

**BORN INTO DISADVANTAGE, LIVING THROUGH DISADVANTAGE, DYING FROM
DISADVANTAGE: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF
MENTORING FOR URBAN AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT MALES**

by

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ABSTRACT

Background: African American males disproportionately suffered from shorter lifespans, lower quality of life and greater mortality rates. African American males experienced excessive rates of HIV/AIDS infections. These poorer health outcomes were often provoked by weak social connections, higher levels of stress, low socioeconomic status, brief or unsatisfactory education and limited access to health services. African American adolescents who lived in urban areas had more exposure to harmful environmental influences. Additionally, urban African American adolescent males who dropped out of school were at greater risk for incarceration, underemployment, and participation in crime. **Purpose:** The purpose of this paper was to conduct a systematic literature review to examine the relationship between mentors and/or adult role models and increase in academic achievement among urban African American adolescent males. The hypothesis was that the mentor and/or role model relationships increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males. Additionally, it was thought that mentors and/or role models would serve as a protective factor against negative influences. The literature was explored to identify how positive adult expectations influenced academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males, specifically in negative environmental circumstances and; how self-efficacy affected prolonged academic success. **Results:** The results showed that mentors and/or role models were able to increase academic performance in urban African American adolescent males. They were also able to increase racial/ethnic identity.

Furthermore, psychosocial functioning was improved. **Conclusion:** Mentoring and/or role modeling was able to increase academic achievement and racial/ethnic identity by providing urban African American adolescent males with support and encouragement. Racial/ethnic identity was shown to be associated with academic achievement. African American adolescent males experienced increased school grades, beliefs of school importance, school attachment, and racial/ethnic identity when they had mentors and/or role models present. **Public health significance:** Mentors and/or role models could serve as protective factors against negative influences. Mentors and/or role models could increase academic performance and provide guidance and support for adolescent males with weak social connection. Mentors and/or role models could increase racial/ethnic identity in youth which improves pride and self-awareness.

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PREFACE

First and foremost, I give thanks to God. I would like to say thank you to my committee for providing their expertise and support during this learning process. Dr. Nolan, thank you for never allowing me to doubt myself, your support and direction served as motivation during this entire process. Dr. Documét, thank you for your assistance during the research process. I appreciate your willingness to provide your expertise and the personal insight you shared. Dr. Lin, thank you for consistently encouraging me to expand my thinking when applying the concepts for this thesis. Thank you to my grandparents whose dedication to education and discipline sparked my interest in education and public health. Abuelita eres increíble gracias por todo. I am grateful to my parents because their love has deeply shaped my personality and development. Thank you to my sister for always pushing me to do my best. Cooyah, and to Carieta, I appreciate your encouragement, reassurance, and open ears. To the Thomas/Macoon dynamic duo, thank you for nourishing my mind and spirit. To friends and family your support was unwavering and without it this thesis could not have been possible.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

African American males suffer increased occurrence of shortened lifespan, decreased quality of life and greater mortality rates, as opposed to their Caucasian peers (Hall, 2006; Battle; 2002). Additionally, urban African American adolescent males who dropped out of school were at greater risk for incarceration, underemployment, and participation in crime (Lee, 1992; National Urban League, 2007; Child Trends DataBank, 2003). African American men living in urban areas experienced greater exposure to negative influences and injurious behaviors (Hurd, Zimmerman & Xue, 2009; Hall, 2006). These behaviors included, but were not limited to, youth violence, risky sexual practices, increased school drop outs and drug involvement (Battle, 2002). The purpose of this paper was to systematically examine existing literature to identify whether a relationship existed between having mentors and/or adult role models and academic achievement. The literature may also identify the indirect ways that the relationship between mentor and mentee served as protective factors against negative health outcomes. These relationships were addressed by answering several questions:

- 1) How did positive adult expectations impact school achievement in urban African American adolescent males?
- 2) Did adult interactions increase academic achievement even in negative environmental circumstances and;

3) How did, if at all, self-efficacy encourage prolonged academic success outside the mentor/mentee relationship?

Two theories, Life Course Theory and Social Cognitive Theory, were used to primarily identify why adolescents engaged in risky behaviors. These theories also detailed which methods worked best to promote healthy behaviors. The Life Course Theory was examined to show that adolescence was a transition period from childhood to adulthood. Events that happened during this transition could either be harmful or beneficial to the long-term health of the individual. It also identified adolescence as a critical period; events that happened during this time could have greater effects than during other periods of the life course that were not identified as critical periods (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2011). Social Cognitive Theory was used to examine the concepts of self-efficacy, observational learning, facilitation, outcomes expectations, incentive motivation, reciprocal determination, collective efficacy, self-regulation, and moral disengagement (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). Although, each component was necessary to inform how and why adolescents changed their behavior, the primary focus of this paper was on self-efficacy, observational learning and facilitation. Academic achievement was addressed in relation to how it may act as a way to improve quality of life (Lee, 1992; van Dyck, 2010).

The hypothesis was that mentors and/or role models would be able to promote academic achievement among urban African American adolescent males. Additionally, it was expected that there would be an association between increase in academic achievement and later health outcomes. The information presented in this literature review has public health significance, because African American males disproportionately struggled with increased occurrences of shortened lifespan, decreased quality of life and greater mortality rates, as opposed to their Caucasian peers (Hall, 2006; Battle; 2002). Therefore, health professionals, practitioners, and

community advocates should continue to search for innovative ways to protect the health of vulnerable populations (Johnson-Reid, Davis, Saunders, William, and Williams, 2005). Mentors and/or role models could serve as protective factors against negative influences. They could increase academic performance and provide guidance and support for adolescent males with weak social connection. Mentors and/or role models could increase racial/ethnic identity in youth which improves pride and self-awareness. This systematic literature review added to current research by identifying mentoring intervention efforts that were intended to improve academic achievement among urban African American adolescent males. Using theory driven mentoring and role modeling, as an intervention method, could help reduce health issues among African American men (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003). These interventions could be beneficial to community organizations and policy makers who are interested in improving school performance of urban African American adolescent males in the U.S. Unfortunately, there was limited research that included the interoperability of mentors and/or role models, increased academic performance, and health for the benefit of urban African American adolescent males. The purpose of this thesis was to discuss mentoring and role modeling that served as interventions to increase academic performance in urban African American adolescent males.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Background section was to depict the challenges that African American males face and to present the public health significance of mentors and/or role models in increasing academic achievement in African American adolescent males. It also described the importance of the Life Course Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Social Support in understanding adolescent behavior. A description of the wider social context was used to describe the external processes that could affect the African American male. Lastly, the Background defined mentors and/or role models.

In comparison to Caucasians, African American males disproportionately experienced shorter lifespans, lower quality of life and greater mortality rates (Hall, 2006; Battle; 2002). Poor health outcomes could be exacerbated by weak social connections and could create higher levels of stress (Cattell, 2001). Unfortunately, stress was not the only factor urban African American adolescent males had to worry about. Social determinants of health such as, low socioeconomic status, brief or unsatisfactory education and limited access to health services also provoked negative health outcomes (Treadwell & Ro, 2003). Additionally, African American adolescents who lived in urban areas had more exposure to harmful environmental influences (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Hall, 2006, Battle, 2002). Fortunately, these deleterious effects may be modified during adolescence by having social support from mentors and/or role models.

Adolescence could be a tumultuous and stressful period in a person's life (McNeely & Blanchard, 2010). Adolescence also played a major role in defining the skills, knowledge and experiences that followed youth into adulthood (CDC, 2012a). During a teen's transition into adulthood, there could be a multitude of factors that compromise the health of the teen. For many teens, adolescence was a period marked by an increased occurrence "...of homicide, unintentional injury, substance use, drinking and driving, and sexually transmitted infections" (Mulye, Park, Nelson, Adams, Irwin, & Brinis, 2009).

According to the Life Course Perspective, "age, relationships, life transitions and social change shape a person's life from birth to death" (Hutchinson, 2007, p.9). The Life Course Perspective promoted several key concepts. For instance, it posited that there was a link between adolescence and later adult experiences. It emphasized the importance of timing, as well as, the idea that the family influenced experiences with the social environment and the adolescent's interpretation of the social world. Lastly, it described how humans made choices that were able to alter their own life course (Hutchinson, 2007).

In addition to the Life Course Theory, Life Course Perspective, Social Cognitive Theory and Social Support all provided frameworks to describe adolescent behavior. In accordance with Social Cognitive Theory, reciprocal determinism was described as when adolescents affected their environment and the environment affected their behavior. Additionally, mentors and/or role models could potentially increase self-efficacy in urban African American adolescent males through facilitation (empowerment) and by promoting positive behaviors (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). Perceived social support was a concept that moderated health outcomes because it made one less susceptible to disease (Cassel, 1976). Adolescent males also benefited

from perceived social support by having a dependable adult they could count on; it made them feel they were loved and part of a reliable network (Cobb, 1976).

2.1 DISPROPORTIONATE DISADVANTAGE FOR YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES

African American males were disproportionately at risk for homicides and heart disease (CDC, 2004). In 2009, the leading cause of death among African American adolescents males aged 15 to 19 was homicide. During that same year, the leading cause of death among African American men aged 35 to 54 was heart disease (CDC, 2009). In 2010, over 2,000 African American males aged 12 to 24 died by homicide (CDC, 2010). The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control reported the homicide rate among African American adolescent males was 51.5 per 100,000. Caucasian adolescents males in the same age category had a significantly lower rate of 2.9 per 100, 000 (Youth Violence, 2012).

African American males have also historically experienced disproportionate rates of HIV/AIDS infections. At one time, African American men had more than double the HIV/AIDS infection rate as African American women (Lichtenstein, 2008). According to the HIV Supplemental Report, African American men had seven times more new HIV/AIDS infections than Caucasian men. These new cases were approximately 70% (14,700) of new infections (CDC, 2012b). These risk factors could be aggravated by social determinants of health such as low socioeconomic status. Specifically, inadequate or insufficient education, under employment and limited access to health services (Treadwell & Ro, 2003).

Battle (2002) argued that negative environmental circumstances and weakened familial support drove African American adolescent males to participate in criminal behavior. She suggested African American adolescent males viewed their actions as a way to improve their circumstances and defy unfair social systems. Furthermore, adolescents who were regularly exposed to illegal drug activity or who engaged in illegal drug use by the age of 16 were more likely to suffer from drug abuse and experienced greater rates of incarceration (Mukke, Benson, Alam, Richie, & Bailey, 2012). Additionally, adolescents who had drug related addictions by the age of 16 were also shown to have an increased likelihood of incarceration during adulthood (Slade, 2008).

2.2 HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE

Academic achievement among urban African American adolescent males was unsteady yet consistently below that of their Caucasian peers (Lee, 1992). African American men, on average, were disproportionately plagued by issues such as sexually transmitted diseases, violence, incarceration, and un/underemployment (Lichtenstein, 2008; Mukke et al., 2012). These circumstances could lead African American males to feel increased and prolonged levels of stress; all of which was linked to lowered immune system functioning (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004; Priyadarshini & Aich, 2012).

Although it was normal to experience stress, prolonged periods of stress lowered the body's ability to fight off infection (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004; Priyadarshini & Aich, 2012). Not only did lowered immunity place adolescents at an additional risk for negative health outcomes, authors have reported that teens' cognitive development was also greatly affected by

chronic stress. This damage to mental functioning early in life implicated adverse health effects that threatened social, emotional and physical functioning (Lupien, McEwen, Gunnar, & Heim, 2009).

Exposure to those social and environmental stressors caused negative effects on both the brain and body (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004; Lupien, McEwen, Gunnar, & Heim, 2009). This threat was aggravated by a culmination of “everyday” stress with the normal stress of adolescence. “Allostatic load” was a term that described the way stress decreased optimal body function; it served to explain the deleterious effect repeated stress had on the body (Green & Darity, 2010; McEwen & Wingfield, 2003).

2.3 LIFE COURSE THEORY/PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of the Life Course Theory and the Life Course Perspective section was to use both theories to describe the path of health outcomes as it related to events during the span of a life time. These negative exposures could have occurred at any time and could be singular events or negative events in succession. Unfortunately, there were times when a person was more sensitive (van Dyck, 2010). These theories were important because they showed that people had the ability to alter the course or pathway of negative health influences (Hutchinson, 2007)

According to the Life Course Theory, the development of health and the pattern of health and disease could be depicted by examining early childhood and adolescent experiences over the course of a lifetime (Braveman & Barclay, 2009). A community report on adversity in maternal and child health, described four main components of the Life Course Theory which were, “trajectories, early programming, critical periods, cumulative impacts, and risk and protective

factors” (van Dyck, 2010, p. 3). The author described trajectories as the pattern of health events over a lifespan. Early programming was the idea that the experiences that happened early in life could determine health later in life. Timing was important because critical periods, like adolescence, were times when an individual was more vulnerable than usual. Negative exposures during critical periods had greater imprints on later development. Additionally, negative experiences could have interaction effects. Cumulative impact was the idea that repeated exposure to negative events over time could have a compounded effect. Environment was comprised of the physical and social factors that governed health. These physical and social factors could either be protective factors or risk factors. An example of protective factors could be social support, whereas risk factors could be dangerous neighborhoods or discrimination (van Dyck, 2010). These concepts of Life Course Theory served as a guide for the way in which health outcome was predicted during the life course.

The Life Course Perspective was a structured way to examine how time and specific occurrences during life determined long-term health outcomes. According to Hutchinson (2007), this perspective acknowledged how transitions and critical periods during the course of a person’s life altered their health years after an event had taken place. Specifically, factors such as, “...chronological age, relationships, common life transitions, and social change shape people’s lives from birth to death” (Hutchinson, 2007, p.9). An interesting aspect of the Life Course Perspective was that, given permissive or tolerant circumstances, life courses could be altered by behavior. It also highlighted childhood and adolescent events as connected to experiences during both adulthood and late adulthood (Hutchinson, 2007).

The Life Course Theory and Life Course Prospective, respectively, provided frameworks for why adolescence was such a crucial time to encourage healthy behaviors. Adolescence was

significant because of the transition from naïve child to mature adult (Hutchinson, 2007; Battle, 2002). Adolescence was also important because it was a critical period in the development of the individual; negative events could potentially have cumulative effects and decisions adolescents made during this critical period could determine their health later on during adulthood (Braveman & Barclay, 2009; van Dyck, 2010). This section discussed the role of the Life Course Theory and the Life Course Perspective in describing the path of negative health outcomes based on life time events.

2.4 SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

The purpose of this section was to use Social Cognitive Theory to describe the key elements for changing behaviors in adolescents. This section illustrated the approach that effective mentor and/or role models might use to increase academic achievement in African American adolescent males. There were nine categories (e.g. self-efficacy, observational learning, facilitation, outcomes expectations, incentive motivation, reciprocal determination, collective efficacy, self-regulation, and moral disengagement) and each one was useful to further explain the many reasons why adolescents changed their behavior. The following detailed sections on self-efficacy, observational learning and facilitation was the foundation to justify why mentors and/or role models used skill building, positive examples and empowerment to increase academic achievement.

Social Cognitive Theory was a theoretical model that illustrated the behavioral actions of the individual in reaction to the wider social environment (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). It most precisely demonstrated the actions individuals took in relation to their external

environment. There were five themes used to categorize the nine constructs that describe Social Cognitive Theory. These themes were, psychological determinants of health, observational learning, environmental determinants of health, self-regulation and moral disengagement. With the exceptions of self-regulation and moral disengagement, each general theme organized the nine constructs of Social Cognitive Theory. These concepts were self-efficacy, observational learning, facilitation, outcomes expectations, incentive motivation, reciprocal determination, collective efficacy, self-regulation, and moral disengagement (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). Each construct worked to explain adolescent behavior.

The constructs that made up Social Cognitive Theory each served to explain why adolescents changed their behavior. Self-efficacy was the adolescent's belief that he had the ability to overcome barriers. Observational learning was learning specific behaviors by watching someone model those behaviors and was most effective when the observer had shared characteristics with the individual being observed. Facilitation was having the skills necessary to carry out a specific behavior. Outcome expectations was the belief that academic achievement was beneficial. Incentive motivation was the encouragement and support that adolescents received from their mentor and/or role model. Reciprocal determination was the way environment affected adolescents, as well as, how adolescents were able to affect their environment. Collective efficacy was the belief that together a group had the ability to produce a specific outcome. Self-regulation was using self-awareness, rewards, self-direction and goal-setting to control personal behavior. Lastly, moral disengagement was disregarding personally accepted moral standards in order to cause harm to others. Although, each concept was applicable, there were three concepts described as most often used by health researchers. These concepts were self-efficacy, observational learning and facilitation. Collectively, these nine

constructs most accurately described why adolescents changed their behavior (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008).

2.4.1 Self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy, described by psychologist Albert Bandura (1997), was defined as the individual's belief in their own ability to identify and reach goals despite obstacles. Social Cognitive Theory could be used to describe the way self-efficacy increased academic achievement in adolescents. In an article by Johnson-Reid et al. (2005), the researchers were able to demonstrate a link between self-efficacy and academics. They found that "academic self-efficacy" had a positive correlation to academic achievement. Additionally, they found several reports that indicated role models and encouraging adults could increase self-efficacy. This finding showed the significance of self-efficacy in stimulating academic achievement.

2.4.2 Observational learning

Observational learning was the process of imitating actions or behaviors that one viewed others doing. The observed behaviors were forms of communication that portrayed different meanings and impacted the behaviors of those watching (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). For instance, a parent who smoked, but told their child not to smoke had already communicated, through their actions, that smoking was acceptable. According to Glanz, Rimer, and Viswanath (2008) this was especially true when the viewer identified with the individual they observed.

2.4.3 Facilitation

Facilitation was essentially skill building and empowerment (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). In the mentor and/or role model relationship with their mentee, the mentor exchanged or passed on skills, knowledge and shared past experiences (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006). According to Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath (2008), facilitation meant giving the resources, skills and know how that would incite behavior change. Mentors and/or role models who provided the tools for leadership did not make their mentees leaders, but they made it easier for their mentee to perform the functions of a leader (Gordon, Iwamoto, Ward, Potts, & Boyd, 2009).

The sections on the Life Course Theory, Life Course Perspective and Social Cognitive Theory served to explain the purpose of these specific frameworks. This section explained why positive mentor and/or role model relationships were important for urban African American adolescents. The Life Course Theory stated that adverse occurrences during different periods of the life course could determine later health outcomes (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2011). The Life Course Perspective was an organized framework to describe the way timing and specific occurrences during life influence long-term health outcomes. The Social Cognitive Theory used several powerful concepts which included, self-efficacy, observational learning, and facilitation (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008).

2.5 SOCIAL SUPPORT

There were two functions of Social Support and four types of Social Support. The two functions were perceived Social Support which was when an individual felt loved and connected to a dependable social network. The second was received Social Support which was the specific type of social support that was available from the person giving support (guidance, encouragement etc). The four types of Social Support were perceived social support- the individual's own belief that they are part of a caring and supportive social network, emotional support- was the level of care and affection from someone, appraisal support- experience and information that help with decision making, and informational support- advice and suggestions any useful or helpful suggestions for a specific need (Berkman & Glass, 2000). Perceived social support was defined as an individual's belief that he or she was part of a caring system or network of people who could be relied on for help when necessary (Cobb, 1976). Social support helped to mitigate adverse health effects because teens had someone they could rely on (Battle, 2002; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Kerpelman, Eryigit, & Stephens, 2008; Rhodes, 1994). Youth who relied on an adult (e.g. friends, family, and teachers) who provided, for instance, emotional social support or care and encouragement, were better able to handle academic demands (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). Social support was necessary to increase self-efficacy in the individual and protected against stressful events (Kerpelman, Eryigit, & Stephens, 2008). Cobb (1976) initially found that perceived social support encouraged individual health because it promoted the idea that one was part of a loving network. Battle (2002) argued that if youth had the resources of being connected to a mentor and/or role model, he or she would have a greater awareness of how to maintain his or her health. In learning to maintain his or her health, adolescence served as a good developmental time between childhood and adulthood for teens to

learn and practice healthy behaviors (Battle, 2002). Mentors and/or role models demonstrated the importance of support by facilitating the process by which teens thought about their future and indicated how to balance competing pressures and the demands of life (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003).

It was noteworthy to mention the constructs of the Life Course Theory/Life Course Perspective, Social Cognitive Theory and Social Support related to each other. As seen in the diagram (see figure 1), Social Cognitive Theory had constructs that related to each of the other concepts. Social Cognitive Theory related to the Life Course Theory through reciprocal determinism, individuals were able to change the course of their health outcomes and thereby affected the environment that was also affecting their health. Social Cognitive Theory was related to the Life Course Perspective because facilitation or having the skills necessary to reach goals can help to alter choices about health. Social Cognitive Theory related to Social Support by encouraging self-efficacy the belief that the individual can overcome adversity. The interaction between Social Cognitive Theory and Social Support included collective efficacy or the belief that the group has what it needs to reach goals and incentive motivation where Social Support served as a reward for urban African American adolescent males. Social Support related to the Life Course Theory because it may have served as a protective factor against negative influences that could potentially cause disease (Cassel, 1976). Social Support and the Life Course Theory were also related because social factors govern health outcomes (van Dyck, 2010). Furthermore, Social Support related to the Life Course Perspective because factors such as relationships and social change can influence health and thoughts about society.

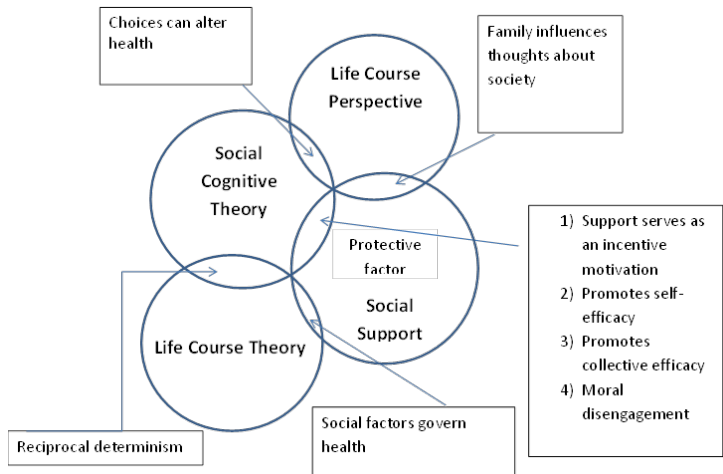


Figure 1 Relationship between Life Course Theory, Life Course Perspective, Social Support, and Social Cognitive Theory

2.6 SOCIAL CONTEXT

There were many individual level factors that determined health (Lee, 1992). However, in order to bring together the health significance of academic achievement for African American males during adolescence using social support from mentors and/or role models, their social determinants of health behavior had to be examined in relation to the greater social and material contexts. Using social determinants of health and the wider social structure was a more comprehensive way to look at the entire system that African American males exist in. Specifically, the social context explained the pathways that led downstream from social structure to health outcomes. Brunner and Marmot (2006) developed a model to explain the way social structure and material factors affected health, illness and death outcomes (see Figure 2). Their

model suggested that social and material factors influenced biological functions to cause disease. Specifically, social factors could dictate where an individual worked and what type of job they held (i.e. blue collar vs. white collar). Material resources would determine how much an individual would have to work in order to satisfy personal needs. Additionally, the specific occupation and duration or difficulty of work would influence wellbeing or even development of disease. For instance, material factors determined whether the individual could afford to maintain their health. Essentially, social and material factors were the upstream influences which Marmot (2006) described as the “causes of the causes” (p. 2). The downstream factors were psychology and individual health behaviors which impaired brain and bodily functions (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004; Priyadarshini & Aich, 2012). All of these factors were impacted by genetics, cultural factors and early life exposures to risk or protective factors. This model showed the pathways for how health was determined by the social and material factors which were also connected to environment, individual behavior, and both brain and bodily function (Brunner & Marmot, 2006).

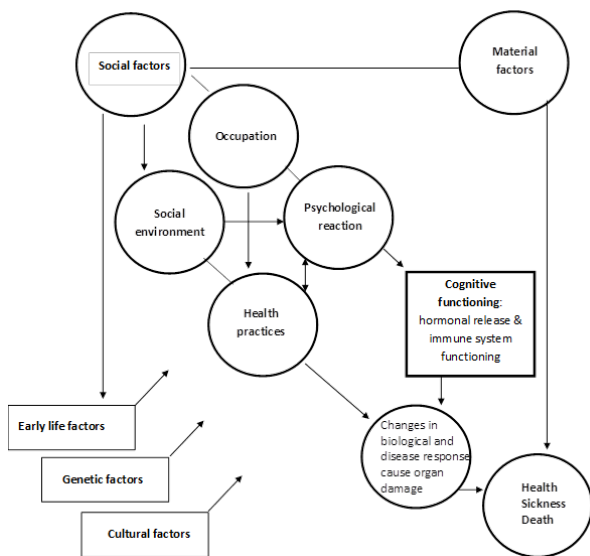


Figure 2 Adapted from Social Determinants of Health (Brunner & Marmot, 2006)

2.7 MENTORS, ROLE MODELS, AND NATURAL MENTORS

Mentors were described as individuals who were part of a formal or organized program that provided individual mentoring or mentoring to a group of adolescents (Holland, 1996). These were individuals who volunteered their time and were formally or systematically matched to a mentee (Royse, 1998). They were adults and teachers whom adolescents felt comfortable enough to discuss personal issues (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2002). They could also be responsible adults, professionals and respected community elder volunteers, "...who form[ed] nurturing authentic relationships" with adolescents (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006, p.51).

Role models were described as persons that adolescents "admire[d] or look[ed] up to" (Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002, p. 56). They were also described as individuals who served as a positive example (Gordon et al., 2009; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006). These individuals provided support and direction to adolescents (Holland, 1996; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). These were important individuals in the lives of adolescents and they shared their personal experiences, beliefs and modeled healthy behavior (Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003).

In addition to the terms mentor and role model, there was natural mentor. Natural mentors were described as coming out of established relationships (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012). Similar to formal mentors, natural mentors and role models also provided adolescents with support. Appraisal Social Support was expressed through encouragement and by helping African American adolescent males make difficult decisions (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Fortunately, most of the authors agreed that mentors, role models, and natural mentors inspired adolescents to do their best. Although, mentors were primarily described in the formal setting as part of an organized program, they were often used

interchangeably with role model (Holland, 1996; Gordon et al., 2009; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006).

Role models were described as providing positive relationships for adolescents in no particular setting and provided support and guidance (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro 2002). Therefore, role models and natural mentors were combined in this paper. Also, for the purpose of this paper all adults who engaged adolescents in positive relationships, whether formal or informal, were described as mentor and/or role model in this paper. The Background section presented the disproportionate disadvantages faced by African American males, the public health significance of increased academic performance in African American adolescent males and the importance of the Life Course and Social Cognitive Theories in understanding adolescent behaviors. It also presented the importance of perceived Social Support, the role of social context and the differences and similarities between mentors and role models in increasing the academic achievement of urban African American adolescent males.

2.8 CURRENT STUDY

The purpose of this paper was to conduct a systematic literature review to examine the relationship between adult mentors and/or role models, academic achievement, and subsequently the protective factors of mentoring and/or role modeling on urban African American adolescent males. The hypothesis was that the mentor and/or role model relationships increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males. The literature was explored to identify how adult expectations influenced academic achievement in urban African American

adolescent males, specifically in negative environmental circumstances and; how self-efficacy affected prolonged academic success.

3.0 METHODS

A systematic literature review was used to identify the benefits of African American male mentors and/or role models who were positive examples for urban African American adolescent males. Additionally, the research identified studies that examined the means by which the mentor/mentee and role model relationship increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males.

3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The five databases that were used to identify articles for inclusion were: Google Scholar, PubMed, PsycINFO, ERIC and Scopus. The Google Scholar search process, which included whole phrases such as, “program interventions that increase academic performance in African American teens”, yielded over two million results. After reading the top ten results, only one article was identified as appropriate.

During the PubMed and PsycINFO searches, a combination of terms were used “mentoring AND urban Black middle school male student” AND “academic performance” (see table 1). This search yielded 49 articles. Of those articles, 27 articles were discarded as not fulfilling the designated parameters. The articles were discarded because the participants were younger than 12 years old, older than 18 years old or the race of the mentor and/or role model

could not be identified. The ERIC search used a combination of key terms (see table 1) such as, “mentoring AND African American youth AND academic achievement”. The search yielded 13 articles. After a review of the abstracts, nine articles were discarded because they were dissertations or in press. There were four relevant articles that remained.

The Scopus search was completed under the guidance of a Public Health librarian. In the Scopus search database the same approach of using a combination of key terms was used to locate relevant articles. These specific terms were Black* OR African American AND adolescen* OR teen* OR youth AND mentor* OR “role model” OR “role models” AND male OR men OR boys” the search yielded 118 articles. After going over the articles, 40 articles were identified as being outside the criteria of this paper. These were articles that had women as the mentor, peers and siblings as mentors, or only girls as mentees. This left 78 articles and after reading these articles another 58 articles were eliminated. The articles were eliminated if the participants were too young, the area of the study was not in an urban setting, or mentees were nurses or other health sciences professionals. These five databases yielded a total of 173 articles. The final result left eight articles that satisfied the inclusion criteria.

Table 1 Search Terms

Adolescent	Mentor	African American	Men	Academic	Urban
Adolescent(s)	Mentor(s)	African American(s)		Academic Performance School	Urban Population
Youth Boys Males Adolescent males Teen(s) Urban Black Urban Black Middle School Student Adolescent(s)	Role Model(s) Positive Adult Mentoring Role Modeling	Black(s) Urban Black		Performance Academic(s) School Education	

3.1.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

There were specific inclusion and exclusion criteria for the articles. The articles included African American men who served as mentors and/or role models to urban African American adolescent males. Articles that had African American male mentors and/or role models of the same age as the mentee were excluded. The mentees had to be African American males between the ages of 12 to 18 years old or based on school grade levels 7th through 12th. The articles had to mention elements of support, self-efficacy and empowerment (facilitation). The adolescents, in the selected articles, had to live in an urban setting. The articles used were published between the years 1996 and 2012. Exceptions were made if the article provided relevant historical context. Mentoring programs focused only on preventing risk behaviors such as, drugs, alcohol and violence were included if they also discussed academic achievement. For the purpose of this research, youth were considered those who had not yet entered college. Therefore, articles that were not included were those that referenced college students (e.g. medical students, nursing students, graduate students etc.) as the beneficiaries of mentoring. Although some of the articles used did include females as participants, articles that focused only on females and/or mothers as recipients of mentoring were excluded.

4.0 RESULTS

The purpose of this paper was to conduct a systematic literature review to examine the relationship between mentors and/or adult role models, academic achievement, and subsequently the protective factors of mentors and/or role models for urban African American adolescent males. The hypothesis was that mentors and/or role models increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males. The literature was also explored to identify how positive adult expectations influenced school achievement in urban African American adolescent males, specifically in negative environmental circumstances and; how self-efficacy affected prolonged academic success.

A total of eight articles were identified in the literature search. These articles discussed the relationship between mentoring and/or role modeling of African American adolescent males and increase in academic achievement. Royse (1996) was the only article that did not find significant results for increased academic achievement in African American adolescent males. Gordon and colleagues (2009) and Washington and colleagues (2006) were the only two articles that examined programs that used Afro-centric thinking to inform the program. Three of the articles specifically mentioned Social Learning Theory (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002) and two articles used Resilience Theory (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009, Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Holland (1996) and Royse (1998) were the only authors who did not mention

theory or any specific paradigm. Three of these eight articles incorporated racial/ethnic identity as a factor in their study (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Lang 2006; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002). They all incorporated academic achievement or school attitudes and behaviors.

Hurd, Zimmerman, and Xue (2009) hypothesized that exposure to negative adult influences would increase an adolescents risk for negative outcomes. They predicted that having a role model would protect against negative psychosocial outcomes, contribute to positive psychosocial outcomes and having more role models would increase protective effects. Social Learning Theory and Resilience Theory were used to inform their hypothesis. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews of 659 African American 9th grade adolescents with a grade point average of 3.0 and below, 322 (49%) were male. These students came from several high schools in the greater Michigan area. The researchers measured externalizing behavior which was defined as violent and nonviolent delinquency, internalizing behavior, defined as anxious and depressive symptoms and school attitudes and behaviors. They also explored other outcomes including, if gender matching increased resilience and if parental or non-parental role models had a greater ability to reduce and/or protect against negative non-parental adult influences. There was no inclusion of culture or ethnic/racial identity (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009).

Hurd, Zimmerman, and Xue (2009) defined role models as a figure the adolescents could look up to. Their intention was to assess if negative influences from non-parental adults would model inappropriate or illegal behaviors to adolescents. They found that having a role model was associated with several positive outcomes. Specifically, the results showed that having a role model reduced the association between negative adult behavior and violent/non-violent delinquency, adolescents with two role models had no association between negative adult

influences and violent/non-violent delinquency, adolescents with two role models had no association between negative adult influences and anxious/depressive symptoms, role models reduced and protected against anxious/depressive symptoms and; role models increased positive school outcomes even when the adolescent was exposed to negative adult behavior (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009).

Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, and Caldwell (2012) hypothesized that natural mentors would be able to, increase adolescents' perceptions that race was part of their identity, promote positive perceptions about belonging to their race, encourage thinking positively about people of the same race, and influence perceptions about the importance of academic achievement and necessity of school for future success. They expected that use of racial/ethnic identity would foster group pride and increase awareness of membership as an African American. They used a theoretical mentoring model to inform their study. The model included: Public and Private Regard, and Centrality. Public regard was categorized as the way a person thought society viewed their race. Private regard was categorized as the person's positive and negative views about their race and about being a member of that race. Centrality was categorized as the way a person generally viewed themselves in reference to their specific race. Natural mentors were defined as, "adults from adolescents' preexisting social networks" (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012). The researchers implemented a three year longitudinal study. They conducted face-to-face interviews and used questionnaires for collecting sensitive information from 541 African American adolescents, with a GPA of 3.0 or lower, 48 (46%) were male. These participants came from an urban mid-western city (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012).

Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman and Caldwell (2012) measured if there was presence of a natural mentor, racial identity beliefs (i.e., public/private regard and centrality), and educational beliefs and attainment. Their intent was to show the protective effects of having a role model. They found several effects. Specifically, natural mentors were able to promote long-term academic achievement by increasing group pride, awareness of membership in a racial group and an increased regard for school importance (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012).

The Benjamin E. Mays Institute (BEMI) program was an in-school mentoring program that provided separate learning areas during each part of the day with instruction from male teachers. Gordon, Iwamoto, Ward, Potts, and Boyd (2009) hypothesized that, compared to controls, participants in the Benjamin E. Mays Institute program would have greater racial identity, higher identity with academic performance, and higher test scores. The researchers gave questionnaires and collected school records in order to study the differences in sixty-one 7th grade urban African American adolescent males, twenty-nine in the Benjamin E. Mays Institute program, compared to thirty-two students who were not participate in the program. It was expected that Afrocentric principles would increase leadership, self-esteem, responsibility, success, and self-discipline. The purpose of the study was to show how beliefs about academics, racial identity and mentoring in conjunction with Afrocentric ideals promote academic performance in boys. The researchers' hypotheses were confirmed. They found that adolescents who participated in the Benjamin E. Mays Institute program reported a higher level of racial identity, received higher grades and higher test scores. They also found that grades for students who did not participate in the program steadily declined over the course of the study (Gordon, Iwamoto, Ward, Potts, & Boyd, 2009).

Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, and Notaro (2002) hypothesized that support from a natural mentor would be a protective factor for adolescents displaying problem behaviors and there may be direct and indirect effects of having a natural mentor. Natural mentor was characterized as someone who provided support, guidance, helped with decision making and encourages them to give their best effort. They used Resiliency Theory to inform their research. They gave face-to-face interviews during school hours to 770 adolescents in a Midwestern city. Of these participants, 608 (79.6%) were African American and 291 (48.2%) were African American adolescent males. They measured presence of a natural mentor, problem behaviors, school attitudes, psychological distress, friends' problem behaviors, perceived problem behaviors, friends' school behavior, and perceived school attitude norms. There was no inclusion of culture or ethnic/racial identity. They found that natural mentors were able to reduce drug use and delinquency and increase attitudes about school. There was no effect on depression or anxiety (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002).

The Kuumba Group was a program for young African American males that used Afrocentric principles and spirituality to increase positive behaviors. Washington, Johnson, Jones, and Langs (2006) evaluated the effectiveness of the Kuumba Group method. The authors used the observational learning component of Social Learning Theory to guide their research. The researchers did pre and post measurements using group interviews and focus groups. The researchers interviewed six caregivers who were from Memphis, Tennessee. The researchers measured increase in spirituality using the Spirituality Orientation Scale. Culture was defined by the Afrocentric tenets of *Nguzo Saba*, which means seven principles. The mentors taught the adolescents lessons on the dynamics of positive African American manhood, healthy responses to oppression such as restraint and Black unity, and discussed the cultural differences among

African American (Washington, Johnson, Johns, & Langs, 2006). The researchers were able to identify a modest increase in spirituality, school attitudes and home behavior (Washington et al., 2006).

Project 2000 was an educational mentoring program that provided one-on-one mentoring over a five year period. Holland (1996) hypothesized that African American adolescent males needed guidance from positive African American men. There were 38 African American high school males in Washington, DC who participated. There was no inclusion of culture or ethnic/racial identity. The purpose was to report on academic performance due to Project 2000. He found that 33 (87%) of participants of Project 2000 had grade point averages of 2.0 or better, 22 (58%) had grade point averages of 2.5 or greater, and 9 (24%) had grade point averages greater than 3.0 (Holland, 1996).

Yancey, Siegel, and McDaniel (2002) hypothesized that adolescents with a role model would have better psychosocial coping skills and the more the mentor and mentee knew each other the stronger this effect. The researchers gave in-person interviews to 749 adolescents between the ages of 12 to 17, 391 (52%) were male and 101 were African American. These adolescents were in Los Angeles County, California. The researchers measured drug use, academic performance, ethnic identity, and self-esteem (Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002).

Yancey, Siegel, and McDaniel (2002) included ethnicity based on the principle that psychosocial functioning is linked to ethnic identity, ethnic identity is important when assessing group risk factors, and there is a relationship between ethnic identity and academic achievement. They found that higher income was predictive of having a role model. They stated that even when controlling for income, ethnicity was not related to having a role model. They found that parents and relatives were most often identified as a role model, followed by non-familial

individuals, and professionals. African American adolescent males were more likely to indicate media figures rather than individuals they knew. On average, males were more likely than females to identify media figures as role models. The majority (96%) of African American adolescent males picked role models who shared the same ethnicity. Ethnic identity was found to be linked to self-esteem. Those with mentors expressed greater school grades, had increased levels of self-esteem and indicated increased ethnic identity. Knowing the role model was associated with higher grades and increased self-esteem. Lastly, they found that the effect of having a role model was similar between groups based on gender and ethnicity (Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002).

The final study, the Brother's Project was the only mentoring study identified in the review with no significant findings (Royse, 1998). The Brother's Project was a mentoring program for African American adolescents who were below grade level in math, reading and science. Royse (1998) evaluated the Brother's Project to identify if the program had an impact on attitudes and behaviors of urban African American adolescent males. The outcomes evaluation compared a control group to an intervention group (matched with a mentor). Participants were given a series of questionnaires and attendance and behavior were identified through academic and discipline records. The participants were African American adolescent males ages 14 to 16, who were below grade level in math, reading and science and who were residing in Lexington, Kentucky (Royse, 1998).

Royse (1998) measured self-esteem, attitudes about drugs and alcohol, grade point average, school absences, and disciplinary infractions. There was no inclusion of culture or ethnic/racial identity. He found that the measures used to assess attitudes and behaviors showed no significant association with the mentoring program (Royse, 1998).

The purpose of this paper was to conduct a systematic literature review to examine the relationship between mentors and/or adult role models, academic achievement, and subsequently the influence of mentors and/or role models as protective factors for urban African American adolescent males. The hypothesis was that the ability of mentor and/or role model relationship increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males. The literature was also explored to identify how positive adult expectations influenced school achievement in urban African American adolescent males, specifically in negative environmental circumstances and; how self-efficacy affected prolonged academic success.

A total of eight articles were identified in the literature search. These articles discussed the relationship between mentoring and/or role modeling of African American adolescent males and increase in academic performance. Royse (1996) was the only article that did not find significant results for increased academic achievement in African American adolescent males. It also did not examine importance of racial/ethnic identity. Gordon and colleagues (2009) and Washington and colleagues (2006) were the only two articles that studied programs that used an Afro-centric framework to guide the program. Three of the articles specifically mentioned the observational learning component of Social Learning Theory (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002) and two articles used the Resilience Theory to guide their studies (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009, Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Holland (1996) and Royse (1998) were the only authors who did not mention theory or any specific framework. Three of these eight articles incorporated racial/ethnic identity as a factor in their study (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Lang 2006; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002). They all incorporated academic achievement or school attitudes and behaviors.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this paper was to conduct a systematic literature review to examine the relationship between mentors and/or adult role models, academic achievement, and subsequently the protective factors or mentors and/or role models on urban African American adolescent males. The hypothesis was that the ability of mentor and/or role model relationship increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males. The literature was also explored to identify how positive adult expectations influence school achievement in urban African American adolescent males, specifically in negative environmental circumstances and; how self-efficacy affected prolonged academic success.

The literature results indicated that mentors and/or role models were able to increase academic achievement in African American males and protected against negative influences. The following section includes how mentoring and role modeling increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males. Increased academics was a result of several different approaches, through use of cultural exploration, academic encouragement, improved psychosocial functioning, and by incorporating theory. The last part of the Discussion section was the limitations of the study.

5.1 THEMES COVERED BY LITERATURE SEARCH

There were three themes that emerged from the literature: cultural exploration, academic support and psychosocial functioning. Cultural exploration primarily described the importance of establishing pride by promoting African and African American ancestry and traditions (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006). Pride was also encouraged by increased racial/ethnic identity (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012). Academic support described techniques mentors and/or role models used such as teaching fundamentals of math, reading and science (Holland, 1996). In addition to emphasizing importance of school, mentors and/or role models also encouraged responsibility and self-determination (Gordon et al., 2009). Psychosocial functioning described the necessity of developing relationships and protecting against negative influences. These themes described the ways that mentors and/or role models affected urban African American adolescent males' academic achievement.

5.1.1 Cultural exploration

Two articles incorporated culture and increased racial/ethnic identity as a necessary component for urban African American adolescent males to gain respect for the achievements of people of color, instill racial pride and develop self-worth. These articles discussed Afro-centric thought as an approach that promoted ancestry, tradition and highlighted African contributions (Washington et al., 2006; Gordon et al., 2009). The authors argued that Afro-centric themes were important because it encouraged urban African American adolescent males to think about their history, as well as, to respect the accomplishments of people of color. Learning tradition created an appreciation of the customs that have existed for generations. Mentoring programs should

incorporate activities such as African dance to foster creative expression and to help adolescents understand the cultural contributions of past generations (Gordon et al., 2009).

In addition to historical achievements, racial/ethnic identity was also a part of culture in these two articles (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006; Gordon et al., 2009). Racial/ethnic identity was used as a way to increase awareness of what it meant to belong to a racial group and to think positively of other members of the same racial/ethnic group. Racial/ethnic identity also served as a way for adolescents to understand themselves and what that meant in the wider social context. By increasing racial/ethnic identity, adolescents were better able to deal with negative perceptions of their racial/ethnic group; subsequently, facilitating the desire to increase academic achievement (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002; Gordon et al., 2009). The authors argued that that racial/ethnic identity was associated with an increase in academic performance because there was a greater sense of pride and self-worth (Gordon et al., 2009; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002). The only study that did not have significant findings also did not include use of cultural exploration (Royse, 1996).

5.1.2 Academic support

Academic support included teaching specific school related subjects, such as math and reading, which made urban African American adolescent males better prepared to handle the challenges of school (Holland, 1996). All of the authors, with the exception of Royse (1998), made the argument that mentors and/or role models provided guidance, support and examples the adolescents could emulate (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002; Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Gordon et al., 2009; Hurd,

Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012; Holland, 1996; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002). Mentees were expected to maintain school performance, complete community projects and learn self-determination, leadership, self-control, unity, critical thinking, communication, and responsibility (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006). In five of the studies, mentors and/or role models integrated parents and/or teachers. This support, guidance and skill-building promoted the importance of school and improved urban African American adolescent males' school attitudes and behaviors (Gordon et al., 2009; Holland, 1996; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006; Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002).

Increased racial/ethnic identity was another component that improved academic achievement (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002; Gordon et al., 2009). The other was facilitation or to develop the skills necessary to handle academic challenges (Holland, 1998, Gordon et al., 2009). The authors showed that mentors were effective when promoting specific values such as, goal setting, positive self-esteem, and responsibility (Holland, 1998; Gordon et al., 2009; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006). A key aspect of the Afro-centric approach was it increased self-worth and self-efficacy. Specifically, these values were intended to promote leadership, motivation and self-discipline (Gordon et al., 2009; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006). Lastly, two authors found that mentors and/or role models who shared the same gender and race as the mentee was associated with increased academic achievement. Perhaps, having a mentor or role model who shared common characteristics and experiences, the adolescent changed their attitudes about school and their behavior during school (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002).

5.1.3 Psychosocial functioning

Psychosocial functioning was described as individual psychological behaviors that were expressed as a result of the wider social environment. Processes such as developing competent relationships improved psychosocial functioning. Additionally, depression, anxiety and delinquent behaviors were included as part of psychosocial functioning (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998; Bandura, Capara, Babaranelli, Gerbino, & Pastorelli, 2003). Two of the eight authors showed that mentors and/or role models could reduce the effects of negative behaviors such as carrying guns, alcohol use, arson and theft. They also argued that urban African American adolescent males who had a mentor and/or role model had healthier psychosocial functioning because their mentor and/or role model acted as a protective factor against negative influences (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002; Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009). Depression, anxiety, and delinquency were psychosocial factors that were also improved by the presence of at least two mentors and/or role models (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009). Mentors and/or role models influenced psychosocial behaviors by being there for the adolescent in difficult times, sharing personal experiences and teaching positive ways to deal with negative social perceptions of African American males. Mentors and/or role models helped the urban African American adolescent males discover purpose, faith, adult and peer relationships, creativity, self-esteem and identity (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006; Gordon et al., 2009). The increased psychosocial functioning may have equipped the adolescents to be more capable of dealing with pressures from their negative external environment (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009).

Each of the themes cultural exploration, academic support and psychosocial functioning were interrelated (see figure 1). Racial/ethnic identity and self-efficacy (the belief you can

overcome adversity) was influenced by developing elements of pride, purpose, and unity through informational and perceived social support from mentors (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006). Increase in racial/ethnic identity was linked to increase in academic achievement by perceiving social support (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012). This emotional and informational social support could be seen as a reward for the adolescent males (Gordon et al., 2009). Furthermore, mentors and/or role models were able to provide academic support and reduce anxiety and depression by serving as a protective factor against negative influences (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009).

5.2 THEORIES

The results of the literature review were compatible with the Life Course Theory, the Social Cognitive Theory and Social Support. Each article highlighted the importance of developing positive behaviors during adolescence. Adolescence was difficult because teens dealt with many external pressures from parents, school, peers and policy makers (Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2011). Fortunately, mentors and/or role models were able to reduce and protect the adolescents from negative influences (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002).

Social Learning Theory was mentioned by Washington and colleagues (2006), Hurd, Zimmerman, and Xue (2009), and Yancey, Siegel, and McDaniel (2002). It was necessary to mention that Social Cognitive Theory developed from the Social Learning Theory. Social Cognitive Theory improved Social Learning Theory by incorporating social disciplines such as positive psychology to further explain the processes of cognition, observational communication

and experiences associated with behavior change (Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). Washington et al. (2006) showed that adolescents learned when mentors and/or role models showed them how to engage in healthy behaviors (e.g. observational learning). Hurd, Zimmerman, and Xue (2009) and Yancey, Siegel, and McDaniel (2002) reported that urban African American adolescent males benefited from mentors and/or role models they shared the same gender, race/ethnicity, and/or experiences. Although the other five articles did not specifically name Social Cognitive Theory, they each shared one or more of its many constructs. The mentees were taught knowledge and skills which was facilitation (Holland, 1996; Gordon et al., 2009). Mentees learned skills such as self-determination and responsibility to regulate their individual behavior which is self-regulation (Washington, Johnson, Jones & Langs, 2006). Mentors and/or role models showed adolescence the importance of education to improve their current environment which was reciprocal determinism. Mentors and/or role models promoted the usefulness of school which was outcome expectations (Holland, 1996; Gordon et al., 2009). Mentors and/or role models were able to affect mentees' belief in their ability to overcome academic and social challenges which was self-efficacy (Gordon et al, 2009). Lastly, mentors and/or role models encouraged and supported adolescents while also reducing the negative influences of adults and peers which was incentive motivation (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002; Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009). Mentors and/or role models also prevented moral disengagement by encouraging racial/ethnic identity (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002; Gordon et al., 2009).

5.3 LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations of this study. In reference to generalizability, the focus of this paper was increased academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males and the protective factors of mentors and/or role models. Therefore, these results could not provide any inferences about the effects of mentoring and/or role models to increase academic achievement or serve as protective factors in other minority males or other disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, by excluding college students, there was little mention of the long term effects of having mentors and/or role models on the long term effects on academic achievement. Another limitation is that self-efficacy was not examined in the articles. However, the four types of Social Support and the Afro-centric themes described in the literature may work to promote self-efficacy by encouraging self-determination, self-control, responsibility and pride. Another limitation was that the researchers focused little attention on the material environment or where the adolescents lived. Also, the researchers gave no attention to the protective effect of mentors and/or role models on adult health outcomes. There should be more literature on the lasting effects that mentors and/or role models have on long-term health outcomes. Finally, literature reviews are limited because the methods and focus of the study have already been determined by another researcher. Given the topic of interest, it could be difficult to identify research studies that target the specific goals of the researcher engaging in a literature review. A more preferable method would have been to carry out an evaluation of how much African American adolescent males gained (e.g. self-efficacy, greater social networks, healthy behaviors) from having mentors and/or role models.

5.4 FUTURE STUDIES

The current results showed that mentoring and role modeling could have an influence on the development of adolescents and their academic achievement. The objective of this study was to examine mentor and/or role model relationships ability to increase academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males. The literature was also explored to identify how adult expectations influenced academic achievement in urban African American adolescent males, specifically in negative environmental circumstances and; how self-efficacy affected prolonged academic success. Overall, the first two objectives were met. The third objective of self-efficacy for long term academic success was not identified. However, the four types of Social Support and the Afro-centric themes described in the literature may work to promote self-efficacy by encouraging self-determination, self-control, responsibility and pride.

Future research should incorporate more use of outcomes and process evaluation. An outcomes evaluation would be able to identify if one particular mentoring and/or role modeling approach is more effective in certain groups. For instance, is mentoring more effective in minorities or non-minorities, males or females, or disadvantaged groups or advantaged groups. It would also be able to describe which mentoring and/or role modeling method had the greatest benefit. A process evaluation would explain *how* the increase in academic achievement occurred. Specifically, it could identify how formal mentoring programs were implemented, how mentors were trained and any issues the program mentors encountered, or the behaviors role models and natural mentors did that promoted the greatest increases in academic achievement. The benefit of this would be for replicating these effects in other urban African American adolescent males. More attention should be given to mentoring and/role modeling from the mentee's perspective. The articles discussed African American adolescent males, but did not provide enough

information as to what these adolescents identified as important in their relationship with their mentor and/or role model or how they thought that relationship improved their academics, perceptions of self, and their health behaviors. Lastly, in contrast to the other seven articles, the inability of Royse (1998) to find significant results suggests that future studies should examine the consequences of inadequately implemented mentoring and/or role modeling interventions, the effects of negative mentors and/or role models, and the impact of not including racial/ethnic identity. Four of the eight articles included a reference to culture or racial/ethnic identity (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2009; Gordon et al., 2009; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006; Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002). Therefore, future research should consider the benefits of culturally centered mentoring and/or role modeling initiatives. Increasing racial/ethnic identity and sense of pride was linked to greater school outcomes for an extended period of time. Perhaps, mentors and/or role models increase positive thoughts about race and self-efficacy if the individual has affirmation that their racial/ethnic group is capable of achievement (Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2009). It is noteworthy to mention that mentors and/or role models who have the same racial/ethnic characteristics as their mentees may serve as a mini representation of the approach of Afro-centric programs (Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002).

6.0 CONCLUSION

The information presented in this paper leads to several conclusions about the relationship between mentors and/or role models and urban African American adolescent males; as well as, their connection to academic achievement, and mentors and/or role models protective influence. One conclusion that can be made is that mentoring and/or role modeling could increase academic achievement by providing urban African American adolescent males with much needed emotional, appraisal and informational social support from positive adults. Secondly, mentors and/or role models were able to reduce and protect against negative influences (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002; Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009). Thirdly, it is noteworthy to mention that themes of cultural development and racial/ethnic identity, academic support, and addressing psychosocial functions emerged.

Mentoring and/or role modeling relationships increased academic performance in urban African American adolescent males in three ways. The relationship between mentor and mentee fostered increase in racial/ethnic identity (Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel, 2002). Academic achievement was increased by providing academic support and encouragement (Holland, 1996; Gordon et al., 2009). Lastly, mentors and/or role models were able to reduce negative behaviors (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002).

The literature results showed that mentors and/or role models were able to reduce, as well as, serve as a protective factor against negative influences from non-parental adults and peers

(Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Additionally, mentors and/or role models were able to increase factors such as school attachment and importance of school even when there were negative influences present (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2002). Although, self-esteem was discussed, there was no mention of self-efficacy in any of the articles. There was only one article that mentioned efficacy and that was school efficacy (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Therefore, future research could examine if the skills and techniques mentors and/or role models taught urban African American adolescent such as self-determination, self-control and leadership worked to increase self-efficacy or the belief that adolescents have the ability to overcome challenges. There should also be further inclusion of the Resilience Theory and a focus on the long term positive effects of mentoring and/or role modeling on adult health outcomes.

Perhaps, for formal mentoring and role modeling (e.g. one-on-one and group) programs to be effective they should specifically recruit college students, teachers, professionals, and community leaders as mentors who mirror the same racial and gender characteristics as their mentees. Mentor and/or role models could strengthen existing resilience factors in youth if they are systematically trained based on the concept of a theory such as observational learning (Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue, 2009). This approach may also allow mentors and/or role models to increase knowledge and perceptions of racial/cultural identify, promote future school success, and incorporate both family members and teachers (e.g. create social capital and increase trust) (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2006, Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell, 2012). In order for informal mentoring (e.g. natural mentors) and role modeling to be effective there should be positive examples of success and guide urban African American adolescent males through difficult decisions by sharing their experiences with adversity (Washington, Johnson,

Jones, & Langs, 2006). Finally, given the limited amount of generalizable information available, there needs to be more research to identify the specific ways mentoring improves educational attainment and to establish the amount of interaction needed between mentors and mentees to impact academic achievement.

This paper discussed the need to reduce negative health outcomes in urban African American adolescent males. Subsequently, reducing these health risks during adolescence may reduce the health disparities faced by African American men. By having African American male mentors and/or role models, urban African American adolescent males may be better equipped for improved academic achievement. This academic achievement may be affected by mentors and/or role models who are able to increase racial/ethnic identity, provide support and help increase self-efficacy, self-determination and perceptions of school importance.

APPENDIX: RESULTS CHART

The purpose of this chart is to display the results from each of the eight articles found.

Table 2. Results Chart

Author/ Program	Participation/Location	Items Measured	Intervention	Racial/Ethnic ID or Culture	Hypothesis	Results
Hurd, Zimmerman, & Xue (2009)	659 African American (AA) 9th grade adolescents in Michigan with GPA 3.0 & below, 322 (49%) male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externalizing behavior: violent & nonviolent delinquency • Internalizing behavior: anxious & depressive symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attitudes & behaviors • Explored if gender matching increased resilience • If parental or non-parental had greater ability to reduce or protect against negative influences 	Self-esteem, Attitudes about drugs & alcohol, GPA, School absences, & Disciplinary infraction	No	Social Learning Theory & Resilience Theory Hypothesis 1) Exposure to negative adult influences increase adolescents risk for negative outcomes 2) role model (RM) protects against negative behavioral outcomes & contributes to positive behavioral outcomes 3)more RM increased protective effects	RM assoc. with positive outcomes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced assoc. b/w negative adult behavior & violent/non-violent delinquency • 2 RM no assoc. between negative adult influences & violent/non-violent delinquency or anxious/depressive symptoms • Reduced & protected against anxious/depressive symptoms • Increased positive school outcomes when adolescent was exposed to negative adult behavior

Table 2 Continued

Author/ Program	Participation/Location	Items Measured	Intervention	Racial/Ethnic ID or Culture	Hypothesis	Results
Hurd, Sánchez, Zimmerman, & Caldwell (2012)	541 AA adolescents in urban Midwestern city GPA of 3.0 or lower & 248 (46%) males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of NM • Racial identity beliefs: public/private regard & centrality • Educational beliefs & attainment 	3 yr Longitudinal study: face- to-face interviews & questionnaires	Established group pride & increased awareness of membership as AA	Theoretical Mentoring Model includes: Public/Private Regard & Centrality. • Natural mentors (NM) increase adolescents’ perceptions race is part of identity, promote positive perceptions of belonging to race & positive thinking about others of same race• NM able to influence perceptions on importance of academic achievement & necessity of school for future success	NM promote long- term academic achievement by increasing group pride awareness of membership in racial group & increased regard for school importance.
Gordon, Iwamoto, Ward, Potts, & Boyd (2009) The Benjamin E. Mays Institute (BEMI)	61 7th grade AA males in Hartford, CT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial identity attitudes • Identification with academics • GPA • Connecticut Mastery test to assess math & reading skills 	RM & mentoring to impact intellectual, spiritual, physical, & social needs of participants. • Wkly 1-on-1 mentoring & activities • Educational sessions from AA men •Professional dress 1 day per wk & host community professional • Events so parents & faculty interact w/ mentor & mentee	Afrocentric principles & values increase leadership, self- esteem, responsibility, success, & self- discipline. Promotes ownership of academic performance.	Afrocentric framework. Hypothesis: Compared to controls, participants in BEMI program greater racial identity, identity with academic performance, & test scores	Hypothesis confirmed. Grades for students who did not participate in program steadily declined over course of study

Table 2 Continued

Author/ Program	Participation/Location	Items Measured	Intervention	Racial/Ethnic ID or Culture	Hypothesis	Results
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly parent & board meetings • Used Sankofa (Afrocentric values) • Mentees completed community proj., learned African dance & maintained academics 			
Zimmerman, Bingenheimer & Notaro (2002)	770 adolescents in Midwestern city: 608 (79.6%) were AA & 291(48.2%) were AA males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of NM • Problem behaviors • School attitudes • Psychological distress • Friends’ problem behaviors • Perceived problem behaviors • Friends’ school behavior • Perceived school attitude norms of NM, problem behavior 		No	Resiliency Theory. Hypothesis: support from NM protective factor for adolescents displaying problem behaviors & may be direct & indirect effects of having NM.	NM reduced problem behaviors (drug use & delinquency) increased school attitudes. No effect on depression or anxiety.
Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Lang (2006) The Kuumba Group	6 adolescents boys from Memphis, TN living with caregiver other than parent	Spirituality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group therapeutic services e.g. recreational activities • Grp mentoring -10 wk, 90 min sessions, facilitate info processing, “support culturally centered experiences”, develop coping skills, critical thinking & teach healthy relationships • Recruit mentors eg “social workers, educators, mental health practitioners, college 	Lessons on dynamics of positive AA manhood, discussed AA "cultural uniqueness & development", taught healthy responses to oppression-restraint & black	Utilized modeling component of Social Learning Theory. Spirituality will serve as a mode to increase positive behaviors.	Identified a modest increase in spirituality as well as school attitudes & home behavior

Table 2 Continued

Author/ Program	Participation/Location	Items Measured	Intervention	Racial/Ethnic ID or Culture	Hypothesis	Results
			<p>students, relatives & community elders”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train mentors on age specific developmental stages & obj • Training included spiritual nature of connection b/w mentor & mentee • Mentors discussed negative valuation of AA men, racial socialization & shared life experiences (i.e. incarceration, racism, gang involvement, fatherhood) • Implemented “Nguzo Saba”- 7 principles unity, self-determination, collective work & responsibility, co-operative economics, purpose, creativity & faith 	unity		

Table 2 Continued

Author/ Program	Participation/Location	Items Measured	Intervention	Racial/Ethnic ID or Culture	Hypothesis	Results
Holland (1996) Project 2000	53 AA male adolescents in Washington, DC	Academic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic mentoring & support • Personal development assistance • Psychological counseling • Mentors fostered initiative, persistence, & creativity • 10-wk interpersonal skills seminar: goal setting, hygiene, self-esteem, substance abuse prevention, suicide & STIs • 10-wk leadership development seminar: test taking, academic achievement 		AA male adolescents need guidance from positive AA men	Participants had sig. higher grades & test scores, than those who did not participate. Boys & girls did not differ, but boys who did vs did not participate had higher grades & test scores.
Yancey, Siegel, & McDaniel (2002)	749 adolescents in Los Angeles County, ages of 12-17.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug use • academic performance • ethnic identity • self-esteem 	In-person interviews	Principle that psychosocial functioning linked to ethnic identity, ethnic identity important assessing group risk factors, & there is relationship between ethnic identity &	Hypothesis: Adolescents with RM have better psychosocial coping skills & greater mentor & mentee know each other stronger the effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher income is predictive of having RM • Controlling for income, ethnicity not related to having RM • Parents & relatives most often identified as RM, next non-familial, & professionals • AA more likely to indicate media figures

Table 2 Continued

Author/ Program	Participation/Location	Items Measured	Intervention	Racial/Ethnic ID or Culture	Hypothesis	Results
				academic goals		than those they know <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Males more likely than female to identify media figures as RM • 96% of AA pick RM of same ethnicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic identity linked to self-esteem • Expressed greater school grades, increased levels of self-esteem & increased ethnic identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing RM associated with higher grades & increased self-esteem • RM effect similar between groups based on gender & ethnicity
Royse (1998)	AA adolescents Lexington, Kentucky (14-16) from single parent household who were below grade level in math, reading & science	Self-esteem, Attitudes about drugs & alcohol, GPA, School absences, & disciplinary infractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes evaluation: control group vs intervention (group matched with mentor) • Completed questionnaires • Obtained school records (attendance, behavior & discipline records) 			Measures used to assess attitudes & behaviors showed no sig. association with mentoring program

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