another woman specified that she is “Mexican-American.” Lastly one woman specified that she was “Black/West Indian” although she did not endorse the “Black/African-American” category. The majority of participants identified as American and heterosexual. Nearly 60% of the women in the study had never been married. Almost half of the women (47.1%) have children, which is lower than the percentage of women with non-marriage as part of their history. These women...
have an average of two children. The average participant was a single, heterosexual Black American woman in her early-thirties.

Table 4.2 highlights the geographical location of where the study participants were raised. Thirty-eight percent of the women were raised in the northeastern region of the United States and 30% of the women were raised in the southern region.

Table 4.3 reports the socio-cultural backgrounds of participants. About half of the women in this study were currently in school. Of those women in school, almost twenty percent were completing their bachelors’ degree and 18% were in graduate (masters or doctoral) or professional (medical, law, pharmacy) school programs. As for the rest of the women in the study, over 25% earned their bachelors’ degree and 18% earned graduate and professional school degrees. These women were employed in various industries. The largest category was women in the business, computers, financial, and administration job industries. The second largest job category was women in social services and education and the third was in healthcare. Thirty-five (percent of all the women who participated in the study took one or more courses on multiculturalism or women studies.
Table 4.1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 259)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgender Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biracial/Multiracial</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Origin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Indian/Caribbean</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin-American</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-ethnic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants* (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region Raised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Regions</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants* (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Trade</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year College</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad School-Masters</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad School-Doctoral</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Level of Education Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not complete H.S./GED</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed H.S./GED</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College/Trade</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year College</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad School-Masters</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad School-Doctoral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services &amp; Education</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial/Entrepreneur</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Computers/Admin</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t/Legal/Protective/Services</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Communication/Entertainment</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 captures information about hair texture and hairstyles of the women and women in their family. The majority of the women grew up with women in their family wearing chemically processed hairstyles (e.g. relaxer, perm, texturizer, etc.). However, the majority of women in the study have natural textured hair (hair texture that has not been altered by chemical processing) and wear mostly natural styles (e.g. afros, locs, two-strand twists, braid/twists-outs, braids, wash & go, etc.).

Table 4.4

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hairstyle Worn by Women in Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Style</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Processed Style</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemically Processed Style</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braided Extensions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weave or Wig Style</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination/Other</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Texture of Participant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemically Processed</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Hairstyle Choice of Participant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Style</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Processed Style</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemically Processed Style</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braided Extensions</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weave or Wig Style</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 captures women’s satisfaction with their hair and an open response question about what they would change about their hair if they could. Sixty-five percent of the women were satisfied or very satisfied with their hair. Almost a quarter of the women were somewhat satisfied
with their hair. Roughly, about a quarter of the women indicated wanting to change the length of their hair, more specifically, to make it longer. About 15% indicated that they wanted to change the texture of their hair. Texture changes included making one’s hair “curlier,” “straighter,” “kinkier,” “wavier,” or making one’s hair softer. These women who wanted to change their hair texture also indicated making their hair one hair texture, instead of multiple and concurrent hair textures. Nearly 7% of the women indicated that they would like consistency with hair texture and hairstyles; healthier hair; better hair color; and patience to work with the hardships of natural hair. Twenty-three percent of the women indicated wanting to change a combination of the aforementioned and having hair that is fuller, less frizzy, and more moisturized.

Table 4.5

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hairstyle Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Satisfied</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Dissatisfied</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Dissatisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Hair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texture</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer/Length</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thickness/Fullness</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moisture</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frizz</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6 captures the women’s views on natural hair in the media. Nearly half of the women indicated that black women with naturally kinky or nappy hair are “Sometimes represented in the media” and the other half indicated they were “Rarely represented in the media.” In terms of opinions on how black women with naturally kinky or nappy hair have been portrayed in the media, almost 39% of the women in this study indicated that black women are “Mostly portrayed in a neutral role that is neither positive nor negative. Thirteen percent indicated that Black women are “Mostly portrayed in a positive and/or attractive way.” However, 44% of women indicated that black women are “Mostly portrayed in a negative and/or unattractive way.

Table 4.6

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Representation</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kinky/Nappy Hair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Represented</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes Represented</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely Represented</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Represented</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Media Portrayal               |     |    |
| Kinky/Nappy Hair              |     |    |
| Positive/Attractive Way       | 34  | 13.1|
| Neutral Way                   | 100 | 38.6|
| Negative/Unattractive Way     | 115 | 44.4|
| Not Portrayed At All          | 7   | 2.1|

Section Two- Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS), Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), and the Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI): Descriptive Results

The previous sections presented demographic findings, attitudes towards one’s hair and portrayal of natural hair in the media. This section reports the descriptive of the von Luschan Chromatic Scale and the findings from the study's three instruments: 1) Skin Color Satisfaction
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR HAIR

Scale (SCSS), 2) Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), and 3) the Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI). The correlations of these three instruments are also reported in table format.

Table 4.7 reports the descriptive results for the von Luschan Chromatic Scale. Women who indicated a number between 1 to 26 were categorized as “Light,” women who indicated a number between 27 to 31 were categorized as “Medium,” and women who indicated a number between 32 to 36 were categorized as “Dark.” Eight participants did not indicate a number.

Table 4.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 26 (“Light”)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 – 31 (“Medium”)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 – 36 (“Dark”)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 reports the descriptive results for the Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI). This inventory is divided into two factors with two subscales for each factor and examines women’s psychological responses to counter multiple forms of oppression that black women face. The Optimal Resistance factor is comprised of the Optimal Resistance subscale and Race Salience subscale for a total of 13 statements/items. However, for this study only 12 statements/items were used for the Optimal Resistance factor (please see limitations section in chapter 5 for further details). The two subscales reflect an optimal or African-Centered worldview characterized by the salience of race in the lives of black women as well as “optimal resistance through community involvement with black people, knowledge of black history, recognition of black history as a source of strength, living a life that is agentic, purposeful, and reflects service to others, and the endorsement of faith” (Robinson-Wood, 2014, p.71).
Conjoining the Optimal Resistance and Race salience subscales is theoretically sound as “value is attached to interpersonal relationships, cultural consciousness, and unity with spirit” (Robinson-Wood, 2014, p. 74) in Myers (1991) theory of Optimal Psychology. The Suboptimal Resistance factor is comprised of the Suboptimal Resistance subscale and the Negative Gendered Press subscale for a total of 12 statements/items. Conjoining the Suboptimal Resistance and Negative Gendered Press subscales is also theoretically sound (Robinson-Wood, 2014).

Robinson-Wood (2014) describes the characteristics of the Suboptimal Resistance factor when these two subscales are combined:

These two scales reflect a suboptimal worldview characterized by reliance on non-spiritual and external sources (e.g., food, drugs, and alcohol) for coping, reliance on external validation for self-worth, feeling overwhelmed with chronic discrimination and inequity, and resorting to physical altercation as a means of addressing racial conflict. Suboptimal resistance includes the negative press of gender on and in women’s lives. Selflessness, limited agency, fragile self-esteem are associated with black womanhood, and emotionally-driven eating (p. 73).

Overall, there were raw scores missing from approximately 45 (optimal) and 44 (suboptimal) out of the 259 respondents completing the RMI. The mean score of 38.10 indicated that this sample could be categorized as women who are optimal resistors. The standard deviation optimal scores were 5.29, and 4.51 for suboptimal scores indicating that both subsets have similar variability. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the optimal scale was.762. This indicates that the results from the optimal scale are a good measure of psychological resistance. Several researchers regarded a reliability coefficient greater than 0.6 as acceptable (George & Mallery, 2003; Kline, 2000; Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the suboptimal scale was .623.
Table 4.8

*Descriptive Statistics for Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI)* (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimal Scale</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>12 - 48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>38.10</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>5.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suboptimal Scale</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>12 - 48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22.77</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 reports the descriptive results for the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS). The instrument measures low and high fear of being negatively evaluated based on one’s appearance within a range of 16-80. The SAAS for this study has excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .961. There were 7 respondents that did not complete the instrument or did not respond to all the items. The highest score for this sample was 76 with a mean of 32. Further, the median for the respondents was 29, which is 47 points below the maximum score. Therefore, these results indicate that study participants have low fear of being negatively evaluated about their appearance.

Table 4.9

*Descriptive Statistics for Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS)* (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>252</td>
<td>16 - 80</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>32.41</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>14.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 reports the descriptive results for the Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS). The instrument measures low and high contentment with one’s skin color within a range of 7-47. The Cronbach alpha coefficient in this study for the SCSS was .401. There were 5 respondents that did not complete the instrument or did not respond to all the items. The highest score for this sample was 44 with a mean of 35 and a standard deviation of 4.28. Further, the median for the
respondents was 36, which are eight points below the maximum score. Therefore, these results indicate that study participants are satisfied with their skin color.

Table 4.10

Descriptive Statistics for Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS)  \( (N = 259) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>n</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>252</td>
<td>7 - 47</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35.10</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Three - Research Questions and Research Hypotheses

The third section of this chapter provides findings from the two research questions. Findings associated with each research question are presented in turn.

Research Question 2: What strategies of resistance do black women describe and how are they used?

Table 4.11 shows resistance data according to skin color hue. Medium skin black women, had a mean score \( (M = 38.67, SD = 4.90) \) for optimal resistance whereas light women had a score of 37.94. Dark skin black women had a mean score \( (M = 23.79, SD = 4.63) \) for suboptimal resistance while light skin women had a mean score of 22.04.

Table 4.11

Demographic Statistics for Optimal and Suboptimal Resistance by Skin Color \( (N = 259) \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimal</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>37.94</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>38.62</td>
<td>4.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>36.94</td>
<td>6.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suboptimal</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>22.79</td>
<td>4.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 shows a one-way multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was performed to investigate skin color group differences for strategies of resistance. Preliminary assumption
testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity with no serious violations noted. There were no statistically significant differences between light, medium, and dark skin color groups on the combined dependent variables, $F(6, 412) = 1.49, p = .181$; Wilk’s Lambda = .96; partial eta squared = .02.

Table 4.12

Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and F Ratios from MANOVA Results (N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimal</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>37.94</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>38.62</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>36.94</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suboptimal</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>22.79</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post Hoc Analyses - Crosstabulations

After the analysis of the second research question was conducted, I was interested in the highest endorsed items for both optimal and suboptimal resistance to further investigate strategies of resistance.

Table 4.13 presents descriptive data on the crosstabulations of the items from the RMI’s optimal and suboptimal subscales that were highly endorsed by all the women in the study. Of the 259 respondents, there were 43 that had missing responses. To explore highly endorsed items, the RMI likert scale (i.e. I strongly disagree with this statement; I disagree with this statement; I agree with this statement; I strongly agree with this statement) was recoded into dichotomous variables such that 1 represented I agree with this statement and 2 represented I
disagree with this statement. Among the 216 valid counts, 92, 94, 90, 94% endorsed the following optimal resistance questions, respectively: a) I believe that the past struggles of Black people have given me freedoms today; b) I believe that when things look bad that they will eventually get better; c) I believe that not having money for basic necessities affects too many Black people; and d) I believe that Black people are entitled to racial justice. Conversely, the following suboptimal statements were endorsed by over 50% of the participants: a) I feel pressure to look attractive; b) I use food for comfort and/or companionship; c) I feel like my daily life is a constant struggle against racism. In terms of alcohol and substance use, 18% of the participants endorsed the statement: I drink to cope with the stress of life and 8% endorsed the statement: I smoke marijuana (weed, reefer) to cope with life. Further item analysis indicated that 21% of dark skin women, 19% of light skin women, and 17% of medium skin women endorsed alcohol use. However, these results did not reach statistical significance. Ten percent of light skin and dark skin women endorsed marijuana use, compared to 6% of medium skin women.
Table 4.13

*Crosstabulations of highly endorsed items by all participants for Optimal and Suboptimal subscales of RMI*  
(N= 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMI Subscales</th>
<th>Agree Number</th>
<th>Agree Percent</th>
<th>Disagree Number</th>
<th>Disagree Percent</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>Total Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optimal Items</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that the past struggles</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Black people have given me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedoms today.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that when things look</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bad that they will eventually</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that not having money</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for basic necessities affects too</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many Black people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that Black people are</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entitled to racial justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suboptimal Items</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel pressure to look</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attractive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use food for comfort and/or</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>companionship.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like my daily life is a</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constant struggle against</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>racism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I drink alcohol to cope with the</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stress in my life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I smoke marijuana (weed, reefer)</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to cope with life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship among skin color satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and strategies of resistance?

**Hypothesis:** Women with lower levels of skin color and hair satisfaction will have higher scores of social appearance anxiety and use more suboptimal resistance strategies.

Table 4.14 shows the relationship between optimal psychological resistance (as measured by the subscale of the RMI: Optimal Resistance) and skin color satisfaction (as measured by the SCSS) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyzes were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a small, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .21$, $n = 213$, $p < .01$, with high levels of optimal resistance associated with higher levels of skin color satisfaction. Next, the relationship between suboptimal psychological resistance (as measured by the subscale of the RMI: Suboptimal Resistance) and social appearance anxiety (as measured by the SAAS) was investigated using Pearson product-movement correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyzes were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .57$, $n = 214$, $p < .001$, with high levels of suboptimal resistance associated with higher levels of social appearance anxiety. The relationship between skin color satisfaction (as measured by the SCSS) and suboptimal psychological resistance (as measured by the subscale of the RMI: Suboptimal Resistance) was also investigated using Pearson product-movement correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyzes were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a small, negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.28$, $n = 214$, $p < .001$, with high levels of skin color satisfaction
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR

associated with lower levels of suboptimal resistance. Finally, the relationship between social appearance anxiety (as measured by the SAAS) and optimal psychological resistance (as measured by the subscale of the RMI: Optimal Resistance) was investigated using Pearson correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyzes were performed to ensure no violations of the assumptions normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a small, negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -0.19$, $n = 213$, $p < .01$, with high levels of optimal resistance associated with lower levels of social appearance anxiety. Participants with lower skin color satisfaction were more anxious about their appearance and used more suboptimal strategies of resistance. Therefore, the hypothesis was confirmed.

Table 4.15

*Table 4.1 shows a one-way multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was performed to investigate skin color differences in satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and strategies of resistance. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity with no serious violations noted. There were statistically significant differences*
between light, medium, and dark skin color groups on the combined dependent variables, $F (12, 535) = 4.84, p = .000$; Wilk’s Lambda = .76; partial eta squared = .09. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, the only difference to reach statistical significance, using Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .017, was skin color satisfaction, $F (3, 205) = 10.42, p = .000$, partial = .132. A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to identify where the significant differences lie between the skin color groups.

Table 4.17 a one-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to identify where the significant differences lie between the skin color groups. There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level in skin color satisfaction scores for the three groups: $F (3, 247) = 8.66, p = .000$. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.11. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for medium skin black women ($M = 35.75, SD = 3.92$) were significantly different from light skin black women ($M = 33.05, SD = 4.22$). Light skin black women were also significantly different from dark skin black women ($M = 36.43, SD = 4.22$), thus indicating that dark skin black women were most satisfied with their skin color.
Table 4.16

*Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and F Ratios from MANOVA Results*

(N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCSS</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>32.69</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>35.80</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>10.42</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>36.69</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAS</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>29.57</td>
<td>13.79</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>31.93</td>
<td>13.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>35.37</td>
<td>16.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimal</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>37.94</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>38.54</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>36.94</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suboptimal</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>22.04</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>22.83</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** denotes significant p value (p < .01).

Table 4.17

*Summary of Means, Standard Deviations, and F Ratios from ANOVA Post Hoc Results*

(N = 259)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCSS</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>33.05</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.866</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>35.75</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dark</td>
<td>36.43</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section Three – Post-Hoc Analyses from Demographic Variables

Analyses of Variance

After the analysis of the second research question was conducted, I was interested in group differences related to demographics variables. A series of one-way, between-subjects ANOVAs were conducted to examine the mean total scores on the SCSS, SAAS, RMI, and the optimal and suboptimal subscales of the RMI for each demographic variable.

Statistically Significant Group Differences

Age Group

Participants were divided into four groups according to their age (Group 1: 21 to 24 years; Group 2: 25 to 29 years; Group 3: 30 to 34 years; Group 4: 35 to 39 years).

Suboptimal Resistance. A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of age group on suboptimal strategies of resistance. Results showed a statistically significant difference, at the \( p < .05 \) level in mean total scores on the suboptimal subscale of the RMI among the four age groups, \( F(3, 211) =3.90, p = .01 \). The effect size was determined to be .05, indicating a fairly moderate effect (Cohen, 1988). Post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey HSD test. The mean suboptimal resistance score of those in the 34 to 39 age group (\( M = 21.76, SD = 4.44 \)) was found to be significantly different from the mean total score of those in the 25 to 29 age group (\( M = 24.00, SD = 4.34 \)), and was also significantly different from the mean total score of those in the 21 to 24 age group (\( M = 24.37, SD = 4.64 \)). The mean suboptimal resistance total score in the 30 to 34 age group was not found to be statistically different from mean total scores of those in the 21 to 24, 25 to 29, or 35 to 39 age groups. These findings suggest that women in their 20s tend to use more strategies of suboptimal resistance than women in their 30s.
Social Appearance Anxiety. A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of age group on social appearance anxiety. Results indicated a statistically significant difference, at the p < .05 level in mean total scores on the SAA between the four age groups, F(3, 248) = 3.01, p = .028. The effect size was determined to be .04. The 21 to 34 age group had higher mean total scores (M = 36.25, SD = 14.46) than the 35 to 39 (M = 35.71, SD = 16.51), 30 to 34 (M = 31.33, SD = 13.50), 35 to 39 (M = 29.40, SD = 14.54) age groups. These findings suggest that women’s anxiety about their appearance decreases as they age.

Marital Status

Participants were divided into four groups according to their marital status (Group 1: single; Group 2: married; Group 3: separated; Group 4: divorced). There were no widowers in the research sample.

Suboptimal Resistance. A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of marital status group on suboptimal strategies of resistance. Results indicated a statistically significant difference, at the p < .05 level in mean total scores on the suboptimal subscale of the RMI between marital status groups, F(3, 211) = 4.46, p = .05. The effect size was determined to be .06 and of moderate size (Cohen, 1988). Post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey HSD test. The mean suboptimal resistance total score of married women (M = 21.83, SD = 4.36) was found to be significantly different from the mean total score of single women (M = 23.57, SD = 4.40). The mean suboptimal resistance total score of the divorced and separated women groups were not found to be statistically different from each other and the mean total scores of the married and single women groups. Married women use less strategies of suboptimal resistance than single women. These findings suggest that single women are suboptimal resistors.
Children

Participants were divided into two groups according to whether or not they have children (Group 1: women with children; Group 2: childless women).

Suboptimal Resistance. A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of women with children and women without children on suboptimal strategies of resistance. Results indicated a statistically significant difference, at the p < .05 level in mean total scores on suboptimal resistance between women with children and childless women $F(1, 213) = 7.99$, $p = .05$ ($?$05. The effect size was determined to be .04. The women with children group had lower mean total scores ($M = 21.87$, $SD = 4.00$) than childless women ($M = 23.58$, $SD = 4.51$) group, suggesting that women with no children are suboptimal resistors.

Multicultural and Women’s Studies Education

Participants were divided into two groups according to whether or not they have taken multicultural and/women studies course(s) (Group 1: women with multicultural and/or women studies education; Group 2: women without multicultural and/or women studies education).

Optimal Resistance. A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of women with multicultural and/or women studies education and women with no multicultural and/or women studies education groups on optimal strategies of resistance. Results showed a statistically significant difference, at the p < .01 level in mean total scores on the optimal subscale of the RMI between the two groups, $F(1, 211) = 14.84$, $p = .000$. The effect size was determined to be .07, indicating a moderate effect. Women who took at least one multicultural and/or women studies course are optimal resistors.

Racial Identification
Participants were divided into three groups according to the racial background they identified on research study survey (Group 1: Black/African American; Group 2: Biracial/Multiracial; Group 3: “Other”).

**Skin Color Satisfaction.** A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of racial identification group on skin color satisfaction. Results indicated a statistically significant difference, at the p < .05 level in mean scores on the suboptimal subscale of the RMI between marital status groups, $F(2, 251) = 4.50$, $p = .012$. The effect size was determined to be .04. Post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey HSD test. The mean skin color total score of the Black/African American identified women group ($M = 35.48$, $SD = 4.15$) was found to be significantly different from the mean total score of the Biracial/Multiracial identified women group ($M = 33.36$, $SD = 4.79$). The mean skin color satisfaction total score of the “Other” group were not found to be statistically different from the mean total scores of the Biracial/Multiracial and Black/African American identified women groups. These findings suggest that Black/African American identified women are more satisfied with their skin color satisfaction than Biracial/Multiracial identified women.

**Optimal Resistance.** A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of racial identification on optimal strategies of resistance. Results indicated a statistically significant difference, at the p < .05 level in mean total scores on the optimal subscale of the RMI between the racial identity, $F(2, 211) = 3.28$, $p = .040$. The effect size was determined to be .03. The Black/African American identified women group had higher mean total scores ($M = 38.43$, $SD = 5.14$) than the Biracial/Multiracial ($M = 35.71$, $SD = 16.51$) identified women group. This suggests that Black/African American women use more strategies of optimal resistance than Biracial/Multiracial identified women.
Hair Change

Participants were divided into eight groups according to what they stated they would change about their hair [Group 1: Nothing; Group 2: Texture; Group 3: Longer/Length; Group 4: Thicker/Fullness; Group 5: Moisture; Group 6: Frizz; Group 7: Other; Group 8: Combination (more than one of the aforementioned features)]

Skin Color Satisfaction. A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of hair change groups on skin color satisfaction. Results indicated a statistically significant difference, at the p < .05 level in mean total scores on the SCSS among the hair change groups, F(7, 237) = 2.81, p = .008. The effect size was determined to be .08, which was determined to be a moderate effect size. Texture hair change group had a lower mean total score (M = 33.76, SD = 5.08) than “Nothing” (M = 34.33, SD = 4.43); “Longer/Length” (M = 36.15, SD = 3.79); “Thicker/Fullness” (M = 37.14, SD = 2.54); “Moisture” (M = 36.38, SD = 3.42); “Other” (M = 34.59, SD = 4.624); and “Combination” (M = 34.32, SD = 4.67). The “Frizz” hair change group only contained 6 participants and therefore lacked statistical power. This suggests that women who would change their hair texture (e.g. curlier, wavier, or straighter) were less satisfied with their skin color than women who would change other features of their hair.

Social Appearance Anxiety. A one-way, between-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of hair change groups on social appearance anxiety. Results indicated a statistically significant difference, at the p < .05 level in mean total scores on the SAAS between the hair change groups, F(7, 235) = 2.45, p = .019. The effect size was determined to be .07, which was determined to be a moderate effect size. Post-hoc comparisons were conducted using the Tukey HSD test. The mean SAAS total score of the “Combination” hair change group (M =
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR HAIR

38.03, SD = 16.30) was found to be significantly different from the mean total score of the “Nothing” hair change group (M = 25.79, SD = 11.74). These findings suggest that women who would change more than one feature about their hair were more anxious about their appearance than women who would only change one feature about their hair or nothing at all.

Non-Significant Group Differences

Skin Color Satisfaction. Results indicated that there were no significant differences in mean SCSS total scores between age groups, F(3, 250) = .885, p = .449; marital status groups, F(3, 250) = .853, p = .466; women with children and childless women groups, F(1, 251) = .347, p = .556; women with multicultural and/or women studies education and women with no multicultural and/or women studies education, F(1, 251) = .439, p = .508; women of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin F(1, 251) = 3.34, p = .069; ethnicity groups, F(5, 243) = 1.02, p = .406; native geographical location groups F(5, 242) = .417, p = .837; and hair satisfaction F(2, 246) = .495, p = .610 groups.

Social Appearance Anxiety. Results indicated that there were no significant differences in mean SAAS total scores between women with multicultural and/or women studies education and women with no multicultural and/or women studies education, F(1, 249) = .674, p = .412; women of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin F(1, 248) = 2.03, p = .155; racial identity groups; ethnicity groups F(5, 241) = .211, p = .958; and hair satisfaction F(2, 244) = .599, p = .550, groups.

Although results also showed that there were no significant differences in mean SAAS total scores between marital status F(3, 248) = 2.18, p = .091 and women with children and childless women groups F(1, 250) = 3.24, p = .073, the single women group had a higher mean total score (M = 34.37, SD = 15.05) than married (M = 29.50, SD = 14.07), separated (M =
28.40, SD = 15.19), and divorced (M = 30.50, SD = 14.44) women groups. The childless women group also had a higher mean total score (M = 33.99, SD = 15.00) than the women with children group (M = 30.65, SD = 14.43).

No significant differences were found in mean SAAS total scores between the native geographical location groups, however internationally raised women group had a lower mean total score (M = 21.00, SD = 3.16) on the SAAS than the northeastern region (M = 33.83, SD = 15.79), multiple regions (M = 32.65, SD = 12.57), southern region (M = 32.39, SD = 13.97), midwestern region (M = 31.72 SD = 17.24), and western (M = 31.33, SD = 12.59) women groups.

*Psychological Resistance.* Results indicated that there were no significant differences in mean RMI total scores between age groups, F(3, 209) = .722, p = .540; marital status groups F(3, 209) = 1.73, p = .162; women with children and childless women groups, F(1, 211) = 1.34, p = .249; women of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin F(1, 210) = .349, p = .555; and hair texture F(7, 197) = .509, p = .827, hair satisfaction F(2, 206) = .382, p = .683,, and hairstyle choice groups, F(5, 207) = .237, p = .946.

*Optimal Resistance.* Results indicated that there were no significant differences in mean optimal resistance of the RMI total scores between age groups F(3, 210) = 48.15, p = .161; marital status groups, F(3, 210) = .361, p = .781; women with children and childless women groups, F(1, 212) = .454, p = .501; women of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin F(1, 211) = .019, p = .890; racial identity groups, F(2, 210) = 2.57, p = .080; ethnicity groups F(5, 203) = 1.18, p = .321; native geographical location group F(5, 203) = .609, p = .693; and hair texture F(7, 198) = 1.39, p = .213, hair satisfaction F(2, 207) = .897, p = .409,, and hairstyle choice F(5, 208) = .684, p = .636 groups.
**Suboptimal Resistance.** Results indicated that there were no significant differences in the mean suboptimal resistance scores between women with multicultural and/or women studies education and women with no multicultural and/or women studies education, \( F(1, 212) = 3.30, p = .071 \); women of Hispanic and non-Hispanic origin \( F(1, 212) = 1.21, p = .272 \); racial identity, \( F(2, 210) = 2.56, p = .08 \); ethnicity groups \( F(5, 204) = .412, p = .840 \); and hair texture \( F(7, 199) = 1.18, p = .318 \), hair satisfaction \( F(2, 208) = .157, p = .855 \), and hairstyle choice \( F(5, 209) = .927, p = .465 \), groups.

Although results also showed that there were no significant differences in the mean suboptimal subscale of the RMI total scores between native geographical location groups \( F(5, 204) = 1.20, p = .309 \), the internationally raised women group had a lower mean total score (\( M = 18.67, SD = 2.94 \)) on the suboptimal subscale of the RMI than the western region (\( M = 23.47, SD = 4.29 \)), southern region (\( M = 23.13, SD = 4.69 \)), midwestern region (\( M = 22.90, SD = 4.56 \)), and northeastern region (\( M = 31.33, SD = 12.59 \)) women groups.

**Section Four- Phase II: Qualitative Results**

**Overview of Data Analysis Procedure**

The purpose of using a phenomenological approach was to explore the unique experiences and perceptions of black women, identifying phenomena and interpreting them. The phenomenological approach emphasizes the importance of personal knowledge and subjectivity. The researcher is able to gain insight into individuals’ thoughts, motivation, and behaviors thus developing empathy to their subjective experiences (Lester, 1999). Qualitative data analysis began after both the quantitative data analysis and the two-hour focus group were completed. During the seven months that data was collected from online surveys and the focus group, no analyses were conducted. Once all data was collected, the researcher transcribed the focus group
audio recording. The transcription was then reviewed twice with the recording to confirm the accuracy of the dictation. The researcher then reviewed the focus group notation and examined for codes that were common among participants. A thematic analysis approach was used, as described in detail earlier in chapter 3. The codes that emerged from the data were based on a number of interview and research questions that were explored. Interview questions were used to answer the two qualitative research questions of the study. As a result of the literature review in Chapter 2, several research questions were developed. These research questions facilitated the development of 10 research questions. The qualitative research questions and interview questions are as follows:

**Qualitative Research Questions**

1. What social and environmental factors influence hair and skin satisfaction?
2. How does hairstyle choice contribute to social appearance anxiety among black women?

**Qualitative Focus Group Interview Questions**

1. Do you experience comments about your skin color from others, presently? What is said? Who says what?
2. Which populations tend to support your choices about your hair? Which populations do not? What is said?
3. Do you experience pressure from others and/or environments to wear certain types of hairstyles?
4. How has the media/social media (i.e. television, magazines, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) influenced your attitude towards your skin color and hair?
5. What messages did you receive about your skin color and hair growing up? From whom? What was said?
6. Have your attitudes towards your hair and skin color changed since childhood and/or adolescence? If so, what caused the change?

7. When are you most satisfied with your hair? Are you satisfied with your hair, currently?

8. Do you worry about what others think when you have a new hairstyle?

9. Do you avoid taking pictures or going out in public if you are dissatisfied with the state of your hair?

10. If your hair could talk, what would it say and to whom (Narrative Therapy Approach)?

Based on these questions, analysis of the data identified several themes that were focused on answering the research questions. This provided a sense of direction during data analysis, by helping me identify codes that were relevant to answering her research questions. As previously mentioned, a thematic analysis approach was used for the focus group. Depending on researchers’ preference of measuring prevalence, the utilization of research criteria in a thematic analysis qualitative method varies (Braun & Clark, 2006). It can be identified based on the number of occurrences where the data item appeared in the data, the number of various participants who discussed a theme, or individual occurrences of a theme across the data set. In a thematic analysis approach there is no set rule about the frequency of data items or codes in order for it to be considered a theme. The researcher must be flexible with determining how to set prevalence (Braun & Clark, 2006). The main purpose of a thematic analysis approach is to sense the presence of potential themes, by continuously familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes that represent the themes, refining these themes, and finally interpreting these themes within the context of a theoretical framework that contributes to the development of knowledge (Braun & Clark, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). In this study, the researcher chose to include
themes based on the number of occurrences where the theme appeared in the data. The focus group consisted of three diverse black women.

After reviewing each recording three times and transcribing the focus group twice, the researcher generated 76 initial codes. These codes were matched with data extracts that demonstrated each code. A total of 21 candidate themes were developed from the initial codes and data extractions. The researcher then had a colleague review her codes and themes, as well as her first three chapters of the study. The purpose of this was to establish validity by the use of investigator triangulation (Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011). This colleague has extensive experience with the demographic population of the research sample as they are employed as a marketing manager, specifically for black hair care at a popular lifestyle magazine for black women. After a few weeks away from the data set, the researcher reviewed the transcription again and created a thematic map to ensure accuracy in reflecting the meanings evident in the entire data set (Braun & Clark, 2006). A thematic map is a less detailed version of a qualitative method codebook, which provides a detailed description of codes, their criteria, and both exemplifications and counter examples (Braun & Clark, 2006). Thematic maps are visual presentations similar to brainstorm bubble diagrams in appearance, but are more effective in combining different codes into overarching themes. The consultation of an external researcher and the use of thematic maps helped me to narrow my themes to nine. Next, another thematic map analysis was conducted by the researcher to further narrow the number of themes. Once the data analysis were completed, six themes emerged from the data:

1. Hair and Skin Color Appraisers
2. Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines
3. Emotional Rollercoaster of Social Media and Black Television
4. Preference vs. Programming
5. Cultural Appropriation
6. Positive Self-Identity

In order to provide a sense of continuity to the unique and rich stories of the black women in the study, these themes are described in a particular order. For example, I begin with ‘Hair and Skin Color Appraisers’ so as to clarify the initial cognitive processes and ideas about hair and skin color, as well as the expanded notions by others external from one’s family. Next, ‘Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines’ are discussed as it connects the comments, actions, attitudes of family members, friends, romantic partners, etc. and how it shapes their own attitudes and action about hair and skin color. ‘Emotional Rollercoaster of Social Media and Black Television’ follows as the impact of social media and television supported and/or did not support their attitudes about hair and skin color. Next, ‘Preference vs. Programming’ is discussed as it merges the prior themes and leaves one to question whether their present notions are personal preferences or remnants of historically imposed ideologies about the black woman. Two out of the last three themes identify and highlight specific topics and issues that impact present day black women. Finally, the last theme discusses self-definition and self-appreciation. This order of the themes helps solidify our understanding of the unique experiences of black women in the United States.

The last half of this chapter will discuss the six themes in detail and how the results of the data reflected these ideas that emerged from the research. The themes will be discussed in the order listed above to help provide a narrative understanding of the process in which the participants of the study developed their present ideas and attitudes about black women’s hair and skin color; and how it impacts satisfaction with their own hair and skin color. As with many
qualitative research analyses, themes will overlap and there are often themes embedded within overarching themes. The themes that are embedded are called subthemes, which refer to themes that exist underneath the context of larger themes. Subthemes share the same organizing idea as the theme, but focuses on one notable element within that theme (Aronson, 1994).

Table 4.18

*Demographic Data and Presence of Themes Among Participants*  
(N = 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Skin Color</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Evie       | 31  | Medium     | Single         | Hair and Skin Color Appraisers  
Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines  
Emotional Rollercoaster of Social Media and Black Television  
Preference vs. Programming  
Cultural Appropriation  
Positive Self-Identity |
| Raquel     | 37  | Medium     | Single         | Hair and Skin Color Appraisers  
Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines  
Emotional Rollercoaster of Social Media and Black Television  
Preference vs. Programming  
Cultural Appropriation  
Positive Self-Identity |
| Serena     | 28  | Dark       | Single         | Hair and Skin Color Appraisers  
Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines  
Emotional Rollercoaster of Social Media and Black Television  
Preference vs. Programming  
Cultural Appropriation  
Positive Self-Identity |
Hair and Skin Color Appraisers Family and Friends Matters

The discussion of the qualitative research results begins with family and other persons in the black women’s lives who evaluate their hair and skin color. All three participants discussed being judged and/or witnessing other black women being judged about their hair and skin color. Three subthemes were coded under the Hair and Skin Color Appraisers theme: (1) Family Matters, (2) Good Hair vs. Bad Hair, and (3) He Said/She said.

Family Matters subtheme denotes family dynamics and the demographics of the communities and neighborhoods where the women were raised. The participants’ first exposure to the diversity of the physical attributes of black women was within their families. Black girls receive direct and indirect messages about the images of black women early in their development. Serena exemplified this theme when she recalled family messages she received about black women:

Again, I feel like I always got positive images from my family. I wasn’t allowed to have a white doll. My mother was very firm about that. People would try to just give me a Christmas gift, she was like, “You need to take that back.” Growing up, I was like, “Why is she tripping like this?” Now that I’m older, I get it now. My mother, and she says this to me. She said it to me when I was younger. She always wanted me to have a positive image of myself… I always was told by my parents and by my family that I’m very pretty and I have a pretty complexion, not to feel anyway about it…

Raquel shared receiving mixed messages from family members regarding her skin color. She acknowledged experiencing and witnessing preferential treatment due to skin color:

I grew up around my family, Africans. There were a lot of darker complexion, my cousins or family members. I could always feel there was a difference in how they treated
me. That’s the case, how they treated me. My sister is darker than me. She was treated
differently than I was. I do know, it’s like you notice but then you’re like no, we’re all the
same…

*Good Hair vs. Bad Hair* subtheme describes the women experiencing and/or witnessing
preferential treatment from family members due to hair texture variations within their family. As
previously mentioned in the first two chapters of this study, “good” hair refers to having a hair
texture that resembles European or Native American hair (e.g., looser hair texture, wavy, straight
hair), while “bad” hair refers to hair that is tightly coiled or kinky. Long hair and fullness
(thickness) of hair is also associated with having “good” hair, whereas short and limp hair is
considered “bad” hair. The participants discussed receiving messages about who had good hair
versus bad hair from an early age. Two of the participants discussed how it affected their
relationships with their sisters. The Good Hair vs. Bad Hair subtheme is reflected in Raquel’s
words:

In terms of [my] hair, my Mom relaxed it. I never wanted to do natural because of what
my Mom told me. You never…if you have your hair natural and your Mom is telling you
things, that’s what you grow up with. “Your hair is not good, so you got to relax it.” All I
knew was relaxing, up until I was like maybe 23 is when I decided, because I saw my
sister and I decided to go natural. Because your Mom and them tell you things like,
“Your hair is not like that girl’s hair.” It’s in your brain. You’re like, “I’m never going to
do that. I need to relax my hair. Let me wear weaves.” I used to wear weaves. I used to
cut my hair and relax it. I never had my hair natural until I was in my 20s…

Serena commented on the contrast between her and her mother’s hair:
I’m not even trying to be funny, but my Mom’s side they really are Native American. You look at them, you’d be like what are you all? I’m actually doing like, trying to find out our historical background with them. Because if you saw my Mom growing up a lot, [I remember] people going up to her speaking Spanish. She’s like that. That look, yeah, especially when she curls it, they’d be like Juanita, da, da, da, and she’s like, “No, I’m not Hispanic.” That’s how they looked, and that’s how their hair was. Again, my hair was more coarse so we just dealt with it. She could braid my hair. I always had my hair braided up a lot. A lot of people had hair like yours [points to researcher] and my Mom’s. My hair was breaking combs.

*He said/She Said* Although family members are often the initial commentators about one’s physical attributes, comments and opinions are received from others as individuals expand their social networks. This subtheme refers to commentaries, ideologies, and opinions from friends, men and romantic partners, and strangers that may impact women’s satisfaction with their hair and skin color. All three participants acknowledged that both positive and negative statements about their hair and skin color from others influence their attitudes and satisfaction towards these features. People’s opinions about their hair and skin color evoke various feelings for them on a regular basis. Evie spoke about comments about her hair from boys made her question her contentment with her hair and influenced her decision to chemically process her hair regularly:

I remember I’d put my hair in two little buns. I just loved my buns. I remember being in the fifth grade and these boys behind me saying: “Look at her hair. She needs to do something to her hair. She needs to get a perm.” Just the way I felt, if I thought I was doing…you couldn’t tell me my little wavy buns weren’t doing it. Just that, internalizing
that and just being like, on the one hand thinking that it was stupid, but then on the other hand feeling somewhere on the other side like they had a point. [That’s when] I got my first perm…when I was 10. I went natural when I was like 14 or 15. The reason why I went natural was because my hair was like paper thin. It’s because I should have never done a perm in the first place.

**Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines**

The theme Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines refers to ascriptions, rules, and expectations directed towards black women and their body image. Three subthemes were coded under the Black Female Aesthetics Guidelines theme: (1) Brown Paper Bag Test, (2) The Caste System of Hair, and (3) Pick Your Struggle.

**Brown Paper Bag Test** refers to a type of racial discrimination in United States during the 20th century. The brown paper bag test originated in New Orleans, Louisiana. It was used in many African-American churches, sororities and colleges. The test consisted of using a brown paper bag to determine whether or not an individual could obtain certain privileges. If an individual was the same color or lighter than the brown paper bag, they were afforded privileges such as admission into elite institutions, parties and exclusive clubs, formal education, and a higher socioeconomic status. The test was also related to ideas of beauty, as proof that lighter skin than other African-Americans was deemed as attractive (Pilgrim, 2014). Although the Brown Paper Bag Test is no longer commonly being used, some Blacks/African-Americans unconsciously and consciously still carry these beliefs about skin color. All of the participants indicated experiences of involuntarily having their skin color compared to other individuals or inanimate objects; having attributes ascribed to them because of their skin color; being
introduced to bleaching creams; and other black people questioning their blackness. Evie described having her skin color compared to food without her permission:

He said something about me being light-skinned. I’m like, “I’m not light.” I don’t want to be in this conversation because I’m just like I’m not going to go back and forth with you about whatever you think.” I was like, “I’m peanut butter color.” They went to the refrigerator and got peanut butter and put it next to my skin! They were like, “You are not that color.”

*The Caste System of Hair* refers to the hierarchy of hairstyles worn by black women. Throughout their lives, black women have received messages about the “appropriate” hairstyles to wear to work and wearing hairstyles that they dislike solely for the purpose of their job/career. These hairstyles are usually straight or conceal the hair texture of the individual. These hairstyles are considered more professional than Afrocentric hairstyles such as afros, braids, and locs. Even outside of their jobs and careers, black women are often pressured to wear their hair straight or in a suggested hairstyle particularly by other black women

Serena noted the unfairness of having to be mindful about the hairstyles she wears to work for the sake of success:

I work in a hospital with a lot of physicians… I don’t feel pressure to [not wear my hair natural]… but I feel the pressure to at least maintain it in a way that I probably don’t want to do it. …you want to I guess go up a corporate ladder, to a certain extent you do have to play by other people’s rules. That is something to take into consideration. It’s not fair.

Evie agreed with Serena about the pressures to wear certain hairstyles in professional environments, she also indicated that wearing her hair straight gives her unwanted attention:
I do feel like when I wear my hair out or my hair straight, I get certain attention that I don’t want. Sadly, that depicts how I present myself, how I feel like people are going to treat me based on that. That, I think it has a bearing on my hair…

**Pick your struggle** subtheme reflects to the idea that having dark skin is a flaw or imperfection that has to be countered by having another physical attribute that is more appealing, particularly a nice body. It insinuates that those who are of a darker skin color and overweight are “too flawed” Evie discussed receiving this message from both black men and women, and reluctantly agreeing with this idea to a certain extent:

He [an actor] was saying that he has to stay in shape. He’s like, “I can’t be this dark and be fat.” I was just like; I think that Viola Davis and Lupita, if they were overweight, they would not be famous. Jill Scott, she could not be who she is and be a dark-skinned woman. It’s just the society that we live in. Sadly. People applaud and say she’s beautiful. She couldn’t be a dark-skinned woman and be where she is now. My friend agreed, she said: “You got to pick your struggle.” She was like, “I’m not going to date a… I won’t date a dude that’s dark-skinned and fat.” I’m like, “Why is that a struggle?”

**Emotional Rollercoaster of Social Media and Black Television** theme refers to YouTube and other forms of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become increasingly popular internationally and cross-culturally. YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram have thousands of instructional videos about natural hair, which can be especially helpful to black women who recently transitioned back to natural hair and are uncertain about how to take care of their hair. There are also many groups on Facebook and Instagram dedicated to natural hair, where women can discuss various topics about natural hair care. In addition to natural hair care, social media serves other functions for black women. Black women may use social media
to be updated about celebrities’ whereabouts, and discuss different topics related to the welfare and social justice of black people, especially on Black Twitter. Black Twitter is a cultural identity of Twitter that solely focuses on issues within the black community. However, social media may also negatively influence hair and skin color satisfaction of black women by depicting images of black women that are unattainable and having beauty competitions based on the skin color of black women (i.e. light skin vs. dark skin). The subthemes (1) ‘Mixed Messages’ (2) No Pictures Please’ and (3) ‘Power of the Celebrity’ also emerged from this theme.

**Mixed Messages** subtheme describes the various messages the women receive on social media, which results in having mixed feelings about social media sites. Two participants acknowledged the benefits of social media and the influences it has on their hair satisfaction, specifically for black women with natural hair. Serena noted that she may not have chemically processed her hair if her mother had access to YouTube like today’s young black girls:

I don’t have any issues with that because that’s all our mothers knew and that’s what they taught because that’s what they were taught. Perm your hair. You got to do something with it. I get what you’re saying. I think now, more parents are more like, “No, we’re not going to perm little girls’ hair.” Thank God for YouTube, right? You can learn everything on hair.

Although, Raquel agreed about the benefits of instructional videos for natural hair, although she explained that she has taken a break from social media:

…why I took a hiatus was, there was different depictions of women, how they should look in terms of skin color and bodies. If you’re not strong within, these messages can be very damaging. You have to be really strong within because you have a lot of men,
women, what is accepted, what is not, skin color, hair, whether you have a weave, whether you have natural hair, whether you have a flat nose, you have a small waist. It’s too much…..

**No Pictures Please** this subtheme refers to the strong desire to look good in pictures and to be satisfied with the results because of the likelihood of them being posted on a social media site for everyone to see. All participants admitted to avoidance of taking pictures when they were feeling dissatisfied with their hair, however they also expressed feelings of guilt for doing so. One of the participants associated these occurrences with issues that affected all women regardless of their race, skin color, and hair texture.

Evie described her experience with taking photos:

If my hair looks crazy or I think it looks crazy, I will avoid pictures. If I don’t like the way that my hair looks necessarily but I know that it’s fine, I know that other people will think it’s fine, I’m not going to be like, “Let’s take a picture.” When somebody says, “Let’s take a picture.” I’m like, “Okay.” I’m not going to initiate the picture unless my hair is popping. If my hair looks good, yeah let’s take all the pictures, like when my hair is not looking good just to cover me. Yeah, when I’m dissatisfied with my hair. Like I said, I’m not going to let that stop me from going to get the groceries. As far as taking pictures that will be put on Facebook or Instagram, I’m not really signing up for that when my hair is not.

**Power of the Celebrity** subtheme describes the women’s beliefs in the rise and fall of black television. Black television shows of the 1980s to the early 2000s had a significant influence on black girls and women. Black females often aspired to be one of the cast members of these show. They would show their appreciation for these characters by emulating their hairstyles and
clothing. All of the participants felt that there were no longer positive representations of black women on television. These images were now replaced with reality shows depicting black women in unfavorable images. Two participants felt a loss of pleasure in watching television. They believed reality show black women now replaced most black television shows. Conversely, they had little interest in watching predominately white television shows that they couldn’t relate to or find characters that resembled. Participants also felt that modern day actresses and performers didn’t speak enough about colorism and other forms of racial discrimination, specifically celebrities of mixed race who utilize black culture, but don’t speak when there is social injustice for black people. Still, the participants expressed joy conversing about celebrities who wore natural hair and were dark skin, however there was disappointment in the number of famous women who had these features.

Serena voiced her disbelief in the downfall of black television:

My biggest issue with television and why I stopped watching the bullshit is because it’s like how the fuck did we go from women like Phylicia Rashad being lawyers, Pam and Gina were in marketing, Regina, even though she was bougie, but how did we go so far to the fucking right and around the corner to this bullshit? Growing up we were on such a high. How did we go from mothers and wives and career women on television to Nene Leakes and Love and Hip Hop? That’s why I stopped watching television and why I don’t watch those shows.

Serena was quoted describing her displeasure with mixed-race celebrities:

Amber Rose does it. She’s said some stuff that I don’t like. What’s that other girl’s name? Was it Rosario Dawson? No, Zoe Saldana. She said something crazy one time. I don’t support that. Then that’s another issue that I have. You have these women that
might be mixed, again, they might be mixed or whatever the case may be, and you make a whole living off of black culture, and black women, and black media but then you don’t want to be black? Then you got something to say? Like on the side, in your little interview and things like that. What are we talking about? I read into these things. I don't know if other black women in media read into these things the way I do. Those are people that I don’t support. I think as a culture, I think black people let a lot of shit slide with these celebrities too. Even, what was that guy’s named? Tiger Woods? Can we do a trade-off?”

Preference vs. Programming

This theme refers to the debate about whether individuals’ present personal preferences are based on their experiences or imposed ideologies that are “programmed” into them. Specifically for black women: is favoritism towards certain hair textures, hairstyles, skin colors, and other physical features that resemble Eurocentric ideals of beauty merely predilections similar to a favorite color or ice cream flavor? Or are they historic belief systems developed during slavery and imperialism to deliberately encode an affinity to Eurocentric beauty and an aversion to Afrocentric beauty? Two out of three participants discussed their opposing views about whether famous black women intentionally or unintentionally demonstrate a preference for Eurocentric beauty. Serena expressed her belief that Beyoncé Knowles was purposefully making herself white:

She [Beyonce] had a campaign for Revlon or something like that. I don't know if you all remember that? Where she looked really, really light. It’s like you didn’t say anything about that. You already have such a platform, which you could have said something and she didn’t say anything. You just collected that check and kept it moving. I’m just saying
this in general, [some people] are probably more proud to be black and want it to be known that they’re black and have no issues with saying that. They won’t do anything for a check. [Then] there are others, they’re going to try to make themselves more appealing to white culture and fit in, and collect the check, and think that we’re all supposed to be cool with that.

Evie disagreed with Serena and spoke about the unconsciousness of certain actions pertaining to beauty:

I think what it is, is that it’s a broken system. In most of our heads, unconsciously or consciously white is better, blonde hair is better, light eyes are better, thin noses are better, not thin lips, big lips are in now. I think that. I feel like a lot of the issues that we have as brown people in this country have to do with, I feel like we have some delayed PTSD from slavery. We are so exhausted and tired [of what you have to go through as a black person] just to get up out the bed sometimes…what has been done to us and what we continue to do to ourselves based on what has been done to us. It just … It’s so pervasive.

**Cultural Appropriation**

The theme Cultural Appropriation signifies the importance of black people, specifically black women having their own cultural values and being acknowledge as innovators of these intellectual and artistic achievements. Cultural Appropriation is defined as, the use of cultural expressions, artifacts, and traditional knowledge, and then taking this intellectual property without permission (Scafidi, 2005). This includes unauthorized use of religious systems, language dress, and music, dance. It is especially psychologically threatening to people of color and other marginalized groups that have already been oppressed and exploited. All participants
discussed their feelings about people stealing one’s ideas and making it their own, especially white women. They added that white females have certain privileges over black females, which allows them to have more freedom in the way that they express themselves.

Serena noted limitability in being able to express herself by wearing certain hairstyles:

Yes, because if I feel like as an African American, if we do it, it’s considered ghetto and ratchet, but then when they do it, it’s so creative and edgy. Usually a lot of these stuff come from streets of Jamaica or something, you know? Where they come up with all these creative styles. Then when we do it and we start this trend, we’ll be getting all the backlash for it. Then when Kim Kardashian does it, all of a sudden it’s so trendy….. My issue is that they [the Kardashians] do everything in black culture. They get butt injections, wear braids, plump up their lips, think black, they do all these things that attribute to black culture but they want nothing to do with black women. You are building your stance on a platform of black women making money off of us. What they’re pretty much telling you is that I can do you better than you can.

Evie agreed and discussed that white female privilege goes beyond hairstyle choice:

I feel like they [white women] have a freedom in a way that we don’t necessarily have the privilege of having when it comes to expressing themselves. Even through what they say, I don’t think a white woman would ever really be called angry. Even if she’s yelling, and cussing at somebody, she’s having a bad day. Yeah, I think it’s different for white women. White girls wear a mini skirt and its just fashion, but a black girl does it and she’s asking to be raped.

Raquel also agreed and provided examples about her personal experiences and the representation of cultural appropriation:
I remember growing up and I pierced my nose. Then I would work in an environment, I had to take the earring out of my nose, but you’ll see a white girl with an earring on her nose, everybody is accepting. They could come in with dreads…everybody is more accepting. For me, it’s more, when I’d had my dreads and I was in that kind of environment, I’d put a wig on, because I didn't know what people were going to think of my dreads. I’m the only black person amongst everybody. That to me, it made me feel bad about myself though for a little bit for me to cover up my crown and what I’m wearing.

**Positive Self-Identity**

This theme characterizes the women’s belief in diversity among black women, self care, and celebrating individuality. Throughout the focus group interview the participants made statements about refusing to be categorized or put into a box. They felt that it was essential as black women not needing to be defined by anyone’s standards and being able to express themselves, regardless of what others thought. They discussed the challenges of being pulled into other people’s ideas of how a black woman should look. They decided that it was also important not to dwell on differences, but rather to have a positive image of oneself. Each participant answered the question of when they are most satisfied with their hair. They concluded that hair and skin color satisfaction equates to black female pride.

Evie quote was coded in the theme Positive Self-Identity:

I think what you just said it made me think of something about how people even with the light skin, dark skin thing, curly hair, straight hair thing, it’s all about boxes. “I want to put you in a box so I know how to treat you, whatever.” It’s just like, that’s problematic to me because this guy approached me one time and he was like, he’s like, “Do you know
why I think you’re beautiful? Because you don’t have no weave or make-up on.” I was like, “Not today.” I usually do different things with my hair. I like to wear a nice lip sometimes. Not today, but why is that a part of your attraction to me?” I don’t like putting myself in a box. I often have to do it, so I don’t want to anymore. I’m most satisfied with my hair when I feel like it’s actually doing something that is controlled. and controlled

Serena echoed the quote above and described letting go of people’s comments and opinions about her hair:

I think if my hair could talk, she would say it on Instagram, “Do what you want to do.” I feel like there are so many hair Nazis out here. I have natural hair too and I pressed it yesterday. I just feel like there’s a lot of natural hair Nazis that we’re trying to get mad at people for wanting to get weaves or wigs or because they cut their hair. Look, it’s your hair. At the end of the day, if you’re an adult, do what you want to do with your hair…. I’m satisfied when it’s natural. As long as I can straighten it, I’m fine. I will probably never perm it again.

Raquel shared a similar belief to the two participants’ quotes above, but also added the importance of self care:

If my hair could talk it would say, “Please start taking better care of me.” That’s what it would tell me, because she’s been … Yes, because I’ve been neglecting her. Her, my pride and glory. Yeah, it would say please take better care of myself. Your hair is your crown. Don’t let anybody tell you or [give you] messages or whatever, don’t let society tell you how you should wear your hair. With hair, comes a freedom. That’s what my hair would say I am satisfied with my hair curly. I do see myself back in dreads. I cut it off 10 years ago because I
wanted a change. The reason why I did cut it off was because I wanted to let go of all bad energy from past relationships or whatever because I say your hair is everything, it collects energy. That’s the only reason. I would like to go back to dreads, but I’m satisfied as of now with my hair.

Section Five– Summary of Primary Findings

There were four primary findings in this study. First, results from the Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS) indicate that the majority of women in the study were satisfied with their skin color. According to the results from the hair satisfaction question in the demographics section of the online questionnaire, they were also satisfied with their hair; although over 90 percent indicated that they would change a feature about their hair. Second, the women in the study had a total mean score of 32 (maximum score 80) on the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale, suggesting that as a group, they have low levels of social appearance anxiety. This sample of women was also found to be optimal resistors as scored from the RMI. Third, skin color satisfaction was associated with the women’s anxiety about their appearance, as well as their use of optimal and suboptimal strategies of resistance. Although both optimal and suboptimal strategies of resistance reached statistical significance in their association with social appearance anxiety, women who use more suboptimal resistance strategies are more anxious about their appearance. Lastly, demographic results show that married women, women in their late thirties (35-39), and women with children use the least suboptimal strategies of resistance. Women who have taken at least one multicultural and/or women studies course use the most optimal strategies of resistance. Women in their early twenties (21-24) had the most social appearance anxiety.
Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a detailed description of the Phase I and Phase II results of the present study that examined the relationships among hair and skin color satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, psychological resistance, and social networks in a sample of 259 black women. First, demographic characteristics of the sample were presented using descriptive statistics. Second, the demographic characteristics for the von Luschan Chromatic Scale, and the demographic statistics for Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS), Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), and the Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI) are detailed. Third, findings related to the first two research questions were presented. Fourth, findings related to the demographic variables were detailed. Fourth, results and analysis of Phase II were presented. The chapter concluded with a summary of primary findings.
Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

The final chapter presents a discussion of the major findings of the study across five sections. The first section provides an overview of discussion for both phase I and phase II. The second section presents the research questions and discusses significant findings within the context of the Optimal Psychology and Ecological Model theoretical frameworks. The current literature on black women and colorism is provided. The third section presents systematic interventions for colorism. The fourth section identifies the study’s strengths and limitations. Finally, the fifth section outlines recommendations for future direction in research.

Section One - Overview of Phase I and Phase II Discussion

In regards to the examination of the relationships among skin color and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and psychological resistance among black adult women results indicated that the black women of this study were satisfied with their skin color, did not have anxiety about their appearance, and used mostly optimal strategies of resistance to cope with everyday stressors. There were significant relationships between the three measures. Women who were less satisfied with their skin color tended to use more suboptimal strategies of resistance such as: relying on others' opinions about their attractiveness, comfort eating, and alcohol and cannabis use to cope with life stressors; and were more anxious about their social appearance. Women who were more satisfied with their skin color used more optimal strategies of resistance and were less anxious about their social appearance. These women acknowledged
the opportunities they have received due to their ancestors overcoming obstacles and recognize the financial hardships of black people. They also opposed racial injustice for black people and were optimistic about the future. In terms of how family, friends, social media, and other social networks contribute to black women’s skin color and hair satisfaction, family and friends’ comments (i.e. positive statements/compliments or critiques about hair and skin color) and actions (i.e. treatment towards them and others due to hair and skin color); diversity of black women in social media and groups/videos (i.e. YouTube, Facebook groups, and Twitter) and social networks that supported positivity and individuality within the Black community contributed to black women’s hair and skin color satisfaction. These findings suggest that there are connections among black women’s satisfaction with their skin color and hair, anxiety about social appearance, and the type of psychological resistance strategies employed. Family, friends, and other social networks, as well as the media (mass and social) impact black women’s contentment with their hair from an early age.

Section Two – Research Questions

Findings from Phase I are discussed through Myer’s Optimal Psychology theoretical framework.

Findings Related to Phase I

Research Question 1: What strategies of resistance do black women describe and how are they used?

The intention of Resistance Theory is to acknowledge that optimal and suboptimal strategies of resistance are used among black women, however a woman who is characterized as an optimal resistor is able to identify when she is using suboptimal resistance strategies, seeks to understand why, and change this use, where possible (Martin et al., 2013; Robinson-Wood, 2014). An optimal resistor differs from optimal strategies of resistance because optimal resistors
regularly utilize a majority of socio-cultural and spiritual psychological strategies to counter oppressive experiences of black women, while optimal strategies of resistance can minimally, unintentionally and/or infrequently be used in their lives. Therefore, one can utilize some optimal strategies of resistance and still be characterized as a suboptimal resistor. Fifty-five percent of the sample of women reflects use of both types of resistance strategies. Overall the women were found to be optimal resisters as scored from the Resistance Modality Inventory (n = 259). Scores on the RMI characterized these women more as optimal resisters strategies (M = 38.10) than suboptimal resisters (M = 22.77). The optimal strategies of resistance that were endorsed by 90% or more by women in this study were:

(1) I believe that the past struggles of Black people have given me freedoms today (optimal). The women are aware and able to acknowledge the obstacles and challenges of their ancestors and other black people who fought for freedom, anti-discrimination, equality and other social injustices, and celebrated the beauty in blackness before their time. These women are aware of the sociohistorical context of being a black woman in the United States and the progress that has been made because of black women of the past (Wyatt, 1997).

(2) I believe that when things look bad that they will eventually get better (optimal). The women believe and understand that they are true testaments of resilience, as being a black woman in the United States causes one to withstand difficult times and be optimistic about the future. The experiences of black women in the United states are filled with challenges, strengths, and resilience that is truly unique to any other racially diverse women or black men (Thomas, 2004).

(3) I believe that not having money for basic necessities affects too many Black people (optimal if high endorsement). The issue of classism and low socioeconomic status are
oppressions many black women and men often face, especially since the abolition of slavery, as freedom came with a cost and respirations were broken promises (Szymanski & Stewart, 2010; Cross 1991; Thomas, 2004). The Great Recession was a period in the United States (December 2007 to June 2009) that was particularly difficult on the net worth of all American families, and fueled by major crises in housing and financial markets. Several years later as most households are economically recovering, the wealth inequality has widened along racial and ethnic groups. In 2010, the wealth of White American families was eight times the wealth of Black households. These gaps have widened in subsequent years as White households are now making 13 times the median wealth of Black households. In 2013, the average white household made $141,900 annually, compared to $11,000 in Black households (Kochhar, 2014). According to Forbes Magazine, this gap has now widened to White households having 16 times more wealth than Black families in 2015 (Shin, 2015). Specifically black women are disproportionately represented in socioeconomic status with one in every three Black women living in poverty. Additionally, they also have the highest rates of female headed households (Robinson-Wood, 2016) According to the 2012 U.S. Census 29% of Black households had no man present.

(4) I believe that Black people are entitled to racial justice (optimal). Ninety-four percent of the participants endorsed this statement. The belief in racial justice has always been pertinent to Black women and the Black community, however the shootings of unarmed Black men and women (to a lesser extent, but not any less relevant), particularly by policeman in the last few years has made this statement a demand and in its extremity of multiple incidents daily, a plea. More recently there has been a call for racism to be labeled a major public health concern with actions to reform the public health agenda and work to decrease racialized health disparities and structural racism (Garcia & Sharif, 2015).
The suboptimal strategies that were highly endorsed (over 50% of the women) by the women reflect gendered racism:

(1) *I feel pressure to look attractive (suboptimal).* Women across all races and ethnicities may experience the burden to be physically attractive (Robinson-Wood, 2014). However, being a black woman in the United States may make this pressure more intense, as the general beauty standards are historically rooted in Eurocentric ideals (Tate, 2007; Robinson, 2011). Superficiality becomes even more suboptimal when the black women’s self-worth is driven by how others view her beauty and physical attractiveness. There is a focus on visual perceptions (Robinson-Wood, 2014; Myers, 2013; Myers, 1991).

(2) *I use food for comfort and/or companionship.* Research has shown that black women may use *food* to combat life stressors and use food as comfort and security (Robinson-Wood, 2014). This use and reliance on non-spiritual and external sources as a way to cope with stress and emotional pain may cause harmful health issues. Regular exposure to oppression put Black women at risk food addictions, high blood pressure, and obesity issues (Martin et al., 2013; Robinson & Kennington, 2002; Brookins & Robinson, 1995). According to the CDC, Non-Hispanic Blacks have the highest prevalence of obesity followed by Hispanics, non-Hispanic Whites, and Asians. Women in general, but specifically Black women have a higher prevalence of obesity than their male counterparts. Although studies have shown obese girls and women have higher body- and self-esteem than girls and women of other races, they suffer from low body- and self-esteem, depression, anxiety, bulimia, body dissatisfaction, and negative self-concept more than their normal weight counterparts (Williams, Mesidor, Winters, Dubbert, & Wyatt, 2015). Higher rates of weight-related diabetes are also highly associated with Black American women and have implications for physical, relational, and mental health (Robinson-
Wood, 2014). The accessibility to healthy foods that are high quality may also be limited.

(3) I feel like my daily life is a constant struggle against racism. Myer’s Optimal Psychology considers forms of oppression such as racism a predisposed factor that an individual is exposed to in the conceptual system, or the society one co-exist in. This conceptual system is considered suboptimal and one is to search to live in optimal conditions or an optimal system through self-knowledge (Myers, 1991; Robinson-Wood & Ward, 1995; Myers, 2013). However, this search can be compromised when individuals or groups exist in a societal period where structural, institutional, and overt racism is ubiquitous. The Black Lives Matter Movement and the twitter hashtag #blacklivesmatter have flooded media outlets since it debut in July 2013. Black Lives Matter is a term coined by Alicia Garza in response (which later turned into a movement), to violence and systematic racism against Black people, especially by police officers. The term was created not to negate the importance of the lives of all individuals, but to acknowledge that the lives of Black people matter just as much as any other race; however the violent events based on systematic racism is sending the message that these lives are less important. (Retrieved on August 30, 2016 from http://blacklivesmatter.com). The women of this study may be finding it difficult to survive in the current day’s harsher and more oppressive environment. There was no statistical significant association between the two sets of optimal strategies of resistance and suboptimal strategies of resistance that were highly endorsed by the women. However, the optimal strategy of resistance statement: I believe that the past struggles of Black people have given me freedoms today was associated with the suboptimal strategy: I feel pressure to look attractive. The suboptimal strategy of resistance statement: I feel like my daily life is a constant struggle against racism was associated with the optimal strategies: I believe that not having money for basic necessities affects too many Black people and I believe that
Black people are entitled to racial justice

Research Question 2: What is the relationship among skin color satisfaction (SCSS), social appearance anxiety (SAAS), and strategies of resistance (RMI)?

The research question was based on existing literature indicating that black women face multiple oppressions (e.g., racism, sexism, classism) on a regular basis (Landry, 2007; King, 2007; Robinson-Wood, 2013; 2014; Essed, 1991; Szymanski & Stewart, 2010; Thomas, 2004). Another oppression that many black women face is colorism. Internalized racism and discrimination about one’s skin color and hair from their identified racial group may contribute to anxiety about their attractiveness and how others evaluate them based on these physical features.

While some black women are cognizant about their devotion to name and oppose oppression (women who are characterized by optimal resistance); others may be unaware of their stance and engage in “quick” fixes to numb and soothe oppression and emotional pain (women characterized by suboptimal resistance) (Robinson & Ward, 1991; Martin et al., 2013). It is important to note that Resistance Theory does not state a binarial framework of either optimal or suboptimal resistors. For example, a woman who is characterized by optimal resistance may experience anxiety or a woman who is characterized by suboptimal resistance may incorporate a health lifestyle by exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy diet. The women’s ability to recognize, manage, and seek help as needed for suboptimal strategies is what differentiates a woman who is characterized by optimal resistance from a woman who is characterized by suboptimal resistance (Robinson-Wood, 2014). RMI scores help clinicians understand the presence of optimal and suboptimal resistance in women’s lives by indicating which type of resistance they characterize. For example, a woman who is characterized by suboptimal
resistance will benefit from interventions that facilitate awareness of their use of suboptimal resistance strategies, while learning how to transform them into optimal resistance strategies and behaviors (Robinson-Wood, 2014).

First, the results of this research question showed a negative relationship between women’s skin color satisfaction and social appearance anxiety. Women who were satisfied with their skin color (80.6%) had lower levels of social appearance anxiety. An extensive literature review found no results of studies that specifically examined black women and social appearance anxiety. However research shows that African Americans, specifically African American women endorse high rates of anxiety, including simple phobias (Breslau, Gaxiola-Aguilar, Su, Williams & Kessler, 2006; Breslau, Kendler, Su, Gaxiola-Aguilar, & Kessler, 2005; Brown, Eaton, & Sussman, 1990; Neal & Turner, 1991). Additionally women of color in urban settings are 60% more likely than men to have an anxiety disorder during their lifetime (National Institute of Mental Health, 2010; Doornbos, Zandee, & DeGroot, 2012). Interactions between anxiety sensitivity, (i.e., fear of anxiety related symptoms and sensations) and subjective social status (i.e., self-perception of social standing relative to others) heighten risk of anxiety symptomology (Reitzel et al., 2016). These findings are consistent with studies that identify oppression that black women face, such as colorism, put them at risk of developing anxiety and other mental illnesses (Martin et al., 2013; Robinson & Kennington, 2002; Brookins & Robinson, 1995; Robinson-Wood, 2014). These anxiety symptoms usually do not present as typical mood (e.g., crying spells) or physical (e.g. fatigue; excessive sweating) symptoms, but rather as somatic symptoms (e.g., frequent headaches) (Brown, Schulberg & Madonia, 1996). It is important to investigate the impact of social appearance anxiety on the lives of black women,
as it may affect them as much as other forms of anxiety that have been previously explored in the literature of black women’s mental health.

Second, results also showed that women who used more suboptimal strategies of resistance had higher levels of social appearance anxiety. As mentioned, suboptimal resistors seek “quick-fix” strategies to deal with an oppressive society that allows one to develop a broken sense of self. Black women who are characterized by suboptimal resistance may have low self-esteem and feel defenseless and insecure about being negatively evaluated on their appearance. Such feelings may contribute to the use of suboptimal strategies that involve undue focus on physical attributes (Myers 1991; Myers, 2013).

Almost a fifth (18%) of women endorsed alcohol use and 8% of women endorsed cannabis use as “quick-fix” strategies to cope with life stressors. Several studies show that blacks are less likely to use alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco than whites during adolescence and young adulthood (Baker, Wagner, Singer, Bundorf, 2003; Breslau et al., 2006; Hasin, Stinson, Ogburn, & Grant, 2007; Pacek, Malcolm, & Martins, 2012; Swendsen et al., 2012; Wu, Woody, Yang, Pan, & Blazer 2011; Zapolski, Pedersen, McCarthy & Smith, 2014). Yet, blacks develop dependency faster (Alvanzo et al., 2011), use for longer durations (Caetano & Kaskutas, 1995), and endure more substance-related consequences and issues than any other racial/ethnic group (Keyes et al., 2015). These substance-related consequences and issues include: legal and social/interpersonal problems related to use (Witbrodt et al., 2014), arrest for marijuana-related offenses (Ramchand, Pacula & Iguchi, 2006), and injury (Ramchand et al., 2006; Keyes, Liy & Cerda, 2012; Witbrodt, Mulia, Zemore, & Kerr, 2014).

While alcohol and substance use rates are lower for blacks than whites, several large-scale epidemiologic studies show that with age these differences converge or cross-over (Caetano,
1984; Feigelman and Lee, 1995; Finlay, White, Mun, Cronley, & Lee, 2012; Kandel, Schaffran, Hu, & Thomas, 2011; Pampel, 2008; Robins, 1985; Watt, 2008). These cross-overs generally occur within the late 20s to mid 30s (Pampel, 2008; Watt, 2008). Witbrodt et al., 2014 found that while white women had higher rates of alcohol use and heavy drinking, black women had greater odds of alcohol dependence. Keyes et al. (2015) found that by the age of 29, women’s racial differences and marijuana use cross-over, with black women having significantly higher frequency of marijuana use than white women. The hardships of multiple jeopardy in the lives of black women may become more evident and prevalent as these women reach their late 20s.

Greater exposure to social disadvantages such as; racial/ethnic stigma, higher rates of non-marriage, sexism, poverty, homophobia, and other forms of unfair treatment are associated with problem drinking and substance use for black women (Mulia, Yu Ye, Zemore, & Greenfield, 2008)

Furthermore, this significant relationship is indicative of the inevitable fear black women face regularly of being evaluated by others, even when consciously aware of the sociopolitical context of living in the United States. It is inconceivable that black women’s anxiety about their appearance wouldn’t be associated with suboptimal resistance. Although many black women are aware of the historical gendered racial discrimination of black women in the United States, specifically the negative evaluations, stereotypes and discrimination continue to infiltrate societal notions of black women today, especially with the use of various forms of media and the internet. In terms of personality characteristics, black women have been stereotyped to be uneducated, ill mannered, aggressive, combative, unladylike, hypersexual, irresponsible, undesirable, and angry. Television and social media perpetuate these stereotypes with television characters and meme/posts of black women who model these traits. This list of stereotypical
personality characteristics of black women is not meant to indicate that all black women are exempt from them, but to rather acknowledge that these traits appear to be attributed to them more than women from other racial backgrounds. Such stereotypes may cause black women to attempt to avoid expressing feelings and emotions that are related to these traits or overcompensate with more acceptable traits to gain approval from others. For example, the stereotype of the “Black Angry Woman” implies that this universal, gender-neutral emotion is a dominant trait of black women (Gentry, 2007; Ashley, 2014). The angry “Black woman” stereotype is pervasive and parasitic; it affects Black women’s self-esteem and how others view them. Black women fearing the label of Angry Black Woman may suppress disclosures of anger and minimize its impact in their lives (Ashley, 2014, p. 30). It infers not only that black women have no reason to be angry, but also are also not allowed to be angry (Ashley, 2014).

In terms of beauty, black women have received negative evaluations about their skin color, hair, facial features and body type. Media outlets and social organizations (e.g., sororities) to name a few are often cited as criticizing black women’s physical attributes. Twitter defended tennis athlete Serena Williams after a New York Times article reported that other top female tennis players (who are white) refuse to look like Serena Williams because they are women and want to continue looking like women. Twitter followers contested that the article implied that Serena Williams is masculine and does not look like a woman, due to her athletic muscular body. However, other Twitter followers and media outlets agreed with the article and stated that Serena Williams looks like a man. The same month, there was ample media coverage about Caitlyn Jenner’s (formerly Bruce Jenner) transition to a transgender woman and how beautiful and feminine she looks (Rothenberg, 2015; Holloway, 2015; Eromosele, 2015) In October 2015, Layla Evette, a black female student at Southern Methodist University (SMU) posted her
thoughts (on her school’s Greek life web page) about sorority-recruitment and the difficulty of joining predominately white female sororities as black woman at her school. She went on to say it appears that black women have to work ten times as hard as any other racial/ethnic groups to become a part of these sororities. Instead of receiving responses that empathized or challenged her views, Evette was confronted with a blatantly racist response post by members of SMU sororities titled: “Reasons why black women do not and will not get bids (i.e. acceptance into a perspective sorority).” This list of 10 reasons criticized black women’s personalities, education, socioeconomic status, and stated that the only incentive of admitting a black women into their sororities would be for diversity (Ellison, 2015). If the 9 reasons for non-admittance for black women into these sororities weren’t enough, the authors of the post made sure to include their thoughts on the attractiveness of black women as well as the decrease in popularity of one sorority that admitted black women: “Y'all are aesthetically unpleasing to the eye for both actives and the fraternity men we associate with. No, we don't want to be the house that took "the black" and end up like Gamma Phi, where guys avoid them like the plague. Sorry, but looks matter” (http://www.watchtheyard.com/activism/white-sorority-southern-methodist-university-racism/, retrieved October 5, 2015).

Erringly similar to the scientific justification of racism with Eugenics, some scientists and psychologists suggest that beauty is not in the eye of the beholder; it can be objectively measured and is only subjective when individuals make a conscious effort. Moreover, these objective measures prove that black women are unanimously perceived as the least attractive women (Lewis, 2010; 2011; Langlois, 2000; Cunningham, Roberts, Barbee, Druen, & Wu, 1995). In his 2011 study on facial attractiveness among races, Lewis found that on average black male faces were perceived to be more attractive than white male faces. These black male faces were found
to be more dominant, masculine and stronger than white male faces. However, these perceptions of attractiveness were quite different for females. He found that white female faces were more attractive than black female faces, but mixed-race female faces were most attractive. Furthermore, mixed-race female faces that were seen as whiter were rated as more attractive. Comparably to black male faces, black female faces were perceived as more mature, masculine, and stronger than white faces. Lewis concluded that regardless of females being mixed-race, there remains a preference for whiter faces (Lewis, 2011).

These findings support the controversial article published on May 15, 2011 in Psychology Today, by evolutionary psychologist, Satoshi Kanazawa. Kanazawa analyzed data from Add Health, which “objectively and subjectively” (Kanazawa, 2011, p. 1) measures the physical attractiveness of its respondents. Add Health is a longitudinal study of 7-12 graders who are followed into adulthood. The study includes more than 8000 variables (https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/beautiful-minds/201105/black-women-are-not-rated-less-attractive-our-independent-analysis-the, retrieved October 6, 2015). He argued that his findings proved black women are the least physically attractive of all women. He explained that though black women have a higher mean body-mass index (BMI) than nonblack women and are less intelligent, they are still the least attractive when those variables are removed. He concluded that black women’s unattractiveness can be explained by their higher levels of testosterone, which give them more masculine features and therefore make them less physically attractive (Kanazawa, 2011). Kaufman and Wicherts (2011) of Psychology Today, reanalyzed the variables that Kanazawa used from the Add Health data set and found that his analysis had major statistical flaws, misinterpreted data, and ignored empirical findings that went against these stated claims. While Kanazawa’s findings were proven wrong and previous studies appeared to
be more subjectively measured, despite claims of objectivity; these studies and media outlet implicitly and explicitly send messages to black women that they are less attractive, desirable, and feminine than any other racial/ethnic group of women.

Third, results indicated there is a negative relationship between skin color satisfaction and social appearance anxiety. Black women in the study who were not satisfied with their skin color were more anxious about their appearance and had situational fears about being negatively evaluated by others for their appearance (Hart et al., 2008). Since 70% of women in this study felt pressure to look attractive (as endorsed on the RMI), dissatisfaction with their skin color appears to contribute to anxiety about not meeting beauty standards.

Fourth, there was a positive relationship between skin color satisfaction and optimal resistance. Since the optimal worldview is parallel to an Afrocentric value system, self-worth and Afrocentricity is essential and contribute to one’s sense of pride and contentment with their skin color (Myers et al., 1991; Martin et al., 2013). Discernably, black women in the study who had high levels of skin color satisfaction used less suboptimal strategies of resistance.

Lastly, there were skin color group differences in skin color satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and strategies of resistance. Dark skin black women (22.0%) had the highest rates of skin color satisfaction, followed by medium skin black women. Light skin black women had the lowest level of skin color satisfaction. Previous research on skin color satisfaction had mixed results. Some studies found that black women with medium skin felt most comfortable with their skin color; light skin and biracial women were most satisfied with their skin color; dark skin women would make their skin lighter if given a chance; and skin color dissatisfaction was more related to overall body image evaluations (Bond & Cash, 1992; Falconer & Neville 2000; Mucherah & Frazier, 2013). Other studies found that black women who opposed
Eurocentric features, had high African self-consciousness, positive racial identity, positive racial regard, and higher levels of skin color satisfaction regardless of skin color (Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams & Belgrave; Makkar & Strube, 1995; Smith, Burton & Lundgren, 1991). The women in the study were satisfied with their skin color, however, higher levels of skin color satisfaction in dark skin black women may be due to receiving more participants from social media sites’ groups that promoted black pride, African self-consciousness, natural hair, positive racial identity, “Black is Beautiful” movements, and celebrated dark skin tones. It is also noteworthy to mention that the SCSS may not be the most accurate measurement for skin color satisfaction (see study limitations for additional information).

Demographic Findings from Research Question 2 Post-Hoc Analyses- Age

Women in the 35 to 39 age group used the least suboptimal strategies of resistance, whereas the 21 to 34 age group used the most. With an increase in age, there was a decrease in suboptimal strategies. One possible explanation is that with age, black women who participated in this study became less concerned with external sources and standards, such as physical attributes; the weight of beauty may be less relevant for women as the get older. Their sense of self-worth, self-esteem, and security may increase with age and more life experiences. They also may have learned that suboptimal strategies are indeed only “quick fixes” that may be maladaptive and in actuality do not permanently solve their problems (Myers, 2013; Robinson & Ward, 1995). Nearly 80% of women ages 21 to 24 endorsed feeling pressure to look attractive, compared to 60% of women ages 35 to 39. Women ages 21 to 24 were also twice (20% vs. 40%) as likely to endorse relying on other people’s opinions to determine how attractive they feel about themselves, compared to women ages 35 to 39. Another explanation for less use of suboptimal resistance strategies as women get older, they may learn from past experiences that
suboptimal strategies are in fact “quick fixes” that don’t solve their problems. These women may be able to acknowledge how far they have come in life with the use of optimal resistance, despite living in an oppressive environment. The theory of becoming wise with age may apply to the way older black women conceptualize optimal and suboptimal resistance. They may become more assertive, put a higher value on self-care and education, and want to become positive role models for younger black women. Nearly 70% of women ages 21 to 24 endorsed using food for comfort or companionship, compared to 40% of women ages 35 to 39.

Since the results from the research questions found that women who used more suboptimal strategies of resistance had higher levels of social appearance anxiety, it is understandable that the 21 to 24 age group had the highest levels of social appearance anxiety out of any of the other age groups. A possible explanation for younger women being more susceptible to social appearance anxiety is their pressure to look attractive for mate selection. Younger women may be anxious about their appearance because they believe their chances of finding a partner will be greater if they are more physically attractive.

**Demographic Findings from research question 2 Post-Hoc Analyses- Marital Status**

The married women in the study also tended to use less suboptimal strategies of resistance than single, divorced, and separated women. Similarly to women beyond their 20s, married women, in comparison to single women, may use less suboptimal strategies because of protective factors associated with marriage. In terms of marriage and age, women who marry at their desired age have the greatest psychological benefits as opposed to women who are single or do not get married at their desired age. However, women who married later than their desired age have less depressive symptoms than those who married earlier than their desired age (Carlson, 2012). Braithwaite-Hall (2011) also found less depression among older women. Research shows
that marriage has been proven to be beneficial to the physical and mental health of the couple. Married couples, consume less alcohol, have lower rates of mental illness, and have lower morbidity (Gove, Hughes & Brigg Style, 1983; Joung et al., 1997; Simon, 2002; Umberson & Williams, 1999). Overall married people report better mental health than their unmarried counterparts (Hughes & Waite, 2009), however, the health benefits associated with marriage distributed equally by gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status are unclear (Roxburgh, 2014). The benefits of mental health in marriage appeared to be strongest for Whites and unmarried Black women do not seem to differ in mental health from married Black women (Jackson, 1997; Williams, Takeuchi & Adair, 1992). White women who are single, separated or divorced are psychologically unhealthier than married White women (McKelvey & McKenry, 2000). Keith and Brown (2010) found that the benefits for White married women may outweigh the benefits for Black married women because they (black women) are more likely to bear the burden of household labor while employed (Spence, Adkins & Dupre, 2011). Another explanation may be that the majority of married women in the study were older; many were among the 35 to 39 age group.

Demographic Findings from research question 2 Post-Hoc Analyses- Children

Similarly to older women and single women, women with children also used less suboptimal strategies. As mention previously, almost half the women in the study have children, which is more than the percentage of women with marriage as a part of their history. These findings are comparable to the national data and Black families. The rates of unmarried Black women with children are disproportionately high. Forty percent of the 12% of all Black mothers in the United States have never married, compared to 32% of the 60% of all White mothers who have never married (Wang, Parker & Taylor, 2013). According to the American Families and Living
Arrangements (2012), married-couple households made up 44% of the households that Blacks maintained, compared to Asians, Whites, and Hispanics (any race) married-couple households: 81%, 80%, and 62%, respectively. Moreover, Black children (55%) are more likely to live with one parent than Hispanic (31%), White (21%) and, Asian (13%) children. Twenty-nine percent of Blacks are in mother-only family groups, the highest percentage of any other race or ethnic group (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider, 2013). One possible explanation (see post-hoc analyses of skin color for further details) for the high rates of single black women with children is the scarcity of marriageable black men (Hamilton, Goldsmith & Darity, 2008).

Demographic Findings from research question 2 Post-Hoc Analyses- Racial Identification

Women in the study that racially identified as Black/African-American used more optimal strategies of resistance than women who racially identified as Biracial/Multiracial and “Other” This finding may be explained by the nature of study, which focuses on the satisfaction of the aesthetics of black women. Women who value their self-worth are committed to surviving in an oppressive environment by labeling and opposing race, gender, and class oppression (Robinson & Ward, 1991; Martin et al., 2013). Additionally, the negative interactions that some Biracial and Multiracial women state they have had with monoracial Black women is an additional oppression that women of African descent face. In Rockquemore (2002)’s study, Biracial and Multiracial female participants described being told by monoracial Black women that they perceive themselves as being better than them due to some of their Eurocentric features (e.g. “good” hair, light colored eyes, light skin) in addition to often being questioned by others about their blackness (Rockquemore, 2002). This conflict with monoracial Black women and questioning of one’s blackness may cause some ambivalence about using certain optimal
resistance strategies pertaining to Black women. There may be a belief by others and/or themselves that they cannot fully relate to the monoracial Black woman’s experience.

*Demographic Findings from research question 2 post-hoc analyses- Multicultural and Women Studies Education*

Women who took one or more multicultural and women’s studies courses also employed more optimal strategies of resistance, than those who have not. As a marginalized group who face multiple jeopardies on a regular basis, black women are driven to operate mostly from one type of worldview (e.g. optimal or suboptimal). African psychology theorists pose that to live within an optimal worldview is to cope and optimally resist living in a society that gives power to whiteness and maleness, while seeking self-knowledge. This worldview may cause black women to develop a multicultural approach of how to integrate system through a multicultural lens and context, or they learn through the dominant standards regarding race, gender, and social class, and including standards of beauty. That is, living within a suboptimal worldview privileges the Eurocentric value system and bases self-worth on the validation of others (Martin et al., 2013). Both multicultural and women's studies assist with integrating the systems we live in through an approach that is culturally diverse. In Caples’ (2008) study, black women who had taken a course in multicultural studies had endorsed items of Internalization or Integrative Awareness more than women who had not taken a multicultural studies course. In Helms (1996) racial identity model, Internalization or Integrative Awareness status is defined as the most advanced stage in the racial identity model, an individual who values their own racial group while maintaining positive interactions with White people. These individuals have their own ideals of beauty and question and scrutinize White or European standards of beauty. Hargrove
(1999) suggests that Black women’s evaluations of physical attractiveness is based on their racial identity status.

Demographic Findings from research question 2 Post-Hoc Analyses- Skin Color

Medium skin black women in this study use the most optimal strategies of resistance whereas dark skin black women use the most suboptimal strategies of resistance, yet dark skin women were most satisfied with their skin color. Previous research studies indicated medium skin black women are more satisfied with their skin color than light and dark skin women (Bond and Cash, 1992). This skin color satisfaction gives them an increased self-esteem (Robinson & Ward, 1995), self-efficacy and self-worth. A possible explanation for dark skin women in this study being the most satisfied with their skin color, but using the most suboptimal strategies of resistance, is an increased effort by these women to prevent or combat the internalization of societal messages that prefer lighter skin. Though they may be satisfied with their skin color, the constant discrimination and disadvantages within communities and the wider society (i.e., environmental systems with an ecological context) based on their dark skin may contribute to “quick-fix” strategies to cope within an oppressive environment. Coard, Breland, and Raskin (2001) suggests dark skin black women may have higher levels of skin color satisfaction than light-skin black women, however they have lower levels of self-esteem than light skin black women. This may be a false sense of satisfaction to counter others' negative attitudes towards dark skin. Additionally, dark skin women may be equating skin color satisfaction with acceptance of their given skin color. In other words, dark skin women may accept the skin color they have, but not necessarily like it or understand the broader ecological context where they contend with others' dissatisfaction. This satisfaction may occur on an intellectual level, while emotional inner conflict (consciously or unconsciously) exists (Coard, Breland & Raskin, 2001).
Thus, increasing the use of suboptimal resistance strategies. An alternative explanation, depending on the types of suboptimal strategies of resistance dark skin women endorsed, is that their skin color may put them at a number of disadvantages over their lighter counterparts. Socioeconomic status, personal and family income, and parental background are only a few demographic variables that dark skin black women are worse off in than light skin women. Numerous research studies and literature provide evidence that greater social status is ascribed to light skin black women in the United States (Hamilton, Goldsmith & Darity, 2008; Hunter, 2005; Maddox & Gray, 2002; Keith Herring, 1991; Hughes & Hertel, 1990).

Within the last 50 years the availability of young “marriageable” black men for black women has declined due to reduced employment opportunities, high rates of incarceration, drug use, interracial marriage, and mortality (Wilson & Neckerman, 1986; Ellwood & Crane, 1990; Darity & Myers, 1996; Hamilton, Goldsmith & Darity, 2008). The availability of “marriageable” black men are especially relevant to black women because of their low rates of interracial marriage. Farley (1996) found that only three percent of black women married outside of their race. Almost twenty years later, 12% of black women married someone of a different race in 2013 (Wang, 2015). Using the Current Population Survey data from 1991-1999, Mason (2006) found that for the civilian unmarried population ratios there were 71 black males to 100 black female, while there were 119 white males to 100 black females. If full-time employment is included in the criteria of marriageable black men, the sex ratio disparity becomes even larger; unmarried full-time employed black males to unmarried black females was 46 to 100, compared to full-time employed white males to unmarried white females was 90 to 100. The shortage of marriageable and desirable black men, affords these men the opportunity to attain a spouse of higher status, which places a premium on black women with lighter skin (Hamilton, Goldsmith & Darity,
2008). Between the ages of 16 and 29, light skinned black women are 14.8% more likely to marry than medium skinned black women. Dark skinned black women are even less likely to marry than a light skinned black women however, dark skinned black women and medium skinned black women are equally likely to marry (Hamilton, Goldsmith & Darity, 2008). These data support prior evidence by sociologists and historians that marriage is less common among dark skinned black women (Udry, Bauman & Chase, 1971; Freeman, Ross, Armor, & Pettigrew, 1966; Bogger, 1997; Johnson, 1996; Gatewood, 1988; and Dollard, 1957). These disadvantages may inform the suboptimal resistance strategies that are used by darker skinned black women (Keith & Herring, 1991).

Findings Related to Phase II

Findings from Phase II are discussed using Bronfenbrenner’s Biological Model theoretical framework. The ecological model claims that having a context of the five system levels helps provide a holistic conceptualization of people’s experiences in the world. Instead of seeing people from one lens, this model allows one to recognize the different factors, both direct and indirect that play a role in people’s lives providing a richer meaning and understanding of their experience. In order to comprehend human development, the multiple systems in which growth occurs must be considered. In the present study, the ecological model facilitates and encapsulates the experiences of black women living in the United States within the context of the various interlocking systems that impact their lives. The ecological model greatly informs one’s knowledge of the intersectionality of systems that describe the lives of these women and the groups with which they interact and affiliate (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Research Question 3: What social and environmental factors influence hair and skin satisfaction?
There were a number of social and environmental factors that influenced the women’s hair and skin color satisfaction. The skin colors and hair textures of their family members were often compared to the women’s skin colors and hair textures, thus creating an environment where preferential treatment was given to those who had skin color hues and hair textures that were thought to be superior. Sibling rivalry, specifically between sisters, often occurred due to indirect and direct comments about who had the nicer skin color and the better quality of hair. The women and their family members were also victims to mistreatment by family members due to their skin color hue and hair texture. This mistreatment varied from shaming their hair texture to creating in-group bias within the family. Black women’s families are where color and hair differences are first noticed and sets precedence for their views about them. When families participate in the perpetuation of colorism through showing preferential treatment or mistreatment to specific family members they endorse Eurocentric standards of beauty and impact how one feels about their skin color and hair (Wilder, 2010).

Geographical location and racial background of the communities where the women were raised appeared to influence their satisfaction as well. The women believed that being raised in the northeast region of the United States and in predominately Black neighborhoods instilled pride in their skin color and hair texture, and limited their exposure to colorism. However, visiting stores within their neighborhood that sell bleaching cream reminded them of the existence of colorism. Communities are vital to a Black female's upbringing, those women who are raised in predominately Black communities have multiple mother figures and caregivers who contribute to their socialization. It is in these communities that Black women learn about themselves, develop their self-esteem and self-worth, and are surrounded by others who look like them (Everett, Marks & Clarke-Mitchell, 2016). In terms of hair, environmental factors that
influenced these women’s satisfaction were black women wearing natural hair “coming back in style.” Natural hair is presently seen as something trendy, and for some people, it is a fashionable statement. Instructional videos about how to do and take care of natural hair on YouTube influenced the women’s contentment with their hair, as having natural hair as an adult was a new experience and there was a lack of understanding in how to take care of it. YouTube has been a positive influence on hair satisfaction for Black women. Not only had YouTube been influential in providing instructional videos for Black women desiring to be more versatile with their hair, it has also helped Black women learn methods to being physically active and maintaining hairstyles (Versey, 2014). Research indicates that Black women workout less than any other racial/ethnic gender group. One recent study found that 38% of Black women avoided exercise because they did not want to ruin their hair (Hall et al., 2013).

Comments, opinions, and questions from others about the women’s hair and skin color appeared to have the most influence on the women’s hair and skin color satisfaction. Through an ecological model lens, the experiences of the black women of this study are viewed as placing great value on their interconnected system or microsystem. They spend a great amount of time interacting with persons (e.g., family, romantic partners, friends) and working at their place of employment or attending school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1994). This environmental system has direct and personal impressions on their skin color and hair satisfaction. All the women participated in the focus group were either told by others or witnessed their siblings being told by others that they did not belong in their family because of their skin color. These people denied them membership to their own family because they were either lighter or darker than the rest of their family members. The women were most disappointed by people of their own racial/ethnic
background who made these comments. There was an expectation of one’s racial group to “know better” and understand the diversity with Black families.

The women in the qualitative sample also experienced positive and negative comments about their hair texture and/or decision to go natural. Some women experienced what they called “backhanded” compliments from other black women such as: “I could never go natural [transition from chemically processed hair to unprocessed hair], I would look terrible…but good for you!” The women also received comments from friends about what skin color they were as opposed to the skin color they believed that they were. These commentators would go as far as putting them in front of mirrors and grabbing food products and putting it on their skin. Similarly to relationships with their families, Black women have close friendships with other Black women. Sharing connections through joyful occasions and difficult times as many female friendships, but also sharing a bond of experiencing life through multiple oppressions. While these women share the harsh reality of living in an oppressive environment, they may differ in upbringing and levels of consciousness. Similarly and sometime even more than the mother-daughter relationship, Black women in friendships or “sisterhoods” have an interdependence based on care, support, and coping with racism, sexism, and classism (Robinson-Wood, 2009).

Skin color and hair satisfaction also seemed to be influenced by men who comment on their skin color and hair and ascribed socially constructed attributes to them. Black men’s attitudes towards Black women’s skin color and hair color continue to influence women’s satisfaction, especially if these women are seeking to select a potential romantic partner (Stephens & Thomas, 2012). At the mesosystem structure of the ecological model, the women’s interrelations between multiple microsystem factors such as, family, romantic partners, friends,
and work speak to the social indications of their hair and skin color (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1994).

All three women who participated in the focus group had mixed thoughts and reviews about social media, on one hand they appreciated finding natural hair groups and pictures of women with natural hair on Facebook and Instagram, and following Black Twitter to keep up to date about issues that are affecting the Black community: “Your social media experience depends on what you are looking for.” However, they also felt that not all skin colors, facial features, and hair textures were represented equally on these social media sites. The women discussed how damaging she thought social media can be because they show “video vixens” and “bartender chicks.” These were described as women who are light skin or lighter shades of medium skin, have long straight hair (that were usually weaves or contained hair extensions) with small waists, big butts and breasts, and were scantily clad. Societal messages and labels ascribed to Black women based on their skin color and physical features continue to objective them (Wilder, 2010; Wallace, Townsend, Glasgow, Ojie, 2011). In fact, the women of the study placed labels on the types of women they described as having a negative effect on black body image. These experiences are a part of their interactions with the exosystem, which connects their immediate context with indirect social settings, that is settings the individual is linked to, but does not play a non-active role (e.g. mass media) and sends visual messages that may support their physical attributes or form feelings of loneliness, misrepresentation and underrepresentation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1994).

Regarding hair, the women had strong feelings of discontent with White women doing Black hairstyles and then renaming and claiming it as their own. The women felt that these hairstyles have been looked down upon by mainstream society for centuries, however when worn
by White women it was not only accepted, but also celebrated. Culture Appropriation not only influenced the women’s hair and skin color satisfaction, but their satisfaction with being a black woman in general. They provided evidence that showed their reality is that as a black woman everyone has opinions about how you should look, dress, and act. Other people’s opinions and comments about black women sent a message to the women of the study that Black women are uncivilized and need to be told what to do. Conversely, White women had the freedom and privilege to do whatever they chose to do from “wearing purple hair” to “short skirts.” However, as much as White women claimed Black culture values as their own, they are not publicly speaking about the discrimination and structural racism towards Black people that is occurring now. Actress Amandla Stenberg best described cultural appropriation:

“Appropriation occurs when a style leads to racist generalizations or stereotypes where it originated but is deemed as high fashion, cool or funny when the privileged take it for themselves. Appropriation occurs when the appropriator is not aware of the deep significance of the culture they partake in.” (Retrieved on September 1, 2016 from, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/10-times-black-culture-was-appropriated-in-2015_us_566ee11de4b011b83a6bd660).

The women also appeared resentful of Biracial and Multiracial celebrities who also did not publicly speak about the social injustices occurring in the United States to Black people. One woman commented about “trading-off” of Biracial and Multiracial celebrities for White celebrities that took a public stance on structural racism. The idea of “trading-off” celebrities derives from the former American sketch comedy television series: The Chappelle Show, starring comedian Dave Chappelle. In the “racial draft” episode, the comedian makes a mockery of the social construction of race and how society places so much importance on which racial group
individuals belong to. During the episode Chappelle humorously states: “We have got to stop arguing about who is what. We need to settle this once and for all. We need to have a draft.” Similarly to actual sports drafts held by the National Football League (NFL) and the National Basketball League (NBA), but solely based on race, the racial draft was a fictitious event that included representatives from different racial and ethnic groups selecting entertainers and social figures to be a part of their racial or ethnic group. During the episode, Tiger Woods is claimed by the black delegation, Lenny Kravitz by Jewish delegation, and the Wu Tang Clan (an all black hip-hop group) by the Asian delegation. “Trade-offs” occurred when a racial or ethnic group felt that particular people were a shame to their race. Since the episode aired in 2004, has become a colloquial expression to acknowledge a racially sensitive non-black celebrity who uplifts the black community is preferable to a black self-loathing celebrity who makes negative statements towards the black community. More recently, Black Twitter tweeted their desire to “trade-off” black celebrity actresses and television show hosts, Raven Symone and Stacy Dash with racially conscious white celebrities due to their internalized racist remarks (Callahan, 2015; Telusma, 2016). These remarks to “trade-off” biracial and multiracial women validate the negative interactions and feuds that Biracial and Multiracial women discuss having with monoracial Black women based on racism (Rockquemore, 2002).

Television personalities and characters also influenced women’s skin color and hair in their childhood. They emulated their hairstyles and identified with women who had similar skin tones to them. At the macrosystem, the women’s positions in society are revealed. The state of black women and their challenges with multiple oppression is evident. The women may have begun to recognize that some of her preferences are not personal choices, but fragments of an
overall broken system that discriminates against her race and gender identity (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Tudge et al., 2009; St. Vil, 2009).

Research Question 4: How does hairstyle choice contribute to social appearance anxiety among black women?

Women discussed pressure from other black people to straighten their hair. These family members, friends, and men sent direct and indirect messages about straight hair looking more presentable and attractive on the women. They also received messages throughout their lives that it is important to “blend in” at work and wear hairstyles that are accepted by mainstream society (e.g., straight hairstyles or if not straight, styles that conceal hair texture). Especially when interviewing for a job because you may jeopardize your chances of getting the job if your hair is not perceived to be presentable. The women felt forced to wear mainstream styles in order to “get far” in their careers. The women’s thoughts and feelings about the pressure to wear “appropriate” hairstyles to work aligns with the research that shows Black women are labeled and criticized, and in some incidents punitive measures have been taken to ban Afrocentric styles from being worn at their place of employment (Thompson, 2009).

Women also had mixed feelings about the attention they received from others when they wore their hair straight. Some women felt less social appearance anxiety because being complemented on their hair was flattering, however some felt more social appearance anxiety because family and friends made comments about “finally” getting their hair done or suggesting they wear their hair straight more often. They also received more attention from men and compliments about their beauty. Yet, the women felt pressure from other Black women with natural hair to wear their hair in Afrocentric styles on a regular basis and remain “all” natural by not coloring their hair and wearing make-up. The women discussed both fear and unfairness in
being perceived as “ratchet or ghetto” if they were their hair in certain styles, however White women were able to wear these hairstyles without being labeled as such. How you are perceived is contingent on the hairstyle you choose to wear. An example of this cultural appropriation was when, Kim Khardashian’s younger sister, Kylie Jenner wore faux dreadlocks for a Teen Vogue cover shoot. The photos were described as “edgy, raw and beautiful.” Yet, when Disney channel actress, Zendaya Coleman wore the same hairstyle at the 2015 Oscars, “Fashion Police” host Giuliana Rancic said she looks like she “smells like patchouli oil or weed.” (Huffington Post, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/10-times-black-culture-was-appropriated-in-2015_us_566ee11de4b011b83a6bd660). As mentioned earlier, women received the message that it is acceptable to comment and control what Black women do with their hair, but not women of other races. Black women don’t have the freedom to express themselves. “Backhanded compliments, ” family, friends, and coworkers asking for more of a variety in hairstyles. The women expressed annoyance in strangers and other people who were not close to them asking if they could touch their hair. Still, the women themselves admitted to constantly attempting to tame their hair, perfect a certain curl pattern, and smooth down their hair in effort to rid its kinkiness. Although they were three black women characterized as optimal resistors and consciously aware of colorism and its history, they still demonstrated some partiality to mainstream beauty standards. Picking a hairstyle can be a fun and interesting activity to most women, however for black women it can open the door to many challenges such as career, friendships, partner selection, and how one is perceived politically, sexually, and economically. Perceptions that were fostered by the dominant society and the historical trauma of slavery. These factors all contribute to social appearance anxiety. At the chronosystem, the women are
reminded that the oppressive environment, in which they live, was created centuries ago for people of their kind (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Tudge et al., 2009; St. Vil, 2009).

Section Four – Systematic Colorism Interventions

Systematic interventions aimed at eradicating colorism, appreciation in the diversity of skin color hues, and the use of optimal resistances is essential to black female development. Family members are encouraged to be cognizant of messages they send to young black females regarding skin color and hair texture, including indirect messages. Young black females observe differential treatment even when it is not directed towards them. Family members, especially female family members have the influence capability to reaffirm mainstream beauty standards or break the cycle of colorism within families. This transformation leads to higher self-esteem and self-worth within Black women (Wilder, 2010). Teachers and educators can practice color consciousness with school systems by: (1) Validating students’ personal experiences with colorism; (2) protecting students from re-exposure of harmful coloristic interaction; (3) being aware of preferential treatment and color exclusion during student engagement. As students advance to upper grades, interventions can be increased by: (1) Facilitating identification and recognition of stereotypical portrays of Black people, especially Black women; (2) engage in Black identity-affirming activities and group discussions with positive black media and literature; (3) display images of Black people of diverse skin colors and hair textures and styles; (4) when appropriate, share one’s own personal accounts of colorism to connect and problem-solve with students; (5) incorporate multiculturalism and diversity within racial/ethnic backgrounds into the learning curriculum; and 6) encourage regular discussions with students (Ward, Robinson-Wood & Boadi, in press) Additionally, it is necessary for family members and educators to be aware that black females may need clinical and therapeutic interventions, such as
the use of optimal psychological resistance strategies to address colorism, and social appearance anxiety. As mentioned earlier, mental health practitioners need to be aware and understand issues surrounding skin color and hair satisfaction among black women, in order to create a safe environment where black women can discuss this complex and sometimes uncomfortable topic. They must also be aware of the historical context of colorism, most recent literature, and the most effective tools to provide them with information about one’s satisfaction with hair and skin color, the types of psychological resistance they use, and levels of social appearance anxiety. A client’s score on the SCSS, SAAS, and RMI, and a thorough clinical interview can provide clinicians with information about a woman’s contentment with skin color and hair, level of fear of being negatively evaluated because of their appearance, and the dominant resistance strategy they use. Facilitating suboptimal resistors' use of optimal resistance strategies is key (Robinson-Wood, 2013), especially in the midst of current events surrounding systematic racism and popular belief of Black lives being less valued than those of other racial backgrounds. A clinician’s empathy and understanding of cultural messages and application of resistance theory is important for black women to gain insight and heal (Robinson-Wood, 2013).

Section Five – Strengths and Limitations of Study

The study is exploratory because attitudes and satisfaction towards Black women’s hair and skin color have been included in previous research to investigate overall body image evaluations, self-esteem, and racial identity (Bond & Cash, 1992; Falconer & Neville 2000; Mucherah & Frazier, 2013; Thompson & Keith, 2001; Robinson & Ward, 1995; Coard. Brelan & Raskin, 2001; Makkar & Strube, 1995; Smith, Burton & Lundgren, 1991; Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams & Belgrave, 2014). Psychological resistance utilization has been explored for skin color and hair satisfaction with black adolescent females (Ward, 2000; Brookins & Robinson, 1995; Ward,
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1996; Robinson & Ward; 1991; Ward, 1995; Okazawa-Rey, Robinson & Ward, 1987; Ward, 1990; Ward & Benjamin, 2004), and depression and attitudes about psychological health with black, self-identified Christian women (Braithwaite-Hall, 2011). Social appearance anxiety has been investigated to better understand eating disorders, weight-related body image dissatisfaction, and multiple studies on adolescents in Turkey (Hart et al., 2008; Levinson et al., 2013; Claes, 2012; Dogan & Colak, 2016). There are no studies on the relationships between skin color and hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social networks, and social appearance anxiety among black women or men. The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale made its debut to psychological research in 2008 (Hart et al., 2008). As such, this unique examination of the aforementioned constructs is a strength of the present study. Another strength of the study was its large sample size in Phase I. The study’s initial target sample size was 114, but due to a large number of respondents, the sample size was almost tripled with close to an 80% completion rate. However as with any research, especially exploratory studies in its beginning stages, limitations must be discussed for improvement of such studies in the future.

External Validity

The sample of black women were recruited from Facebook by the researcher posting an online research recruitment advertisement to predominately black women groups with diverse interests, identities, and physical characteristics (e.g., black women who love make-up; black women who run; black women with natural hair; black women with relaxed hair; LGBTQ black women; etc.). Despite best efforts to have black women of diverse physical attributes, and characteristics, the majority of the women in the study wore their hair natural, identified as heterosexual, and were of medium skin tone. Still, due to the large sample size, results may still be best generalized to Black women in their 20s and 30s.
Missing Data and Sample Size

As mentioned earlier, 259 (78.5%) of participants completed the survey. Forty-eight (14.5%) participants did not meet eligibility criteria and 23 (7%) did not complete the survey. Forty-five and 44 raw scores were missing from the data of the optimal and suboptimal resistance subtests of the RMI, respectively, while seven and five raw scores were missing from the data of the SCSS and SAAS, respectively. This may have been due to the participants' desire to finish the survey quickly or impatience with the length of the survey. Evidence that supports this possible explanation is the fact that the RMI had the most missing data and was the last and lengthiest measure. Additionally, measure order effects may have played a role in the missing data for the RMI. The missing raw data in the measure may have decreased tremendously if the RMI was the initial measure on the survey.

Unlike the online survey, Phase II’s focus group had a small sample of three participants. While the three participants were observed to be very interested in the topics discussed, the information obtained during the group interview was somewhat redundant. Sample size recommendations for qualitative research are 6 to 8 participants to avoid limited engagement and informational redundancy (Onweugbuzie & Collins, 2007; Morgan, 1997).

Another sample size limitation occurred in the post-hoc analysis of racial identification and the use of optimal resistance. Although the analysis reached a statistically significant level, the small sample size of women who identified as biracial/multiracial (n = 28) compared to those who identified as monoracial black in the study (n = 223) caused a statistical power issue in the findings. Therefore it is uncertain whether black/African-American women truly use more optimal resistance strategies than do biracial/multiracial women in the general population.

Internal Consistency Reliability
The Skin Color Satisfaction Scale (SCSS; Falconer & Neville, 2000) is an extension of Bond and Cash’s (1992) 3-item Skin Color Questionnaire (SCQ). Four additional items were added to increase the internal consistency reliability in the measurement of skin color satisfaction (Falconer & Neville, 2000). However, these reliability issues still remained with the expanded scale (Buchanan, Fischer, Tokar & Yoder, 2008). For this study the reliability coefficient was .401. After personal communication about the SCSS’s reliability with one of its authors, Buchanan et al., (2008) decided to score the instrument for only 4 out of the 7 items of the scale. Results of the present study scored all 7 items of the measure, however the researcher was curious about the scale’s internal consistency with the 3-item omission. If the three items were omitted before survey administration, the modified SCSS would have had a reliability coefficient of .586.

The Resistance Modality Inventory (RMI; Robinson-Wood, 2014) measures psychological resistance, specifically for black women. The original measurement was initially only available in paper format. This researcher transformed the measurement into a computerized version, but accidentally left out item 16: *I believe it is not necessary to define myself as Black; I am a human being* due to a number sequencing error. While there are many advantages of conducting online research studies, customized survey design errors that decrease reliability are one of the disadvantages of modernized research (Wyse, 2012). Despite the accidental omission of the item, Cronbach’s alpha was .762 and .623 for the optimal and suboptimal scales, respectively. Thus indicating the optimal subscale as a “good” measure of optimal psychological resistance and the suboptimal scale as an “acceptable” measure of suboptimal psychological resistance (George & Mallery, 2003; Kline, 2000; Gliem & Gliem, 2003).
Section Five - Future Directions, Study Contributions, and Qualitative Observations

There are a variety of considerations for future research that are warranted as a result of this study. First, replication of this study with some minor adjustments, such as the use of the 4-item version of the SCSS or a more reliable measurement of skin color satisfaction. If the sample population is similar to the present study’s sample, there may still be an overall satisfaction with skin color among black women, but the significance of more satisfaction in one skin color group over another may change. Previous research studies have had mixed results on which skin color group is most satisfied with their complexions. Additionally the use of the complete 25-item RMI may allow us to understand more accurately the impact of psychological resistance on black women. Lastly, in terms of replication of the present study, a focus group that is conducted online via Skype or another video calling application may have resulted in a larger qualitative sample. The researcher received several messages and calls from participants regretting their unavailability to join the focus group due to time-constraints or geographical location. Overall the research sample appeared to be very fluent in computer literacy. The use of video calls for focus groups may produce a larger qualitative sample size and more variability in the qualitative data.

One of the major components of the present study was to understand the psychological resistance black women used while living in an oppressive environment and interacting with multiple environmental systems, especially the chronosystem’s structure of the historical context of slavery in the United States. However, it may be interesting to examine skin color and hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social appearance anxiety, and social networks internationally, to gain a better understanding of colorism among black women in other countries. More than half of the black women that were ineligible for the study did not meet
criteria because they were not currently living in the United States. Further evidence that supports the importance of an international version of the present study is the recent protest by black high school adolescent girls in Pretoria, South Africa about racial discrimination against their hair. More specifically, the black girls of Pretoria High School for Girls were protesting about the school’s policy that require “they tame their natural hair.” Black hair that is straightened, chemically processed, or braided is acceptable, but afros and locs are not. The protest and the school’s polices have started a national debate in South Africa that is being reported worldwide, discussing the overt and covert ways that South African blacks are pushed to conform to mainstream white culture (Retrieved on September 05, 2016 from http://www.npr.org/2016/09/04/492599435/girls-at-south-african-high-school-protesting-hair-and-language-bans).

There have been a few studies that have examined psychological resistance in black adolescent and college female populations (Brookins & Robinson, 1995; Robinson & Ward; 1991; Okazawa-Rey, Robinson & Ward, 1987; Robinson-Wood, 2014), but researchers have yet to examine intersectionality of skin color and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and psychological resistance on these populations. Internationally studies, particularly Turkey, are frequently investigating the impact social appearance anxiety has on the nation’s adolescents (Dogan & Colak, 2016). Skin color and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and psychological resistance studies on black female adolescents and college students may help implement more systematic interventions to reduce colorism (Ward, Robinson-Wood & Boadi, in press). Conversely, it may be relevant to explore these constructs in woman over the age of 40 as well. The remainder of ineligible participants did not meet the criteria for age because they were older than the target age. The researcher had several discussions with black women over the
age of 39 about why they could not include them in the present study. One woman stated: “I am 60 years old and proud. I have a quite a few things to say about black women and beauty, doesn’t my opinion matter?”

Lastly, an unexpected finding was the Black/African-American group significantly differing from the Biracial/Multiracial group in the use of optimal strategies of resistance. Although questionable due to sample size and statistical power issues, the Black/African-American group used more optimal strategies of resistance than the Biracial/Multiracial group in the present study. Additionally, one participant from the focus group demonstrated and voiced her resentment towards Biracial and Multiracial celebrities for not publicly voicing their opposition to structural racism and other forms of racism. There is evidence that shows otherwise, yet has other implications about the politics of skin color. In the December 2015/January 2016 issue, Ebony Magazine celebrated its 70th anniversary issue with a front photo cover of Harry Belafonte, Jesse Williams, and Zendaya Coleman with a headline of “Power (100) to the People!” While this was an extraordinary issue with black celebrities standing for racial equality, many people criticized the popular Black magazine for their selection of all light-skinned, biracial celebrities on their cover (Retrieved September 02, 2016 from http://www.clutchmagonline.com/2015/11/on-ebonypower100-magazine-cover-the-perpetuation-of-colorism/). These mixed messages about the appropriation of Biracial and Multiracial individuals are further evidence in their negative interactions with monoracial blacks and ambivalence on racial identity (Rockquemore, 2002). An exploration (with a larger sample size) of skin color and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, psychological resistance and social networks among biracial and multiracial women who identify as black (partially or entirely) may help researchers investigate whether biracial and multiracial women are socially
privileged by and psychologically benefit from lighter skin (Thomas, 2004; Mucherah & Frazier, 2013).

I am excited to have conducted this study, which explored the topic of skin color and hair satisfaction among black women. It is my hope that this will be the first of several research studies I conduct in the future regarding this topic. I also hope this study will also enhance clinicians’ understanding of the impact that skin color and hair satisfaction can have on black women’s mental health.

*Study Contributions*

The present study exploring black women’s relationships with skin color and hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social appearance anxiety, and social networks provided several contributions that are noteworthy. As discussed in the first chapter earlier, as of October 2016, there are no known research studies examining how colorism affects black women’s levels of social appearance anxiety, and the use of psychological resistance and social networks. This study offered a look into the lives of black women in their 20s and 30s and the social and environmental factors influencing their skin color and hair satisfaction. It also explored the importance of black women’s hairstyle choices and how it can contribute to social appearance anxiety. The historical trauma of slavery and maltreatment and the impact of multiple jeopardy on the lives of black women in the United States make their experiences with aesthetics unique to women of other racial/ethnic backgrounds. The ability to demonstrate strength, function, and endurance in such an environment is a phenomenon deserving of continuous explorations through time.

The present study contributed to a greater understanding of the effects of colorism with the advancement of modern technology, specifically the significance of social media in society
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and smartphones (i.e., phones with camera and video capabilities and easy accessibility to the internet and social media websites). The use of social media and smartphones has undeniably changed the way humans communicate and interact with one another. The advantages of these technologies are countless, however they have also made it easier to discriminate (via words, pictures, and videos) against individuals/groups, bully/body shame, and perpetuate stereotypes, while reaching millions of people. These features alone have singlehandedly reinvented how individuals develop self-concept, perceptions of groups (their groups and groups they don’t belong to), and experience discrimination and maltreatment.

Another contribution of this study was the quantitative findings. This study found multiple correlations among skin color satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and optimal and suboptimal resistance. Women with higher social appearance anxiety scores reported more use of suboptimal resistance strategies, and women with lower social appearance anxiety scores reported more use of optimal resistance strategies. In terms of skin color satisfaction, women who were satisfied with their skin color used less suboptimal resistance strategies, and women who used more optimal resistance strategies were more satisfied with their skin color. Finally, women who were satisfied with their skin color were less anxious about their social appearance. These findings highlight the importance of exploring psychological resistance and its relationships with self-image and psychological concepts among black women.

The present study can be compared to other colorism studies (Okazawa-Rey, Robinson & Ward, 1987; Robinson & Ward; 1991; Smith, Burton & Lundgren, 1991; Bond & Cash, 1992; Brookins & Robinson, 1995; Robinson & Ward, 1995; Falconer & Neville, 2000; Thompson & Keith, 2001; White, 2005; Bellinger, 2007; Thompson, 2009; Robinson, 2011; Mucherah & Fraizer, 2013; Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams & Belgrave, 2014), which explored the importance of
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skin color and hair satisfaction, two non-weight related aspects of body image that has permeated the lives of black women for centuries.

Qualitative Researcher Observations

Although my focus group only had a sample size of three, it is important to note my observations and feelings that I experienced throughout the interview. I was eager to facilitate this focus group because of the difficulty of finding a private meeting room at the library for two hours. I knew that if it didn’t happen on the particular date and time I would be unable to schedule another meeting room for at least a month, due to the high demand of these rooms. However, I became anxious when only one participant showed up during the first 10 minutes of the time set for the focus group. Fortunately, two more participants appeared within 30 minutes of the start time. My anxiety decreased as each participant entered the meeting room and greeted me with a hug while mentioning their excitement about participating in the focus group.

My initial observation of the group was that they were warm and ready to discuss the politics of skin color and hair. I then noticed that out of the three participants there were two medium (closer to light) skin toned women with naturally textured hair and one dark skin toned woman with a straight textured hair weave. I noticed that the two medium skinned participants bounded more on topics such as, being considered light skinned by some of their family and peers, and their experience of receiving preferential treatment from some family and friends for their skin tones. I was slightly disappointed that the group was not larger and more diverse or homogeneous. The dark skinned woman was the minority within group. However, I thought about my discussion with my committee and colleagues about not controlling the focus group and allowing the interview to take its natural course. During the interview, the dark skin participant briefly discussed some black men’s opposition to dating dark skin women. Whether
intentionally or unintentionally, her commentary appeared to “fall on deaf ears.” At that moment, I wanted to share my own personal experiences with being a dark skin woman and some black men’s opposition to dating us, among other hardships. I wanted to form an alliance with her and let her know that I understood, but instead I kept silent. This participant was singled out again when she discussed her grandmother accusing her of using bleaching cream. She commented that she does not use bleaching cream, but offered a “shoutout” to those who do because that is their prerogative. One of the other participants then said: “No. No shoutout to them. Don’t bleach your skin.” The same participant also disagreed with her that magazines and advertisements intentionally made singer, Beyoncé Knowles’ skin lighter in photos. I noticed that after these two events, the dark skin participant appeared defensive and would preface her answers about questions related to skin color with: “I don’t have a problem with my skin,” although she made similar comments at the beginning of the focus group. On two occasions, I had to briefly explain that participant responses don’t only have to be about negative experiences, after she responded that she had no bad experiences to share about certain questions regarding skin tones. I then became somewhat self-conscious on how I was asking the interview questions and guilty that I didn’t respond to her discussion about being dark skin and dating.

Participants appeared to be more comfortable discussing hair satisfaction than skin color satisfaction. All the women experienced similar problems with their hair and deciding how to wear it to work. The dark skin participant announced that her hair was natural, but she decided to wear a weave for now. The other two participants mentioned that they also wore weaves in the past or if they needed to give their hair a break. I found myself asking: “what about skin color?” several times, even though the questions requested responses for both skin color and hair. I observed discomfort from one of the medium skin participant’s when she discussed the
preferential treatment that she received over her sister from her family. She appeared to be saddened and ashamed by her family’s preferential treatment. I felt the urge to provide her with comfort, but the other medium skin participant comforted her and asked relevant questions. I noticed a shift in comments that the dark skin participant made by the middle of the interview. She mentioned her sister looking very different from her and that she was much darker. She also spoke of her mother having nice hair that resembled Hispanic or Native American textured hair, while her hair needed to be kept in braids as a child because it was coarse and she could not get a comb through it. She indicated that her mother has Native American ancestry. She pointed out that her mother’s hair was similar to mine. I felt uncomfortable by this comment because I had made a conscious effort to hide my hair by putting it into a tight bun. I feared that my slightly looser curl pattern would make my participants feel like I could not relate to them. I have had personal experiences with family and friends that claimed I couldn’t fully relate to black woman’s hair due to this looser curl pattern and would occasionally exclude me from discussions about black hair care.

Overall all of the women, including myself, bonded. We were supportive of each other and respectfully exchanged differences of opinions. We especially agreed on the underrepresentation of black women in Hollywood and television, cultural appropriation, and the importance of positive self-identity. These topics also happened to be discussions that aren’t asking personal questions about one’s physical traits, so all the women may have been more comfortable. The discussion about the importance of black women keeping a positive self-identity occurred at the end of the focus group. I believe this discussion motivated all of us to maintain resiliency and continue to be true to oneself despite all the obstacles black women face.

Conclusion
The black women in this study are compiled of a group of ethnically-diverse females with various interests and lived experiences, yet sharing the bond of multiple jeopardy. When confronted with external and internal gendered racial discrimination and expectations about their aesthetics, these optimal resistors utilize psychological strategies, and positive relationships and social networks to counter these experiences. They are aware of the substantial impact slavery, societal norms, and social interactions have had on their preferences and satisfaction with their physical attributes. Despite confinement in an oppressive environment, these women have managed to thrive in family, motherhood, success, determination, bravery, and resilience. The unique lived experiences of this race and gender combination is worthy of awareness, understanding, and further exploration. This dissertation concludes with the words from an unknown author, who like many Black women selflessly support the people in their lives while surviving in an obstructive society with little to no recognition:

“Black women are made out of brown sugar, honey, cocoa, and gold.

And the strength of ten thousand moons.”
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APPENDIX A

Demographic Sheet

Instructions: Please answer all questions carefully and honestly. Your responses will be kept confidential and they will not be shared with anyone. I greatly appreciate your time and willingness to participate.

1. Age______
2. What is your race? For purposes of this question, persons of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin may be of any race.
   __American Indian or Alaskan Native
   __Asian or Pacific Islander
   __Biracial/Multicultural (Indicate the racial groups to which you belong)
   __Black/African American
   __White
   __Other (Please specify)
3. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? __Yes __No
4. What is your ethnicity? __________ Sample Responses: American, British, Jamaican, Guyanese, Nigerian
5. Primary area(s) you were raised in (indicate City and State):
6. Area you currently reside in (indicate City and State):
7. Currently, are you a student?
   □ Yes
   □ No
8. If you are a student, please answer the following question (if you are not a student, please skip this question and go to Question #9):
   Please indicate the level of education you are currently at:
   □ Working on GED
   □ Community College/Trade School
   □ 4-year University or College Degree
   □ Graduate school - Master’s Level
   □ Graduate school - Doctoral Level
   □ Professional School (e.g., Medical, Law)
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If you are not a student, please answer the following question (if you are a student, please answer Question #8 and skip this Question):

9. Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed:
   □ Did NOT complete High School/GED
   □ Completed High School/GED
   □ Community College
   □ 4-year University or College
   □ Graduate school - Master’s Level
   □ Graduate school - Doctoral Level
   □ Professional School (e.g., Medical, Law)

10. If you are currently employed, what is your occupation? _________________________

11. I am (Check one)
    ___ Single   ___ Married   ___ Divorced   ___ Separated   ___ Widowed

12. Do you have children?
    □ Yes
    □ No

    If yes, how many children do you have? ______

13. Have you ever taken a class or course on Multiculturalism and/or Women’s Studies?
    □ Yes
    □ No

    If yes, please indicate how many courses and the name of the course(s)  __________________________________________________________

14. My hair texture is:
    □ Natural (hair texture that hasn’t been altered by chemical processing)
    □ Chemically Processed (e.g. relaxer, perm, texturizer, etc.)
    □ Transitioning (intentionally returning to a natural hair texture from a chemically straightened texture; hair that is half chemically processed and half natural)

15. Which answer best describes how you typically wear your hair?
    □ Natural Styles (e.g. afros, locs, two-strand twists, braid/twists-outs, braids, wash & go, etc)
    □ Natural Processed Styles (e.g. press, flat-iron, blow-out)
    □ Chemically Processed Styles (e.g. e.g. relaxer, perm, texturizer, etc.)
    □ Braided Extensions (braided or twisted styles where human or synthetic hair is added)
    □ Weave or Wig Styles (e.g. loose or unbraided styles where human or synthetic hair is added)
    □ Combination/Other (explain)
    __________________________________________________________
16. Growing up, how did most of the women in your family typically wear their hair?
   □ Natural Styles (e.g. afros, locs, two-strand twists, braid/twists-outs, braids, wash & go, etc)
   □ Natural Processed Styles (e.g. press, flat-iron, blow-out)
   □ Chemically Processed Styles (e.g. relaxer, perm, texturizer, etc.)
   □ Braided Extensions (braided or twisted styles where human or synthetic hair is added)
   □ Weave or Wig Styles (e.g. loose or unbraided styles where human or synthetic hair is added)
   □ Combination/Other (explain)
   ________________________________________________________________

17. Reflecting on what you’ve personally seen in the media, Black women with naturally
kinky or nappy hair are:
   □ Frequently represented in the media
   □ Sometimes represented in the media
   □ Rarely represented in the media
   □ Never represented in the media

18. How do you think Black women with naturally kinky or nappy hair have been portrayed
in the media?
   □ Mostly portrayed in a positive and/or attractive way.
   □ Mostly portrayed in a neutral role that is neither positive nor negative.
   □ Mostly portrayed in a negative and/or unattractive way.
   □ Not portrayed in the media at all.
APPENDIX B

Von Lushcan Chromatic Color Chart
APPENDIX C

Skin Color Satisfaction Scale

1. How satisfied are you with the shade of your own skin color? 1 (Extremely dissatisfied) to 9 (extremely satisfied)
2. Compared to most African American people, I believe that my skin color is ….
   (Responses range from 1 (extremely light) to 9 (extremely dark).
3. If I could change my skin color, I would make it 1 (much lighter) to 9 (much darker)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Compared to the skin color of members of my family, I am satisfied with my skin color.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I wish the shade of my skin were darker.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I wish the shade of my skin were lighter.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Compared to the skin color of other African Americans, I am satisfied with my skin color.</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

SOCIAL APPEARANCE ANXIETY SCALE (SAAS)

Directions: Please indicate how characteristic each statement is of you, using the response scale provided.

Not at all  A little  Sometimes  A lot  Extremely
1       2       3       4       5

1. I feel comfortable with the way I appear to others.
2. I feel nervous when having my picture taken.
3. I get tense when it is obvious people are looking at me.
4. I am concerned people would not like me because of the way I look.
5. I worry that others talk about flaws in my appearance when I am not around.
6. I am concerned people will find me unappealing because of my appearance.
7. I am afraid that people find me unattractive.
8. I worry that my appearance will make life more difficult for me.
9. I am concerned that I have missed out on opportunities because of my appearance.
10. I get nervous when talking to people because of the way I look.
11. I feel anxious when other people say something about my appearance.
12. I am frequently afraid I would not meet others’ standards of how I should look.
13. I worry people will judge the way I look negatively.
14. I am uncomfortable when I think others are noticing flaws in my appearance.
15. I worry that a romantic partner will/would leave me because of my appearance.
16. I am concerned that people think I am not good looking.
APPENDIX E

The Resistance Modality Inventory

Instructions: Each question is asked in two different ways. Please read each statement carefully. Dash the one best response for each question. For example:

1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The first version of the question asks whether or not you agree with a statement. The legend is as follows:
1) I strongly disagree with this statement
2) I disagree with this statement
3) I agree with this statement
4) I strongly agree with this statement

The second version of the question asks how frequently (if at all) a behavior, thought, or feeling occurs. The legend is as follows:

1) Never happens or is not applicable
2) Happens once a year
3) Happens 2-3 times a year
4) Happens every other month
5) Happens once a month
6) Happens once a week
7) Happens daily

1. I feel like my daily life is a constant struggle against racism
   Feeling like my daily life is a constant struggle against racism

2. I think negative thoughts about myself as a Black woman
   Thinking negative thoughts about myself as a Black woman

3. I gain wisdom from the ways that older Black women have dealt with racism
   Gaining wisdom from the ways that older Black women have dealt with racism

4. I feel pressure to look attractive
   Feeling pressure to look attractive

5. I believe that the past struggles of Black people have given me freedoms today
   Believing that the past struggles of Black people have given me freedoms today

6. I say yes to people's request in order to gain their approval
   Saying yes to people's request in order to gain their approval

7. I feel that many of my friends put me down
   Feeling that many of my friends put me down

8. I feel like it is important to spend time with other Black people
   Feeling like it is important to spend time with other Black people

9. I drink alcohol to cope with the stress in my life
   Drinking alcohol to cope with the stress in my life
10. I believe that when things look bad that they will eventually get better
Believing that when things look bad that they will eventually get better

11. I am not affected by Black people’s progress or failures
Not being affected by Black people’s progress or failures

12. I hold Black people to a higher moral standard than I do White people
Holding Black people to a higher moral standard than I do White people

The first version of the question asks whether or not you agree with a statement. The legend:
1) I strongly disagree with this statement   3) I agree with this statement
2) I disagree with this statement                      4) I strongly agree with this statement

The second version of the question asks how frequently (if at all) a behavior, thought, or feeling occurs. The legend:
1) Never happens or is not applicable   4) Happens every other month   7) Happens daily
2) Happens once a year                  5) Happens once a month
3) Happens 2-3 times a year             6) Happens once a week

13. I am pursuing goals that will enable me to help Black people
Pursuing goals that will enable me to help Black people

14. I use food for comfort and/or companionship
Using food for comfort and/or companionship

15. I believe that the hard times in life have a purpose
Believing that the hard times in life have a purpose

16. I believe it is not necessary to define myself as Black; I am a human being
Believing that it is not necessary to define myself as Black; I am a human being

17. I believe that not having money for basic necessities affects too many Black people
Believing that too many Black people do not having money for basic necessities

18. I smoke marijuana (weed, reefer) to cope with life
Smoking marijuana (weed, reefer) to cope with life

19. I physically fight with and/or curse at people if they act racist toward me
Physically fighting with and/or cursing at people if they act racist toward me

20. I rely on other people’s opinions to determine how attractive I feel about myself
Relying on other people’s opinions to determine how attractive I feel about myself

21. I read Black poetry and/or literature to identify with Black people
Reading poetry and/or literature by Black people to identify with Black people

22. I participate in community activities that promote racial harmony
Participating in community activities that promote racial harmony
23. I judge other people’s worth based on their material possessions
   *Judging other people's worth based on their material possessions*
   
   1  2  3  4

24. I make the Black community stronger by giving of my time
   *Making the Black community stronger by giving of my time*
   
   1  2  3  4

25. I believe that Black people are entitled to racial justice
   *Believing that Black people are entitled to racial justice*

   1  2  3  4
APPENDIX F

Responses to open-ended question: "If I could change something about my hair, it would be..."

1. Hair texture (curlier), hair length, moisture & softness.
2. Hair length and hair thickness
3. Hair length
4. Curl pattern and thickness
5. I’d like it to be less frizzy, and bigger/looser curls or just straighter in general
6. Fuller hair with larger curls
7. Less tangled at ends
8. I am growing it out so I would say length. I have recently achieved my desired thickness.
9. Fewer frizzes
10. Straighter /longer/ softer/ thicker
11. Make it healthier
12. Length
13. Hair length shorter
14. More moisture, longer, straighter hair
15. Less curly, more on the wavy side
16. Length and less coarse
17. Not applying any chemical products to it so I wouldn't have to deal with this transitioning phase
18. Thicker, longer hair
19. Hair moisture
20. Being biracial my hair is like 5 different textures, which sometimes makes it difficult. I just want one. Any one.
21. Curlier
22. Less frizzy, easier to comb out
23. Dryness
24. Length
25. Length, wavier
26. Hair moisture
27. For it to be less nappy and more manageable
28. Curlier
29. Hair moisture
30. Either straighter (like typical biracial hair) or kinky. I'm in between.
31. N/a
32. I am currently combing out my locs after five years. I want my loose, natural hair, as I have never experienced it before. I loc'd right after I cut out my relaxer (big chop).
33. Hair frizziness
34. Nothing
35. More consistent. my hair looks different EVERY day
36. If it is really humid my curls loses its curl
37. Hair moisture
38. Hair moisture
39. Length
40. Length
41. More moisture
42. Softness & length
43. Nothing
44. Length. I want it to my waist.
45. Length
46. Kinkier and thicker
47. Nothing
48. Length
49. Hydrated
50. Length
51. Thicker
52. Longer hair
53. Hair Moisture
54. Moisture
55. Length
56. Less puffy at roots
57. Nothing
58. Curlier
59. Longer
60. N/a
61. Longer
62. Longer and just a little bit looser of a curl
63. Length. Color
64. Kinkier curls
65. I have Scarring Alopecia so I would love for it just grow again!
66. Hair thickness
67. Maybe length but that's on the way :-) 
68. Nothing
69. Curlier
70. The moisture level in my hair
71. To be longer
72. Make my hair more softer and less thick
73. Nothing
74. Less thin - I have a LOT of hair but I have thin strands that leads to a lot of breakage.
75. Thicker
76. Thicker and softer
77. Fuller
78. Nothing, I love my natural hair!
79. Stronger, healthier, longer
80. I wish it would hold moisture better. I also wish it was thicker.
81. I would rather less shrinkage,
82. Longer
83. Curlier
84. Hair length
85. Kinkier
86. Hair color
87. Longer, thicker, denser
88. Less shrinkage after washing
89. I just want longer hair and don’t understand why black women have to work so hard to retain length
90. Softer
91. Nothing.
92. Longer hair
93. Thicker
94. Go back to natural spiral curls; the hot combs and hair coloring damaged my hair
95. Thicker
96. Hair color and less thick
97. Health
98. Length and moisture
99. More hair moisture
100. Hair moisture
101. Hint of hair color
102. I wish my hair was longer, shrinkage is real!
103. Fuller and longer
104. Hair length and wavier
105. Length
106. I love my relaxed hair. It's long, full, thick and healthy. I wouldn't change a thing about it.
107. Easier to manage
108. Hair length
109. Longer and fuller, and completely transitioned
110. Thicker and longer hair
111. Length and curl pattern/texture
112. Length
113. Length
114. Growth of edges
115. The length
116. Moisture and length
117. Color
118. Longer and wavier
119. Just longer and even bigger!
120. Nothing
121. Longer length of Locs
122. Frizz!
123. Hair length
124. Wavier, Curlier, Hair Length
125. Hair moisture
126. Hair moisture, hair thickness at roots
127. Hair Length
128. I would like for it to be a uniform curl pattern all over.
129. Increase the moisture and smoothness
130. Longer hair length, curlier hair texture, softer hair
131. Curl pattern. I would like a looser one that’s easier to work with
132. Moisture
133. Softer, thicker
134. Length
135. Hair length
136. Hair length
137. It would be longer
138. Thicker
139. Hair moisture, Color, cut
140. I wouldn't change a thing
141. It would hold more curl/kink for certain styles like twist outs
142. Wavier
143. More moisture, curlier
144. Length but I'm working on health first
145. I wish my hair were a bit fuller and longer
146. Hair moisture
147. Thickness and length
148. Curlier, thicker & longer
149. Nothing
150. Moisture
151. Color
152. Removing all relaxed ends
153. Hair moisture, softer
154. Nothing
155. Less frizz in natural state
156. Thicker
157. Hair moisture, texture, fullness
158. Hair texture
159. Learning how to retain length and thickness
160. Length
161. Longer hair length, straighter texture
162. Texture after it dries
163. Hair length
164. I wish it was longer
165. Nothing
166. Softer
167. I wish I could grow it back. I would also wear it naturally.
168. Less dry/More moisturized; have the same curl pattern throughout my whole head
169. The hair length
170. Hair thickness and Hair moisture
171. Longer
172. For it to be curlier at the roots
173. Longer. I like big fluffy hair.
174. Thickness
175. Not much...faster growth but it isn't a big deal and grows about 5-6 inches a year
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR HAIR

176. Length softness
177. Hair length and color
178. Length
179. My top hair texture is looser than the rest; I wish it can all be one texture
180. Length
181. Hair length
182. That it was stronger and even in texture.
183. Hair length
184. Hair moisture
185. Hair length, hair health, hair moisture
186. I wish my hair was stronger and not so dry
187. Length
188. Not so dry
189. Thicker
190. Thickness
191. Less frizz
192. Nothing!!
193. My hair has a lot of damage that I am currently trying to grow out. In between relaxers it is difficult to maintain because of the kinkiness.
194. The dryness
195. Hair length to longer so that I can cut off the rest of the relaxed portion of it and feel comfortable to stop wearing braids
196. Moisture
197. Curlier
198. Hair moisture/softness
199. Looser curl pattern
200. Hair moisture
201. Color - starting to get grey
202. Hair texture and no more relaxers
203. Longer and shoofter without relaxers
204. Length
205. Thicker
206. Hair moisture
207. Length retention
208. Hair length
209. My hair length and moisture
210. Thinning edges
211. Thickness, Length, Shine, Volume, Moisture, Porosity, Health
212. Thicker
213. Nothing
214. Thickness length
215. More moisture and a little longer
216. Hair length
217. Hair color
218. Hair softness
219. Thicker hair texture; longer length
220. Softness
221. Length
222. More moisture
223. Hair length
224. It is pretty thick but I wish would get bigger than what it is. I would love to wear an afro but it doesn't pouf out well.
225. Hair moisture and color
226. Looser curl (not so kinky)
227. My patience with it
228. Thicker
229. Healthier
230. Curlier
231. Naturally curlier
232. Thickness, make it thicker
233. Hair length
234. Softer hair texture
235. Curlier
236. Thickness in the top or back
237. Nothing
238. Length, color, thickness, softness
239. Longer Hair
240. More manageable and longer
241. I would have longer hair
242. Curlier
243. Hair thickness
244. Hair color, texture - wavier
245. Hair length
246. Thicker
247. Longer
APPENDIX G

Focus group interview questions

1. Do you experience comments about your skin color from others, presently? What is said?
   Who says what?

2. Which populations tend to support your choices about your hair? Which populations do not?
   What is said?

3. Do you experience pressure from others and/or environments to wear certain types of hairstyles?

4. How has the media/social media (i.e. television, magazines, Facebook, Instagram, etc…) influenced
   your attitude towards your skin color and hair?

5. What messages did you receive about your skin color and hair growing up? From whom?
   What was said?

6. Have your attitudes towards your hair and skin color changed since childhood and/or
   adolescence? If so, what caused the change?

7. When are you most satisfied with your hair? Are you satisfied with your hair, currently?

8. Do you worry about what others think when you have a new hairstyle?

9. Do you avoid taking pictures or going out in public if you are dissatisfied with the state of your hair?

10. If your hair could talk, what would it say and to whom (Narrative Therapy Approach)?
### APPENDIX H

Raw Data of Focus Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher:</th>
<th>Thank you all for coming to the focus group. If you would like to state your name and your age.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>My name is Raquel, and I’m 37.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evie:</td>
<td>My name is Evie, and I am 31.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serena:</td>
<td>My name is Serena, and I’m 28.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher:</td>
<td>Thank you guys for joining. I’ll start with the first question. Some of the rules is that I ask that you allow each other to speak one at a time. Also, that we respect each other’s opinions. It’s fine to disagree, but just be sure to just respect each other’s opinions and views on topics. Okay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher:</td>
<td>Okay. First question is, which populations tend to support your choices about your hair? Which populations do not, and what is said?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serena:</td>
<td>I’ll go. I would say support my choices of hair, African American. That doesn’t support my choices, probably Africans, and maybe white society depending on your hairstyle. I’m thinking if you had dreads or something. Natural hair I guess is starting to be a little more accepted but maybe not so much dreads, off the top of my head, I’m thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>What population would support my hair? African Americans, but then some white people depending on the hairstyle. It depends on who the white person is and what the hairstyle is. I think if it’s more mainstream, it’s more acceptable. If a black person had dreads, and then a white person all of a sudden decides to go dreads, dreads, even though there’ll be a discrepancy, it’s still more like they’ll be more open to it as opposed. Yeah, I would say white people and African Americans would be more supportive. People that won’t be supportive, I want to say Africans. Africans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher:</td>
<td>It’s fine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Africans, and maybe Latinos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evie:</td>
<td>I think for me it depends on where I am. I have family all over. I feel like in D.C., where I’m from, my hair is, most of the people who give me compliments of my hair are not black or African American. I think in D.C., it’s a very political city, a very whatever city so people are still into the straight, light, silky. I feel like in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brooklyn where you see so many hairstyles and so much natural hair, that’s where I get a lot of compliments. In Brooklyn in New York, I get compliments from everybody or from anybody. It’s not based on race. I think in other places that are less progressive, especially as far as hair and black appearance is concerned, like white people.

**Researcher:** What’s said? What do these people say, negative and positive?

**Serena:** I have natural hair too. I’m trying to think what’s negative. I think Evie, to a certain extent you are correct. I don’t think I really have that issue here in New York City. I think it’s more of an issue if I go to Africa, it might be an issue like [imitates an African accent] why don’t you straighten your hair?

**Raquel:** Or why didn’t you perm it?

**Serena:** Yeah, something like that.

**Evie:** Or Harlem, [imitates an African accent] hair braiding miss, no matter what your hair looks like, hair braiding, they want to braid your hair.

**Serena:** They want to braid your hair.

**Raquel:** Yeah I think it is depending on where you’re at. What do they say? I haven’t had so many complaints lately. I think I’ve settled down, because I’ll show you pictures maybe a year ago, I had this side of my hair shaved off on the side. Some people liked it, some people didn’t. I could cover it up when I go to work, you know?

**Researcher:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Raquel:** I guess it depends on the person too and the atmosphere. At my job, I would cover it up. On the streets I’m like wearing my hair shaved on the side. I don't know, yeah. It’s good. The question?

**Researcher:** What is said, what do people say? Positive or negative.

**Raquel:** My hair is now natural, but I’ve had dreads before. I get the black and white people asking me, what am I going to do after I finish my dreads? Is there something else you’re going to be doing with your dreads? Or I get some white people touching it, that they want to touch it, or they want to feel it. They’d be like, “Do you mind if I touch your hair? Do you mind if I?” I’m like, “I’m not a plant. It’s like I’m not some type of plant that you touch its hair.” That’s what I get. I get a lot of white people ask me. Then I get black people too that are very open but they’re like, “What are you going to do to your hair? That’s it? Are you going to straighten it? That’s it? That’s all you can do?” You get some, not a lot but you get some.
It depends yeah, or you get, then some Latinas, they don’t like curly hair. Even when you as a black person have curly hair, they’re like, you go to a Dominican salon and they want to straighten it. They want to just take the curls and the kinks out, so yeah.

Serena: I agree, yeah.

Evie: What said? Just compliments like, “I like your hair.” Never anything, or, because I have white hair, “I like the color of your hair.” Nothing, I don’t feel like anything negative is ever really said. People will give looks and backwards compliments, like “I wish I had the confidence to wear my hair like that,” but nothing crazy like, “That’s ugly.” Nothing like that.

Raquel: Or they would say something like, “I would go natural if my hair texture was like this.” You hear stuff like that, which is, you don’t know your hair texture until you cut it off and really see it.

Researcher: Do you experience pressure from others and/or environments to wear certain types of hairstyles?

Evie: I think as far as being in certain industries. I guess when I was looking for a job, I always felt like pressure whether it was stated or unstated like, if you’re going on an interview, you need to straighten your hair. I don’t watch TV. I think if I watched TV, there would be sometimes a subliminal pressure in my head because I feel like we all to an extent, especially growing up had that in the back of our heads like, “You look better with straight hair, or you straighten your hair.” I think because I don’t watch TV and I don’t do a lot of things, I don’t really feel pressure. I feel like whatever pressure is self-imposed. It probably has to do with something like that way back brainwashing. I guess that is pressure but it’s not necessarily like regular.

Serena: I’m going to say I do feel pressure, but that’s because I work in a hospital with a lot of physicians and things like that. I don’t feel pressure to, because sometimes I will do a little wash and go, or something like that, keep it moving. I don’t feel that pressure, but I feel the pressure to at least maintain it in a way that I probably don’t want to do it. I would like to keep my hair shaved on the side all the time, things like that. Sometimes I want to get the box braids, let’s say to go Harlem or something. Then it’s like, “She got box braids down to her butt?” or something like that. I think that’s because of my job. Personally, I don’t care. It’s true, if you want, whatever you’re doing, you want to I guess go up a corporate ladder, to a certain extent you do have to play by other people’s rules. That is something to take into consideration. It’s not fair. You know?

Researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Evie: No, what you were just saying, it made me think about, I didn’t think about hair color. I was just thinking about style. I don’t want to say like purple hair but just thinking about the fall out with that family and not just in your family, just how people perceive you and just treat you based on your appearance, I would not. I wouldn’t.

Serena: Yeah, because I would still want to dye my hair blue I haven’t. I don’t feel like hearing other people’s opinions on it.

Researcher: Do you think it’s different for white women?

Serena: Yes.

Raquel: Yes.

Researcher: What makes it different? With being able to color blue and purple? Do you feel like that’s more acceptable?

Serena: Yes, because if I feel like as an African American, if we do it, it’s considered ghetto and ratchet, but then when they do it, it’s so creative and edgy. I have an issue with that. That’s not fair because, we’re probably the ones, and I feel like it usually does come from the streets up to me. Usually a lot of these stuff come from streets of Jamaica or something, you know?

Researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: Where they come up with all these creative styles. Then when we do it and we start this trend, we’ll be getting all the backlash for it. Then when Kim Kardashian does it, all of a sudden it’s so trendy and it’s like okay.

Raquel: Just speak, yes.

Evie: I saw something about that on Facebook earlier. I think it really, it’s part of a larger issue where I feel like it’s people feeling like they have the right to comment, or control, or just have whatever to say about black women or what they do and how they express themselves.

Serena: In general.

Evie: Even in general, much less how they express themselves through how they wear their hair or choose the way their hair. I forgot what the question was.

Raquel: The question was do you think it’s different for white people?

Evie: I do feel like it’s different for white women just because they’re not black women. I feel like they have a freedom in a way that we don’t necessarily have the
privilege of having when it comes to expressing themselves. Even through what they say, I don’t think a white woman would ever really be called angry. Even if she’s yelling, and cussing at somebody, she’s having a bad day. Yeah, I think it’s different for white women.

Raquel: I agree with both your statements. It is different for white women. For instance, I remember growing up and I pierced my nose. Then I would work in an environment, I had to take out my earring out of nose but you’ll see a white girl with an earring on her nose, everybody is accepting. They could come in with dreads, everybody is more accepting. For me, it’s more, when I’d had my dreads and I was in that kind of environment, I’d put a wig on, because I didn't know what people were going to think of my dreads. I’m the only back person amongst everybody. That to me, it made me feel bad about myself though for a little bit for me to cover up my crown and what I’m wearing. Yeah, I have to say white people.

Serena: Yeah, to piggyback off what Evie said, it’s like they have a privilege that we don’t have.

Raquel: Yeah, yeah.

Serena: They can do these things without any backlash but we don’t have that. It’s unfortunate.

Evie: Even not just hair. I was thinking about the-

Serena: Totally everything.

Raquel: Yes, yes.

Evie: White girls wear a mini skirt and it’s just fashion but a black girl does it and she’s asking to be raped.

Raquel: Raped, yes.

Evie: We’re built differently in general. I get part of that but I just, yeah, it’s troubling.

Researcher: I’m going to switch gears for a little bit and go on to skin color. Do you experience comments about your skin color from others? What is said and who says what?

Serena: Me? Do I go?

Researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: I don’t have any issues with my complexion because I was raised to always like
myself. I always had black dolls and things like these. I never had any issues personally. I don’t like the compliment, “You’re pretty for a dark-skinned girl.” That’s a backhanded compliment. I don’t like that at all. In my past experience with guys, I don't know, from other races like Asian, White, whatever the case may be. Sometimes I’m wondering, they’re like, “You’re so beautiful. You’re so exotic looking and da, da, da, da.” It’s like, “Okay, is it because I’m not white or whatever the case may be so I’m exotic looking to you?” To me, I’m just me, you know?

Raquel: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: I don't know if that’s a compliment or getting a backhanded compliment. I don't know. That’s where I get confused with people. I don't know if you’re complimenting me or you’re offending me, because to me, when you say, “No, you’re so exotic.” That’s because you’re not used to seeing me. I deal with guys that look like me every day and it’s not an issue. Is that a compliment or a dis? I don't know. I’m going to say I’m confused sometimes when it comes to things like that and how to accept it.

Evie: I’m going to say my experience is, it’s really been the last, like since college, no one ever said anything to me about my complexion or whatever. That could be because I was really fat and so that was the thing that people thought about when they saw me so they didn’t talk about my complexion. I just remember in college, I was saying something to my roommate, I think this was the first time it was addressed. I was saying, “You know your friend who’s the same complexion as me?” She was like, “Ya’ll not the same complexion.” I was like, “Yes, we are.” She’s like, “Do you need a mirror?” She pulls out a mirror. She’s like, “Look at yourself.” I was just like, “I didn’t see it. I’ll go meet this girl with the same complexion.”

Researcher: Now, was this person more darker or lighter?

Evie: She was darker.

Researcher: Okay.

Evie: It was just a very slight moment. I was just like, “That was strange.” Then I went on like yea. Then as time went on I kept noticing like people just having things to say. Even someone in my choir a couple of weeks ago. He was like, “You probably are a bunch of beautiful light-skinned women. People in your family, they’re so pretty.” I’m just like, they’re not mutually exclusive. I don’t consider myself light-skinned first of all. Secondly, I don’t like when people comment on it because I feel like they’re subscribing characteristics to me that are not necessarily, it’s just based on my complexion. I didn’t grow up light-skinned. I just grew up me, and fat.
It concerns me because I’m aware now, especially within the last year that people look at me and decide who I am based on what they see. It bothers me because I’m just like that’s at least, attributes ascribed to light-skinned women. I don’t think that I embody those. That’s not how I would describe myself. I would never describe myself as a light-skinned. I might say I’m like peanut butter color or something. It’s just yeah. I don’t like the whole complexion thing. I understand it’s an issue for a lot of people.

Raquel: For me, I’m like Evie because I tend to identify, I grew up around my family, Africans. There were a lot of darker complexion, my cousins or family members. I could always feel there was a difference in how they treated me. That’s the case, how they treated me.

Let me give you an example, like say for instance, I consider myself a brown skin girl. That’s what I am. I am brown. I know when I’m looking at shades. Let’s say if I speak to my sister, I’m like, “Yeah, I’m this shade.” She’s like you. She’s like, “No bitch, you’re this shade, a little bit lighter here. Where you’re going over here?” I don’t know. Maybe because I see myself as a brown, I don’t look at light-skinned, I see myself like you, a brown-skinned woman. I think a lot of people would be like, “It’s winter, you look pale.” I’m like but pale, what does pale identifies to you because I don’t look pale. I look brown like you. That’s my problem there in terms of that, yeah.

Researcher: What someone wants you to be.

Serena: Just to piggyback off a couple of things Raquel said, I definitely get that. My grandmother once she asked me if I was using bleaching cream. I was like no way. I would never do that. Never, that’s not my thing.

Raquel: I know what you mean.

Serena: But shout out to people who do. I don’t know.

Evie: No, no, no, stop that. No, shout out to them. Don’t bleach your skin.

Serena: Yeah, you’re right.

Raquel: You have beautiful skin.

Serena: Yeah. I would never do that. I understand what you’re saying because in Africa, I feel like especially in Ghana, the women there seem to be very dark like this complexion. When you go there, I know you said you haven’t been there in a while. They used to call me a white girl.

Raquel: Your complexion?
| Serena: | Yeah, because I’m more lighter which is so funny, and I think the problem is we’re all talking about it’s how we see ourselves in the mirror. Or you’d be like, “Yeah, I’m a dark-skinned girl.” They’re like, “No, you’re not as dark as us.” |
| Raquel: | Yes, they do say that. Yeah. |
| Serena: | I’m still dark. What’s the difference? I’m still peanut butter color. Like what is the difference? I think it’s a difference on how we as black women perceive ourselves in the mirror. Then the issue is also, there’s like 45 or 50 different shades of black people anyway. That’s a lot, compared to other cultures where there’s only like 3. You’re dealing with like 45 or 50 different shades. Personally, I just summed it up to 3, you’re either light, in the middle, or dark, because it’s just too much to deal with. There are so many complexions. I was like no. I think the issue is how we all perceive ourselves personally in the mirror because you see something else. |
| Evie: | How it conflicts with (inaudible). |
| Serena: | You see something and I see something, and they could see something else. It’s like all right. |
| Evie: | My issue is more not with what people see but the attributes they ascribe to what they see. Even the attributes they ascribe to maybe being a dark-skinned person are like, what a person looks like has nothing to do with who they are. Absolutely nothing. It’s about a person. It’s funny that you say that about, I was at a friend’s house at one time. There was a group of us or whatever. One of our friends, he has an issue with complexion which I can’t date anybody who has complexion issues. I’m not going to raise kids with that. I wasn’t raised with that. He said something about me being light-skinned. I’m like, “I’m not light.” I don’t want to be in this conversation because I’m just like I’m not going to go back and forth with you about whatever you think.” I was like, “I’m peanut butter color.” They went to the refrigerator and got peanut butter and put it next to my skin. They were like, “You are not that color.” I’m just like, “This is going way too far. Let’s just change subjects. That’s fine. We can agree to disagree. That’s fine.” It’s so pervasive and so … |
| Serena: | Deeply-rooted. |
| Evie: | Deeply rooted in our culture. I don't know that it’s something we’re going to get rid of ever. It’s sad. |
| Serena: | Yeah. I will say to me personally, I feel like it’s more of an issue down south too, because again, I went to school down south. I never had this issue of all these light-skinned girls and all these dark-skinned girls until I went to college. I’m like, “What the hell?” To me, I don't know. It’s an issue up north and probably on the West Coast. I don't think it’s as deep an issue as it is down south or like a guy |
is like, “I only date dark-skinned girls. I only date light-skinned girls.” It’s like, “What the heck? We’re all black, right?”

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<th>Raquel:</th>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Cops shoot at anybody. I don’t know what the issue is. Maybe because of slavery, that mentality, I don’t know but to me, once I cross that Mason-Dixon line it just seems like such a huge issue. Then also what I wanted to say, because there are so many different shades of black people, I think other cultures clearly don’t understand the fact that we can all be in the same family, all different shades. I think that confuses people too because my mother is very light. When growing up, people would be like, they look at my cousins who are also light like her. They’d be like, “Your daughter is so cute.” She’s like, “No, that’s my daughter there.” They’re like, “Are you sure?” I think it confuses other cultures about our complexions so maybe that’s why they don’t know how to react or how to perceive us as well. To a certain extent, I don’t know.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>It confuses me, not confuses me, it bothers me when there’s confusion amongst us. I’m like. I’ve heard people say like, “That’s so and so’s mother, she’s light-skinned. So and so.” I’m just like that’s really …</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>You should be used to it.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>I can’t with you. I got stuck under an awning with this young man that I really didn’t like, it was raining and I didn’t want to mess up my hair. I was like why did I not bring my umbrella? He’s like, “What are you?” I was like, “Black, clearly.” He was like, “No, what else are you?” I was just like, “I’m a lot of things like you.” He’s like, “No, I’m just black. I’m just black.” I’m just like, “No, you’re not. You’re in America. You’re a whole bunch of things and probably are the same thing.” He was like, “No.” He was like, “Your complexion.” I’m like, “Sir, I have cousins who are darker than you and we have the same blood. What you are is not indicative of what you look like on the outside. This is just how I came out, just the way you came out.” I just was like, I think it’s an issue amongst us, where people will have these reactions like, “Her Mom is light-skinned and she’s dark.” I’m like, “It be that way.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah, that’s very common.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>It’s very common.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>I feel like it’s more like that amongst us than it is with other people. No, maybe it’s equal. I think maybe it’s equal because a white person might be confused as well. I think it could be like. It concerns me more when we’re confused. I’m like; you don’t go no brown skin.</td>
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| Serena: | That, I agree with you but I can understand more so like a white person being
Evie: No, I can sympathize with that.

Raquel: Yes, as opposed to a black person being confused, because I’m with you Evie and Serena, my sister, my Mom is light-skinned. My sister is dark skin, I am brown skin and my brother is brown skin. Every time, you’ll see my Mom and you’ll be like, “Your Mom is light-skinned?” Then they’re looking at all of us like, “Oh my gosh.” I do get that point. It’s like how can you not understand that we come in different shades and different? That’s the problem. I’m more like what Evie said, more about complex about us as black people not understanding than more so white people, because white people sit there and think you’re the same person. They’ll be like, “Oh yeah I saw you down.” You’ll be like, “No, that was my friend.” So yeah.

Serena: That’s true, and that’s so weird.

Raquel: Isn’t that weird?

Serena: Like really?

Raquel: We do not look damn alike.

Evie: She said that they thought that I was jaundice.

Raquel: Who?

Evie: When she was leaving the hospital with me when I was born. They were just like wondering, asking like, “Was that her baby?”

Serena: Oh my gosh.

Evie: [laughter]. I can’t with us. I can’t.

Researcher: The next question. How has the media and the social media influenced your attitude towards your skin color and hair? When I say media and social media, we’re talking television, magazines, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, all of that.

Raquel: I’m not on any of them. Let me tell you why. I’m going to tell you why as I’m not. I dibble and I dabble. I’ll tell you why. I was on Facebook. I was on Instagram, but I watched TV and stuff. What’s been happening is, what I’ve noticed and why I took a hiatus was, there was different depiction of women, how they should look in terms of skin color, bodies. If you’re not strong within, these messages can be very damaging. You have to be really strong within because you have a lot of men, women, what is accepted, what is not, skin color, hair, whether you have a weave, whether you have natural hair, whether you have a flat nose,
you have a small. It’s too much. It is to the point where if you’re not really strong within, it could really mess up your mind.

I took a moment. I just took a long hiatus from it because it is damaging. It can damage you. A lot of people would say no, they won’t be damaged by it. It could be just a little seed planted in can start something. So yeah, to a point that, yeah.

**Evie:** I was about to say I didn’t think it had any bearing but then just listening to you, I think that’s probably because I see people who look like me or at least who have my complexion. I see people like that everywhere. I was reading Issa Rae’s book. She put this, it was a passage from something that she read. It was just like how you convince someone they’re a monster is that they don’t see any reflections of themselves because monsters don’t have a reflection when they look in the mirror. When you don’t see yourself, you then start to think something is wrong with you, and that I guess you’re a monster for lack of a better term or whatever.

Because I am affirmed in what I see, and when I go outside my house, the way people speak to me and treat me, not all the time. I think sometimes it’s reverse, but I feel like people because they think I’m light-skinned or whatever, browner people, they will treat me a certain way or mistreat me a certain way because of who they think I am or how I’m thinking about them. I always lose sight of the question. I was about to say I don’t think it has any bearing but I think it doesn’t as much because I am what I see, at least complexion wise.

**Researcher:** You feel like you see more people with your complexion on social media?

**Evie:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** What about with hair?

**Evie:** Hair, no. See, I have issues with hair, and that probably has to do with a lot of things growing up, or whatever. I feel like I always I’m on the hassle of like what am I going to do with my hair? What am I going to do with my hair? Something being done with my hair, it’s just not what I feel, or how I think it should look. That’s deep down because clearly I can do whatever I want to do with my hair, but I always come back to certain styles or whatever. That’s for various reasons. One of which then I do feel like when I wear my hair out or my hair straight, I get certain attention that I don’t want. Sadly, that depicts how I present myself, how I feel like people are going to treat me based on that. That, I think it has a bearing on my hair, but I can’t really say that that has bearing on how I feel about my skin complexion for the reasons that I addressed already.

**Serena:** I’m 50/50. I’m on social media like clockwork. I’m one of those. Ironically, stopped watching television. I don’t watch it, I watch Netflix and things like that. I don’t watch reality shows really and stuff like that. You didn’t put that in here but I’m just saying. It is on here, television. Okay, all right. Yeah, let’s talk about
that specifically. I’m so glad. Let me start with the television. I stopped watching a lot of television because I don’t like the way black women are depicted on the reality shows. That’s a choice because these women go on the shows and black people support these shows. That’s what I don’t get, but they took that off their Sorority Show in 2 seconds. They had a show called Sorority Sisters.

Raquel: I remember.

Serena: They showed it all in one night. That’s because they rallied against it. It’s like it’s crazy to me that you all will rally against that but you all won’t rally against these, what is it? Love and Hip Hop and all that stuff?

Evie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: Yeah, I don’t watch that crap.

Raquel: I remember it was on VH1, right?

Serena: Yeah.

Raquel: It was the...

Serena: Yeah, they rallied against that. You all don’t rally against this crap because, obviously people like it, right?

Evie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: People do.

Evie: Yeah people do.

Serena: My issue with television is that there’s not, especially with black women in television, I’m talking about reality shows specifically that there isn’t, they’re not giving me anything else. You’re just giving me ratchetness. I hate to say it because, and I really hate to say this, it’s going to sound a little fucked up. I get it now, when people have negative opinions of black people because that’s what you’re giving me, because that’s how I feel about the city of Atlanta. I’ve been in Atlanta plenty of times. You see all these reality shows of Atlanta and all this ratchetness, it’s now like, “I can’t stand Atlanta no more. I don’t want to run into NeNe. I don’t want to run into Sheree.”

Evie: Or NeNe.

Serena: NeNe and the girls, Mimi and everybody else. I get it now. I’m starting to see myself act like that towards a city. I know there are probably great people in the city of Atlanta, but it’s like that’s all I see and that’s all, and I don’t want to deal
with it. That’s my issue with television, is like you’re not giving me anything else. There’s only 2 shows that I feel as somewhat decent as to what, the Olivia Pope show.

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<th>Raquel:</th>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Scandal.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>How to Get Away with Murder?</td>
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Serena: Yeah. I watch that. I watch it on Netflix so far. Other than that, it’s like are you kidding me? That’s the only depiction that we have of black women these days. All the depiction of black women, they all have attitudes. It’s so funny. I don’t run into these black women every day. It’s like I meet women like you all, all the time. My biggest issue with television and why I stopped watching the bullshit is because it’s like how the fuck did we go from women like Phylicia Rashad being lawyers, Pam and Ginawere in marketing, Regina, even though she was bougie but how did we go so far to the fucking right and around the corner to this bullshit? Growing up, we were on such a high, [inaudible 00:30:23] she was a housewife. How did we go from mothers and wives to career women on television to NeNe Leakes and Love and Hip Hop? That’s why I stopped watching television and why I don’t watch those shows.

You mean to tell me that the only way a black woman can be successful on television is if she throws a bottle? Which is crazy to me because sometimes I’ll watch the other housewives, the Beverly Hills ones. They don’t do any of that crap. They still have a following. In order for a black woman to be successful, they got to be ratchet and mm, mm, da, da, da, and all of that. It is so funny. I don’t run into these women every day in my life. That’s my issue with television. You’re not giving me anything else. You’re just giving me a whole bunch of bullshit. People love the bullshit. Somebody watching it like I don’t know who-

Raquel: Look at the ratings.

Serena: Yeah, but it’s just so weird to me that television went so far right around the corner, especially with black women and how we’re perceived. We were so at a high, I don't know how did we get so far low? That’s so crazy to me. You said social media. I’m on social media all the time. All right. I think it depends on what you get yourself towards. That’s why I’m 50/50 on that, because you can go on Instagram and go look at a whole bunch of video bartender type of chicks if that’s what you choose to do. You can also go on Instagram and go towards natural hair girls. I think it depends on your likes. I’m 50/50 on that one. It can go left really quick for both ways.

As far as skin complexion. You know what? I feel personally growing up, I never
really had issues with my skin complexion so I don’t see things the way other black people see things. I had a friend from down south, she came to New York one time. She was like, “I didn’t notice how many dark-skinned are out north.” I’m like, “That’s what you noticed in New York City?”

Raquel: How do you even think that?

Serena: Yeah. I was like that’s what you noticed in New York City?

Raquel: Why would you say something like that?

Serena: Yeah.

Evie: She’d been thinking in terms of this person is dark, this person is dark. There are a lot of dark people.

Serena: Thank you.

Evie: There are a lot of people and there are a lot of people like that.

Serena: She’s not light either.

Raquel: I’m like what?

Serena: I was like, “Really? That’s what you think?” I’m like, “You don’t see the tall buildings? You don’t see the birds? You don’t see the rats?”

Evie: Nothing.

Serena: That was your first thought when you got here? I thought that was so weird.

Evie: Oh my God.

Serena: Obviously that’s where her mind is at, right?

Evie: Yeah.

Serena: I’ve never had those kind of issues or even dating guys. There have been guys that I know that, “I only fuck with light-skinned girls.” I’m one of those people like I always brush it off like whatever, you don’t like me, cool.

Raquel: Yeah, that’s your preference.

Serena: I think for some people, they have a lot of issues with skin color in the media and things like that, but I don’t think that way personally. That’s not on my radar. If I’m thinking about media and black women in media as far as skin colors, I would
say that it’s evenly balanced. I don't know. I’m thinking, because there are so many pretty dark-skinned girls and there’s so many pretty light-skinned girls. I don't know. There’s Gabriel Union, there’s Sanaa Lathan. I’m trying to think of light-skinned people, Beyoncé. You know?

Evie: Yes.

Serena: You know, I will say to be devil’s advocate, I think Beyoncé, this is what I don’t like about media and black women. Someone like Beyoncé’s complexion or her attributes, people are probably more acceptance of because she does look more white. Then I also feel like before this whole formation thing, she’s done things and certain other celebrities, black women in media, they do things to make themselves more appealing to white culture. They don’t say anything. They collect their check and think that I’m supposed to fall behind the thing that I didn’t realize the BS that just went on behind this. Obviously, there’s some lighting. I’m not going to blame the celebrities themselves but they don’t speak up on it. I had an issue with that. I’m talking about Beyoncé specifically. I’m just going to use her as an example. She had a campaign for Revlon or something like that.

Raquel: Yes.

Serena: Where she looked really, really light. It’s like you didn’t say anything about that. You already have such a platform, which you could have said something and she didn’t say anything. You just collected that check and kept it moving. First of all, its 2016, I guess she’s got formation and she’s trying to be about this like, I don't know, I guess I’m saying that very loosely. Then it was Rihanna. She did a cover for a magazine. I don't know if you all knew about it, in Switzerland or something like that. They put like a nigga bitch or something like that. She went off. It was something really crazy. They all tried to defend what they were saying. The editor that wrote it, but Rihanna really pissed about it. You know what I’m saying?

Raquel: Yeah, of course.

Serena: I guess my point is I feel like some women in media are probably more proud to be black. That’s no shade to Beyoncé or anybody. I’m just saying this in general, are probably more proud to be black and want it to be known that they’re black and have no issues with saying that. They won’t do anything for a check. There are others, they’re going to try to make themselves more appealing to white culture and fit in, and collect the check, and think that we’re all supposed to be cool with that. As a black person, I could see between the lines personally. I don't know if we want to go that deep into that, but, because you all have an issue with that. Ironically, I’m going to throw another culture in here. I was talking to a friend today about why I don’t like the Kardashians, right?

Evie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Serena: He was like, “Why don’t you like them?” I was like, “I’m surprised that all these black women love them.” He was like, “What’s the issue?” I was like, “My issue is that they do everything in black culture. They get butt injections, wear braids, pump up their lips, think black, they do all these things that attribute to black culture but they want nothing to do with black women. That’s my biggest issue with them. I don’t care how you make your money. If people are stupid enough to give you money for your emojis and stuff, cool. You are building your stance on a platform of black women making money off of us.

What they’re pretty much telling you is that I can do you better than you can. I can’t believe when I go on YouTube all of these black women that support them. It’s like, “You all don’t see the bullshit?” I have an issue with that. They’re not the only ones. Amber Rose does it. She’s said some stuff that I don’t like. What’s that other girl’s name? Was it Rosario Dawson? No, Zoe Saldana. She said something crazy one time. I don’t support that.

Then that’s another issue that I have. You have these women that might be mixed, again, they might be mixed or whatever the case may be, and you make a whole living off of black culture, and black women, and black media but then you don’t want to be black? Then you got something to say? Like on the side, in your little interview and things like that. What are we talking about? I read into these things. I don't know if other black women in media read into these things the way I do. Those are people that I don’t support. I think as a culture, I think black people let a lot of shit slide with these celebrities too. Even, what was that guy named? Tiger Woods?

Raquel: Tiger Woods.

Serena: Why is he still? We need to have a draft off. You all can give him up. He dated all these beautiful white women and you all still-

Evie: Do a trade-off.

Serena: Yeah, go do a trade-off or something. I don’t like the fact when people build their whole career off of black women and black culture but then do not support us. I have a huge issue with that. I’m going to shut up now.

Evie: I want to respond to a couple of things you said. I don’t feel like, like Beyoncé. I don’t know her. I don’t know her life. I don’t feel like she’s consciously or purposely trying to appeal to a white audience. All her family is from the south. Appearing white, that’s just what you do. I don’t think that she was like, she thought, first of all, that whole lightening thing, I was like Beyoncé is light-skinned. Sometimes she’s darker than you are in others. She might have gone on vacation. That was dumb to me. It’s not like Viola Davis, not to say, not like-
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<th>Serena:</th>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>It wasn’t going to Beyoncé complexion. It was like really, that was crazy to me. That it was a whole big thing. I don't think that she and other people are consciously trying to appear more white. I think what it is, is that it’s a broken system. In most of our heads, unconsciously or consciously white is better, blonde hair is better, light eyes are better, thin noses are better, not thin lips, big lips are in now. I think that.</td>
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<td>The thing you said about media, how did we go from Phylicia Rashad to ratchet? I really feel like we had Phylicia Rashad, we had Aunt Viv, and then there was like a span of years where there was nothing. I think when these reality shows started coming out, we were so hungry to see ourselves that we latched on to it.</td>
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<td>Honestly, I felt like it’s addictive. I don’t have a TV so I don’t see any of it, but I remember I was in a hotel, I was somewhere. I was in a hotel. I cannot turn off the TV. I was watching Love and Hip Hop and said, “Why can’t I turn off the TV off?” I think sometimes you’re so hungry to see yourself or see a representation of, at least a part of you even though it’s not the whole, what you are. They got brown skin like me or they got hair like me or whatever that you neglect whatever the effects of watching it are, or you neglect how negative it is, and how it doesn’t agree with anything else about you but it was just like they look like me.</td>
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<td>I don’t like watching Love and Hip Hop but that’s the only thing on TV with brown people on it. Honestly, I don't know that I identify with a lot of things that I see on TV. A co-worker, he’s Asian. I don't know where they fall in this spectrum. He’s like, “You don’t watch Friends?” I was like, “No.” I didn’t really feel like going into that. I don’t know if it’s consciously because it’s a show with a whole bunch of white people. I just never have turned on Friends and be like this is something I want to watch. I couldn’t agree with it. I couldn’t really say anything that’s going on here, like never. Yeah, there was something else but I can’t remember now.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>I agree with both of your points especially in terms of the Kardashians and the culture, because what I do, I’m like you, I pay attention to everything. If I’m watching the Kardashians, I’ll see that Kourtney doesn’t have any black friends. Or like I’ll see Kim but Kim doesn’t have any black friends but she’s around, I just see a lot of things where people are being used. I definitely get from your point where, everything you said. I watch Friends. I watch Will &amp; Grace.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>I like Will &amp; Grace. I do. I do Will &amp; Grace. With Friends, I just never …</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>No, you’re not the only person because I remember one of my besties said that her friends never watched Friends or Will &amp; Grace. She was like, “No, I’ve never.” She’s like, “You never watched it?” She’s like, “Hello, I’m black. No.”</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>But it’s not even about being Black, it’s just, I could not relate to anything in Friends.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>That’s what she said. She couldn’t relate.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>Will &amp; Grace, I enjoyed because it was funny. I have a gay friend or 2. That sounds terrible, but like I had people in my life who emotes that way and who interact that way. I do Will &amp; Grace but Friends, and maybe I’ve never sat down long enough to watch enough shows but it never grabbed me. I was like this is..</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>I think a lot of people like all of us, I think it’s because we don’t see ourselves in Friends. Then later on when Friends started getting off the air, they put in Gabriel Union because people were like what, a little bit.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>Really?</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Yeah for briefly. Yeah, she came on. She was Ross’, and she was yes.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah, she was dating one of them.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>Shut up.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Yes. She came in for a little bit because everybody, first of all, it was in New York. Hello? We’re everywhere. There’s multicolor so I don’t understand. It was just a team of people, no black woman, no black, nothing. People were making noise about it so they had Gabriel Union come in for like 6 episodes and be a love interest for a bit.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>I think overall though, and I get what you’re saying. You’re right. It does come to lighting and things like that. My biggest issue was people in media, black, white, whatever, using black culture as a step up and as a crutch but had nothing to do with black culture.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>What did Paul Mooney say? I don't want to say the N word. It sounds like everybody wants to be a...</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Yeah, it’s true, it’s true (inaudible).</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Where is Paul Mooney when you need him? You’re absolutely right on that one.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>It’s true.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>It’s true. I have a huge issue with that.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Me too.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>You use us and do what you want to do with our culture but they have issues with us specifically. You don’t like me wearing purple but you can wear purple, right?</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Yes, or like lately it’s been all over the media like Cosmo or Teen Vogue or all these whichever, whatever white mainstream media magazine. Now, Kim has been wearing braids. Now, it’s the big, now it’s called boxer braids. Black Twitter went in. Let me tell you, that’s who I.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>You be on Black Twitter.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Yeah. They go in. They were like, you know them. They were, and like no, this is our style. We’ve been doing this style since we were kids.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>You’ve been here.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>That’s my problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>That’s my problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>That’s my problem. Now it’s acceptable because Kim wears it and it’s acceptable because it’s, now it’s called boxer braids, B-O-X-E-R. I’m like no. Its damn braids that we had in our hair when we have the little picture, we were doing it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah. It’s again using what I do against me.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>Right.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evie:</td>
<td>You can do it and do it well, and it’s celebrated.</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah. I have a huge issue with that. Then I don’t know. I feel like they have a platform and black people follow them too. I feel like maybe in this room maybe we’re more conscious about these things. There’s something out there for everybody. Again, I don’t watch Love &amp; Hip Hop and all that stuff. Granted, I think I do dive too deep into things. I’ve been told that before. A psychology major. Maybe that is what my issue is. I just don’t feel like there’s enough of a platform for people like me. I feel like there’s so much ratchetness and it’s so much for me to follow every other non-black person out there that use what they used against me but there’s nothing for me to be celebrated as a black person.</td>
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myself. What was that movie that Will Smith and them funded?

Raquel: The Annie movie?

Serena: That was really cute. You know what I’m saying? A little black girl could look in a movie theater and be like, “She’s cute. She’s like me. She likes to sing songs, da, da, da.” All right, fast forward to the women in our age group, I can’t really identify with any of the women that I see in media. As for this getting called in here like yeah, I get it and I love that Viola Davis wears natural hair. Oh my gosh Lupita. They’re different. Now it’s starting to be celebrated. Now I’m starting to see myself like okay, these are women. They’re educated. Okay, they’re dark-skinned, or they’re natural, or whatever the case may be. I was like, “Okay, I can identify with them but they’re still far and few as opposed to the NeNe Leakes of the world. I don’t know the other girls’ names. You know what I’m saying?

Raquel: Yeah.

Serena: I just feel like we’re such a minority. It’s unfortunate especially in this country, it’s celebrated to be stupid too.

Raquel: Don’t try me.

Serena: It’s like I’m fighting a losing battle out here.

Raquel: It’s like Donald Trump. They’re celebrating Donald Trump, yeah.

Serena: Yeah, I don't know. Will the scale ever be tipped again, where we can actually have a job on television and not be a crackhead and things like that? I don't know. I hope so but I don’t know because I just feel like we went so far on that corner.

Raquel: I agree with you, because in terms of like when they say the Oscars are so white. Do you notice that we only get awards when it’s something like again so crackhead? Like Halle Berry, Monster Ball. Oh my gosh, that movie was insane. How her character was in Monster Ball, or Denzel Washington in Training Day. You’ve noticed, it’s like a pattern of or the first, I’ve heard the first black woman that won an Oscar, she won it for being a maid. There’s like these things. It’s like subservient what they deem us to look like is what we’re awarded for. When we’re intelligent, and such as Will Smith the, what is it, Concussion? Wasn’t nominated, but it’s a brilliant movie. It wasn’t nominated. You know what I mean?

Serena: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evie: These are the type of things that we get celebrated when we’re in demeaning roles. That’s what it looks like, yeah.
Serena: Just to piggyback off what you said Raquel. I agree with you 120%. I just feel like, but again, I don't know, to a certain degree I feel like it’s our fault that we allow this shit to happen because again, I don't deal with chicks that’s like NeNe and stuff like that. I wish I could think of one of the other names, I can't. You know NeNe.

Raquel: Sheree, she’s the loud one.

Serena: Sheree. I don’t know these women. I don’t know these women in my family. Yes, it’s in us, black women I get that. Do I deal with women like that every day? No, I don't. Again, I blame us because you’re right, I don't know, how is it that NeNe Leakes is so popular but Keisha Knight Pulliam isn’t? She is an educated black woman. She is beautiful. She is now married. You all got me looking at NeNe every week, are you kidding me? Why do we allow this to happen?

Raquel: I agree.

Serena: If you go on Instagram, NeNe’s probably got like 2 million, I follow Rudy Huxtable. I love her.

Evie: Me too.

Serena: She’s probably got like 300,000. That’s so crazy to me. Why isn’t Serena Williams as population as opposed to all these other chicks out here that these bartenders on Instagram. You know what I’m saying?

Evie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: She is such an amazing tennis player. I don't know. To a certain degree, I do blame us because we allow it to happen. We should be celebrating these women more so. Again, I don’t feel like there’s a platform enough for them to be celebrated. I feel like again, we went so far in that corner. Everybody just wants to turn up every damn week. That’s all it is.

Evie: You can’t even go to the grocery store, why?

Serena: Yes. Why?

Evie: Here’s the thing. I feel like, what you said, I think that there is the power of the celebrity. I feel like they promote a certain, I can’t think of the word, but a certain appearance, or a certain way of being over others. I feel like because they do that, it’s what people are hungry. That’s what people keep feeding for because they don’t see something else. I feel like the benefit of the society in the times we live in is like you don’t have to be on a station. YouTube, there’s Instagram. Anybody deserves an Instagram page. Celebrate yourself.
That’s what part of my issue with a lot of these things where it’s like people are upset because we’re not getting Oscars. That wasn’t built for us. Start your own. Start up, I’m not saying that you don’t want to be recognized but why do you care what they think about you? Why do you care? Why do you want them to approve of you and to pat you on the back? Who cares? That’s not who I’m trying to appeal to anyway.

I just feel like I have always been like a background person but I feel like I’ve been, as I’ve gotten older, I’ve come up to the front and just like I have something to say and I know that it’s not what everybody else is saying. I want to direct and make movies and TV shows, and things that showcase a spectrum of people. Not just colored wives but just stories and background because it’s not the norm, because I feel like again, with the passage that Issa Rae had in her book, when people don’t see representation of themselves, it makes them think something is wrong with them. I feel like everybody deserves to be represented. Even when you were saying Lupita and Viola Davis, it reminded me of inaudible name You know?

Raquel: No.

Serena: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Evie: He was saying that he has to stay in shape. He’s like, “I can’t be this dark and be fat.” I was just like, I think that Viola Davis and Lupita, if they were overweight, they would not be famous. Jill Scott, she could not be who she is and be a dark-skinned woman. It’s just the society that we live in. Sadly. People applaud, she’s beautiful. She couldn’t be a dark-skinned woman and be where she is and be famous and all these things if she was dark-skinned, because society doesn’t allow for that. Who’s that? This girl I know. She was just like, “You got to pick your struggle.” She was like, “I’m not going to date a… I won’t date a dude that’s dark-skinned and fat.” I’m like, “Why is that a struggle?”

Raquel: You got to pick a struggle.

Evie: In relation to that, this guy on Instagram, not on Instagram, on Facebook posted this picture. He was like, “Black women, we got to start like building up our black women and telling them you have a big stomach but that’s okay.” He was naming all these things that were I guess things that were bad things but that you should celebrate your woman.

One of them was dark-skinned. I just wrote him a little note. I was like, “I appreciate your message. I really appreciate how people are receiving your message, and how you’re affirming people, and you putting out this message.” I was like, “Why was dark-skinned included on your list of imperfections? That’s not imperfection.” Of course he didn’t respond. I just was like, “I’m not trying to start anything. This is why I put you a message and didn’t write it under the
picture but I just wanted to give you food for thought.” That’s not an imperfection. A stomach, we feel different ways about our stomach but dark-skinned, that’s nothing. You can’t have nothing to do with that. You have no control over that. Back to what you were saying about bleaching creams, I had never seen bleaching cream in my life until I came to New York.

Serena: Really?

Evie: It blows my mind that it’s on a corner, on every corner in every store. There’s not one kind. There are several kinds of bleaching cream to choose from. I’m just like, “Yo, this is 2016.” Even to the point where, I shop online for hair and stuff, and wigs, or whatever. I refuse to buy from this website, that’s all bleaching cream. I can’t. I won’t. Knowing that it’s probably not black people that run the site, but still, just yeah.

Researcher: I’m going to take that and transition for a bit to ask the next question. What messages did you receive about your skin color and hair growing up? From whom and what was said?

Serena: Again, I feel like I always got positive images from my family. I wasn’t allowed to have a white doll. My mother was very firm about that. People would try to give, you know?

Raquel: Yeah, yeah.

Serena: People would try to just give me a Christmas gift, she was like, “You need to take that back.” Growing up, I was like, “Why is she tripping like this?” Now that I’m older, I get it now. My mother, and she says this to me. She said it to me when I was younger. She always wanted me to have a positive image of myself. I think it is important especially as young black girls, and black women, and raising black women to give them a positive image of themselves and have things that make them look like themselves. I know what was it? GoFundMe, there’s this girl. She has a doll that she’s trying to fund, like curly-haired doll. You see this?

Raquel: Yeah.

Serena: It’s so cute. I think it’s like $80. I just want to buy one myself. She made the doll because she said her daughter said that she didn’t feel like she’d seen any doll that looked like her. That’s why she’s starting this line. Personally, it’s just a personal thing. I always was told by my parents and by my family that I’m very pretty and I have a pretty complexion, not to feel anyway about it. Again, I feel like growing up north, I don’t feel like I really had any complex issues and things like that. Again, like we said, there’s down south, maybe I would have had a different bearing on it. When I go over to my family down south, it is, growing up it wasn’t like that. Some people would be like, “That’s your mother?” I’m like, “Yeah.” They’re like, “That’s your daughter?” People don’t get it.
Again, I was raised up here. I grew up in a black community. My family is African. In Africa, we’re all pretty much dark. I’m probably on the lighter side of Ghanaian people. I think again, being African is a little different because and I always say this, even culture wise, in Africa and even in the West Indies, they’ve had presidents, African black presidents their whole lives. All the streets have my name. There’s a Seytre bank. You know what I’m saying?

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<th>Raquel:</th>
<th>Mm-hmm (affirmative).</th>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>It’s a little different, my aspect on things like that. I feel like I’m giving a biased answer. I don’t think that my answer is fair, because I’ve had such positive images, personally. I think in the West Indies and Africa, people already been had houses and stuff like that. My family in Africa, we had the same family ground for at least 400 years.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>Wow.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah exactly. I think it’s different here. The mentality is different here. I feel like my mentality is a little biased because I already had that strong-rooted opinion of myself, and my family, and the way I look at myself. You know what I’m saying? I think I’m a little biased on that. I feel positive about myself, being black, being a woman, I love it. I love you all black women to, we’re going to ride it out till the day we die. I’m very proud of us, very, very proud of us. I’m proud of black American women, all black women. I’m very proud of us as a group. I can’t think of anything negative right now to say.</td>
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<td>Researcher:</td>
<td>It’s okay. The idea of like what your experience was like.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah. That was pretty much my experience.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>What you were saying was interesting to me. I feel this way about, so you’re Ghanaian?</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Mm-hmm (affirmative).</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>I feel like a lot of the issues that we have as brown people in this country have to do with, I feel like we have some delayed PTSD from slavery.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>All of us. Honestly, I feel like a lot of the things that I’ve been able to do in my life and accomplish, are because of my one quarter Bajan part of me. I feel like the, and it’s not because we don’t want to. I feel like to an extent, we cannot. We are so, just to get up out the bed sometimes, what has been done to us and what we continue to do to ourselves based on what has been done to us. It just …</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>It still affects us.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>It’s so pervasive. It’s just like it’s yeah. Back to the question, I don’t feel like I received any messages about my skin color growing up. The thing is I realize now that maybe I just was like, I just wasn’t open to be more receptive. I was chunky growing up. I told this to my mother who said the same thing. I said, “Mom,” I said, “I don’t think that I ever internalized people being mean to me or treating me a certain way when I was younger because of my race or the way I look. I thought always that I was special.” She was like, “You know, I think the same thing.” She was chunky growing up.</td>
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<td>Just the fact that, a lot of times, the way you perceive is what it is like maybe people weren’t treating me a certain way because of my complexion but I just thought it was because I was fat. I guess I don’t really know at this point. I’m grown. I can’t go back and look at certain instances and be like, “Because of my skin color.”</td>
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<td>Definitely hair was the issue. I had a lot of hair growing up. It was thick. I remember going to get my first perm. I remember, because I begged my mother for the perm, because I just had so much hair. It was like really a lot. I was tender headed so I thought of it as a way to lessen the issues when I went to the hairdresser. My mother couldn’t do our hair so we’ve been going to hairdressers since we were like 2. I guess I thought of it, but I remember the day that, I wore cornrows up until the point that I got a perm, because I remember the day before. The day before I got my hair done, my mother always had to take my hair out and play with my hair. Always loved hair, I used to do my hair when I was younger but only until I went to the hairdresser.</td>
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<td>I remember the day before, I took my hair out. I remember I’d like to slick my hair to 2 little buns. I just loved my buns. I remember being on the fifth grade and these boys behind me saying, “Look at her hair. She needs to do something to her hair. She needs to get a perm.” Just the way I felt, if I thought I was doing, you can’t tell me my little wavy buns weren’t doing it. Just that, internalizing that and just being like, on the one hand thinking that it was stupid, but then on the other hand feeling somewhere on the other side like they had a point.</td>
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<td>Then going to the hairdresser after school and this lady being like, “Your hair is so thick and pretty.” Saying that to me and the hairdresser was like, “Yeah, I’m about to take care of that right now.” The way she said it was so upsetting to me. There was a serious tone in her voice. The way she said it. I just was like, I guess now looking back, I was like yo, I should have ran out of there. At the time, it went over my head.</td>
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<td>Then realizing like I wouldn’t have to add, I got my first perm when I was 10. I went natural when I was like 14 or 15. The reason why I went natural was</td>
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because my hair was like paper thin. It’s because I had never did a perm in the first place. They were looking at thickness and volume like it was something that needed to be tamed. It was like, “No, I just need somebody who’s going to take care of my hair.” I didn’t need a perm. I don’t think anybody needs a perm. Some people, perms are better for their lifestyles or with the issues. I don't think anybody needs a perm. Hair definitely was an issue growing up, but I think more of it was because of people just not understanding.

Researcher: That’s good. Would you like to go?

Raquel: The question is what message did you get about skin color? It’s 3 of us. It was myself, and my sister, and my brother. My Mom perms my hair. She said, from what I heard the messages were my hair was not as good as my sister’s hair. My Mom was relaxing it. She relaxed it whereas my sister, she had thick, long, curly natural hair, but my Mom relaxed it. What happened is when she was like 15, she decided she wanted to make a change and do her own thing. What happened in terms of skin color message, I’m going off the tangent. I don’t necessarily, I didn’t have a problem with my skin tone. I didn’t. You have to ask my sister or my brother what they are. I didn’t have a problem. My sister would say I was treated differently.

Evie: Because your sister is darker than you?

Raquel: My sister is darker than me. She was treated differently than I was. I do know, it’s like you notice but then you’re like no, we’re all the same. I didn’t look at it like that. I didn’t look at it like my sister is dark-skinned, I’m light-skinned, that’s my sister. On my mother’s side, there was, which was very, all of them were very fair-skinned and mixed up. They were looking at my sister. There would be sly remarks. It was something about like oh, like something about my father, because my father is dark-skinned. They’ll say just comments like that. I did see messages growing up. I know it impacted my sister.

In terms of hair, my Mom relaxed it. I never wanted to do natural because of what my Mom told me. You never, if you have your hair natural, your Mom is telling you, that’s what you grow up with. “Your hair is not good so you got to relax it.” All I knew was relaxing, up until I was like maybe 23 is when I decided, because I saw my sister and I decided to go natural. Because your Mom and they tell you things like, “Your hair is not like that girl’s hair.” It’s in your brain. You’re like, “I’m never going to do that. I need to relax my hair. Let me wear weaves.” I used to wear weaves. I used to cut my hair and relax it. I never had my hair natural until I was in my 20s. It depends, yeah.

Evie: What you were saying was interesting to me, is how you were the lighter one so you didn’t know. I think you don’t know what people were saying to your sister.

Raquel: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
I think the person who is the less accepted one is the one who’s going to get these messages. It probably just goes over everybody else’s head. My mother was saying how her mother who was light would tell her, “You just need to put yourself out there. That’s when, you need to go on dates or whatever.” She was like, she would tell her mother that, “The boys only liked the light-skinned girls and the white girls.” Her mother would be like, “No, that’s not true. It’s just that you don’t out yourself out there.” She’s like her mother didn’t get it because she was light-skinned. You’re not going to, necessarily, more often than not, you’re not going to get it if you’re not there, unless you just started this extremely compassionate, and empathetic, and can see things and observe it.

I feel like I see things because I observe. I think I’m like, I usually I’m a fly on the wall. People don’t even notice me I feel like sometimes. I appreciate that and stuff. It’s just funny to me because sometimes we will, people look at me but they don’t see me. Then later, they’re like, “You’re really pretty.” I’m like, “Thanks.” They didn’t see it. They didn’t see it before. They were just talking to me. Then they were just oh now I see.

I think unless you are that you’re not going to see it. It’s interesting that your sister, because your sister got all the messages. She got the message that people referred to you because you were lighter. She got the message that people were better than her because you are lighter, and that she wasn’t as good because she was darker, because people said crazy stuff to her, I’m sure. That’s why it’s a bit over your head. You don’t see that as being part of your experience but your sister sure enough that’s part of her …

Her experience, yeah.

Just to piggyback off what you’re all saying about the hair, I grew up too, I’m not even trying to be funny but my Mom’s side, they really are Native American. You look at them, you’d be like what are you all? I’m actually doing like, trying to find out our historical background with them. Growing up, I’ve always had like long thick hair. My hair would break combs. I probably didn’t get my first perm till right before high school again. I was cool with it. I liked it. I think growing up, especially in our age group, I think in the ‘50s and ‘60s, that’s when it was cool to be natural and stuff like that. For a while, it was all about just for me perms and things like that, or straightening your hair, or whatever the case may be. I just feel like being natural just started coming back maybe about 10 years ago or something like that. You know?

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

I don’t have any issues with that because that’s all our mothers knew and that’s what they taught because that’s what they were taught. Perm your hair. You got to do something with it. I get what you’re saying. I think now, more parents are
more like, “No, we’re not going to perm little girls hair.” Thank God for YouTube, right?

Evie: Right.

Serena: You can learn everything on hair.

Evie: Go on there and there’s everything.

Raquel: Then they know what it was like for them. They know what their experience was like and so they’re not going to do that to their children.

Serena: Yeah. I’m going to just give our mothers a pass, because.

Raquel: That’s what I’m saying yes.

Evie: They were working...

Raquel: They were working with what they had.

Serena: I don’t even blame my mother for giving me a perm because my hair does break combs. I always feel like my hair always grew fast, and was long and thick. She was like, “I can’t do this anymore.” I was like, “All right. It’s cool.” I get that. I get that aspect. Again, my Mom’s side of the family, because they look more Native American and things like that, my hair was always really, really, thick and coarse. Her family, a majority of them had like, what is it? 3C, D, or whatever.

Raquel: 3C yeah, 3A, 3B, 3A.

Serena: I don't know what but something like that. It was easier for them. Because if you saw my Mom growing up a lot, people go up to her speaking Spanish. She’s like that.

Raquel: She has that look?

Serena: That look, yeah, especially when she curls it, they’d be like Juanita, da, da, da, and she’s like, “No, I’m not Hispanic.” That’s how they looked, and that’s how their hair was. Again, my hair was more coarse so we just dealt with it. She could braid my hair. I always had my hair braided up a lot. I just noticed like back in the day, it was like a whole bunch of commercials for curls. You barely can see them these days...castor oil. I don’t blame her.

Raquel: No.

Serena: A lot of people had hair like yours and my Mom’s.
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<th>Raquel:</th>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>My hair was breaking combs.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>It’s interesting that you say that though because when you were saying that I was like I just remembered. I just remembered, I probably do this a lot now. When I was younger, I loved having a lot of hair but because I knew that people would say stuff to me about my hair and then my sister would feel a way. She was mad because I had a lot of hair and she didn’t. People would always comment on us looking different. I would not celebrate and feel good about my hair around my sister. I remember I waited until she was in the living room or something. I would close the door and then I would let my hair . Just do all this. I just remember we feel like it was a to lift away that bit because it was an issue for other people. For my sister, not other people, but for my sister because I knew, people said stuff to her.</td>
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<td>I remember one time we were in a hair salon. This is the only one I remember but I’m sure it happened a lot. My Dad has even talked about it to me as an older person. Clearly as a kid, he wasn’t talking to me about it, about how people would say crazy stuff about how we look different. Even now people say crazy stuff about how we look different. It was to the point where at Christmas time, this year, I had to say to my sister, “You don’t have to tell people we look different. That we look different but we’re really sisters.” You don’t have to say that. It’s like she wanted to say it before somebody else could. I was like it bothered me because it makes me feel a way like, I don't know. This was a whole family conversation. My mother was in the room. I know she wanted to say something.</td>
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<td>Back to what we were saying though. We were in the hair salon, this little boy was like, “Why don’t you have long hair like your sister?” It’s such a simple comment but I know that that started that whole thing with her. To the point where she has really short hair now. She cuts it. I don't know if it’s because she just doesn’t care, and it’s like a rebellion thing where she doesn’t, she’s like I don’t subscribe to that. I’m just going to do what I’m going to do, or I don't know. I definitely think like this thing with families, even though it’s not something that my parents did, people on the outside can, what they say and do can infiltrate it and it be an issue. I feel like that’s the issue between us. That’s not even anything that went on in our household or in our circle, but because it’s like in line with outside messages, it can take root and be an issue.</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>It sure can because like again, on my Mom’s side, a majority of them are fairly light, as Africans. You see all these light-skinned girls and then you see me. It’s like, “Hey.” Again, I don’t have any issues with it but from the outside people would be looking at us like where does she fall in? You know what I’m saying?</td>
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<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Mm-hmm (affirmative).</td>
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Serena: Again, I was always building towards, you are right, love yourself, whatever. I don’t have any issues. It’s true it’s like people from the outside trying to tear you more than the people from your family. It’s like wow.

Evie: It irritates me so bad when people, I’d be like, “She looks just like my mother.” Like, “No, they don’t.” It will only be because of their complexion. They’ve got the same face but one is dark and one is light. People are like. I’m like, “Look at their features. They have the same face.” Just because of the complexion, people can’t see past that. That bothers me.

Raquel: Me too.

Evie: I know so many people who look so much like their family but because they’re a different complexion, people are like, “I don’t see it. Are you sure you’re whatever?” I’m like, “That’s okay.”

Raquel: Just like me. Your story relates to me and my sister. Same thing. Outside influences and you start to feel bad because your sister is hearing these messages. She’s the youngest. I’m supposed to protect her. When you’re yeah, and you’re hearing this. You don’t know what to say. Your heart breaks. It’s like, yes, it’s outside messages. It was a lot, because I think it has impacted, because you get a lot of people like, it will be my sister and I walking, “You guys are sisters? You don’t look alike.”

Evie: Exactly. I’m like it happens (inaudible). These aren’t children, these are grown people who say this stuff.

Serena: Yeah, it wasn’t children.

Raquel: You’re grown people, like come on.

Serena: On my Dad’s side, I’m the oldest girl. I was talking about her beloved siblings, right?

Raquel: Yes. She was telling me.

Serena: I’m the oldest girl. Some of us, you put us all in a line, it’s like 5 girls, right?

Raquel: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: Some of us, one is about your complexion, maybe 2 or more are my complexion and then like the other one, she’s really, really dark. She does not look like us. It’s true like, people from outside are like, “You all are sisters? Are you sure?” I can’t believe a dude said that to my sister. He was like, “You don’t look like any of them.” I had to cuss him out. I shouldn’t have done that in Ghana because really you’re supposed to respect your elders but I could tell she felt so bad about it.
You know what I’m saying?

Raquel: Yeah.

Evie: They need to be told.

Raquel: They need to be.

Serena: Yeah. I don’t know about it in Ghana, you know. I couldn’t believe that he said that, because I’m the oldest and she’s the second oldest. I’m not going to lie, she does not look like us. She doesn’t. He was like, “She doesn’t look like her. Are you sure that’s your mother and da, da, da?” I was so mad at him for that. I was like, “You’re grown. Why are you talking to her like that?” You should not be talking to children like that.” He was like, that’s my, Mom was like, “You shouldn’t talk to him like that.” I’m like, “He’s out of line. You should not talk to children like that. You look like you’re about 40 something years old.”

Evie: You should know better.

Serena: This was when we were in high school. I was like, “She’s a teenager. You should know how to write your sentences to go better when you’re speaking directly to people.” I got sent to the corner for that, but still. I get it. Why are you trying to say? What are you trying to say or do, or start something between me and my sibling?

Evie: What’s the point of even saying you all look different?

Serena: Exactly. Unless you’re trying to start something.

Evie: You’re questioning paternity. Before you could even say something, be like, we have the same hair. We both are black but we just look different. We both are black. All this, I don’t even understand why people are concerned. Why do you care?

Serena: That was my thing. Why are you saying this stuff to her? I could tell she felt so bad. She put her head down.

Raquel: I hate that.

Serena: Yeah, because I do have a sister, me and her look very similar. We look almost like twins but she doesn’t. She doesn’t look like us. I was like argh. I told her, “Don’t even worry about that.” That’s always been my personality. Don’t even worry about what other people are saying. Keep it moving. Not everybody is going to love you. You’re not for everybody. That’s all you can do because some people are going to get it and some people are not. That’s why I feel like I try to be positive about the skin color and hair, and things like that, because obviously,
I'm not everybody. What I do is not for everybody, natural hair, dark skin, light skin, whatever. Bleach blonde like Beyoncé is not for everybody.

Raquel: It’s true.

Serena: You got to ground yourself. I’m so happy for my family for always giving me positive images. That way now that I’m older, it’s like I’m okay with who I am. It doesn’t matter. You might have a problem with me, a guy might say he doesn’t like dark-skinned girls, or whatever but I’m cool with it because you are not for me then. I have a positive reflection of myself and what I see, so I’m good. That’s very important. It’s so important to teach young black girls that, especially young black girls that because they don’t have it.

Evie: I think what you just said it made me think of something about how people even with the light skin, dark skin thing, curly hair, straight hair thing, it’s all about boxes. I want to put you in a box so I know how to treat you, whatever. It’s just like, that’s problematic to me because this guy approached me one time and he was like, “Do you know why I think you’re beautiful? Because you don’t have no weave or make-up on.” I was like, “Not today. I used to different things with my hair. I like to wear a nice lip sometimes. Not today but why is that a part of your attraction to me?”

I don’t like putting myself in a box. I really, any opportunity that I have, I just and myself because I feel like I check a lot of boxes. I really want people to feel comfortable enough to not put themselves in a box, because it’s not just other people putting us in boxes. We put ourselves in a box because it makes us feel more comfortable. We define ourselves by our jobs or by different things because it’s easier than just being like I don’t know who I am, or I’m this and it doesn’t fit anywhere. I’m just me. Yeah, I feel like it comes back to just feeling like you need to live in this world. You need to put yourself in a box, and I just feel like you don’t.

Researcher: No, absolutely. I’m going to fast forward a little bit because we have 14 minutes left. Hopefully, they’ll forget about us and they won’t come down here. Actually, question number 7. We’ll skip 6. When are you most satisfied with your hair? Are you satisfied with your hair currently?

Serena: I’m satisfied with my hair currently. When am I most satisfied with it?

Researcher: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Serena: I don't know because I like to change it up. When I did shave my hair, it was on a whim. I don't know. I was mad that day. Can you cut your hair off? Then fast forward 2 months later, I straightened it. I’m straightening it all the time. Then 2 months after that, I’m wearing it curly. I don't know. I just like changing anyways. As long as I like the change, I’m okay I guess. That’s just my
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you’d like to speak about?

Serena: I do because Evie, you brought it up, It’s ironic I can’t believe you knew the person, she brought up Issa Rae, I love her. When you’re talking about different representation of black women as opposed to what’s on there, she’s showing you to put on, what was it?

Evie: The Misadventures of?

Serena: An awkward Black girl. I miss that show; I’m about to watch it tonight. It’s so funny. I wish it would have went on ABC or whatever. I know she was in [inaudible 01:26:44] with that.

Raquel: It was supposed to be on HBO.

Serena: Yeah?

Evie: It was like the office. I feel like I had just, when I saw that show; I think it really just expanded my ideas of like what we could do. What was possible, just like-

Serena: That was me.

Raquel: Yeah exactly, that’s me.

Evie: Exactly, I showed it to some of my coworkers at work., like the videos I thought it was funny. It was like Hispanic dude and a mixed dude. They were just like that’s you.

Raquel: Yeah.

Evie: Just like you’re showing this (inaudible).

Serena: No, no, no, you’re fun because I thought like dang she do about that show because me and my best friend used to watch it like every day. That’s a representation of me and I wish that there was more stuff like that. I also agree with what you were saying. I didn’t care about the Oscars, I just think we have way more issues to think about Oscar. I was telling everybody that too. “Instead of worrying about the Oscars, let’s just build a platform of our own.”

Raquel and Evie: Yes, finally.

Serena: Yeah. That’s what it boils down to. I get people saying if you want to expand your base to other cultures, I get that, but I don’t feel like one black culture, we don’t have enough money. First of all, we don’t have enough money to counter that. Like you said, we don’t even have anything, we don’t have award shows to
counter either with enough quality movies and things like that. When you say Issa Rae, I’m like that was a perfect show. That show was perfect. It was a representation of a different type of black person. That was a great show. If we were to expand on things like that more so, I think we’ll do much better. People are so worried about Oscars. I didn’t care about it. Honestly, I saw it, what was it? I saw that on Leonardo DiCaprio movie. There’s nothing better than that movie. It was Descendant?

Raquel: It was Descendant, yeah (inaudiable).

Serena: Absolutely. I’m sorry. There’s nothing better than that. I’m sorry, I don’t care what anyone says.

Evie: From what I heard Will Smith’s, not that his acting is bad but his accent was terrible.

Serena: It was.

Raquel: Yes. I don't understand why they couldn’t get …

Evie: Idris. He’s Nigerian. I didn't (inaudiable) whole idea. I’m just like (inaudiable).

Serena: I feel like the commercial was enough, I’m sorry.

Raquel: I thought it was too. When he was talking, I felt so bad. It made me sweat. There’s the other Nigerian actor Chiwetel Ejiofor.

Evie: That was, yeah.

Raquel: I think it was listed.

Serena: I just wish that there were more directors, and more actors and actresses that were on that thinking that we can build our own platform and not worry about what they’re doing, because to me, I think there’s only probably like, I can only think of Tyler Perry and Oprah Winfrey.

Evie: Ava DuVernay who’s coming up, I just really, I haven’t seen a lot of her stuff but I just like what she represents and I like how she like, presents herself, just how she speaks, I like how she is, just I believe in 10 years or so, I hope to be there.

Raquel: You will.

Evie: Thank you. Just being able to show that there are, not just us, other people, just show these stories, not keep telling the same story over and over again, and just provide quality in entertainment. I’m so sick of going on Netflix and them suggesting things to me that within 1 to 2 minutes, I’m like I’m not watching this.
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>(inaudible) really messed up.</td>
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<td>Evie:</td>
<td>No. This aint for me. Why did you give this one to me?</td>
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<td>Serena:</td>
<td>Yeah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher:</td>
<td>Yeah. Thank you ladies. I really appreciate it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raquel:</td>
<td>Thank you. This was very interesting</td>
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APPENDIX I

IRB Protocol, Recruitment Advertisement, Telephone Script, and Informed Consent Forms
If you are a female, identify as Black regardless of ethnicity (e.g., African-American, Afro-Caribbean, Black Latina/Hispanic), and are 21 to 39 years old, I would like to invite you to participate in an anonymous online survey examining your attitudes about beauty (specifically skin color and hair) and life experiences as a Black woman. This survey is part of a research study aimed at better understanding the relationship between skin color and hair satisfaction among Black women. Approximately 30 minutes are required to complete surveys.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will have the option of entering a raffle to win 1 of 5 beauty boxes, containing hair and skin products ($40 value).

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact the student-researcher, Noreen Boadi, at boadi.n@husky.neu.edu

Thank you so much for your time. Your consideration and participation is greatly appreciated.
Telephone script about study participation

(What is your study about?)
Hello, my name is Noreen Boadi. I am a graduate student at Northeastern University in the Applied Psychology department. I am conducting research on Black women and beauty. I am currently seeking volunteers as participants in this study and wondered if you would be interested in hearing more about it.

(If No): Thank you for your inquiry about the study. Have a good day.

(If Yes): Participation in this research includes taking an anonymous online survey about your attitudes about Black women and beauty, specifically skin color and hair, as well as your beliefs about coping strategies. The entire survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. In appreciation of your time commitment, you will have the option of entering a raffle to win 1 of 5 beauty boxes, containing hair and make-up products ($40 value) at the end of the online survey by entering your email address.

If you agree and are selected to participate in a follow-up group interview to further discuss this matter, it will take approximately 90 minutes. You must be in the New York City area to participate in the follow-up group interview. At the end of the online survey you will have a chance to enter your email address if you are interested in the follow-up group interview. If you are selected, I will email schedule an appointment for the group interview. In appreciation of your time commitment, you will receive a gift bag containing beauty products and a magazine ($40 value).

(Am I eligible for the study?)
If you are a female, identify as Black regardless of ethnicity (e.g. African-American, Afro-Caribbean, Black Latina/Hispanic), and are 21 to 39 years old, you are eligible for the study.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board of Northeastern University. However, the final decision about participation is yours.

Would you be interested in participating?

(IF NO): Thank you, good-bye.

(IF YES): Thank you; I appreciate your interest in my research. The link to the online survey is http://northeastern.qualtrics.com/SI/?SID=SV_2mC2sd8S4p2h8bj

Thank you so much for your time. Your consideration and participation is greatly appreciated. Goodbye.
Northeastern University, Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Name of Investigators: Tracy Robinson-Wood and Noreen Boadi
Title of Project: Relationships among skin color, hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social appearance anxiety, and social networks among black women: A mixed methods analysis.

Request to Participate in Research

I would like to invite you to participate in a web-based online survey. The survey is part of a research study whose purpose is to examine the relationships among skin tone and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and psychological resistance among black women. This survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. I am asking you to participate in this study because: 1) you are a woman, 2) identify as Black regardless of ethnicity (e.g. African-American, Afro-Caribbean, Black Latina/Hispanic), 3) must live in the United States, and 4) are 21 to 39 years old. You must be at least 21 years old to take this survey.

Voluntary Participation

You do not have to participate in the survey and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the online survey, you can stop at anytime. Your decision to participate is voluntary.

Risks

The possible risks or discomforts of the study are minimal. You may feel some discomfort answering questions about your physical appearance. If you anticipate that answering questions about your skin tone and hair may distress you at this time, it is advised that you do not complete this survey. Mental health resources and referral information will be available to you at the end of the survey.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. However, the information learned from this study may help mental health professionals develop better awareness and understanding of matters surrounding skin tone and hair among black women.

Compensation

For completing the survey, participants will have the chance to enter their email at the end of the survey to win one of five beauty boxes ($40 value).

Confidentiality
Your part in this study is anonymous to the researchers. However, because of the nature of web-based surveys, it is possible that respondents could be identified by the IP address or other electronic record associated with the response. Neither the researcher nor anyone involved with this survey will be capturing those data. Any reports or publications based on this research will use only group data and will not identify you or any individual as being affiliated with this project.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions regarding electronic privacy, please feel free to contact Mark Nardone, NU’s Director of Information Security via phone at 617-373-7901, or via email at privacy@neu.edu.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Noreen Boadi at (347) 762-1678 or boadi.n@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. You may also contact Dr. Tracy Robinson-Wood, the Principal Investigator at telephone number: (617) 373-5936. Fax number: (617) 373-8892. Office address: Northeastern University, 404 International Village; Boston, MA 02115. Email: tr.robinson@neu.edu.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373.4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Thank you,

Noreen Boadi
RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SKIN COLOR AND HAIR

Northeastern University
Department of Counseling and Applied Educational Psychology
Title of Project: Relationships among skin color, hair satisfaction, psychological resistance, social appearance anxiety, and social networks among black women: A mixed methods analysis

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

I am inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will give you this statement to keep for your records.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

I am asking you to participate in this study because you are a woman, identify as Black regardless of ethnicity (e.g., African-American, Afro-Caribbean, Black Latina/Hispanic), and are 21 to 39 years old.

Why is the research study being done?

A long history of racial and skin color discrimination exists, both within and external to the Black community, it is imperative to explore the satisfaction black adult females have with their skin color and hair texture. Psychologists have explored black adolescent girls’ satisfaction with their skin color and hair textures. They have also investigated the relationship between optimal and suboptimal resistance and depression. However, there are no known studies that explore Black women’s skin color and hair texture satisfaction and the relationship to anxiety, psychological resistance, and social networks. The purpose of this research is two-fold: 1) To examine the relationships among skin tone and hair satisfaction, social appearance anxiety, and psychological resistance among black adult women; 2) To qualitatively explore how family, friends, social media, and other social networks contribute to black women’s skin color and hair satisfaction.

What will I be asked to do?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in an audiotape-recorded focus group that will last about 60 to 90 minutes. The questions that will be asked include:

1) Which populations tend to support your choices about your hair? Which populations do not?
2) What is said? What is said? What is said? What is said? Who says what? 4) How has the media/social media (i.e. television, magazines, Facebook, Instagram, etc…) influenced your attitude towards your skin color and hair?
5) What messages did you receive about your skin color and hair growing up? From whom? What was said?
6) Have your attitudes towards your hair and skin color changed since childhood and/or adolescence? If so, what caused the change? 7) When are you most satisfied with your hair? Are you most satisfied with your hair, currently? 8) Do you worry about what others think when you have

1
a new hairstyle?; 9) Do you avoid taking pictures or going out in public if you are dissatisfied with the state of your hair?; 10) If your hair could talk, what would it say and to whom?

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?

The focus group, which will take about an hour and a half, will be held in a fully private meeting room in a New York City public library.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?

I do not foresee any risk associated with this research. In the process of talking about your experiences, you may recall an event that contributed to feelings of sadness or exclusion. Please let me know if this happens. Mental health resources and referral information will be provided at the focus group for those who are interested.

Will I benefit by being in this research?

There will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in the study. The information learned from this study may help other women who are in your situation better understand and contend with their experiences.

Who will see the information about me?

Your participation in this study will be confidential. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way. I will keep your audiotape-recorded interview in a locked office and during publications you will be given a pseudonym to protect your identity. Because this is a qualitative study that in addition to words values voice tone, inflection, pauses, emotion, and other nuances that describe the human experience, audiotapes will be destroyed immediately after they are transcribed. In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board to see this information.

Can I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Noreen Boadi at (347) 762-1678 or boadi.n@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Tracy Robinson-Wood, the Principal Investigator at telephone number: (617) 373-5556. Fax number: (617) 373-8892. Office address: Northeastern University, 404 International Village; Boston, MA 02115. Email: tr.robinson@neu.edu.

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?
If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115 tel. 617-373-4588, email: irb@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

**Will I be paid for my participation?**
Each participant will receive a gift bag, which will contain: a beauty magazine, hair products, skin care products and/or cosmetics ($40 value).

**Will it cost me anything to participate?**
Other than gas or public transportation costs, there will be no costs that may be incurred by you as a participant in this study.

**Is there anything else I need to know?**
You must be 21 to 39 years old to participate.
Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Thank you,
Noreen Boadi