

SOCIALIZATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: AN EXPLORATION OF ONLINE RACE-
RELATED EXPERIENCES AND BLACK YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) aides in shaping ethnic-racial identity (ERI) and contributes to Black youth's well-being. No study was found to consider contemporary ERS agents, especially with advanced technologies. The goal of this dissertation was to explore the role social media plays in transmitting ERS themes and the impact those themes have on Black youth's ERI. Findings revealed that social media is an ERS agent that impacts Black youth's ERI and that race related messages online have implication on Black youth's well-being. Furthermore, results show variations in ERS themes transmitted on social media and that ERS themes have different impacts on ERI subtypes. Implications for practice, interventions, and research are provided.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to me, Daphne Jasmine Hill. You have never forgot to dream and work hard toward anything you wanted. In keeping God first, you have been armed with strength and courage to attack any task in front of you. This dissertation is a sample of the hard work you have dedicated to your education and your future. Dreams do come true!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social media has added to the complexities of environmental interactions that impact youth's development. The ecological framework recognizes that youth development is influenced by different factors within an environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Adolescence is a unique developmental stage where experiences and interactions with oneself, other individuals, and the environment shape individual growth. Youth in the adolescence stage of development are in search of who they are and how they fit into society. By engaging with others in one's environment, youth receive validation or invalidation of thoughts and beliefs. Youth depend on their environment and those in it to answer their self-inquiries. Interactions with other individuals inform self-exploration and can inspire or extinguish who one is or wants to be (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

During adolescence, peer relationships take an important role in self-exploration. It is at this stage in child development that messages from parents that were verbally or behaviorally expressed to their children directly and indirectly are met with diverse messages from peer relationships. Youth use their peers to challenge existing perceptions about oneself and the world initially created by parent socialization. Peers have diverse identities that have been influenced by their own diverse environmental interactions. Youth's diverse identities comprise of what one has learned or accepted to like and dislike, as well as what one believes and values. The interactions with peers begin to have influence on one's perception of current and future identities by challenging embedded parental socialization messages.

Parents of color have an innate instinct to transmit their cultural norms, beliefs, and traditions to their children to maintain their own cultural values. Cultural conversations also promote positive self-identity development (Huguley et al., 2019). Black families engage in conversations about race that are induced by race related experiences. In addition, it has been found that Black families initiate ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) earlier than other ethnic-racial groups making ethnicity and race more salient to Black youths' identity (Phinney, 1996). Studies of parental ERS show that conversations between parents and their children about racial experiences produce positive and negative effects. For examples, studies have shown that discussions about social inequalities and injustices, promote high self-esteem, racial pride, and preparation for bias (Huguley et al., 2019; Spencer, 2006; Wang et al., 2020). While early ERS can strengthen Black youths' consciousness of race relations (Benner et al., 2018; Phinney, 1996), this detection has shown to have positive and negative impacts on their ethnic-racial identity (ERI) development (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017).

Overall, parental ERS has consistently been positively associated with healthy ERI development (Brittian Loyd & Williams, 2017; Wang et al., 2020). However, ERS is not limited to parents as the source. Youth can be exposed to different ethnic-racial messages through peers, teachers, and others in their community in various settings (e.g., school, organizations, sports). Different sources of information within one's environment will continue to challenge and reform beliefs, thoughts, and ideas, specifically as it relates to forming one's ERI. These other sources of ERS have shown to promote identity exploration and a greater sense of group membership (Byrd & Ahn, 2020; Byrd & Legette, 2022).

In the past, ERS sources have been somewhat controlled and limited geographically and to in-person interactions. However, with advancements in technology youth have access to

information that can impact their ERI by means of television, cellphones, and the internet. Of interest in the current study is social media as a source of ERS. Social media diminishes the barriers between social contexts that are not in youths' immediate environment.

Social media has added to the complexities of how the different environmental systems can interact with one another and affect child development. Now, youth have access to different forms of information and communication that allow them to interact with others globally, eliminating geographical limitations and furthering exposure to different sociocultural backgrounds. Social media platforms give space for all users to express themselves, as well as entertain, network, and advertise. Although great for advertising and spreading information quickly, some have cautioned about the overreliance of social media and technology for youth (Berryman et al., 2018; Riehm et al., 2019). Given the amount of time youth spend on social media platforms, and the different motivators of social media use, social media has become an influential socialization environment.

Social media platforms allow for individuals from all around the world to be users and content producers. Individuals when online are able to dynamically share, post, and comment on content using different platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to name a few. Further, information online has the possibility to be reposted increasing indirect exposure and interactions. The content online circulates quickly and widely by online users with diverse opinions and interests shaped by different experiences and narratives. Social media usage is most prevalent among young people and now plays an important role in youth identity exploration.

Adolescents, regardless of demographic characteristics, have reported being online on a constant basis each day (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). It has been found that Black youth consume more time on social media (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Byrd & Ahn, 2020). This is made possible

with internet access on mobile devices and technology-based tools and interactive activities utilized in schools (Devi et al., 2019). Youth use social media as a method to build and maintain relationships, as well as to obtain news information and be entertained (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). The content online, pictures or text, can be truth, misinformation, and/or interpreted contrary to its intent. The online experience youth have, contribute to their identity exploration which includes the formation of their ERI.

In general, social media exposes online users to diverse experiences as other online users are within- and across- ethnic-racial group membership with different thoughts and beliefs. Stornainolo and Thomas (2017) found that Black youth tend to follow accounts that reflect their ERI. However, it has been found that Black youth are more willing to follow people and pages of individuals that they know directly and indirectly, as well as people and pages of individuals that they do not know at all compared to their counterparts (Byrd & Ahn, 2020; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). Online accounts can be used for personal disclosure and created as a page for business promotion or themed based content only. In the current study, “people” refer to online users who have social media accounts that portray their lives as an individual. “Pages” include little to no content about the person that is managing the account and is promoting a topic or idea. In considering Black youth’s tendency to follow personally known and unknown individuals, we can assume Black youth interact with others from diverse ethnic-racial membership and experiences.

With diverse interactions online, youth can explore their ERI; however, these interactions can have positive and negative ramifications. Youth have reported positive implications of social media usage. Youth use social media to connect with family and friends and find others with similar interests (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Particularly salient to Black youth, social media has

increased exposure to celebrating beauty, power, and resilience of Black men and women (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). In addition, social media gives a platform for positive Black representation and successes that have shown to have a positive impact on Black ERI development (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Contrary to positive implications of social media usage, online platforms also create a space for negative encounters.

Youth have reported direct and indirect negative online experiences. Studies have found that youth have experienced direct bullying, discrimination, microaggressions, and pressure to portray themselves contrary to their realities on social media (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Berryman et al., 2018). Indirectly youth are at risk for vicarious trauma from the spread of negative global events. As of late, the elevated presence of online content exposing differential treatment and devaluation of Black men and women in the workplace and community settings is constantly shared and reposted. While awareness to injustice can increase awareness of views of one's ethnic-racial group and increase civic engagement (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017), it can also provoke feelings of distress (Liu et al., 2016). Also, posts and information can be altered by the online user and be interpreted by other online users based on their own experiences and connections to online content. Whether direct or indirect, social media content can create positive experiences or various traumatic stress impacting daily functioning.

Given that Black youth spend more time online compared to their peers (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Byrd & Ahn, 2020) they increase their risk to negative online content and impose a need to understand how social media interactions impact youth mental health. ERS and ERI paired together can lead to regulation of one's emotions and behaviors that are triggered by online interactions. While social media may pose as a threat to the psychological well-being of Black youth, ERI may prove to be a protective factor against adverse experiences online, as it

has proven to be for off-line experiences (Oyserman et al., 2007; Phinney, 1996; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Extending from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST; Spencer et al., 1997; Spencer et al., 1997) emphasizes youth's identity development from a cultural ecological perspective. Spencer's PVEST is a human developmental framework that acknowledges that interactions within and between ecological systems play an important role in identity formation, specifically, micro-level and macro-level systems. Micro-level factors include perceived relationships and interactions between the child and immediate surroundings, such as parents, school, peers, and neighborhood. Macro-level factors refer to distal relationships and interactions between the child and society, which include cultural values, customs, laws and policies. Interactions between and within micro-level and macro-level factors impact youth' identity development.

During adolescence, youths' identity becomes more salient and in turn heightens their self-consciousness within their social contexts in the micro- and macro-level systems. Phenomenological experience is central to youth's identity development as they become progressively aware of social contexts and how they fit into those spaces (Spencer et al., 1997). With maturation comes cognitive changes that integrate and internalize ideologies and beliefs that are directly and indirectly taught and reinforced by multiple sources in different systems. This identity development is shaped by how the individual youth is treated in the world that is largely influenced by structures of power and social positioning. Through these experiences, youth form behavioral and emotional responses and coping mechanisms for their social systems (Spencer et al., 1997).

PVEST is especially relevant for youth as their self-awareness extends to their experience as a racial being. PVEST is a culturally sensitive theoretical framework that considers the differences of diverse groups and how their experiences may differ. The PVEST approach includes contextual, cultural, and developmental variables to better understand the Black youth experience (Spencer et al., 1997). The phenomenological experiences of Black youth impact how they experience, interpret, and respond to ethnic-racial group membership.

Spencer argues that regardless of ethnic-racial group membership, everyone encounters risks and supports (Spencer et al., 1997). For members of marginalized ethnic-racial groups, those risks and supports can look different from their counterparts. Black youth experience challenges and external stressors based on their ERI within and across social contexts. Different supports to risk factors shape positive mental health outcomes. Specific to Black youth, ERS has been shown to be a protective factor in positive ERI development, reduced maladaptive coping, and increased self-esteem (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020).

The current study is examining ERS themes disseminated online through social media platforms. PVEST fits the current study to understand the Black youth experience online considering cultural and developmental aspects. Social media is considered a micro-level factor as it is a molar activity within the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that also is a method to interlock micro-level and macro-level factors. The racial framework includes ERS as it relates to ERI. Further, inadequate amounts of research have explored social media as a factor in ERI formation for Black youth populations.

Current Study

The current study explored the ERS themes Black high school students experience on social media and how this influences their ERI. This study analyzed the participants' experiences

within the larger context of online platforms to encapsulate youth's online experiences and understand the impact social media has on youth's mental health. A general conceptual model based on the current study is provided below (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

General Conceptual Mod



This research adds to the literature on ERS and ERI, as well as exploring the impact of social media interactions have on Black youth's well-being. The following are the research questions for the current study:

1. What ERS themes are Black youth exposed to on social media?
2. How do online ERS themes influence Black youth's ERI?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review aims to understand Black youth experiences online and how these experiences impact their ethnic-racial identity (ERI) and well-being. The research discussed below underlines general then specific implications for Black youth for the areas of ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) and ERI. Understanding the existing literature clarifies the importance of the factors for this study, as well as identifies the contribution the current study gives to these specific areas of research.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization

ERS is the process of providing information, directly and indirectly, about ethnicity and race from adults to children (Huguley et al., 2019). Specific messages about practices, knowledge, and values about ethnicity and race can be relayed to children from different sources, such as parents, peers, and schools to name a few (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Spencer et al., 1997). Socialization encapsulates multiple agents communicating information that is then interpreted based on one's own experiences, beliefs, and knowledge. The literature suggests that ERS has important implications for youth' ERI development which impact personal values, behaviors, and expectations for oneself (Huguley et al., 2019).

As it relates to the interest of the current study, no study has focused on socialization practices in the context of social media. However, much of the literature has identified common themes of parental ERS. ERS themes are cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Cultural socialization refers to messages promoting positive ethnic-racial pride. Preparation for bias involves preparing

youth with emotional and behavioral coping mechanisms to utilize when faced with discrimination. Promotion of mistrust is the teaching of distrust for other ethnic-racial groups. Lastly, egalitarian messages emphasize ethnic-racial equality across ethnic-racial groups and acceptance of diversity.

Cultural socialization is the most widely researched ERS theme (Huguley et al., 2019). Cultural socialization refers to the collection of approaches promoting cultural pride and knowledge through the teachings of cultural customs, history, heritage, and belonging (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Some examples of cultural socialization include discussing cultural figures and historical accomplishments of same-raced members. Further examples include exposure to culturally relevant books, artifacts, music, foods, language, and holidays related to one's cultural group.

Cultural socialization has been found to be salient in parenting practices, as parents find it important to teach their children the values and history of their identified cultural group (Huguley et al., 2019). Messages promoting cultural socialization have been positively associated with academics, social functioning, mental health, and ERI formation for children of color. Cultural socialization messages are also conveyed through academic courses, peers, community members and organizations (Brittian Loyd & Williams, 2017; Byrd & Legette, 2022). For studies that have focused on non-parental socialization sources, cultural socialization messages continue to have a positive effect on ERI development and positive attitudes toward people of different ethnicities and races.

Preparation for bias is the second most common ERS theme to be studied, specifically with parents as the source of these messages (Huguley et al., 2019). This ERS theme transmits messages to promote awareness of discrimination and prepare to cope with differential treatment

(Huguley et al., 2019). Preparation for bias messages can be operationalized in two ways: 1) information that brings awareness of bias and race related issues and provide actual skills to cope with possible experiences and 2) practices taken in response to discriminatory experiences in preparation for future encounters (Wang et al., 2020).

Although the prevalence of discussion relevant to preparation for bias varies across ethnic-racial groups, it has been commonly found that parents of color engage in conversations pertaining to this ERS theme (Huguley et al., 2019). Preparation for bias socialization can be triggered by parents' past and current experiences, as well as race related issues that may arise in their children's life. Specifically for Black families, preparation for bias dialog is important for their children to understand racial barriers given the historical treatment of Black populations (Huguley et al., 2019). Studies have shown preparation for bias messages to be correlated with youth's high self-esteem and awareness of racial differences (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020).

The literature surrounding the effects of preparation for bias messages is mixed for academic success, mental health outcomes, and ERI development. It is important to consider moderating variables when considering the implications of preparation for bias messages. For example, developmental age, assessment tools, and the socialization source have been found to moderate implications of preparation for bias messages (Byrd & Ahn, 2020; Byrd & Legette, 2022, Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020).

The promotion of mistrust is used to describe practices that caution the intentions of members outside of one's ethnic-racial group (Huguley et al., 2019). Promotion of mistrust messages differentiate from preparation for bias messages as they contain no advice for coping with or managing discrimination. Promotion of mistrust practices communicate awareness of

barriers to success, avoidance of other groups in different contexts (e.g., not dating outside race, using same-race physicians), and skepticism of relationships with outside group members.

Despite reports suggesting promotion of mistrust is not a salient ERS theme for parent practices (Wang et al., 2020), many studies have shown that parents transmit these messages to their children, especially if the parents are foreign born (Park et al., 2020; Woo et al., 2020) or if the parents have experienced discrimination themselves (Grills et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2020). For Black families, it is commonly the latter (Grills et al., 2016). Promotion of mistrust messages have been negatively associated with academic self-esteem, prosocial behaviors, adjustment, and ERI development (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020).

Lastly, egalitarian is the ERS theme that refers to promoting success in society and inclusion (Huguley et al., 2019). Other researchers have operationalized egalitarianism as success in coping with actual or potential racial stressors (Wang et al., 2020). Some historical studies that interviewed Black parents reported that they engaged in egalitarian practices by emphasizing hard work, virtue, self-acceptance, and equality (Wang et al., 2020). The current study defines egalitarianism as promoting and accepting diversity within the context of people, successes, and ideologies.

There are concerns in the literature that egalitarian messages are centered on color-blind values and assimilation to mainstream norms; however, egalitarianism can capture promotion of values and ethnics without rejection of ethnic-racial ideologies (Wang et al., 2020). It is possible that parents can successfully promote values-based egalitarian ideals in conjunction to cultural socialization. Studies suggest that promoting positive success ideologies with your ethnic-racial group over assimilation beliefs may be the reason that egalitarian messages are shown to promote academic success and positive ERI (Huguley et al., 2019).

Although ERS has been found to be present in parenting practices across different ethnic groups, Black parents have been found to transmit messages to their children using all four ERS dimensions: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). For this reason, Black families are the center of ERS literature with parents as the source of ERS themes (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). For Black families, parental ERS studies have extensively shown to positive effect on their children's daily functioning (Huguley et al., 2019).

In addition to focusing on parents as the source of ERS, the ERS literature tends to center the experience of Black youth within the age groups of children, youth, and young adults (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Black families have been shown to engage in ERS with their children at a younger age when compared to parents of other ethnic-racial groups (Benner et al., 2018; Huguley et al., 2019; Phinney, 1996). Huguley and colleagues (2019) suggested that developmental maturity may serve as a protective factor against race related experiences as youth to young adults can have a deeper understanding of ERS and implement ERS teachings.

Congruent with ecological models, adolescence is a particular time of cognitive maturation. During adolescence, youth have increased abilities to perspective take and understand the role that ethnicity and race play within their different ecological systems (Spencer, 2006). This increased awareness prompts exploration of the function of ethnicity and race within society by questioning who is rewarded more often, who is punished, and who is neglected. Youth's observations along with more direct teachings about ethnicity and race can lead to youth seek to understanding of their own positionality within society.

The current study explores the complexities of ERS on Black youth's identity development, specifically as it relates to the experiences they have through social media. This study adds to the ERS literature by focusing on social media as the source of ERS. The focus on Black youth allows for exploration of differences and commonalities within this population in regard to online ERS exposure. Further, the current study includes high school participants. This age range assumes cognitive maturity and experience that aide in identifying ERS themes.

Ethnic-Racial Identity

ERI is the connection an individual feels toward their ethnic-racial group (Phinney, 1996). This connection between an individual youth and their identified ethnic-racial group is determined by their beliefs and attitudes toward that group (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Phinney, 1996). The identity process beings as a child and is influenced by the different interactions across and between that child's ecological systems (Spencer et al., 1997). The interactions that individual youth have amongst their social contexts are analyzed to build connection between one's self-concept and their ethnic-racial group membership. The perspective and knowledge an individual gains about their ethnic-racial group impacts their ERI development (Oyserman et al., 2007; Phinney, 1996).

Similar to ERS, ERI too includes different components. Oyserman and colleagues (2007) proposed that ERI is a multifaceted and includes three components: connectedness, awareness, and embedded achievement. Connectedness describes the extent of the individual youth's positive connection to their ethnic-racial group. Awareness describes the individual youth's awareness of out-group views on an individual's ethnic-racial in-group. Lastly, embedded achievement involves the belief that achievement is valued within the identified ethnic-racial

group and the individual youth has feelings of motivation to achieve goals because of their ethnic-racial group.

Connectedness involves a strong sense of positive connection to the individual's ethnic-racial group. Examples include comments like, "My black is beautiful. I love my hair and the skin I am in" (Bybee & Terry, 2003). This component of ERI yields a good feeling about being part of the identified ethnic-racial group. Although, connectedness does not operationalize specific behaviors appropriate for group membership, a sense of connectedness may provide motivation to engage in behaviors associated with the ethnic-racial in-group (Oyserman et al., 2007).

Engaging in behaviors, traditions, and values related to one's ethnic-racial group strengthens youth's connectedness to the group. Studies focused on the impact of connectedness have consistently found positive mental health outcomes (Oyserman et al., 2007; Phinney, 1996; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Connectedness is predictive of increased feelings of self-worth, stronger sense of ERI, and feelings of belonging (Oyserman et al., 2007; Phinney, 1996; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Further, studies suggest that for Black youth a greater feeling of connectedness to the ethnic-racial group the greater the feeling sense of community, familialism, and support from their social environment (Byrd & Ahn, 2020; Oyserman et al., 2007; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017).

Another component of ERI is awareness. Awareness is the recognition of racism. This aspect of ERI refers to the awareness of members outside of the individual's ethnic-racial group opinions and conceptualization of the individual's ethnic-racial group. Part of ERI development includes the experience and possible devaluation of one's ethnic-racial group in terms of prejudice, racism, and exclusion encounters (Oyserman et al., 2007). Youth's ERI is shaped by

their perspective and reaction to these experiences. Examples of awareness of racism includes such comments as, “Being Black means that there are no easy ways out, one should be ready for each obstacle” (Oyserman et al., 2007).

The awareness component of ERI is commonly studied with youth of Black and Latino ethnic-racial identities. Studies have found that for Black youth when awareness is part of their ERI they engage in coping strategies to maintain their self-esteem. For example, if an individual youth receives negative feedback from others that is taken with skepticism depending on the source and nature of the content (Oyserman et al., 2007). Furthermore, studies have insufficient evidence that awareness alone is correlated with positive well-being; however, when in conjunction with the other two components of ERI (i.e., connectedness and embedded achievement), positive impact on self-processes have been found (Oyserman et al., 2007).

Lastly, embedded achievement specifies that an individual’s ethnic-racial group motivates the individual youth to engage in and strive for success. Achievement or success may be defined by possession of material goods, educational levels, beliefs, and values. An example of embedded achievement thought is, “To be Black means to me being strong, intelligent, and very proud of where I came from. Many Blacks have been successful, and I plan to be the same way” (Oyserman et al., 2007). The operationalization of achievement can be different within and between ethnic-racial groups and ethnic-racial group members. For the current study, embedded achievement is determined by beliefs that one can do well and achieve success in the form of social, academic, and career domains.

Overall, the three components of ERI, in accordance with Oyserman and colleagues (2007), together promote positive ERI development, academic success, and well-being (Oyserman et al., 2007). These components alone do not have the same significant effect than

they do when harmonized. Youth's ERI is formed by a sense of connectedness to their identified ethnic-racial group and encourages the youth to achieve success (i.e., embedded achievement) and persistent when faced with adversity (i.e., awareness). The implications of youth's ERI are that ERI serves as a protective factor against adverse ethnic and racial experiences (Burt & Simons, 2015; Oyserman et al., 2007; Phinney, 1996), as well as directly and indirectly, influence positive mental health (Wang et al., 2020).

Of interest for the current study, the implications of ERI for Black youth have been widely studied. Studies have identified ERI to be associated with higher academic achievement and healthy adjustment to experiences of differential treatment based on ethnicity and race and stereotypes for Black youth (Huguley et al., 2019; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). An abundance of literature identifies parents, peers, and educational settings as key players in the formation of ERI. The interactions within and across these settings influence ERI formation.

The current study looks to explore social media as an important domain in fostering Black youth's ERI. As informed by PVEST, this study considers social media platforms to serve as a space for ecological systems to interact with one another and extend cultural considerations. While they are in the process of critical questioning and interpretation of race relations, one of the goals of this study is to identify what ERI components as outlined by Oyserman and colleagues (2007) are shaped by online ERS for Black youth, and how online ERS themes impact their well-being.

Connection Between Ethnic-Racial Socialization and Ethnic-Racial Identity

ERS is commonly investigated with ERI. ERS and ERI can be bidirectional processes continuously shaped by the interactions an individual youth has with their social contexts (Huguley et al., 2019). ERI development occurs through the exploration of information about

ethnic-racial topics through the socialization process. ERS specifically targets instilling a sense of pride and knowledge about one's ethnic-racial group for children. Simultaneously ERS and youth's ERI shape interactions within and across their ecological systems based on previous and current consciousness of ERS and one's ERI.

ERS and ERI literature has often focus on parents, peers, schools, and television shows being key factors in promoting ERS and ERI formation. Facilitation of ERS, can further develop a favorable attitude toward the youth's ethnic-racial group and the strength of youth's ERI can determine sensitivity to ERS themes. The most common studied ERS source for families of color is parental ERS and parental ERS has repeatedly been positively correlated with ERI (Huguley et al., 2019). Byrd and Legette (2021) found that a school climate that fostered identity exploration through conversations and learning about one's culture was associated with healthy ERI commitment. These findings show the importance of ERS on ERI development. Similarly, it was founded that Black youth who consumed ERS through television shows development a strong ERI. The act of learning about one's culture through in-person and media contribute to one's ERI.

The implications for studies that have explored the connection between ERS and ERI are mainly positive for Black youth. The association between ERS and ERI has been shown to create a positive attitude toward one's identified ethnic-racial group and different ethnic-racial groups, as well as higher levels of education persistence, positive self-processes, and positive adjustment (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Huguley et al., 2019; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). The relationship between ERS and ERI serve as protective factors to environmental risks.

Contrarily, other studies have indicated negative implications for Black youth when reviewing the connection between ERS and ERI. Studies have found that for youth of color who

are exposed to more frequent and intense ERS themes that stress mistrust and bias awareness have negative feelings toward their ethnic-racial group and other ethnic-racial groups (Huguley et al., 2019; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Another study found that when ERS focused more on egalitarianism, Black youth had lower ERI (Byrd & Legette, 2022). Taken together, these findings suggest that ERS is valuable in ERI development.

Specific ERS themes have different connections to ERI. With further exploration of how ERS and ERI connect, the different ERS themes seem to produce different effects on ERI development for youth of color. For instance, cultural socialization was found to be the most prominent predictor of ERI when compared to all other ERS themes (i.e., preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, egalitarianism; Huguley et al., 2019). This verifies why most ERS studies have focused on this theme specifically when studying the influence of ERS on ERI development.

Preparation for bias studies have suggested that youth easily perceive preparation for bias messages transmitted from their parents explaining the reason for this ERS theme to be the second most common ERS theme studied (Huguley et al., 2019). This may mean that parents engage in direct and explicit conversations about preparation for bias messages compared to other ERS themes. Preparation for bias messages have been shown to be positively associated with ERI (Huguley et al., 2019). Youth who reported more preparation for bias socialization also report advanced ERI development compared to their counterparts (Huguley et al., 2019). Other studies suggest that preparation for bias only warrants positive academic outcomes if paired with cultural socialization messages (Huguley et al., 2019).

ERS themes specific to egalitarianism, have often been reported to be concurrent with cultural socialization messages (Huguley et al., 2019). Huguley and colleagues' (2019) meta-

analysis suggested that parental ERS did not include significant promotion of egalitarian messages. It was further suggested that parental ERS of egalitarianism emphasized having values, such as respect and kindness, that should be applied to all people regardless of ethnic-racial group. In the past, egalitarian messages have been positively linked to ERI and identified as the second strongest ERS theme associated with ERI development behind cultural socialization (Huguley et al., 2019).

Contrary to other strong positive correlations to ERI formation, promotion of mistrust has shown to be the weakest ERS theme to predict ERI (Huguley et al., 2019). This may be explained by previous studies that found that promotion of mistrust to be salient to parental ERS for families of color (Wang et al., 2020). Further, studies have found that parents that engage in promotion of mistrust are commonly foreign born (Woo et al., 2020) or have experienced high levels of discrimination (Grills et al., 2016), thus if an individual youth is in a family meeting this criterion, it is likely that promotion of mistrust would influence their ERI development. Lastly, in studies where youth have reported frequent exposure to promotion of mistrust messages, they reported lower ERI development (Huguley et al., 2019).

In conclusion, it is evident that ERS contributes to ERI develop and ERI prompts further depth into the analyzing of ERS themes. In the current study, the connection between ERS and ERI will be explored for Black youth. Further this study explores ERS that are transmitted through social media platforms. Given that studies have found different sources of ERS to impact youth's ERI, and no studies have researched social media as a space that facilitates the interrelation between ERS and ERI, the results of the current study will add to the literature in multiple ways.

Social Media

Information and communication technologies have advanced the internet environment. Web-based platforms have created spaces for others to create and interact through websites and applications. Online spaces in sum are acknowledged as social media. Social media is a forum of websites and applications that allow for users to create and share content, as well as network with other users.

Some popular social media platforms for youth are Facebook, Snapchat, Tumblr, YouTube, and Instagram (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). A 2018 survey concluded that Facebook was the most used for that year, even more so for Black youth (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). However, with the increase in online platforms (e.g., TikTok), trends are bound to change. Individual social media users have indicated to have multiple social media accounts across different platforms and within one social media application (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Online accounts can be used for personal disclosure of current and previous life events, as well as for business and promotion purposes. Online accounts can also be in the form of a “page” that is less about the individual personally and focused on circulating awareness about a theme or idea (e.g., selling items, comedy page, mental health awareness).

Individual users are able to engage online through dynamically sharing, posting, and commenting on content within and across various social platforms and accounts. Content added online is quickly and widely circulated, constructing a permanence of interactions and content through methods of retweeting, reposting, and reblogging. Further, the actual content created on social media platforms are shaped by different opinions and current events that individual online users that are from all around the world.

With the evolution of electronic devices, access to social media platforms have increased. This includes devices such as tablets, laptops, desktops, and smartphones (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). Ninety-five percent of participants in Anderson and Jiang's (2018) study reported owning or having access to a smartphone. The study further concluded that ownership of a smartphone is ubiquitous among youth today across gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background.

The prevalence of internet access permits students to be online across physical settings. Anderson and Jiang (2018) had youth endorse being online "almost constantly," especially youth of color. It has been shown over the years that Black youth engage in social media usage more than their peers (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). Often social media usage is for leisure and entertainment; however, it is being integrated into the schools to support learning.

Youth are online for leisure and entertainment, as well as for educational intents. Schools have begun to use technology to create interactive activities in the classroom and prepare youth for online networking for achievement purposes (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). While students may be using social media during school hours for their own pleasure, teachers use it to establish online learning between teacher and student, students and outside sources, and student to student (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). Social media can be used for many reasons; however, all reasons involve interacting with others regardless of social context.

For current youth to be categorized as digital natives, it is understandable as to why they use social media as an interactive tool to illustrate their life experiences and perspectives (Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). Social media platforms allow for individuals to explore other social avenues outside of using in-person methods. Studies have shown that social media can be

beneficial for introverts and be used as a safe space for self-expression and advocacy (Berryman et al., 2018; Lim & Richardson, 2016; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). The different interactions online allow for the narrative of all online users to be expressed and shared, as well as shape and create awareness to diverse experiences for other online users.

Social media usage is most prevalent among young people and now plays an important role in Youth ERI development. Similar to the interactions and relationships built with individuals in schools and neighborhoods, social media platforms offer opportunities for identity exploration based on the interactions between online users (Byrd & Ahn, 2020; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). The interactions online include interactions that are within and across ecological systems. With the internet being accessible by all beings across the globe, youth are exposed to diverse opinions and interests shaped by different life experiences, economic structures, and political systems of users from within- and across-ethnic-racial group membership. Online interactions can validate, create, and extinguish thoughts and beliefs an individual youth has about their current and future identity as it relates to ethnicity and race.

Online interactions that individuals have are largely shaped by the people and pages that one chooses to follow. As it relates to the current study, research has shown that Black youth have higher friend betweenness and heterogeneity online when compared to their peers (Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). This means that Black youth often follow other online accounts that they become aware of through reposting or resharing from their initial peer followings. This type of online exposure extends their chance for diverse interactions. Further, Black youth are more likely than their peers to follow online users that reflect their culture (Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). It can be assumed that congruent with in-person needs of connectedness to an

individual's ethnic-racial group, youth seek the same connectedness online (Oyserman et al., 2007).

A feeling of connectedness can cause Black youth to translate information online as an accurate portrayal of their racial ideology (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Oyserman et al., 2007). Studies have shown that media (e.g., movies, television, literature) can impact how Black youth believe their identified ethnic-racial group should behave and act, as well as how others perceive their ethnic-racial group (Oyserman et al., 2007; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Given this information, it can be assumed that social media's portrayal of Black populations is important in shaping Black youth's beliefs about themselves, their ethnic-racial group membership, and beliefs about other ethnic-racial groups' perspectives on their ethnic-racial group, especially when Black youth's feeling of connectedness are reinforced.

With awareness to social media content that is bringing about positive feelings toward one's ethnic-racial group, the awareness to the negative content that may devalue or impose ethnic-racial stereotypes is also emphasized. Black youth exposed to ERS and in advanced stages of ERI development, are conscious of ethnic-racial information online (Byrd & Ahn, 2020; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). Regardless of demographic characteristics youth have reported discriminatory interactions with other online users specific to their ethnic-racial group (Berryman et al., 2018). Online conflict has been found to increase risk to depressive and anxious symptoms, especially for female online users (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Berryman et al., 2018). Given that Black youth report greater media consumption when compared to their peers (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017), they are at higher risk to experience negative online interactions.

The ethnic-racial content youth experience online extends to distinct local and global news that they encounter online. When stressful or violent current events are spread online feelings of distress can be provoked (Berryman et al., 2018). Specific to youth exploring their ERI, their advanced cognitive ability makes them aware of how local and global issues connect to their race, ethnicity, culture, and values (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). This level of awareness can build and strengthen one's ERI (Stornaiulo & Thomas, 2017). The ways in which online users choose to respond and cope with negative online interactions can be moderated or mediated by their ERI.

ERI development includes identifying and practicing coping mechanisms in preparation for adverse experiences (Huguley et al., 2019). Black youth may react to race related stressors utilizing different coping strategies such as avoidance or engagement (e.g., discounting information, responding to posts). Other strategies may include implementing privacy controls, blocking users, unfollowing users, and restricting commenting on posts to control content and online user exposure (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). The ERI literature suggests that Black youth with greater ERI implement coping strategies to maintain their self-esteem and healthily adjust to experiences of discrimination and stereotypes (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). While social media may contain race related stressors, it can also encourage critical consciousness of racial injustice and give space for activism (Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017).

Social media platforms can be a space for developing and implementing healthy coping mechanism to online content for Black youth. Posts and comments to posts can be indefinite on the internet. The ability to revisit negative posts can have ruminating effects on an individual's mental health (Berryman et al., 2018; Stornainolo & Thomas, 2017). It is important for young Black social media users to learn and implement healthy coping strategies when negative online

content can be disseminated across social media platforms quickly and widely. ERS and ERI have both been found to impact mental health outcomes, separately and dynamically (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020).

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study sought to understand Black youth's online race related experiences and subsequent mental health outcomes. A qualitative data collection approach was utilized to identify ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) messages transmitted via social media, as well as the influence of those messages on Black youth's ethnic-racial identity (ERI). The following section includes the description for study procedures, data collection, measures, and data analysis approach.

Study Procedures

Prior to data collection, approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Texas A&M University. The current study met the American Psychological Association and Texas A&M University's research requirements and followed ethical guidelines regarding parental consent for minor participants before collecting data. Per IRB approval, parental consent for participants aged 18 years and younger was collected prior to obtaining data from the participants.

A web-based consent and assent forms, along with a brief demographic questionnaire were created through the online survey building and data collection system called Qualtrics. Parents provided consent after reviewing an electronic consent form. After consenting, a password was provided to the parent to give their child access to the study's assent form and demographic questionnaire. In all cases, contact information of the primary researcher was provided in case any questions and concerns arose. Specific data collection strategies are detailed in the following section.

Data collection. Participants were recruited through a combination of snowball sampling, word-of-mouth, general and targeted emails, social media advertisement, and fliers posted throughout the community. The coronavirus pandemic impeded on the study's ability to recruit students from the local schools. Public and private schools within Bryan-College Station, TX were closed limiting youth recruitment from high schools. In response, the study resorted to diverse means of recruitment by means of distributing flyers through email, social media, and postings that extended outside of Bryan-College Station, TX. Emails advertising the project were forwarded to potential participants throughout Texas.

Recruitment materials included a flyer requesting that interested participants have their parents follow the link or scan the QR code to access the electronic parental consent form. The flyer contained two methods to receive the consent form to provide convenience and easy access to generation of the consent form. The consent form prompted parents to provide participant consent, then redirected them to the password-protected assent form, along with the password for access. A password was put in place to verify that parents were giving consent before youth were able to complete their portion of the research study.

Each participant was required to sign an assent form before continuing to a brief demographic questionnaire to obtain demographic information, as well as indicate their availability to attend a virtual interview. Assent was obtained to verify that interested youth were willing participants. In obtaining participant demographic information, this study could report commonalities and differences within the Black experience being studied. At the end of the form, participants provided available dates and times giving the interviewer multiple options to then confirm with the participant. The first ten participants to complete these steps were then

contacted to confirm a date and time to conduct the interview used to assess the youth's experience on social media.

Participants were interviewed following a semi-structured protocol that included scripted questions and suggested probes to properly explore interviewees' social media experience. This method of interviewing allowed for consistent information across participants and an opportunity to clarify experiences. The interview questions targeted the following categories: ERS themes and ERI. Individual interviews were conducted virtually using the secure video conferencing platform, Zoom. Interviews were virtual to implement coronavirus safety procedures of social distancing. Participants were notified that the audio from the interview would be recorded and securely saved for data analysis. The audio from each interview was saved in order to be professionally transcribed.

The study's lead investigator conducted all 10 virtual interviews. In using one interviewer, the interviewing process was maintained to the standard of the lead investigator. The interviews ranged between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviews included a brief review of information about the study as stated on the consent form and completion of all interview questions and responses. At the end of each interview participants were offered a list of support services in case their disclosure triggered any negative emotions. Each participant was compensated for their services with a \$35 Amazon gift card.

Each audio recording was sent to GMR transcription to provide accurate transcription for this research project. All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcribed interviews were then processed using the Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al., 2005) approach. The analysis of this study's data is described in the Data Analysis section. The information provided

in the demographic survey of each interviewed participant was collected, charted, and is reported accordingly.

Sample

The present study recruited male and female participants who identify as Black and were between the ages of 14 and 18. Participants were asked to further indicate if they also identified as Biracial or Multiracial. This developmental age range was selected based on the average age for 9th through 12th graders. Grade levels 9th through 12th include ages that are within the considered age range of the stage of adolescence and is when youth explore their independence and sense of self. Studies have shown that ERS has a positive association with ERI, with the strongest relationship among high school students (Huguley et al., 2019). Further, eligibility for the current study included having at least one active social media account.

The CQR approach to analyzing qualitative research (Hill et al., 2005) recommends samples of 8-15 participants to maintain the homogeneity of the sample and in-depth data. A total sample of 10 participants ages 16 and 17, who identified as Black, high school students were included in the current research study. Majority of the sample identified as female (80%; n=8) and indicated that they live in Texas (90%). Most indicated that their parents earned at least a bachelor's degree (60%), and half of the participants' parents were married and living in the same home (50%). Table 1 contains the detailed demographic information for the study's participants.

Table 1*Individual Participant Profile*

Demographic Characteristics						
Participants	Race	Grade Level	Gender	State	Home Structure	Parent Highest Degree
Susie	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, different home	Master's degree
Emily	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	High school
Patrick	Black	12	Male	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	Doctorate degree
Erica	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	Bachelor's degree
Jasmine	Black	10	Female	TX	Live w/relative (grandmother)	Less than high school
Olivia	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	Bachelor's degree
Ava	Black/Biracial	12	Female	OH	Live w/both parents, same home	High school
Holly	Black	11	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, different home	Bachelor's degree
Charlotte	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/relative (grandmother)	Associate degree
Gregory	Black	11	Male	TX	Live w/single parent (mother)	Master's degree

Note. n = 10

Measures

The brief demographic questionnaire was completed by each participant before their scheduled interview. The demographic categories and responses can be found in Table 1. A semi-structured interview was conducted to explore Black youth's social media engagement and race related experiences. The interview protocol was developed to emphasize the areas of ERS and ERI as they related to online interactions. The full interview protocol can be found in the Appendix D.

Demographics. Participants completed a brief demographic questionnaire which included questions regarding different demographic variables about themselves and their parents. This demographic information was used to verify that participants met the study's eligibility criteria and further give information to explore commonalities and differences amongst participants. Participants were asked to report their race/ethnicity, grade level, age, their parents'/guardians' marital status, what parent/guardian they reside with, and a parent/guardian's highest level of education. Although criteria to participate in the current study includes identifying as Black, participants were also asked if they identified as Biracial or Multicultural. Participants who selected Biracial or Multicultural were asked to indicate their specific identities. Grade level and age were reported to categorize participants as high school students and give evidence to them being in the age range warranted for the current research study. Participants were asked to report their location to obtain geographical location information in case helpful to explain differences in data across participants. Lastly, parent/guardian and household information were reported to provide understanding of participants' home environment and possibly explain any difference in data across participants. Demographic information was used in

conjunction to common themes and patterns identified in the results to explore any moderating and mediating effects.

Interview. The interview used in this study was originally structured for larger study researching Black youth mental health literacy. The current study included a semi-structured interview designed after review of the literature on ERS and ERI for Black youth. The interview consisted of open-ended questions to provide participants space to give genuine responses and avoid leading questions. Questions addressed social media usage and race related content online.

As it pertains to social media usage participants were asked to disclose what social media platform they use, age they joined social media, and what they use social media for. Questions that provided information about ERS and ERI asked the participants to describe the people and pages they follow and who follow them, the impact these people and pages have on them individually, identify and describe positive and negative experiences had online, and specifically disclosing any race related messages online.

Data Analysis

This study sought to identify ERS themes online and the influence of ERS on ERI and psychological outcomes for Black youth following the qualitative method of CQR. Previous research has found that ERS and ERI are interrelated; however, no research has targeted social media as the source. The current study can extend this body of research by exploring the narratives of the participants in this study.

Audio recordings of each interview was sent to GMR transcription to provide accurate transcription for this research study. A total of 10 transcripts were transcribed through GMR transcription. After all transcripts were created a team of coders was composed. Team members included five graduate psychology students. Team members underwent training that emphasized

and described the CQR procedures before beginning the data analyses process. Each coder was assigned five transcripts to begin the coding process independently and the team reviewed all transcripts for cross-analysis. In having a team compare findings, a higher level of data analyzes could occur to confirm findings.

The CQR data analysis process includes three central steps: domains, core ideas, and cross analysis. Identifying domains include segmenting the data into larger topics and then summarizing the data into core ideas (i.e., fewer words with greater clarity). All coding team members agreed on the categorization of the domains and core ideas. Domains were easily identified as this research study sought to explore specific topics already established in the literature (i.e., ERS and ERI). Having a list of domains influenced the creation of interview questions and were then applied to code for these specific domains. Domains can include multiple sentences or words that reflect a specific category. The coding team segmented the data into domains for the transcripts they were assigned independently.

Once domains were identified throughout the transcripts, the coding team identified the core idea that best reflected the data. This stage of coding includes editing the data into concise and clear categories that would be the same across participants. Core ideas were constructed using the themes of interest for this research study within each category of ERS and ERI. ERS themes were edited to the following core ideas: cultural socialization, preparation for bias, promotion of mistrust, and egalitarianism. ERI core ideas included connectedness, awareness, and embedded achievement.

The last step was the cross-analysis step. This step involved the coding team meeting and reviewing each transcript per participant. Team members discussed the core ideas that overlapped in agreement amongst the assigned coders to have group consensus. Further, team

members discussed core ideas that contrasted or were not identified amongst all assigned coding team members. Team members read the sections in question aloud and made an argument to why they agreed or disagreed with the way the data was coded until a group consensus was made. This process allowed for the team to analyze the data and agree on the core ideas assigned to domains.

Positionality

Research is influenced by unique experiences and biases of the researcher. I recognize that my positionality as a biracial Black identifying woman within a doctoral program imposes on my personal experiences and perspective. I am conscious that the topic of inquiry is influenced by my social identities. I was intentional about having participants voice their social media experience without being swayed to take a specific perspective to viewed social media content. Further, I was conscious that my coding team may be influenced by their social identities and to avoid possible inconsistencies in interviewing, I was the sole interviewer. I approached this study with genuine interest to learn more about modern activities that impact Black youth's development.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A total sample of 10 participants between the ages 16 and 17 who met inclusion criteria for analysis engaged in an interview. Majority of the sample identified as female (80%) and indicated that they live in Texas (90%). Table 1 contains detailed demographic information for this study's participants.

All participants reported using their cellphone to access social media and engaging on the following social media platforms: Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. TikTok was reported as the most used social media platform with Instagram in second. Family and peers were the only sources identified as initiating participants' awareness of social media. All participants (100%) indicated that social media accounts with which they interact reflect shared identities (e.g., ethnicity-race, gender, interests). All participants (100%) reported that social media accounts they follow influence them in some manner and four participants (40%) reported that they influence their social media followers.

Explicit and subtle interview questions prompted participants to disclose race related online experiences. Results are organized into the themes for which the data were coded. The results begin by addressing the boarder research questions then reveal subthemes of commonalities within each boarder research area.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization via Social Media

The first research question was to identify any ERS themes that participants reported encountering online. Participants reported that ERS themes were included in content that was specific to current events, news, and posts by peers about their own thoughts and experiences.

All participants identified being exposed to at least one ERS subtype across different social media platforms. See Table 2 for specific quotes coded for each ERS theme.

Table 2

ERS Theme Quotes

ERS Theme	Participants' Quotes
<i>Cultural Socialization</i>	<p>“They’re trying to uplift Black women. Cause you know a lot of people tend to stare down at us. They’re just like, positive messages about us.” (Emily)</p>
	<p>“Because it is Black History Month all I see on my timeline is about race. The same race as me. I knew about this one post of a Black inventor. That was cool. I learned more about him through comments on there.” (Susie)</p>
	<p>“Some accounts I follow post about Black excellence and all these good things and you get to learn like things that they don’t teach you in school.” (Susie)</p>
<i>Preparation for Bias</i>	<p>“I’ve noticed a lot of external like solutions. Like focusing on like the allies and teaching others about racism.” (Olivia)</p>
	<p>“There’s stuff about like have you ever been in this type of situation like if someone is bullying you about your race, your color, how you like, you should just like, giving me tips on how to act.” (Jasmine)</p>
<i>Promotion of Mistrust</i>	<p>“We’re exposed to things, where other people are blamed for things just because of the color of their skin and they’re treated differently.” (Susie)</p>
	<p>“They’re posts saying bad things about White people. Like Whites should be slaves now. None of us deserve to go through that. No one should be enslaved.” (Jasmine)</p>

Table 2 Continued

<i>Egalitarian</i>	“People are on there saying that White people are taking Mexican jobs and stuff like that. Like they’re just going for White people at the moment.” (Charlotte)
	“One of my best friends, she’s Palestinian, so she’ll post a lot of things when it comes to issues in Palestine. So I branch out and follow those pages, then I’ll be like exposed to more stuff.” (Olivia)
	“I like to see different points of view on other things. And sometimes I might not agree with everything that all the people I follow post. But yeah it’s the type of things I like to see.” (Ava)
	“I am exposed to different cultures all the time. My friend is Greek and his father posts things about that. It is nice to see a wider range of cultures and stuff like that on social media.” (Patrick)

Cultural socialization messages were the most common ERS theme found and preparation for bias messages were the least common ERS theme found. There were many cultural socialization messages with expressing beauty of Black skin and hair textures, as well as topics of “Black excellence” and reverence for Black persons who were successful in business and advocacy. Egalitarian messages were the second most coded ERS subtype. It was reported that online content displays difference in lifestyles and mistreatment of others triggering a need to be “more accepting” of others across social class and ethnic-racial groups. Many participants reported being open-minded to learning about and respecting others regardless of cultural, sexual, religious, and ethnic/racial differences.

Although promotion of mistrust was reportedly not commonly encountered online, participants did report viewing online content that referred to the oppression of various ethnic-

racial groups. Some participants reported promotion of mistrust messages regarding White populations toward populations of color. Specifically, content that urging to not let history repeat itself, referring to enslaving Black people. Other participants reported viewing content that in general targeted other groups of color for reasons of the debating who disseminated the COVID virus and immigration issues. Sometimes the groups of color were reported to be against each other. Messages promoting mistrust were spread online through personally followed people and pages, as well as from reposts.

Participants reported seeing ERS content from people and pages they personally follow. ERS content was also made visible if the people or pages that the participants followed reposted content. Another way youth encountered ERS content online was through posts on the explore page and pop-ups of social media platforms. The posts and news ads on explore and pop-up sections of different social media platforms, as explained by the participants, are decided based on an algorithm that tracks the online user's interests. Online users' interests could be based on searched topics, viewed content, or spoken key words heard through the phone's software. The exposure to online ERS themes was clear and easily reported by the participants.

Pre-socialization factors. Preparation for bias messages online were the least of the ERS themes to be reported by the participants. However, many participants reported an awareness that negative content can exist online. Some participants reported that their parents or family members have made comments, such as “not everyone is gonna like you” and “you cannot please everyone online.”

Having been exposed to preparation for bias messages prior to or after social media usage, participants may disregard similar messages online. Other participants reported learned emotional and behavioral responses when faced with negative race related conflict in-person

without specifying the socialization source. For participants who reported they learned how to cope with future negative interactions based on past experiences, they identified coping mechanisms that work for them which could encourage them to shy away from other suggestions. Online content reflecting preparation for bias messages could not be as detectable for participants who have already been socialized through in-person interactions with preparation for bias messages.

Ethnic-Racial Socialization Impact on Ethnic-Racial Identity

The second research question was to explore how online ERS themes impacted ERI subtypes, connectedness, awareness, and achievement. All participants identified at least one ERI subtype that was impacted by their social media experience. Participants reported that social media content contributed to feelings of connectedness, created awareness of others' views on their ethnic-racial group, and motivated them to achieve goals for their ethnic-racial group. Connectedness was the most common reported ERI subtype and achievement was the least common ERI subtype to be reported.

Most participants identified cultural socialization messaged to produce feelings of connectedness, awareness, and achievement. For example, it was reported that the content emphasizing "love for Black women" made participants aware of the negative view toward Black women. Others reported seeing content embracing Black women's natural hair texture in braids and curly which produced feelings of connectedness. Further, participants reported following online users and exposure to content that celebrated Black successes in the form of graduation and entrepreneurship.

The second most common connection reported was promotion of mistrust and ethnic/racial awareness. Participants stated that social media content related to recent social

movements created awareness of social injustices against their ethnic-racial group. Further it created awareness of the stance their followers' who they have more personal relationships with, took on these social injustices. Egalitarianism and preparation for bias were not as commonly coded from participant reports. These specific ERS themes were reported to raise feelings of connectedness.

In sharing how online ERS messaged impacted their ERI, participants reported common factors that may have influenced this connection. Participants disclosed how other sources of ERS, and intersecting identities contributed to the social media content that they are exposed to and how they attribute the content to their ERI. These factors are explained in the subthemes below.

Off-line socialization sources. Participants reported engaging in ERI exploration by engaging in conversations about ethnicity and race with parents, family members, and school personnel. Susie stated, "I like to share in our family chat things I see online, mainly about race, just to see how it use to be back then with my grandparents and parents." Gregory reported that his mother has dialogued about "need to cultivate knowledge and be open to new experiences because we need to give back to our communities. She would tell me that people won't like you for this and that, but you keep striving for what you want." Participants mentioned that these interactions encouraged them to learn information and challenge information regarding their ethnicity and race through social media platforms.

Further, some participants mentioned that they have learned about ethnicity and race through lessons at school and student organizations. Susie reported "we are learning mostly, either about race or gender, anything that has to do with history and since we're learning this at school, I will do research on it using social media." Others indicated that lessons in school about

race and ethnicity helped them learn about their ethnic-racial group. For example, Susie stated that “because it is Black History Month all I see on my timeline is about race. The same race as me. I knew about this one post of a Black inventor. That was cool. I learned more about him through comments on there.” School lessons can trigger exploration of a topic and strengthen feelings of connectedness to one’s ethnic-racial group.

Regarding school organizations, participants reported that in-person interactions with peers directly in school clubs and educational trips leading to the meeting of other students impacted their ERI. Participants reported feelings of connectedness after continuing relationships created in-person through the school setting to online interactions. Two participants mentioned that joining organizations made them aware and less afraid of going to college. For example, Olivia reported that she enrolled in a summer event for high school students and “the Black kids made a group chat, and we’re actually also in touch now. We follow each other [on social media]. It really helped me because some of the kids went to college this year... I’m going to college soon and it is interesting to hear their different experiences at different schools. One of the girls goes to the college I want to go too so her telling me how it really is helps me be ok with going somewhere new.” ERS from school and peers may have strengthened ERI and may moderate the impact online ERS have on youth’s ERI.

Intersecting identities. Feelings of connectedness were the most reported ERI subtype and was commonly connected to cultural socialization messages. Each participant reported salient identity types outside of their ethnicity/race. Common intersecting identities reported were gender, sexuality, religion, and hobbies/talents, such as being a skater, dancer, and artist. Participants reported the ability to explore their other identities separately from their ethnic-racial group and within-in their ethnic-racial group through social media platforms.

Based on participant reports, social media is used as a safe space to meet others across- and within-ethnic-racial group membership with similar interests, as well as introduce new constructs that align with their beliefs and values. A few participants mentioned that social media content and users made them aware that others within their ethnic-racial group had similar interests. For example, Erica stated, “in my community you don’t see Black people skating so when I saw there were Black skaters in this Christian Facebook group, I was like yes people like me, and I started hitting them up.” Holly shared that she had conflicting beliefs about religion compared to her parents and stated, “I’ve learned a lot about religion, surprisingly on social media...I’ve learned that I’m agnostic and I didn’t know that was a thing until I looked on social media. It just shows you not everything is just one thing. Like, you can be multiple or whatever.” Finding others within their ethnic-racial group with similar intersecting identities can strengthened a feeling of connectedness. This in turn brought more positive formation of ERI.

The majority of participants were female and strongly identified as Black women. All the female participants noted that they sought content that empowered or exemplified the successes of Black women. These Black women wanted to support content and issues surrounding two marginalized groups. In seeing this type of content, participants reported awareness for issues related to Black women, felt motivated to achieve their goals, and endorsed feelings of connectedness. Participants’ multiple identities were able to be explored separately and together with one’s ethnicity and race through social media forming a ERI that included diverse aspects.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Ethnic-racial socialization (ERS) plays an important role in ethnic-racial identity (ERI) development (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Understandably, parents have been the most widely studied source of ERS as parenting practices, specifically for Black youth, emphasize the importance of preparing youth for worldly experiences and positive identity formation (Huguley et al., 2019). To date, the literature has ample documentation that ERS is connected to ERI (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). However, for today's youth, social media is intertwined into their daily lives adding another socialization source. Therefore, it was hypothesized that social media would also serve as a space that facilitates the connections between ERS and ERI. It is especially important that social media's role in youth development be understood when it comes to these areas, especially for Black youth.

In response, this study examines social media as a source of ERS, as well as a space that facilitates the relationship between ERS and ERI for Black youth. The findings suggest that (1) ERS themes are transmitted through social media platforms and (2) online ERS impacts ERI formation. This study adds to the existing ERS and ERI literature and is the first of its kind to explore social media as an ERS source and identify implications of online ERS.

Social Media as a Socializing Agent

The findings provide validation that social media platforms transmit ERS messages to online users. Participants receive, post, and interact with ERS content through social media platforms. Participants can easily identify different ERS themes as expected given that Black

families have been found to engage in ERS earlier than other ethnic-racial groups (Phinney, 1996). Earlier ERS may cause Black youth to be conscious of online ERS themes.

Social media serves as an ERS source, exposing Black youth to messages about ethnicity and race. Participants receive ERS messages from their followers and those they follow in the form of current events, news, opinions, and experiences. Participants in this study mainly follow online users that reflect their ethnicity-racial group or identify with a group of color. In choosing these profiles to follow, Black youth are more likely to see posts related to their ethnic-racial group as online users tend to post and circulate information most relevant to their identities (Stornaiulo & Thomas, 2017).

Further, participants receive ERS messages on social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, to name the most popular in this study as indicated by the participants. Online platforms provide a space for participants to express themselves, as well as find others within their ethnic-racial group. Some participants' report that their residential communities do not reflect their ERI and are able to find others in their ethnic-racial group online, leading to more acceptance and understanding of their ERI. Studies show that regardless of the race of community members the conversations regarding ethnicity and race that is had between a Black youth and others, relays ERS themes that impact ERI (Byrd & Ahn, 2020).

Given the number of online users and participants specifically seeking ethnic-racial group members to follow on their social media accounts, it is not surprising that cultural socialization is the most common ERS theme found in this study. Social media gives space for promotion of ethnic-racial pride and knowledge through the teachings of cultural customs, history, and cultural figures. Youth can identify cultural socialization messages easily. Cultural socialization is salient among parenting practices (Huguley et al., 2019), as well as the most studied ERS theme for

other ERS sources (i.e., school, community organization, peers; Brittian Loyd & Williams, 2017; Byrd & Legette, 2022). Considering cultural socialization to be a common variable studied for parental ERS and with other socialization sources, it is not surprising that social media platforms source cultural socialization messages too.

Egalitarian messages are the second most prominent ERS theme found in this study. This finding is important as some studies express concern that egalitarian messages may promote color-blind values and assimilation to mainstream norms (Huguley et al., 2019); however, egalitarian messages in this study emphasize the promotion of diverse definitions of beauty within their ethnic-racial group and inclusive respect for all persons in- and outside participants' ethnic-racial group. For example, participants express that Black skin and hair textures were beautiful alongside other societal norms of beauty. Participants also report the need to be "more accepting" of others to not repeat oppressive behaviors that their ethnic-racial group experienced. Further, participants deny doubts of obtaining success in areas of interests as evidenced by discussions about college, being a professional dancer, and revering the successes of Black online users. Perhaps egalitarian messages are prominent because in conjunction with cultural socialization messages, ethnic-racial pride and awareness to their ethnic-racial group's history and successes are promoted.

Online promotion of mistrust messages are not as commonly identified by participants' reports. This finding was unanticipated considering the current events of seemingly polarized race relations and the dissemination of injustice being widely spread. Promotion of mistrust messages are low in parenting practices and for this study this ERS theme is low on social media platforms (Wang et al., 2020). Given this study provides little reporting of promotion of mistrust messages, it may mean that the participants are exposed to a small amount of promotion of

mistrust messages on their social media accounts or youth engage in coping mechanisms to reduce the impact of these messages. If the reason is the latter, then pre-socialization to promotion of mistrust encourages Black youth to distrust and avoid online promotion of mistrust content (Wang et al., 2020). However, these learned coping strategies may be effective as promotion of mistrust can be associated with negative well-being (Wang et al., 2020).

Finally, reports of preparation for bias are markedly low in this study. Preparation for bias is the second most common ERS theme studied in the literature and is prominent in Black parenting practices (Huguley et al., 2019). Although participants reported few online preparations for bias messages specifically, they report awareness to negative online content and interactions. Participants report learned coping mechanisms from their parents who warned them of possible mistreatment from others which can translate to online settings. Considering this information, Black youth may have strong coping mechanisms from other ERS sources that reduce the negative effects of online content.

Social Media, Ethnic-Racial Socialization, and Ethnic-Racial Identity Relation

Social media platforms facilitate the relationship between ERS and ERI. Participants report that ERS on social media impacted their ERI and their ERI influence their attention to and posting of ERS. It is likely that online ERS themes can impact ERI subtypes through exploration and challenging of previous knowledge. In addition, participants use social media to share ERS themes that contribute to their ethnic-racial group. For example, participants advocate for their ethnic-racial group through posting, reposting, and commenting on content related to police brutality and Black Lives Matter. The subjection to ERS content influences ERI and because the content is related to their ERI, the content is shared, creating ERS that could possibly impact another online users ERI. These findings support the literature in that ERS and ERI influence one

another (Byrd & Legette, 2022; Huguley et al., 2019) and add to the literature by identifying social media as a facilitator of the relationship.

Social media gives Black youth the opportunity to meet others in their ethnic-racial group. The exposure to diverse commonalities and differences across ethnic-racial group members did create feelings of connectedness to participants' ethnic-racial group. Black youth use social media as a method to explore their ERI in conjunction to other important aspects of their identity like gender, religion, and interests without feeling like they must fit a specific ethnic-racial profile. In finding commonalities among ethnic-racial group members, Black youth enhance their self-worth and positive attitude toward their ethnic-racial group (Huguley et al., 2019; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Positive self-worth and attitudes toward one's ethnic-racial group can lead to greater relationship satisfaction with others (e.g., peers, family members; Wang et al., 2020).

Social media brought feelings of connectedness among this study's participants. Participants identify cultural socialization messages as the most common ERS theme to increase ERI subtypes connectedness, awareness, and achievement. Cultural socialization is part of multiple facets of Black youth development (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Cultural socialization enhances feelings about oneself and ethnic-racial group for youth of color (Wang et al., 2020). Given the literature and study findings, social media content that emphasizes cultural socialization improves ERI. This series of events builds up youth of color's perception of their value within their social contexts and buffers against adverse experiences.

The second most common connection was between promotion of mistrust and the ERI subtype awareness. For participants that report promotion of mistrust, they also report awareness to social injustices and ERS from parents and schools relating to wariness other ethnic-racial

groups. Black youth are socialized to race related conflicts that can lead them to be conscious of past and present racism toward their ethnic-racial group. Participants in this study unfollow and end interpersonal relationships based on other online users' comments and posts regarding ethnic-racial issues. Specifically, participants discontinue communication with online users with opposing views. While it is important to understand your ethnic-racial group's history to connect to one's ethnic-racial group and engage in achievement, promotion of mistrust can cause misinterpretation of other's actions and impact interpersonal relationships with those outside of Black youth's ethnic-racial group (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017; Wang et al., 2020).

Egalitarianism and preparation for bias were ERS themes that reportedly created feelings of connectedness. Exposure to content emphasizing inclusivity and diversity within and outside of one's ethnic-group can produce understanding and connection to Black youth's ethnic-racial group and society. This in turn can promote healthy ERI development and a feeling of importance in society for Black youth (Huguley et al., 2019). Preparation for bias's link to connectedness can best be explained by youth feeling that others in their ethnic-racial group too render the same risks of mistreatment as the mistreatment is based on ethnic-racial group status. In turn this causes enhanced ERI (Huguley et al., 2019). It is important for Black youth to feel connected to their ethnic-racial group and society, as well as have the skills to cope with adverse situations.

Implications of Online Race Related Messages

Overall, participants report positive implications for social media usage and exposure to race related messages. Notably, participants indicate enhanced self-processes, motivation to achieve, engagement in advocacy, and support amongst other social media users. The positive implications of social media usage are as expected given that participants seek online accounts

that reflect their ERI in conjunction with their other social identities and modify which online accounts they follow based on interests and needs. For example, Olivia and Ava report taking to social media to find and learn how to style their specific hair texture. Jasmine and Charlotte report following Black professional dancers for motivation and to learn. The study's findings support the literature that representation and positive visuals about one's race are necessary for positive ERI development (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017).

Although studies have found negative outcomes in relation to social media usage (Riehm et al., 2019), participants in this study report controlling their online spaces to have more positive experiences. Participants report following accounts that reflect their interests and unfollowing accounts when content is not aligned with their interests or sociopolitical beliefs. Patrick reports that he purposefully searches topics not associated with sociopolitical trends to change the suggested content on his social media platforms. Social media controls can modify and restrict youth's online experiences, and for these participants it limited negative online interactions.

Participants' engagement in strategies to reduce negative online interactions came with developmental maturity. Participants report healthier coping strategies compared to their initial social media usage and contribute their improvement to their developmental age. The participants in this study joined social media between the ages 10 and 13. There is consensus across participants that being young on social media is harmful to youth's well-being. For example, Jasmine states, "I remember I used to follow people who were like extremely pretty, but they would have like very unrealistic, um, standards, and it would affect my self-esteem when I was much younger. It would make me feel like I was not good enough or like I had to change a lot about myself in order to like kind of reflect what they are." Other female participants report that cultural socialization messages that emphasized stereotypical Black

physique and mannerisms made them feel ostracized from their ethnic-racial group for not meeting those stereotypes. To note, participants report a history of following Black actors, musicians, and influencer accounts. When youth view content that is not realistic to their developmental age and they have not developed effective coping mechanisms, processing and challenging online information may be nuanced (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). Pre-adolescents and young adolescents can easily skew reality when comparing themselves to others that are physically mature and have different economic means which in turn can cause negative mental health outcomes. With developmental maturity and implementation of social media controls, Black youth can strengthen their self-processes and ERI to protect against negative interactions to maintain a positive well-being.

Participants positive social media experience is associated with the positive representation of their ethnic-racial group online. Positive attitudes about oneself and ethnic-racial group are indicative of empathy for outside ethnic-racial group members (Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017) and may explain participant reports of being empathic to social injustices for other ethnic-racial groups. Participants report awareness of social issues related to Asian-Americans, White-Americans, and Mexican Americans. Jasmine reports interacting with a that said, “Whites should be slaves now” by commenting, “no one should be enslaved.” Ava reports that a Latino Women’s group posted about issues impacting that community and learning about their concerns. Many participants report using social media to learn about diverse topics and advocate for friends in various ethnic-racial groups. Messages about ethnicity and race online expose youth to diversities within and across ethnic-racial group membership. The exposure to diverse narratives can be met with empathy, validation, and connection.

Limitations

The present study results may not be generalizable to ethnic-racial groups outside of Black youth and could be limited to generalizability to other Black youth. However, the results of this study compliment and expand prior study findings on the impact of social media and ethnic-racial socialization for Black youth development. Participants seemed open, engaged, and comfortable sharing their experiences, giving insight to social media interactions.

The gender distribution of the sample was predominantly female. Gender can play a role in shaping social media experiences in regard to content participants are exposed to and the response to online content. Females in this study often intersected their gender and ethnic-racial group identities when reporting their social media experiences. Future studies should recruit a sample that is approximately equal in gender to examine how gender impacts social media experiences.

Implications for Research and Practice

The findings in this study add to the literature of ERS agents for Black youth. Specifically, results suggest that social media platforms serve as a source of ERS, as well as facilitates the interaction between ERS and ERI for Black youth. Existing literature has stressed the importance of ERS and ERI in the development of Black youth's identity (Huguley et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020). Given the addition and strengthening of existing literature that the current study has done, it is encouraged to use these findings to continue studying the role social media has on youth development. Further, findings should be incorporated into case conceptualization of Black youth when they are provided mental health services.

Research on social media. Although online ERS is the focus of this study, there are other impactful socializing influences that contribute to the relationship between online ERS and

the ERI formation for Black youth. Other socialization influences include parents, peers, teachers, and other forms of media. Accounting for the moderating effects that ERS sources had on the relationship between the study's variables was beyond the scope of the current study. Future studies should consider analyzing the effect of other socializing agents.

Further, future studies should consider the role of intersecting identities on the relationship between ERS and ERI for Black youth. Participants in this study indicate social identities too intervene in their ERS processing. Social identities could also influence Black youth's well-being when considering the effects of online content. Future studies must apply an intersecting identities lens to ERS research.

Lastly, future studies should continue to analyze ERS themes and ERI subtypes separately and together to examine the different connections and impact that these variables have on youth's well-being. In addition, this analytical suggestion should consider the role social plays as a socializing agent and facilitator of the interactions. Studies have found differences among and between ERS themes and ERI subtypes; however, social media as a socializing agent and facilitating factor has not been considered.

Treatment implications. A chief implication of this study is the critical role of social media in Black youth development. Online ERS impacts ERI formation. Specifically, exploration of the study's variables shows that online ERS creates positive attitudes toward participants' ethnic-racial group which in turn promote self-acceptance and feelings of connectedness. Online interactions can cause negative emotional responses, such as suspicion of other ethnic-racial group members which cause conflict for online and in-person relationships. Mental health providers should assess the role social media plays in youths' lives to examine if social media is reinforcing negative mental health outcomes and seek to address it as part of

treatment. Further, the strength of Black youth's ERI should be assessed, and barriers should be identified as ERI serves as a protective factor.

Interventions should seek to strengthen coping strategies, social skills, and social-emotional functioning. This could take the form of therapy groups, parent coaching, or informal meetings to establish support among other youth or parties involved in youths' lives. In addition, the youth's intersecting identities and developmental age should be considered in case conceptualization and intervention to provide effective services.

Conclusion

The current study sought to explore Black youth's social media experiences and how these experiences influence their development. It was hypothesized that with social media being intertwined into youth's daily lives social media platforms would serve as a space that facilitates interactions between ERS and ERI. The results for this study suggest that (1) ERS themes are transmitted through social media platforms and (2) online ERS impacts ERI formation.

This study contributes to the literature as it provides insight into the experience Black youth have on social media platforms. Additionally, to the author's knowledge, it is the first study to examine social media as a source of ERS. This has implications for clinical practice with Black youth as it indicates that social media plays a key role in youth development, specifically in relation to ethnic-racial group membership. Results suggested that exposure to race related content on social media platforms can impact ERI formation and youth's well-being; however, it further suggests that other ERS agents, intersecting identities, and developmental age can moderate the relationship. Such findings merit replication and call for future investigation into social media's role in youth development.

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APPENDIX A

Individual Participant Profile

Demographic Characteristics						
Participants	Race	Grade Level	Gender	State	Home Structure	Parent Highest Degree
Susie	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, different home	Master's degree
Emily	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	High school
Patrick	Black	12	Male	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	Doctorate degree
Erica	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	Bachelor's degree
Jasmine	Black	10	Female	TX	Live w/relative (grandmother)	Less than high school
Olivia	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, same home	Bachelor's degree
Ava	Black/Biracial	12	Female	OH	Live w/both parents, same home	High school
Holly	Black	11	Female	TX	Live w/both parents, different home	Bachelor's degree
Charlotte	Black	12	Female	TX	Live w/relative (grandmother)	Associate degree
Gregory	Black	11	Male	TX	Live w/single parent (mother)	Master's degree

Note. n = 10

APPENDIX B

ERS Theme Quotes

ERS Theme	Participants' Quotes
<i>Cultural Socialization</i>	<p>“They’re trying to uplift Black women. Cause you know a lot of people tend to stare down at us. They’re just like, positive messages about us.” (Emily)</p> <p>“Because it is Black History Month all I see on my timeline is about race. The same race as me. I knew about this one post of a Black inventor. That was cool. I learned more about him through comments on there.” (Susie)</p> <p>“Some accounts I follow post about Black excellence and all these good things and you get to learn like things that they don’t teach you in school.” (Susie)</p>
<i>Preparation for Bias</i>	<p>“I’ve noticed a lot of external like solutions. Like focusing on like the allies and teaching others about racism.” (Olivia)</p> <p>“There’s stuff about like have you ever been in this type of situation like if someone is bullying you about your race, your color, how you like, you should just like, giving me tips on how to act.” (Jasmine)</p>
<i>Promotion of Mistrust</i>	<p>“We’re exposed to things, where other people are blamed for things just because of the color of their skin and they’re treated differently.” (Susie)</p> <p>“They’re posts like saying bad things about White people. Like Whites should be slaves now. None of us deserve to go through that. No one should be enslaved.” (Jasmine)</p> <p>“People are on there saying that White people are taking Mexican jobs and stuff like that. Like they’re just going for White people at the moment.” (Charlotte)</p>
<i>Egalitarian</i>	

“One of my best friends, she’s Palestinian, so she’ll post a lot of things when it comes to issues in Palestine. So I branch out and follow those pages, then I’ll be like exposed to more stuff.” (Olivia)

“I like to see different points of view on other things. And sometimes I might not agree with everything that all the people I follow post. But yeah it’s the type of things I like to see.” (Ava)

“I am exposed to different cultures all the time. My friend is Greek and his father posts things about that. It is nice to see a wider range of cultures and stuff like that on social media.” (Patrick)

APPENDIX C

General Conceptual Model



APPENDIX D

Study Interview Protocol

1. What social media platforms do you use?
 - a. Which platforms do you use the most and why?
2. What age did you start using social media platforms?
 - a. How did you hear about these platforms?
 - b. How did you get access to these platforms?
3. What do you use these social media platforms for?
4. What type of people or pages do you follow?
 - a. Describe their demographics.
 - b. How do you find and decide who to follow?
 - c. Do you believe that who you follow reflects who you are?
 - d. Do you feel that who you follow influences you in any way? (e.g., behavior, mental health, self-esteem, life goals)
5. Who follows you?
 - a. Describe their demographics.
 - b. Do you believe that those who follow you reflect who you are?
 - c. Do you feel that you influence those that you follow?
6. What good experiences have you had?
 - a. Describe the emotions behind these experiences.
7. What bad experiences have you had?
 - a. Describe the emotions behind these experiences.
8. What type of messages are you exposed to online about race?
9. Are you exposed to different beliefs, values, and experiences online?
 - a. What do you learn from your social media activity?
10. Has anything online changed your values and beliefs?