
African American Mother-Son Dynamics and their Effect on the African American Marital Relationship

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Abstract

This conceptual paper investigates the difficulties African American married couples are experiencing in an attempt to maintain stable relationships. The following questions are analyzed and answered: (a) how are African American mother-son relationships characterized in the literature? and (b) how does the bond between African American mothers and their sons affect their sons' future relationship with their wives and marital satisfaction? The significance of this paper is to gain a broader perspective of the state of marriage in the African American culture. To identify and understand how African American mother-son relationships influence spousal unions and use the findings as an instrument to enhance African American marriages, and to gain a larger comprehension of African American male-female tension and provide a different perspective and knowledge in assessing the origins of the conflict. The Freudian psychoanalytical Oedipus complex will be used to discuss how African American men subconsciously choose a mate that resembles their mother. Olson and Olson's five typologies of marriage will also be used as a guide in discussing marital satisfaction among African American married men. The conclusions are that there are certain things only a mother can teach a son, many African American marriages are conflicted, an African American man will subconsciously pick a mate much like his mother, and the marital union will most likely resemble the mother-son relationship and many African American-mother son relationships are most likely conflicted.

Problem Statement

Inescapably, research on marriage in the United States suggests that the institution of marriage is rapidly declining (Dickson 1993; Johnson, 2007). Causes linked to the descending trend include "...an increase in the age of first marriages, high divorce rates, and economic variables such as unemployment and SES" (Johnson, 2007, p. 1; Koball, 1998). For many, these conditions may lead individuals to opt out of marriage altogether and resort to other lifestyles such as cohabitation (Johnson, 2007; Sassler & Schoen, 1998). Undoubtedly, it is important to recognize the divorce rates in the United States have been on a decline since the 1980's. From

22.1 per 1,000 women in 1980 to 17.1 in 2005 (Jayson, 2005); however, the USA still has the highest divorce rates among industrialized countries (Johnson, 2007). These findings have launched social concern and researchers speculate the drop is a product of fewer individuals marrying (Jayson, 2005); a different implication than if marriage rates were steady since 1980 and rates were declining as a result of increased marriage longevity.

Across racial backgrounds and ethnicity, there are differences in marriage rates (Dickson, 1993; Johnson, 2007; Sassler & Schoen, 1998). Recently, the marriage rate of African Americans appears to be on a slight upswing "...from 46.1 percent in 1996 to 47.9 percent in 2001 after a 40-year downward spiral" (Kinnon, 2003, p.1). Kinnon (2003) further conveys, although this is a positive change in trends, otherwise depressing evidence reveals African Americans are marrying at a much lower rate than Caucasian Americans. "The National Center for Health Statistics (1995) indicated that 85% of marriages in the United States involved heterosexual Caucasian couples while only 11% involved African American couples" (Johnson, 2007, p.2). A marriage rate with a massive gap such as this is an alarming discrepancy. Furthermore, Dickson (1993) stated that in the early 1990's 72% of all Blacks between the prime ages of 20-29 never married. The U.S Census Bureau (2000) indicated that 57% of Caucasian women married compared to 37% of African American women and 60% of Caucasian men married in contrast to 16% of African American men. The research verifies African Americans are less likely to marry and if they marry, are more likely to divorce or separate and less likely to remarry (Dickson, 1993; Sassler & Schoen, 1999).

History of the Problem

The instability of African American marriages is evident and has compelled researches to gain a more enriched understanding of the dilemma. Many have speculated different rationales as to why African American marriages are suffering and analyze the astoundingly low success rates compared to their Caucasian counterparts (Aborampah, 1989; Dickson, 1993, Johnson, 2007).

Numerous researchers suggest the institution of slavery as the main contributing factor for African American marriage instability (Aborampah, 1989; Dickson, 1993; Hill, 2006; Schwalm, 2008). Implying that it is a trap that began centuries ago when African Americans were valued only as merchandise, not allowed to marry and continually ripped away from their families. This caused disjointed and destroyed bonds and relationships (Schwalm, 2008). The repercussions of slavery such as oppression, discrimination and racism, have had lasting affects on African American's physical, mental, emotional health and employment status, even currently in the twenty-first century (Aborampah, 1989; Johnson, 2007; Schwalm, 2008).

Subsequently, some suggest the unequal men to women ratio and the decreasing pool of marriageable African American men plays a massive role in the decreasing rate of married African Americans (Aborampah, 1989; Kinnon 2005). Due to the imbalance in educational achievement among African Americans (Johnson, 2007),

this unfortunately decreases employment opportunities, resources and financial success. The disproportion may also be a result of African American males as the number one victims of homicide and that they make up 49% of inmates nationally (Mauer, 1999). In addition, studies reveal African American men and women are incongruent on marriage views and expectations which creates an environment for instability (Kinnon, 2005).

Much of the research on African American marriage investigates the perspective of women, and the majority of the work exploring African American men does not engulf much analysis on mother-son relationships. Most often focus is placed on the absence of fathers and its effect in single-mother households (Hill, 2006; Lawson Bush, 2004; Lawson Bush, 2000; Thomas et al, 1996; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). Research calls for more emphasis on specifically African American mother-son dynamics. This may be a possible opportunity in understanding a different position of the instability of African American marriage. Because, the first female bond any man has is with his mother, there may be evidence that suggests conflicted relationships with the mother may perhaps lead to a conflicted relationship with the son's wife. Therefore, presuming specifically that the majority of African American men have conflicted relationships with their mothers, this most likely leads them to a failed marriage. This may be a possible piece to the puzzle in understanding the pitfalls of African American marriage and its low success rates.

Purpose of Proposed Research and Proposed Research Questions

This is a conceptual investigation of the difficulties African American married couples are experiencing in an attempt to maintain stable relationships. There will be an exploration of the bond African American men have with their mothers and how this affects the bond with their wives. A better understanding of these issues will shed light on possible ways to further improve and enhance African American mother-son relationships. An improvement of this specific bond may help progression in the stability of African American marriages. The following questions will be analyzed and answered:

1. How are African American mother-son relationships characterized in the literature?
2. How does the bond between African American mothers and their sons affect their sons' future relationship with their wives and marital satisfaction?

Significance of the Topic

Three essential reasons solidify the significance of this study. First, the institution of marriage in African American culture is suffering (Dickson, 1993; Hill, 2006; Johnson, 2007; Sessler & Schoen, 1999). Second, identifying and understanding how African American mother-son relationships influence spousal unions can be instrumental in enhancing African American marriages. Finally, the findings from

this inquiry may offer better understanding of African American marital tension and ways to possibly reduce the strain existing in those marriages.

Summary of Theoretical Framework for the Proposed Study

The noted and controversial oedipal complex theory, formulated by Sigmund Freud, has for centuries sparked an assortment of scholarly discussions based on the implications of its ideology. Warren (2008) defines the oedipal complex as the following:

... the inner representation of a constellation of familial relationships, including all the combinations and permutations that are possible among and between parents and their child. In earliest development, children fundamentally take in one person at a time. The basic paradigm for relationships is dyadic. Once they reach the age of about three, children begin to appreciate more complexity in relationships. They are able to see that their parents have an exclusive relationship with each other, that each parent has a relationship with the child, and that they as a unit have a relationship with their child. These children can now understand that relationships of different kinds are possible: e.g., that relationships between people can take the form of a unified dyad relating to a third person, as the parents do to the child. (Warren, 2008 p 331)

In reference to the philosophy of mate selection, based on the oedipal complex, simplistically Freud proposes that unconsciously sons will gravitate and choose a mate or wife who resembles his mother (Jedlicka, 1984; Levy-Warren, 2008). Many studies have tested Freud's theory and examine how it compares to tangible human life and relationships (Jedlicka, 1984; Levy-Warren, 2008; Poland, 2007).

Jedlicka (1984) did a mate choice study to test Freud's psychoanalytical theory which will serve as the first theoretical framework for this inquiry. The study prospectively investigates the hypothesis that a son will marry someone who resembles his mother (Jedlicka, 1984). The literature constructs a clear point of this assumption based on evidence performed on the other following nationalities: Hawaii, Asia, U.S. mainland, Europe, Pacific, British Commonwealth and Latin American. In Jedlicka's study the resembling factors included: (a) religion (b) race (c) national origin (d) nativity (e) occupation (f) political orientation, and (g) world views. These variables associated with how the mother's lifestyle is imprinted on their sons (Jedlicka, 1984). The results conclude that sons pick a mate with many of the same resembling factors as their mother. Based on the variables the results confirm the hypotheses that a son will indeed choose a mate much like his mother. This theory will be used to illustrate the concept of African American mother-son dynamics and the influence mothers have on their son's marital relationships. Assuming the mate has similar characteristics as the mother, then the spousal interaction will be similar to the mother-son relationship.

In addition to Jedlicka's (1984) study based on Freud's psychoanalytical theory, the second theory that will be used for formulating this investigation is a more contemporary framework on marital satisfaction. Olson and Olson (2000) surveyed 21,501 couples to gain an understanding of happy and unhappy married couples. From their research they propose there are five different types of marriages: (a) Vitalized (b) Harmonious (c) Traditional (d) Conflicted, and (e) Devalitized. They suggest that the scoring of the following ten different factors, will determine which category the married couple will fall. They include: (a) personality issues (b) communication (c) conflict resolution, financial management (d) leisure activities (e) sexual relationship (f) children and parenting (g) family and friends (h) egalitarian roles, and (i) religious orientation. Prior to Olson and Olson (2000), there have been other researchers who investigated marriage satisfaction and formulated typologies (Miller & Olson, 1990; Olson, 1993), as cited in Gottman (1979) and Snyder & Smith (1986). However, Olson & Olson's (2000) recent data is a perfect fit for this proposed research study because it is most current, more developed typologies, is based on a larger sample and can be directly tied into trying to explain the downfalls of African American marriages. A collaboration of both theories will justly serve as a concrete foundation in analyzing both the mother-son dynamics and marital satisfaction.

Analysis and Discussion of the Literature and Presentation of Theoretical Framework

The first interaction that any man has with a woman is his mother or a mother figure. If we can accept the idea that there are only some things a man can teach a man, there must also be some things that only a woman can teach a man (Lawson Bush, 2004). A man uses these experiences as one means to learn how to interact with women. In doing so, according to the oedipal complex, due to the unique relationship a man has with his mother he will unconsciously pick a mate that resembles her (Jedlicka, 1984). We can then speculate that the same discrepancies apparent in the mother-son relationship will also be evident in the marital union. For the purposes of this study Olson's ten factors will be used to identify generally the typology of African American marriages based upon the opinion of African American married men. A proposed empirical expansion of this study will use Olson's instrument solely on African American mothers and their married and divorced sons; to then develop greater responses of the research questions.

Conflicted/Impaired African American Mother-Son Dyad

A literary analysis done by Lawson Bush (2004) investigates four empirical studies of how African American mothers participate in the development of manhood, masculinity and identity. They include the following: *Black Mothers to Sons: Juxtaposing African American Literature with Social Practice* (King & Mitchell, 1990), *Can Black Mothers raise our sons?* (Bush, 1996b), *Beating the Odds: Raising Academically*

Successful African American Males (Harbowski et al., 1998) and *Black Sons to Mothers: Compliments, Critiques, and Challenges for Cultural Workers in Education* (Brown & Davis, 2000). These studies were chosen because they appear to be the “only texts where Black-mother son relationships [were] the primary focus (Lawson, 2004, p. 382).”

Lawson’s findings from the literary analysis are the following: First, mothers felt they were often too overprotective of their sons, wanting to protect them from the racist world but also teaching them how to manage. Second, great emphasis was made about the great men that came before their sons, such as grandfathers, uncles, fathers and African American men publicly in power; mothers are using these men as illustrations of dignity, strength and pride. Third, mothers were highly disappointed and blamed themselves when their sons were inconsistent with the values they were taught. Fourth, “Black mothers recognize the interrelationship of masculine and feminine experiences and expect Black males to contain in their sex –role identities a masculine and feminine self “(Lawson, 2004, p.383), more balanced qualities such as: compassion for everyone, believing in God, responsibility to his community and being true to self. Fifth, mothers desire to develop a broad philosophy of life and develop a relationship that encourages open discussion. Sixth, they teach specific ways to handle certain situations, (i.e. be weary of discrimination, be well employed, and maintain family rituals and religious beliefs) (Lawson 2004, 386). Finally, mothers prepare their sons to do works that may traditionally appear feminine, so that they are able to independently take care of themselves and if necessary their own family (Lawson, 2004).

The related conclusions suggest “(a) Black mothers play a significant role in the healthy development of manhood and masculinity, and, (b) it demonstrates how Black mothers participate in the healthy development of manhood and masculinity... (Lawson, 2004, p. 388).” Due to the implication that African American mothers have a great influence in the development of their sons growth into a man, this could directly affect the relationships he will have with other people, especially his future wife. Therefore, “inadequate socializations of black males...in the early years is claimed to produce...conflictual relationships in their adult years (Aborampah, 1989, p. 328)”, including the influences of the mother.

It is also important to recognize the impact on single mother parenting in regards to raising African American sons. Starker (2009) reports that fifty percent of African American households are headed by single mothers. Some research suggests that life in a single parent family is linked to children having adjustment problems (Hrabowski III et al., 1998). Due to the fact that there are such a large number of African American mothers raising sons on their own, it seems quite apparent that there will be difficulties in the relationship that may not exist in a contrasted two parent home (Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). Especially during the process of socialization in learning how to interact with women, there may possibly be a big disconnect in healthy modeled behavior and interactions (Thomas et al., 1996). It is important to recognize that there are many variables that affect a single mothers home and environment that will correspond to the relationship she has with her son and

that there will still most likely be some sort of absence in modeling a healthy African American male-female relationship. This does not put any blame on the African American single mother, but just an awareness of a possible disconnect in preparing her son to be a successful husband. As stated by Bush (2004), the mother plays a unique and important role in raising her son into a man. Therefore, there must be close attention paid to the mother son dyad, especially in a single parent environment, because inevitably this relationship will most likely be more impactful than others.

Many of the variables may be outside of the mothers control, however, it is possible for her to build and enhance the personal relationship she has with her son. Especially, if it is clear they already do not have a healthy relationship; improvement in this area may perhaps help build him with the necessary skills to be a more productive husband in the future. Even though this is not the only relationship that is responsible for socializing African American sons, it is still very important. Especially since the son will pick a mate much like his mother (Jedlicka, 1984).

African American Son and Partner Impaired Relationship

Mothers consciously and subconsciously influence male mate choice more than fathers and resemblance of a mans' wife occurs more frequently than chance. (Jedlicka, 1984). Therefore, as stated prior "inadequate socializations of black males... in the early years is claimed to produce...conflictual relationships in their adult years (Aborampah, 1989, p. 328)." Furthermore, there is tension between African American males/females and some men even resent their own mothers (Aborampah, 1989). There has been different speculation as to why, and some researchers believe it stems from slavery, oppression, discrimination and racism (Aborampah, 1989; Johnson, 2007; Schwalm, 2008). Also, African American men and women appear to have different expectations of relationships which makes their relationships unstable (Kinnon, 2005).

Nonetheless, due to the conflict between African American male-female relationships, African American marriages are suffering. Knowing that African American men have a divorce rate of 66% (Lawson & Thompson, 1995) may have possible connections with an unhealthy relationship stemming from the mother. In a 1995 article, *Black Men Make Sense of Marital Distress and Divorce: An Exploratory Study*, investigated by Lawson and Thompson. The results concluded that according to Black men there were there were four different themes that contributed to divorce. They include the following: financial strain, differences in spending practices, inability to negotiate conflict, and differences in religious beliefs.

In correspondence to David and Amy Olson's five types of married couples, many African Americans would fall into the Conflicted Couples category. The typology states that about 73% of these couples have thought about divorce. The divorce factors formulated by Black men are conducive to the factors that Olson and Olson suggest contribute to an unhappy marriage.

Conflicted Marriage

Olson and Olson (2001) extensive research study produced the definition of five marriage typologies.

1. **Vitalized** couples symbolize the happiest couple type and have the largest amount of strengths; only 14 % have considered divorce (Olson & Olson, 2000).
2. **Harmonious** couples are also happy and tend to have much strength as well; however scores are lower in child and parenting because they more likely do not have children, only 28 % ever considered divorce (Olson & Olson, 2000).
3. **Traditional** couples are overall happy but have higher scores in traditional views, including parenting, roles, religions and family and friends. Of these couples 37% considered divorce (Olson & Olson, 2000).
4. **Conflicted** couples are overall unhappy, they disagree in many areas such as communication and conflict resolution. They have numerous growth areas and 73 % of these individuals have considered divorce (Olson & Olson, 2000).
5. **Devitalized** couples are extremely unhappy and in the greatest need to revamp their marriage. In this category 69 % of both spouses are dissatisfied with their marriage and 90% have considered divorce (Olson & Olson, 2000). Figure 1 illustrates the five married couple dynamics.

This literature will be utilized as a foundation for assessing the mother-son relationship satisfaction and marital satisfaction among African Americans. In the future the same survey questions that were used to determine the five typologies will be used on African American married and divorced men and also their mothers, (minus the survey on sexual satisfaction for mother and son use), the data collected can be compared and contrasted.

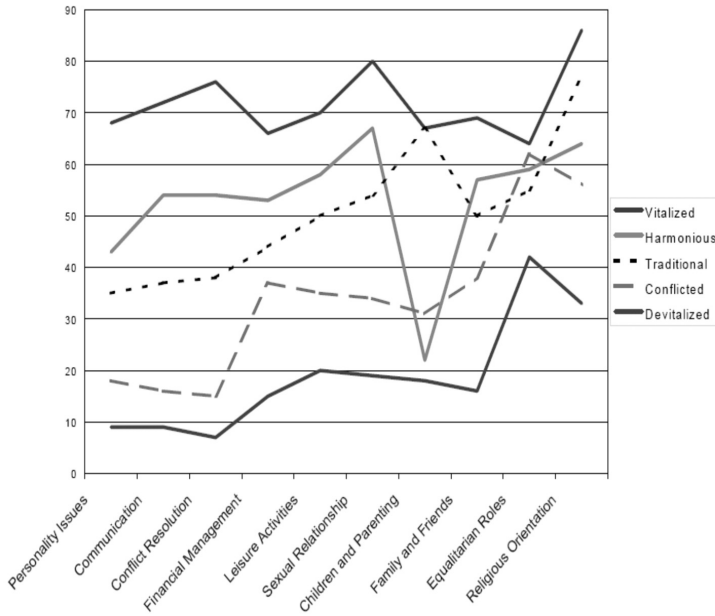
According to Olson and Olson (2000) the top three enablers that hinder a conflicted marriage are personality issues, communication, and conflict resolution. For example, focusing on the communicational aspect, In *The Form and Function of Quality Communication in Marriage*, Montgomery (1981, p. 21), declares:

Quality communication in marriage is... the interpersonal, transactions, symbolic process by which marriage partners achieve and maintain understanding of each other...[contribution] to quality marriage are described: openness confirmation, transaction management, and situational adaptability... these components functionally linked to marital satisfaction.

Specifically, addressing the level of importance of communication in any relationship, if the communication in the mother-son relationship is flawed, it is most likely that the communication in the marital union will also be flawed. Therefore, suggesting the same pattern will occur for personality issues and conflict resolution. Olson's top five communication "stumbling blocks" of couples who have problems are: (1) I wish my partner were more willing to share feelings, 82% (2) I have difficulty asking my partner for what I want, 75% (3) My partner does not

understand how I feel, 72 % (4) My partner often refuses to discuss issues/problems, 71%, and, (5) My partner makes comments that put me down, 67%. See Figure 1. Further research will measure the differences between mother and son, husband and wife.

FIGURE 1 ENRICH PCA Means for Couple Types



Olson and Flowers (1993)

Strengths, Limitations and Implications of the Literature

The literature suggests that African Americans are more prone to fall into Olson’s conflicted typology. African American marriages appear to possess many of the issues that are associated in a conflicted marriage. In addition, from Jedlicka’s (1984) research, mothers have a great influence in who their sons will pick as a mate. Because the mate is most likely similar to the mother, the marital relationship will mirror many of the characteristics of the mother-son relationship. The two positively correlate; therefore, if the mother-son dynamic is pleasing than it is possible that the marital relationship and satisfaction rates will most likely be pleasing.

Although, the literature and secondary analysis provided data to formulate answers to the research questions, this conceptual inquiry is constrained by the following limitations: First, there will be no primary empirical data collected. However, preparation and discussion will be made for future research study. Finally, literature research was gathered in a constrained time frame of eleven weeks.

Presentation and Discussion of the Theoretical Framework

According to Jedlicka (1984), testing of the Oedipus complex, the results show that males tend to be especially influenced by their mothers. "Resemblance between a man's wife and his mother...occur more frequently than expected by chance (Jedlicka 1984, p. 68)." In relationship to African American marriages we can possibly speculate that the majority of married men have a wife that resembles their mothers. If many African American marriages are conflicted, then we may also speculate that many African American mother-son relationships are conflicted as well. Future studies will be conducted to further test this hypothesis.

Comparing and contrasting Olson and Olson (2000) typology research puts African American marriage in the category of conflicted marriage. This information is consistent with the research done on African American marriages and mother-son relationships. There is speculation that perhaps a single mother African American mother-son relationship will be more impaired than a two-parent household. However, there will always be exceptions.

Research Design and Methodology

Literature Sources/Methods for Analyzing the Literature

Majority of the information gathered was from peer reviewed scholarly journals. These journals were obtained from *Journal of Black Studies, Marriage and the Family, Family Relations, Negro Education, and The Family*. An article from an *Ebony* magazine was also used in the data collection as well as *Empowering Couples* by David and Amy Olson. The university library was the primary where the data was searched. The books collected in the fields of Marriage and Family were least useful, because they lacked specifics pertaining to African Americans and much of the printed literature was outdated. However, the librarian was tremendously helpful in guiding me to different databases that would contribute useful amounts of literature closely related to my research topic. Specific databases that were utilized are the following: SocIndex, PsycINFO, Family and Society Studies Worldwide and JSTOR. Key words that were used to help retrieve information are as follows: African American marriage, men and marriage, Black mothers, Blacks and marriage, mother-son relationships, African American mothers and sons, and black male and female relationships. Before completely delving into the literature, the topic and research questions were open for discussion to individuals who fell into my category of research. Black mothers and sons were asked their opinions about the theories and hypotheses. This process, although unstructured, provided a small piece of validation to the study. Each article was read at least twice, some called for much more attention. Generally, the first time through was to obtain a general overview of the information and the second to closely uncover deeper meanings of the text. Additional content review and continual analysis were specific articles or books that supplied a greater contribution in answering the research questions. While

reading the literature words that were unfamiliar were researched as well as statistics. Reoccurring themes were noted and given individual concentration. New questions developed were used to challenge the primary research predictions. Generally the studies researched were qualitative. Use of focus groups, longitudinal studies, surveys and observations were highly prevalent amongst the articles. However, many of the samples were small and did not exactly measure the research questions. Studies were molded for the purposes of this study.

Data Collection Strategies and Data Sources

Essentially, the greatest significant data source in the future will be empirical data. This will consist of focus groups, surveys, interviews, observational studies/longitudinal studies and secondary analysis of other previous works done in this field. Studies will be specifically intended and directed towards Black mothers and their son(s). If the son or mother has siblings it will also be interesting to get different perspectives of their relationship from others who are close to them, i.e. siblings or a relative living in the same household. However, there will be certain constraints on those who are eligible to contribute, such as an individual who has lived with both parties for more than fifteen years, who has seen the mother son –relationship from child to adult, who still interacts with both parties before and after the son was married. Research will be done in a variety of different libraries such as McKeldin Library at the University of Maryland and the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. More data will be gathered from additional journals, dissertations, articles, and videos.

Data Analysis Strategies

In the future there will be empirical data, therefore the direction and methods taken in order to analyze the literature and information will be more intense and offer a more deepened examination. Meaning, with the use of more allotted time the literature can be investigated on a larger scale and more information can be gathered. The data received from focus groups, observational studies, interviews/surveys and other secondary research can be given more attention to be intellectual scrutinized. In this process additional answers will be revealed related to the hypotheses and prediction of the study. This will enhance and strengthen my research and future studies. Finally, the substance and ideas of the research will be critiqued by other scholars and experts in this field which will be useful in effectively analyzing the data from fresh perspectives. It will act as a contribution in understanding the literature and the ability to unravel new information that may not have been evident previously.

The future study will survey happily married African American men and divorced African American men, then compare and contrast the relationships each man has/had with their mother and identify how their relationship with their mother affected the stability or instability of their marriage.

Proposed Strategies for Minimizing Bias Error

In order to help minimize bias and error for this paper a variety of journals were used and thoroughly analyzed. Credibility of the publications were taken into consideration as well as the year the documents were published. Biases of each author were noted and carefully explored.

To ensure minimizing bias and error for future studies data will be collected from a variety of African American demographics. There will samples taken from a range of ages, religion and socioeconomic classes. The data will be critically analyzed and peer reviewed by other scholars in the same field.

Ethical Considerations

During future inquiry in order to maintain ethical consideration, subjects used in the study will have a full understanding of the research assessment and what will be expected of them. Consent forms will be handed out and thoroughly explained and signed by both the subjects and administrator of the focus groups, survey or observational study. Subjects will also have an opportunity to ask questions. Confidentiality will remain with all parties involved. Each study will be taken seriously and honestly managed. Results will be carefully recorded and analyzed in complete context of the research.

Findings from the Literature Related to the Proposed Research Questions

In response to (a) how are African American mother- son relationships characterized in the literature it reveals that Black mothers play a vital role in their son's development of manhood and masculinity. There are special teachings that only a mother can give to her son, and (b) how the bond between African American mothers and their sons affect their sons' future relationship with their wives. Sons will subconsciously pick a mate who is similar to their mothers. The mother has more influence on who they decide to marry than their father. Therefore, the relationships with their wife will be similar to their relationship with their mother. The foundational knowledge, wisdom and lessons he learns from his mother will carry over into his adulthood as well as his understanding of how to properly interact with a woman. Not saying that this is his only means of learning how to relate with women but it defiantly one impactful predictor.

Conclusions Based on the Analysis on the Literature

After an extensive literary review, the literature suggests the following: there were no exact studies done on the relationship between African American mother-sons in comparison to their wives. However, other related studies were able to support results to the research questions. Mothers can be used as a guide to knowing the type of wife and marital relationship the son will have. Many African American

marriages are conflicted. There are certain affairs only a mother can teach a son. An African American man will subconsciously pick a mate much like his mother. The marital union will most likely resemble the mother-son relationship. Many African American-mother son relationships are most likely conflicted

Recommendations for Future Research

After analyzing the literature it has become evident that there is not much research done specifically on African American married men and also African American mother-son relationships. Furthermore, longitudinal studies should be done in generational strands of African American mothers and their sons. This will be a comparison and contrast of the changes between the different generations in the marriages from African American men and this will help put a new perspective on the different impacts during the life course of mother and son and will provide a record of characteristics that are passed down through generations. Also to use similar research questions, compare and contrast data from other ethnicities and finally, compare and contrast current research inquiry with African American interracial marriages mother-son relationships.

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