

DRAMA EDUCATION IN THE LIVES OF BLACK GIRLS:
EXPLORING HOW DRAMA INFLUENCES THE SOCIOEMOTIONAL LEARNING
AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK ADOLESCENT FEMALES

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree
Doctor of Education in Leadership Studies

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A Dissertation
entitled
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Exploring How Drama Education Influences the Socioemotional Learning and
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by
Davina Nasha' Ware
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Dr. Judy Alston, Committee Chair

Abstract

This qualitative study investigates how drama education influences the socioemotional learning and leadership development among Black adolescent females. Existing research has highlighted the benefits of drama education for personal and social development, yet there is a lack of focus on the experiences of Black adolescent females within this domain. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the ways in which drama education affects socioemotional learning and leadership development among this demographic.

Utilizing a phenomenological approach, participants were selected through convenience and purposeful sampling methods and in-depth interviews, to capture their subjective experiences. Through thematic analysis, four themes emerged from each research question shedding light on the transformative role of drama education in understanding emotions, forming identity, improving mental health, and enhancing socialization and interpersonal skills with peers. It also contributed to their development as leaders by communicating and collaborating with others, working effectively and efficiently on teams, learning organization, planning and time management skills and adaptability.

The findings of this study highlight the overall significance of incorporating arts education into the curriculum, particularly Black adolescent females. These insights have important implications for educators, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to promote holistic development and equity in educational settings.

Dedication

To my Dearest Son,

David, you are the shining light that guided me through the darkest nights of this academic journey. Your hugs and kisses have been my greatest source of strength. This dissertation stands as a tribute to the endless inspiration you bring into my life. The day you entered this world, I found myself learning to balance responsibilities of parenthood and academic pursuit. Despite the exhaustion and the overwhelming sense of responsibility, it was during those moments, with you cradled in my arms, that I realized the depth of my commitment not only to my studies but also to you and our family's future.

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This dissertation stands as a testament to years of hard work and dedication, it also serves as a symbol of the profound love and devotion I have for you. Your presence has infused every word, every idea, and every moment of this endeavor with meaning and purpose. May you always believe in the power of knowledge, resilience, and the pursuit of dreams.

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~Love Mommy

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In an effort to promote linguistic, mathematical, and scientific literacy, many primary and secondary schools are placing less emphasis on education related to art, music, and drama. Indeed, the core subjects of language arts, mathematics, and science are prioritized in U.S. schools due to recent decreases in students' standardized and classroom test scores in these areas (Pak et al., 2020). However, education in drama and the arts has numerous benefits, including the development of creativity (Dere, 2019), problem-solving skills (Carter Andrews et al., 2019), and social and interpersonal skills (DeCuir-Gunby, 2020). With educators giving increasing attention to the promotion of well-rounded students (Mi et al., 2022), investigations into the perceptions of students regarding fine arts education are imperative and timely.

This qualitative study focused on drama education and its role in facilitating social and emotional learning and leadership development among Black girls from their own perspective. Evidence has shown that drama can have numerous positive impacts on the socioemotional development of young students (Assari, 2019; Carter Andrews et al., 2019; DeCuir-Gunby, 2020). However, there has been limited attention specifically given to the experiences of African American drama students regarding the influence of drama education on social and emotional learning and leadership development. This dissertation contains a presentation of a novel study that helps gaps in the literature related to drama education and social and emotional learning and leadership development among Black girls. The background of the study is presented first, followed by a specific statement of the problem to be addressed in the proposed study. The precise purpose of the study is

then clarified, and its potential significance to research and practice is considered.

Operational definitions that will be used in the proposed study are then presented, and assumptions and delimitations that pertain to this study are discussed. This chapter concludes with a summary and outline of key points.

Background

The domain of theater education has been widely acknowledged as a platform that transcends mere aesthetic performance and can contribute to students' social and emotional development (Assari, 2019). This form of education encompasses a wide range of talents, beliefs, and experiences, both inherent and external, that impact students' lives (Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020). By its very nature, drama education is characterized by experiential and interactive elements, making it a distinct platform for facilitating socioemotional learning (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). According to contemporary scholars in the field of education and the performing arts, the term drama encompasses the acquisition and application of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that enable individuals to comprehend and regulate emotions, establish and accomplish constructive objectives, demonstrate empathy towards others, cultivate and sustain positive interpersonal connections, and exercise responsible decision-making (Avnet et al., 2019; Rogers & Butler-Barnes, 2022; Seltzer, 2019). As such, drama education has the potential to help students develop critical skills that can influence their college- and career readiness, with important implications for adulthood.

Historically, the intersection between socioemotional learning and drama education has been explored in diverse situations and via varying research designs and

methodologies (DeCuir-Gunby, 2020). Numerous studies have underscored the capacity of drama activities to foster the development of several socioemotional competencies, including empathy, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relational skills, and responsible decision-making, all of which are necessary for leadership (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020; Seltzer, 2019). For example, researchers have found that drama education is significantly linked with improvements in emotional intelligence and several sub-domains of this construct, such as empathy, compassion, and cultural competence (Batdi & Elaldi, 2020; Ozbey & Koycegiz, 2020; Remziye et al., 2019). These abilities are integral to the socioemotional learning framework and can translate to lifelong enhancement in interpersonal skills, facilitating leadership development (Assari, 2019). However, a comprehensive understanding of these experiences necessitates an intricate methodology that considers individuals' various histories and identities.

Recent evidence has highlighted the fact that Black adolescent females possess a distinct positionality at the junction of multiple social categories by which they are defined, which set them apart from many of their non-racial-minority counterparts (Avnet et al., 2019; Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020; Ogunyemi et al., 2020). According to several studies, Black girls, irrespective of the educational setting or context, experience an increased susceptibility to the risk of microaggressions beyond their racial majority counterparts, and these experiences can have significant impacts on their concepts of both race and gender (Gibson et al., 2019; Rogers & Butler-Barnes, 2022; Staples-Dixon, 2023). Individuals encounter the complexities and potential advantages linked to their

racial and gender identities when participating in any form of social education, including in modern drama programs (Mims & Williams, 2020). Throughout history, researchers have demonstrated how Black groups have employed theater and performance as means of expression, resistance, and community (Seltzer, 2019). These artistic practices range from the utilization of spirituals and storytelling to the more contemporary form of theater (Anderson, 2020).

Despite the importance of drama education, a noticeable deficiency can be observed in the existing body of scholarly work related to this topic. This deficiency is becoming increasingly problematic based on the disparities in the representation of Black women in contemporary dramatic arts compared with their actual percentage within the population (Avnet et al., 2019). The existing body of research on theater education and socioemotional development tends to adopt a broad perspective or concentrate on racially and ethnically varied populations without adequately examining the unique experiences of Black adolescent females (Avnet et al., 2019; DeCuir-Gunby, 2020). Researchers have called for further investigation into this topic to expand on the level of knowledge and understanding stakeholders possess regarding promoting equitable, inclusive, and culturally competent education for this sociodemographic group (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020). Exploring their experiences, which may possess distinct characteristics in the junction between theatre education and socioemotional development, has yet to be extensively investigated (Seltzer, 2019).

The absence of information in this area highlighted the necessity for a qualitative investigation that could provide insights into the experiences of this specific group.

Through a comprehensive examination of the lived experiences of Black females in leadership, valuable information can be gained regarding the potential efficacy of theatre education to facilitate socioemotional growth and development. Such research helps fill a gap in the evidence base and expand understanding as to how to improve practice concerning the promotion of socioemotional learning for Black girls who attend drama education programs in the United States. The following section presents the problem that will be addressed in the proposed study in more detail.

Statement of the Problem

Drama education has the potential to have multidimensional impacts on the socioemotional learning of young students, simultaneously fostering the development of numerous social skills while also challenging gendered stereotypes or presenting complex gender issues that extend beyond these young students' cognitive maturity (Avnet et al., 2019). However, schools are not providing Black girls with sufficient opportunities to explore and question their identities and engage in socioemotional learning (Neal-Jackson, 2018). Black girls have demonstrated increased attendance in drama education programs and a heightened representation in the dramatic arts in recent years (Batdi & Elaldi, 2020; Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020). However, Black girls and women are still significantly underrepresented in this field in proportion to their percentage of the broader population, and the issues and experiences of younger African American girls who attend drama education programs have largely been neglected (Gibson et al., 2019). Thus, it is unknown how drama education impacts the socioemotional learning of Black adolescent females.

Understanding how drama education impacts socioemotional learning and leadership development, based on the perceptions and experiences of Black girls, is critical for determining ways in which to not only address limitations that exist in these programs themselves but also to foster a more comprehensive, inclusive, and culturally competent experience for this sociodemographic group. Without researching the importance of drama education for Black girls, educational leaders may continue to use insufficient or outdated knowledge to guide decisions about creative arts in secondary schools. Moreover, drama teachers could use the findings of the study to understand how drama education impacts Black girls' socioemotional learning, knowledge that can guide curriculum development to improve socioemotional learning.

Purpose of the Study

Based on these gaps in the literature and the aforementioned problem, the purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how drama education impacts the socioemotional learning and leadership development for Black adolescent females from their own perspectives. This study examined perceptions of Black females who engaged in drama education programs during their adolescence. The evidence obtained helps provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role drama education plays in facilitating socioemotional learning and leadership development among Black girls. Moreover, this study contributes to scholarly discussions surrounding gender and education, focusing on how drama education impacts the socioemotional learning of Black girls.

Results from this study are also intended to help expand on the extant literature related to drama education (Batdi & Elaldi, 2020; Ozbey & Koycegiz, 2020; Remziye et al., 2019). The conceptualization of this study represents a potentially novel and significant contribution to the understanding of how drama education can create and perpetuate socioemotional learning and induce ideas about gender and gendered performativity. While these topics have been studied in the literature to some extent, there is a scarcity of evidence on this subject specifically associated with Black adolescent female students (Evans-Winters & Hines, 2020; Gibson et al., 2019; Rogers & Butler-Barnes, 2022). Therefore, findings from this study are intended to offer a significant contribution to the literature related to drama education, as well as research in the domains of sociology, psychology, and leadership studies.

Research Questions

The following two research questions were devised to address the purpose of the proposed study. young adult Black females who participated in drama education in their adolescence.

RQ1: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their socioemotional learning?

RQ2: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their leadership development?

Significance of the Study

The study holds substantial significance and potentially offers valuable contributions to the field of education and the performing arts in general. This study aims

to conduct a qualitative analysis that explores the intricate relationship between race and gender in theater education and socioemotional learning. The experiences of Black girls may provide distinctive perspectives, given the specific socio-historical environment surrounding their identity (Anderson, 2020; Gibson et al., 2019). Therefore, the findings of this study have the potential to facilitate more comprehensive investigations into the impacts of different educational approaches on heterogeneous populations.

It has been observed that the current body of literature pertaining to socioemotional learning and theatre education either encompasses a wider range of topics or fails to differentiate the distinct experiences of Black girls (Mims & Williams, 2020; Rogers & Butler-Barnes, 2022; Staples-Dixon, 2023). Therefore, this work has the potential to address the existing gap in the literature, therefore establishing itself as a groundbreaking research endeavor that subsequent studies can reference and further develop. The utilization of a qualitative methodology allows for the comprehensive examination of the extensive and intricate effects of theater instruction, thereby establishing methodological precedence. Through the examination and juxtaposition of many experiences, this study has the potential to provide a methodological framework that may be utilized by other researchers who are interested in exploring the interconnectedness of race, gender, and education, particularly within the performing arts.

The examination of the perceived effects of theatre education on the socioemotional learning of Black girls can also potentially provide valuable information for educators seeking to develop interventions that are specifically designed for this particular demographic (Rogers & Butler-Barnes, 2022). Acknowledging the distinct

difficulties and capabilities exhibited by members of this demographic group could potentially result in implementing more efficient pedagogical approaches (Gibson et al., 2019). Accordingly, the findings of this study have the potential to be incorporated into training programs for theater instructors, enhancing their awareness of the distinct socioemotional requirements of Black girls. This phenomenon can foster a teaching environment characterized by greater inclusivity and empathy than what is currently being practiced or what has been documented in the literature (Gibson et al., 2019).

The curriculum's expansion might be achieved by examining the potential advantages and potential drawbacks of incorporating theatre instruction specifically for Black females. This analysis would facilitate the adaptation or diversification of curricula to better accommodate student populations with varying backgrounds (Mims & Williams, 2020). The integration of narratives, plays, or performances that align with the lived experiences of Black girls has the potential to serve as a valuable component within the theatre curriculum. Furthermore, this study's findings can potentially impact educational policies on a larger scale. There is potential for schools and districts to be incentivized to incorporate theatre education as an essential element of socioemotional learning practices, with a particular focus on communities or groups that have the most potential for positive impact (Anderson, 2020; Staples-Dixon, 2023).

Given the inherent connection between drama and community expression, this study also aims to explore strategies for actively involving the broader Black community in theater projects implemented within educational institutions (Ozbey & Koycegiz, 2020). Establishing community-school collaborations can facilitate the development of a

more robust socioemotional environment for pupils (Rogers & Butler-Barnes, 2022).

Therefore, the suggested qualitative study holds the potential to make substantial contributions, encompassing the expansion of scholarly investigations and the enhancement of educational methodologies. Through the prioritization of the experiences of Black girls within the context of drama education and socioemotional learning, this research has the potential to illuminate avenues for developing educational environments that are more inclusive, successful, and sympathetic. Drama education serves as a platform for Black adolescent females to traverse their dual identities, express their personal narratives, and challenge prevailing societal stereotypes (Assari, 2019; Ozbey & Koycegiz, 2020). Thus, exploring the importance of drama education for Black adolescent females is a noteworthy research topic.

Definitions

Key terms from this study are derived from its conceptual framework, which combines intersectionality theory, feminist standpoint theory, and performative identity theory. Key terms are defined operationally in this section. It should be noted that the theories used in this study are not defined here but are discussed comprehensively in the conceptual framework section of Chapter 2.

Black: A Black person will be defined as a person having origins in any Black racial group in Africa (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Drama Education: Structured, comprehensive, and multidimensional educational curriculum focused on training and developing skills in the dramatic arts (Remziye et al., 2019).

Emotional Regulation: The ability to identify, understand, and control one's emotions and affective state in a manner that is socially appropriate, and which aligns with the needs of a particular situation or circumstance (Gibson et al., 2019).

Gender-Based Emotional Development: Healthy and adaptive development of one's emotional skill and intelligence, accompanied by a balanced and self-accepting understanding of contemporary gender roles and social conceptions of gender (Rogers & Butler-Barnes, 2022).

Interpersonal Relationships. A mutually contributive and interactive dynamic between two or more people in which there is a reasonable assurance of trust, interdependence, and sharing of experiences, thoughts, and ideas (Ozbey & Koycegiz, 2020).

Interpersonal Skills: The combination of abilities that enables one to function proficiently in social situations and amid social interactions, such as verbal and non-verbal communication, understanding of personal space, and proper intonation (Batdi & Elaldi, 2020).

Self-Awareness. The ability to view one's self from an external perspective and/or how one may be reasonably perceived by others (Staples-Dixon, 2023).

Self-Control: The ability to recognize and regulate one's behavior, despite potentially experiencing a contradictory or contrasting emotion that may not be socially appropriate or ideal (e.g., avoiding engaging in a fight in a bar after being insulted) (Mims & Williams, 2020).

Assumptions

Assumptions are aspects of a study that are believed to be true, but which cannot be fully verified (Silverman & Patterson, 2021). One assumption of this study was that the interview questions can assess the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent females. This assumption was made because the instrument consisted of an interview guide developed strictly for this study, which had not been established as a trustworthy instrument. The items on the instrument were developed based on previous peer-reviewed research related to the focus of this study. It was submitted for expert panel review to experts in socioemotional learning.

Another assumption made in this study was that the participants responded to all items honestly and authentically. This assumption was made because it is not possible to truly know if respondents are being honest and transparent or if they have the level of self-awareness necessary to provide insight into their perceptions, and any lack of honesty or transparency may significantly skew the results (Hennink et al., 2020). Finally, an assumption was made in this study that the researcher's personal biases and conceptions did not influence the study outcomes. While interpretation is a critical component of qualitative data analysis, it must be done in a systematic manner so that there is consistency in the analysis and that *a priori* beliefs about how the findings should have, or were likely to, turn out actually impact the study outcomes (Lichtman, 2023). A rigorous and systematic approach to analyzing the data was implemented to help address this assumption.

Researcher's Lens

As an educator and CEO of an Art Institute, my journey into researching Drama Education for Black adolescent females is deeply rooted through my personal experiences. Raised as a creative Black girl in an Appalachian County, I struggled with issues of self-worth and identity. The transformative power of Drama Education provided me with a safe outlet for expression and fostered personal, social, and emotional growth. Now, as a researcher, I aim to explore how Drama Education shapes the lives of Black girls, drawing upon my own journey and the principles of social constructivism, interpretivism, and reflexivity.

Epistemological View

My epistemological view aligns with interpretivism, recognizing the subjective and socially constructed nature of knowledge (Creswell, 2013). Consistently, I seek to understand the world through various perspectives and acknowledge the influence of social and environmental factors on human behavior. I recognize knowledge as co-constructed through social interactions and interpretations (Guba and Lincoln, 2018, Creswell, 2014). Through qualitative methods, particularly interviews, I aim to capture the diverse perceptions and experiences of Black girls engaged in Drama Education.

Ontological Views:

From an ontological perspective, I embrace social constructivism as another worldview (Creswell, 2013). I acknowledge the reality as socially constructed and context dependent. Social constructivism identifies the hold our culture has on us and shapes the way in which we see and feel things, which provides all of us with a view of

the world (Patton, 2016). Drawing insights from my own journey and scholarly literature, I recognize the importance of capturing the lived realities of Black adolescent females within Drama Education settings. This informs my qualitative research approach, which aims to capture the complexity and richness of Black adolescent females' lived experiences within Drama Education settings, particularly exploring how Drama influences their socioemotional learning and leadership development.

I see myself as a constructivist, acknowledging the socially constructed and context-dependent nature of reality. Guba and Lincoln (2018) assert that reality is not objective but rather shaped by social interactions and cultural norms. Similarly, Patton (2016) discusses how constructivism views reality as a product of shared meanings within social contexts. I recognize the existence of multiple realities and perspectives influenced by factors such as culture, identity, and power dynamics.

Positionality and Reflexivity

My positionality as an educator and former Black adolescent girl shaped my approach to this study. Through reflexivity, I critically examined my biases and positionalities, striving to center the perspectives and agency of Black girls in the research process. Informed by and guided by ethical considerations, I sought to authentically represent the voices and experiences of Black girls within Drama Education settings. For Black girls engaging in Drama Education, their experiences are shaped by their identities, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts. A constructivist approach enables researchers to center these subjective experiences, providing insights into how

Drama Education intersects with their identities and influences their personal and social development (Creswell, 2014).

My epistemological and ontological views, Guba and Lincoln, Creswell, and Patton, emphasize the subjective and socially constructed nature of knowledge and reality within the context of Drama Education in the lives of Black girls. Through qualitative research methods and reflexive practice, I endeavor to generate contextually rich insights that honor the diverse perspectives and experiences of Black adolescent females and shed light on the transformative potential of Drama in fostering their socioemotional learning and leadership development.

Guba and Lincoln, acknowledges the existence of multiple realities and emphasizes the importance of understanding these diverse perspectives. In the context of Drama Education for Black girls, this approach allows researchers to recognize and explore the varied experiences, identities, and realities that intersect within this population (Guba & Lincoln, 2018). Creswell emphasizes that constructivism recognizes knowledge as a human construction and prioritizes the interpretation of lived experiences. For Black girls engaging in Drama Education, their experiences are shaped by their identities, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts. A constructivist approach enables researchers to center these subjective experiences, providing insights into how Drama Education intersects with their identities and influences their personal and social development (Creswell, 2014).

Delimitations

Delimitations are aspects of a study that narrow its scope and potentially limit the extent to which they can be applied to a target population (Silverman & Patterson, 2021). This study's findings were strictly delimited to Black women who participated in drama education during adolescence. Further, the study was delimited to African American women in leadership between the ages of 18 and 25; this delimitation was chosen to ensure that the participants could accurately remember their experiences as adolescent drama students. The results of the study may not fully apply to students of similar disciplines, such as drawing-based arts or music. Drama education was chosen instead of individual arts, such as drawing or music, because of the necessity for interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. The findings of this study were delimited to Black drama education students, who may have unique experiences and perspectives on how this form of education influenced their socioemotional development and learning. Thus, findings may not be generalizable to students of other ethnic backgrounds. Finally, the findings of this study were delimited strictly to biologically female students. Therefore, findings may not be fully applicable to members of the male biological sex. The study was geographically delimited to Black women who participated in drama education in U.S. high schools; this delimitation was chosen because drama education in other countries may not accurately represent U.S. drama education.

There may be additional limitations present in the design and methodology of this study that will potentially influence the transferability of the findings. First, this study included convenient and purposeful sampling approaches. While convenience sampling is

considered appropriate and acceptable in a qualitative study, it does induce the potential for a selective sampling bias, which may detract from the external validity of the findings (Hennink et al., 2020). Additionally, the qualitative design warrants an interpretative approach to analyzing the data and may induce interpretative biases on the researcher's part (Silverman & Patterson, 2021). In order to counter this limitation, a structured and systematic approach was taken to analyzing the data and all coding was performed using a software program, NVivo. Finally, the instrument in this study may not fully measure the construct of interest, as the construct validity was known. To minimize the impact of this limitation, questions were generated based on previous, reputable, peer-reviewed research, and the instrument was submitted to scholars in the field for review (Carter Andrews et al., 2019; DeCuir-Gunby, 2020; Mims & Williams, 2020). Any feedback was incorporated into the final version used to collect data.

Summary

This chapter contained an introduction to a proposed study related to drama education and its role in facilitating socioemotional learning among Black females in leadership. Background information related to this topic was presented first, leading to the identification of the specific problem and gap that was addressed in the study. The purpose of the study was then clarified, and its significance to research and practice was discussed. Operational definitions for key terms were presented, drawing mainly on this study's conceptual framework. Assumptions, delimitations, and limitations were then considered. Results from the study have the potential to significantly increase understanding of the experiences of female, adolescent, Black drama students,

particularly as they relate to socioemotional learning and leadership development.

Findings from this study are also intended to contribute to the scholarly discussion of gender issues in drama education and how they intersect with being of a minority ethnic background. Chapter 2 contains a presentation of the literature review related to key variables and constructs of interest.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Drama education has the potential to enhance creativity, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills of adolescent students. Such skills are notably important for career readiness, academic success, and career development (National Research Council, 2012). This study examined the perspectives of Black women who participated in drama education as adolescents regarding how drama education impacts the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescents. As such, this study explored how drama education effectively involves Black girls' experiences and personal and cultural knowledge, thereby broadening the range of perspectives and discourses accessible to them (Gallagher, 1998). Existing literature suggests evidence of educational disadvantages experienced by female students during their secondary school years (Arnot, 1992; Delamont, 1999). Gaskell et al. (1989) highlighted a substantial corpus of literature concerning sex differences, which frequently focuses on elucidating the factors attributed to Black girls' underachievement rather than addressing potential institutional or curricular barriers that may impede these girls' academic success. Educational disparities influence college readiness and career and vocational readiness (Hurtado et al., 2020), with lasting physical and emotional effects spanning generations (Zajacova & Lawrence, 2018).

Drama education has the potential to foster academic success. Lehtonen et al. (2016) found that drama education fosters creativity among students, promoting the development of problem-solving skills. Therefore, the significance of creative arts and research pertaining to artistic education for adolescents lies in their inherent value and

impact (Moeller, 2021; Pinto & Douglas, 2017). Initially, cultivating an aesthetic sensibility empowers students to engage in inquiry and exploration, enabling them to understand their surroundings in a manner reminiscent of poetic expression (Pinto & Douglas, 2017). According to Koopman (2005), aestheticization involves a heightened sensitivity to our living experience. Thus, arts education can inspire students to produce a creative expression that instills a sense of pride in Black girls (Farrington et al., 2019). This sentiment reflects a deep conviction in the significance of their work and expression. Thus, there is sufficient justification for advocating the promotion of the arts and any educational curricula prioritizing a student-centered and inquiry-based methodology.

Drama education can influence students' socioemotional development. Socioemotional development begins in childhood, but it is critical in adolescence. Socioemotional learning is a person's ability to create and sustain meaningful relationships with others (Ahmed et al., 2020). It includes developing self-awareness, self-control over behaviors and emotions, and forming interpersonal relationships vital for success in school and adulthood (Paolini, 2020). Multiple lines of inquiry suggest that educational disparities are linked to decreases in students' socioemotional development (Ou et al., 2021; Spitzer & Aronson, 2015). Therefore, efforts to address educational disparities and enhance the socioemotional development of students can promote success in adulthood.

This study aimed to provide fresh insights into well-known inquiries regarding gender and equity in the field of education, particularly as it relates to the role of drama education in facilitating Black girls' socioemotional learning and leadership

development. Through this study, I sought to contribute to the expanding body of research in drama education by presenting compelling evidence from classroom settings that highlight the aesthetic, social, and academic benefits of an intermediate or senior drama curriculum for this demographic group (Gallagher, 1998). By providing up-to-date research and addressing various feminist, social, and academic inquiries related to drama education, I aimed to contribute to the existing debates in this field (Gallagher, 1998). This study proposes potential avenues for future research within the broader topic of educational equity, as it will deliberately examine the variables of ethnicity, race, class, and gender and how they relate to socioemotional learning (Gallagher, 1998).

The remainder of this chapter contains a review of the literature related to this topic. The search strategy used to identify relevant studies is presented first, followed by the theoretical framework underpinning the study. A synthesis of the literature related to key variables and constructs of interest is then offered in accordance with themes that emerged from the extant evidence. Gaps in the literature and research design, and methodological issues are presented, leading to the rationale and justification for the proposed study. This chapter concludes with a summary and outline of key points.

Literature Search Strategy

In order to locate studies relevant to the topic of this review, a combination of the Education Resources and Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and ProQuest databases were searched. These databases were selected because of their comprehensiveness and their relevance to the field of education. When searching these databases, the following keywords and phrases were entered: *Black; adolescent; female;*

drama; knowledge; culture; sex; gender; equity; socioemotional learning; leadership; intersectionality; feminist standpoint; performative identity; and education. Boolean logic was used in order to link keywords and phrases to narrow the scope of the search, as needed. Studies were included in this review if they were published in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals in the English language within the past five years and/or were considered to be of a seminal nature. Examples of studies that were considered to be of a seminal nature included those which contained original documentation of a theory or the presentation of a novel instrument. Based on these search parameters, at least 85% of the studies included in this review were published within the past five years. The following section contains a presentation of the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

Conceptual Framework

Examining the issue of socioemotional learning in drama education of Black adolescent girls is a promising route for scholarly investigation. Based on the particularity of your research and the interconnectedness of the phenomena under investigation, transformative learning theory was chosen as the theoretical underpinning of this study. According to Bukuski (2020), transformative leadership is a field of study that is emerging while consistently inspiring leaders to realize their ideals that are aligned with the many challenges of the 21st century. The concept of transformative experiences applied to students is a pivotal dimension of education. Through this framework, I aimed to understand how drama students experience profound transformations through their interactions with other students and teachers, fundamentally reshaping their socioemotional learning and leadership development. This conceptual framework

underscores the dynamic nature of drama education, emphasizing its continuous growth and evolution. For example, Ansell et al. (2021) discussed the role of teacher leaders in initiating transformative programs that drive positive change within schools. Similarly, Blackburn Miller (2020) examined how drama education can promote transformative learning that impacts students' growth, development, and interpersonal skills.

The foundation of this conceptual framework is rooted in transformative learning theory, which posits that individuals undergo substantial cognitive and emotional changes through critical reflection on their experiences (Mezirow, 1997). In teaching, transformative experiences occur when educators deeply engage with their students, leading them to reevaluate their beliefs, teaching methods, and objectives. These experiences challenge students to question their assumptions, adapt to evolving educational landscapes, and enhance learning through constant growth.

At the core of this framework lies the notion that transformative experiences often stem from the intricate relationship between students and teachers (Ansell et al., 2021). These interactions serve as moments of revelation, shedding light on a teacher's profound impact on a student's life. According to Ansell et al. (2021), such interactions can kindle a profound change in the students' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Transformative experiences call for students to engage in reflexive practice, critically how they approach their academics and impacting non-academic areas of life (Swanson, 2010; Weinberg et al., 2020). Weinberg et al. (2020) explained that through self-reflection, students can identify areas for improvement and adaptation driven by their transformative experiences, leading to changes in their thoughts, behaviors, and

emotions. Furthermore, students who undergo transformative experiences tend to embrace innovation in their everyday approaches (Cranton, 2002). They may incorporate fresh strategies, technology, or unconventional methods into common situations. Moreover, teacher education plays a pivotal role in fostering transformative experiences. These transformative experiences empower students to think creatively, fostering continuous growth.

In this study, I examined how drama education impacts the socioemotional learning of Black female adolescents. Socioemotional learning is the process of developing self-awareness, self-control, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skills (Paolini, 2020). I interviewed young Black female adults who participated in drama education to comprehensively understand how drama education influences Black female adolescents' socioemotional learning and leadership development. Using transformative learning theory provides lens for understanding socio-emotional outcomes experienced by students, including gender- and race-based emotional development, the formation of one's personal, unique identity, and the formation of interpersonal relationships. The following section contains a synthesis of literature related to key variables and constructs of interest.

Literature Review

Drawing on this theoretical framework, the remainder of this chapter now contains a synthesis of the contemporary and seminal evidence related to the focus of this study. First, the literature on gender and schooling in drama education is discussed (Chahbane et al., 2021; Shuster, 2019). Then, a discussion of the evidence related to

gendered performance and implications for socioemotional learning is conducted (Ruppel, 2022; Senior, 2021; Trezise et al., 2023). A further exploration of the challenges of drama education and socioemotional learning is presented (Gammon, 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Steffen, 2020). Gaps in the literature and a critique of previous research designs and methodological issues are then presented, leading to the rationale and justification for the proposed study.

Socioemotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) covers acquiring several abilities that enable individuals to comprehend and regulate their emotions, establish, and accomplish constructive goals, demonstrate empathy towards others, cultivate and sustain meaningful relationships, and exercise responsible decision-making (Estrada et al., 2021).

Socioemotional learning covers a set of abilities and competencies that help people to effectively understand and manage their emotions, form meaningful relationships, and make responsible decisions (Estrada et al., 2021). According to Denham & Brown (2010), SEL an essential component of personal development that contributes to overall success.

Socioemotional learning involves learning self-awareness of one's emotions. This vital aspect of socioemotional learning enables individuals to participate in introspection, thoroughly grasping their emotional states, triggers, and behaviors (Lawson et al., 2019). According to Humphrey et al. (2020) & individuals who cultivate self-awareness become more sensitive to the complexities of their emotions, allowing them to handle life's obstacles and encounters better. This increased emotional self-awareness not only

improves personal well-being but also serves as a foundation for developing other critical social and emotional skills (Estrada et al., 2021). Socioemotional learning ultimately empowers individuals to form more authentic relationships, make informed decisions, and thrive in various personal and professional contexts through learning self-awareness.

Drama education can provide a platform for students to learn self-awareness. Students are encouraged to delve into their emotions, views, and motivations by participating in dramatic exercises such as role-playing, improvisation, and character analysis (K. L. Law & Rowe, 2019). This experiential method enables students to move outside their comfort zones, take on different roles, and reflect on their emotional reactions. Students acquire insight into their feelings and reactions as they immerse themselves in the world of theater, but they also learn empathy for the emotions and experiences of others (K. L. Law & Rowe, 2019). For example, in a case study conducted by Mavroudis and Bournelli (2019) found that drama in education can be a helpful educational instrument for developing a variety of qualitative abilities required in many facets of daily life. Socioemotional learning provides the framework for increased emotional intelligence and self-awareness that can extend well beyond the stage and into their personal life.

Socioemotional learning involves learning self-control and emotional regulation. Individuals learn to manage their impulses, emotions, and emotional states through socioemotional learning, providing a sense of inner balance and well-being (Lawson et al., 2019). Specifically, individuals can respond to challenging situations deliberately and productively by developing an excellent knowledge of their emotions and learning

techniques to manage them (Humphrey et al., 2020). Humphrey et al. (2020) explained that self-control mastery improves personal resilience and fosters stronger interpersonal interactions, as individuals are more equipped to speak and interact with others courteously and collectedly. Socioemotional learning facilitates the development of self-control and emotional regulation, which provides individuals with essential life skills that contribute to their overall emotional intelligence, allowing them to navigate the complexities of their emotions and effectively navigate the social landscape.

The study of drama frequently necessitates pupils to explore a diverse array of emotions, allowing them to comprehend, articulate, and regulate these emotions inside a secure and organized setting. This inquiry takes place in a safe and supportive atmosphere, allowing students to grasp their emotional terrain thoroughly (Van de Water, 2021). Students learn to identify, express, and manage emotions in a safe and organized environment by embodying various characters and events (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). Stepping into diverse roles allows students and children to confront feelings that may be unexpected or difficult, developing emotional growth and resilience (K. L. Law & Rowe, 2019). However, according to a meta-analysis study by Lee et al. (2020) examining the effect of drama-based pedagogies on K-12 literacy-related outcomes, this immersive journey helps students build a vocabulary for expressing their emotions and provides them with the tools to control these emotions effectively. Furthermore, fostering a sense of emotional self-awareness and regulation fosters artistic expression which can be beneficial to different types of learning modalities (Lee et al., 2020). The study of drama

can significantly contribute to students' broader socioemotional development, preparing them to navigate the complexities of emotions in their personal and interpersonal lives.

Drama education allows students to learn self-control and emotional regulation. For instance, role-playing exercises enable students to address their emotions and examine their responses within many contexts (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). Engaging in a theatrical production frequently involves the establishment of objectives, such as acquiring line memorization, comprehending a character's underlying motivations, or mastering physical gestures and actions required for a particular scene (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). Through these theatrical productions, students can learn to harness self-control and manage their responses in a controlled and constructive manner as they negotiate the complexities of these emotional landscapes (Van de Water, 2021). This method promotes profound reflection, which helps them improve their artistic ability and cultivates an expanded emotional intelligence that transcends the sphere of theater. Furthermore, the varied aspects of participating in a theatrical play considerably adds to the development of self-control and emotional regulation (Lee et al., 2020). Pursuing goals essential to theatrical performances, such as remembering lines, understanding character motives, and learning the precise physical motions required for specific scenes, necessitates a rigorous approach. According to Lee et al. (2020), this engagement requires students to exercise self-control in managing their time, focus, and effort, instilling a stronger sense of discipline and self-regulation. Drama education, in this way, not only fosters artistic expression but also equips students with critical life skills like

self-control and emotional management, which will serve them well beyond the bounds of the theater.

Socioemotional learning facilitates the development of interpersonal and conflict-resolution skills. It offers individuals the tools to manage different social interactions by emphasizing the development of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and empathy (Humphrey et al., 2020). For example, individuals learn to detect and understand not only their own emotions but also the emotions of others through socioemotional learning, which is necessary for efficient communication and relationship-building (K. L. Law & Rowe, 2019). Furthermore, socioemotional learning fosters a greater understanding of opposing viewpoints, allowing individuals to approach conflicts with empathy and openness (Estrada et al., 2021). Studies show that individuals who practice conflict resolution are better equipped to participate in constructive discourse, discover common ground, and seek collaborative solutions (Humphrey et al., 2020; K. L. Law & Rowe, 2019). Socioemotional learning equips individuals with vital interpersonal and conflict-resolution skills, nurturing emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and empathy for effective communication and relationship-building, while also promoting the capacity to engage with opposing viewpoints empathetically, thereby empowering individuals to navigate conflicts constructively and seek collaborative solutions.

Drama education allows students to develop interpersonal skills. Students are given a platform to improve their communication, cooperation, and social interaction skills by participating in various dramatic activities such as group performances, improvisation, and collaborative projects (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). Drama, by

definition, demands individuals to interact with their peers, share ideas, and work collaboratively to bring stories to life (Van de Water, 2021). This method promotes active listening, effective communication, and the ability to react to the cues and responses of others. Van de Water (2021) and Mavroudis and Bournelli (2019) explained that students learn to accept diverse perspectives, negotiate positions, and contribute to a coherent performance as they navigate the complexities of character interactions and engage in ensemble work. These experiences can increase students' self-confidence and create respect for collaboration and empathy.

The sociocultural composition of drama education classes can significantly influence the understanding and development of social skills, such as communicating with the same and opposite sex and gender (Gammon, 2022). Specifically, individuals are encouraged to break down prejudices and assumptions due to their exposure to varied gender dynamics, resulting in a more nuanced knowledge of effective interpersonal interactions (Gammon, 2022). Students develop empathy, respect, and a heightened awareness of the complex interplay between identity and practical communication by participating in scenes and projects that involve interactions with the same and opposite sexes and genders. Studies have indicated the potential for enhancing the expression of diverse perspectives via engagement in drama education at an early age (Kingsberry & Jean-Marie, 2022; Okello, 2022). Drama, particularly in the context of group performances, strongly emphasizes teamwork and collaboration, imparting to pupils the significance of trust, effective communication, and mutual respect (Collie & Perry, 2019). The intrinsic components of theatre education encompass the navigation of group

dynamics, the resolution of disputes, and the comprehension of human relations, facilitating the development of interpersonal skills. Drama frequently showcases ethical quandaries, situations with several interpretations, and intricately developed characters (Estrada et al., 2021). The examination of these facets can facilitate discourse about ethics, values, and conscientious decision-making, essential components of socioemotional learning.

Black Girls and Socioemotional Learning

Socioemotional learning refers to a systematic approach aimed at fostering the acquisition of essential skills by people, enabling them to effectively regulate their emotions, cultivate constructive interpersonal connections, and exercise sound judgment in decision-making processes. Numerous studies have shown that socioemotional learning plays a pivotal role in fostering academic achievement and promoting favorable outcomes in individuals' lives (LaBelle, 2019; Panayiotou et al., 2019). Black girls, specifically, have distinct obstacles that might influence their social and emotional growth, such as racial discrimination, gender bias, and economic disadvantage (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). These aforementioned problems can induce feelings of isolation, diminished self-worth, and heightened worry, thus impeding their capacity to acquire knowledge and flourish academically. Consequently, prioritizing socioemotional learning for Black girls becomes imperative in order to provide them with the necessary competencies for achieving success (Lohmann, 2023).

Recent studies highlight the need for culturally responsive approaches to socioemotional learning that center on the experiences and assets of Black girls. For

instance, King et al. (2023) implemented a STEM program for middle school Black girls, incorporating activities to foster communal values, racial pride, voice, and leadership. Quantitative and qualitative findings showed participants gained socioemotional learning competencies, including self-awareness, self-efficacy, problem-solving, and relationship skills. The program enhanced girls' social-emotional development by cultivating a culturally sustaining space for identity affirmation and STEM engagement. Similarly, Scott's (2023) Ten-session group socioemotional learning intervention engaged Black middle school girls in culturally grounded workshops on identity, sisterhood, and counter spaces. Pre-test and post-test analysis and interviews demonstrated increased self-esteem, emotion regulation, support seeking, and cognitive reappraisal among participants. The author found that a culturally enriched socioemotional learning intervention can help Black girls develop a positive self-concept, self-efficacy, and resilience. The study emphasizes the importance of culturally relevant socioemotional learning interventions in supporting the socioemotional development of Black girls.

Other studies emphasize the need to tailor socioemotional learning initiatives to the specific interpersonal and sociopolitical needs of Black girls. For instance, Jones (2022) identified key intrapersonal competencies like self-efficacy and resiliency as well as interpersonal skills like code switching that enable Black girls to persist in STEM. The author found that Black girls need to develop a sense of belonging, self-efficacy, and resilience to overcome the barriers they face in STEM fields. The study highlights the importance of socioemotional in helping Black girls develop the skills they need to succeed in STEM careers. Similarly, Pollock's (2023) case study of discussions between

Black middle school girls underscored the complex psychosocial processes they engage to make sense of marginalizing school experiences. The study highlighted the importance of these discussions in facilitating the socioemotional development of Black girls. It emphasized the need for creating spaces where Black girls can engage in open dialogue, critique oppressive discourses, and understand the complexities of culture. Additionally, Mahfouz and Anthony-Stevens (2020) argue that socioemotional learning programs need to be culturally relevant to be effective. The authors suggest that socioemotional learning programs should be designed with the cultural backgrounds and experiences of students in mind. This approach can help ensure that socioemotional learning programs are inclusive and effective for all students, including Black girls. Promoting the well-being of Black girls through socioemotional learning requires explicit attention to the impacts of cultural hegemony and systems of privilege/oppression on their development.

In summary, research increasingly demonstrates the limitations of conventional, technical applications of socioemotional learning that fail to address cultural assets and systemic inequities shaping the experiences of marginalized youth like Black girls (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). Socioemotional learning programs should be redesigned in culturally sustaining ways that nurture the identity, agency, social awareness, and systemic consciousness of Black girls within schools and broader society (King et al., 2023; Scott, 2023). This necessitates institutional commitments to implement antiracist and antisexist socioemotional learning curricula, pedagogies, and policies that mitigate deficit views of Black girls and actively foster their social, emotional, and academic thriving.

Racial Stressors Experienced by Black Girls in Education

The intersectionality of race and gender significantly impacts the psychological well-being of Black adolescent girls, particularly in the context of racialized stress and its effects on memory retention. In interviews with Black girls, Wilson (2023) found experiences of gendered racism led to vulnerability to depression. This specific type of stress, often a product of systemic and interpersonal discrimination, not only exacerbates depressive symptoms but also has potential implications on cognitive functions, such as memory. The chronic nature of this stress can lead to a continuous state of heightened alertness, potentially impairing the memory consolidation process. This suggests racialized stressors may diminish memory capabilities, while targeted supports could help strengthen cognitive functioning.

Moreover, Ruffin and Blake (2023), in their narrative review further elaborate on the psychosocial challenges faced by Black adolescent girls. They point out that the constant navigation through a landscape of racial and gender biases requires significant mental and emotional resources, which can detract from cognitive capacities, including memory retention and recall. The cognitive load theory suggests that when individuals are faced with high levels of stress, their working memory capacity can be compromised (Ruffin & Blake, 2023), indicating that the racialized stress experienced by Black girls may directly impact their ability to encode, store, and retrieve memories effectively.

Furthermore, Gadson and Lewis (2022) found that Black adolescent girls experience gendered racial microaggressions that can lead to feelings of devaluation, over-discipline, and stereotyping. These experiences can cause stress and negatively

impact their mental health. The constant exposure to microaggressions leads to a heightened state of vigilance, which, while adaptive in some respects, can be detrimental to memory functioning. This vigilance, while a protective response, can overload the working memory system, thereby impairing the processing and storage of new information. Additionally, in their study of over 300 Black adolescent girls, Butler-Barnes et al. (2022) found that perceived discrimination from teachers was associated with higher depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts. The researchers proposed discriminatory experiences from teachers undermine Black girls' sense of school belonging, which could negatively impact memory and academics (Butler-Barnes et al., 2022).

These studies provide evidence that Black adolescent girls encounter unique forms of racial and gender discrimination at school that contribute to psychological and academic risks. Experiencing discrimination from teachers appears especially detrimental. The repeated exposure to marginalization and lowered expectations can negatively impact Black girls' self-image, school engagement, and memory processes. More research is needed to further examine the effects of racialized stressors on cognitive outcomes for Black girls. Implementing teacher training and school policies that address discrimination could help mitigate these harmful experiences. Providing Black girls access to mental health services and promoting identity empowerment are also important for supporting healthy development.

Gender and Schooling in Drama Education

This section contains a discussion of the historical context of gender and schooling, as well as how this theme relates to drama education in secondary schools. The influence of traditional gender norms on education settings is evaluated, as well as the advantages and constraints of drama education, the intersectionality of race and gender in education as it relates to Black female adolescents and the impact of drama education on socioemotional learning. Gender and performance issues are then discussed.

The relationship between gender and schooling is a complex, multifaceted topic that has been the subject of much scholarly discourse and public deliberation (Farrier & McNamara, 2013; Senior, 2021; Stern, 2021). Several crucial considerations emerge that revolve around Black adolescent girls in theater education settings (Kauli & Thomas, 2022; Ruppel, 2022; Williams, 2022). Researchers have called for eliminating social differences, inequalities, and stratification to achieve emancipation from social oppression (Cherryholmes, 1988). Both seminal and contemporary research has shown that gendered performativity can manifest in drama education, impacting adolescent perceptions of gender roles (Black, 2021; Malagon et al., 2021). Additionally, studies exist that chart the rapid decline of self-worth experienced by girls when there is a strong and rigid sense of gender identity (Perrott, 2014; Shem-Tov, 2013).

In public education, girls are often asked to identify with a specific gender role that may not align with their self-perception (Gallagher & Sahni, 2019). Researchers have highlighted the challenges in drama education, where students must develop themselves according to their own will while still being required to understand complex gender

issues in the context of dramatic art forms like plays (Gallagher, 1998; Salverson, 2023).

Additionally, these researchers have noted the lack of research on this subject (Gallagher, 1998), indicating a need for the present study.

Seminal literature has demonstrated how the division of students based on demographic characteristics like race and gender can adversely impact the socioemotional learning of students (Gregory & Fergus, 2017). For example, Zimmermann (2018) found that such classroom designs impaired students' understanding of complex gender issues and delayed socioemotional development in both male and female students. Kazemek (1995), in her work on reading and female moral development, insisted that a multi-perspectival view concerning drama education pedagogy fosters a greater sense of socioemotional learning. Furthermore, Gentile et al. (2009) found that division of students based on gender resulted in lower levels of self-confidence among students, potentially negatively impacting their socioemotional learning. These findings illustrate how drama education can provide a platform for socioemotional development and learning among adolescent students and can contribute to an enhanced sense of equity and empowerment for marginalized groups.

The Influence of Traditional Gender Norms on Educational Settings

Gender norms in educational settings have influenced pedagogical approaches throughout history (Nereson, 2022). Broad societal trends have underpinned these norms and shifts in gender-based perspectives in education have largely reflected the social zeitgeist (Trezise et al., 2023). However, some antiquated gendered norms are perpetuated in modern schools, which can sometimes have detrimental and limiting

impacts on students' growth and development (Gabriel, 2021). The following sub-section contains a discussion of the historical context of gender norms in education.

Historical Context. In the past, educational institutions have played a role in perpetuating specific gender norms and societal expectations (Zimmermann, 2018). Historically, girls have frequently been directed towards engaging in activities and pursuing jobs traditionally associated with femininity while being discouraged from involvement in subjects traditionally associated with masculinity, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs (Grissom-Broughton, 2020). The historical context demonstrates a long-standing trend of educational inequality based on gender. For example, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, school curriculum for girls was concentrated on domestic skills and nurturing roles, reflecting the prevalent societal idea that women's primary function was as caregivers and homemakers (Huang et al., 2020). Meanwhile, areas such as mathematics, physics, and technology were frequently regarded as too cognitively demanding or inappropriate for women (Grissom-Broughton, 2020). Even when women began to make inroads into higher education in the late 1800s, they were frequently barred from renowned universities or given limited access to specific fields of study (Huang et al., 2020). Understanding this background is critical to understanding the continued problems that female students confront in accessing fair educational opportunities and overcoming persistent gender norms throughout academic disciplines such as drama.

Gender differences are inherent in drama education. The significance of theater lies in its frequent exploration of gendered perceptions within the realm of the arts

(Gabriel, 2021). Although drama has historically been associated with the encouragement of emotional expression, a feature generally linked to femininity, it is noteworthy that the highest positions within the profession, such as directing or playwriting, have predominantly been occupied by men (Steffen, 2020). The aforementioned dichotomy may be experienced acutely by Black adolescent females attending drama schools, as in many cases, they do not have male classmates for the purposes of comparison (Harris & Davis, 2018). Lack of male classmates leads to unintended single-sex education, which can influence the socio-emotional development of adolescents (Pahlke & Hyde, 2016). Thus, the nature of drama education may have unintended consequences regarding the socioemotional development of adolescent females.

Advantages and Constraints of Drama Education in Secondary School

Drama education can positively and negatively impact students (Zimmermann & Keynton, 2021). The benefits of attending drama schools in secondary school years have been supported by research, which indicates that girls in such educational environments may have fewer gender-based classroom expectations (Lee et al., 2023; Ruppel, 2022; Senior, 2021). Consequently, evidence also suggests that these girls may develop higher levels of confidence, particularly in topics that are usually dominated by males (Stern, 2021). Conversely, according to Wang (2021), it is important to acknowledge that certain middle-school contexts may occasionally place excessive emphasis on gender norms as a result of limited everyday interactions with individuals of the opposite gender. This could possibly restrict the range of gender expressions and roles available within these situations (Kim, 2021).

Drama education, characterized by the use of dramatic practices and techniques within the educational setting, possesses considerable efficacy and dynamism, particularly when applied to secondary school students in a period of developmental change (Winsler et al., 2020). The field of drama presents a wide range of advantages, although it also entails specific limitations (Kolovou & Kim, 2020). Regarding advantages, the art form of drama fosters an environment that promotes and cultivates collaboration and teamwork. Students acquire the skills of effective communication, negotiation, compromise, and active listening, which are critical elements of socioemotional learning (Kolovou & Kim, 2020). These talents possess immense value in both academic and non-academic settings.

Engaging in public speaking and presenting in front of one's peers might be perceived as a challenging endeavor. The act of overcoming stage fright and successfully delivering a performance can enhance one's self-esteem and foster the development of confidence (Najami et al., 2019). Drama provides a secure setting for the articulation of sentiments and affective states. Adolescents in secondary school experiencing a wide range of emotions due to puberty can derive physical and psychological advantages from engaging in such forms of expression (Winsler et al., 2020). Physical development is a key aspect of drama, as it frequently incorporates elements such as movement, coordination, and body awareness. Engaging in physical activities can potentially enhance students' physical agility and cater to their kinesthetic learning preferences (Kolovou & Kim, 2020). The cognitive advantages of engaging in activities such as memorizing lines, comprehending character motivations, and reading scripts can enhance

memory capabilities, foster critical thinking skills, and cultivate analytical aptitude (Winsler et al., 2020). Thus drama education can facilitate adolescents' socioemotional development.

Creativity and imagination are nurtured through the medium of drama, as it allows students to construct intricate worlds, develop diverse characters, and craft compelling narratives. This process stimulates creativity and facilitates the expansion of one's imaginative capacities (Lee et al., 2020). Cultural and historical awareness can be fostered among students through the exploration of various plays and scripts, enabling them to gain insights into varied cultures, historical events, and societal challenges (Najami et al., 2019). This engagement serves to expand their perspectives and knowledge. Language and communication skills are essential in the field of acting, as they encompass clear articulation, vocal projection, and expressive communication (Van de Water, 2021). This has the potential to improve language proficiency and enhance general communication aptitude.

Some limitations related to drama education among secondary school-aged students have been identified in the literature. Some students may experience discomfort or exclusion in theatrical events, particularly those with timid or introverted tendencies. It is imperative to organize activities in a manner that accommodates the participation of all individuals according to their respective comfort levels (Najami et al., 2019). Resource constraints can also impact the effectiveness of drama education, as it often necessitates the availability of various resources such as props, costumes, adequate space, and even professional trainers (Lee et al., 2020). Not all educational institutions may possess the

necessary resources or facilities, in particular, drama education may not be prioritized in inner-city schools, which tend to have many minority students (Conrad, 2002). In contrast to disciplines characterized by definitive solutions, theatre is inherently subjective in nature (Kolovou & Kim, 2020). The grading process poses challenges for educators, who must prioritize establishing fair and unbiased assessments (Lee et al., 2020). Emotional and social dynamics within a group can become intricate, particularly when there are disagreements among students or instances where certain individuals perceive themselves as targets of ridicule.

Time limitations can be a significant difficulty when allocating adequate time for engaging in theatre activities, especially considering the demanding nature of packed curriculums. It is evident that students' levels of interest in theatre can vary, with some exhibiting strong passion while others may not demonstrate the same level of excitement (Najami et al., 2019). Furthermore, logistical issues, such as resource availability, can stymie the comprehensive, immersive experiences that theater education seeks to give (Dawson & Lee, 2018). Specifically, Mahant et al. (2023), explained that in their study on shifting the learning atmosphere through process drama, the fifty-minute time limit per class hampered the flow of process drama sessions, reducing efficacy. According to Mahant et al., (2023), further research is needed to overcome these constraints in order to promote experiential learning, resource provision, and inclusivity, ensuring that the transformative potential of theater education is available to all children. Ensuring active engagement and effective learning for all individuals can provide considerable difficulty.

The use of drama in educational settings can serve as a means to expose students to diverse cultures and historical contexts. However, it is of utmost importance to address these subjects with high sensitivity and precision (Lee et al., 2020). Misrepresentations have the potential to contribute to the maintenance of stereotypes. Theatre education provides a wide range of advantages, particularly for secondary school children during a pivotal period of growth (Kolovou & Kim, 2020). Nevertheless, effectively incorporating this type of education into the educational program necessitates careful strategizing, allocating resources, and comprehending the possible obstacles to guarantee a favorable and all-encompassing learning environment for every student. Using these methods may provide enhanced educational experiences for adolescents interested in pursuing dramatic arts.

The Intersectionality of Race and Gender in the Context of Education

Another important sub-theme that emerged in the literature related to this topic pertains to intersectionality. Multiple studies have shown that Black girls frequently have a distinctive set of challenges characterized by a double jeopardy phenomenon when they experience prejudice stemming from both their racial and gender identities (Boyle et al., 2022; Brooms, 2023; Harris & Davis, 2018). Within educational institutions, these phenomena may materialize as the perpetuation of stereotypes. For instance, Black adolescents may experience the undervaluation of their intellectual capacities or the implementation of disciplinary measures that are disproportionately harsh in comparison to those imposed on their classmates (S. L. Campbell, 2020).

The intersection of race and gender can significantly influence Black adolescents' perceptions within theatrical contexts. S. L. Campbell (2020) suggested that the confluence of race and gender can potentially shape Black adolescents' perceptions in the context of theatrical settings, impacting their role preferences and casting outcomes within school plays. Moreover, it is noteworthy that the realm of theater exhibits inherent racial prejudices, frequently exhibiting a preference for plots and characters rooted in Eurocentric perspectives (Johnson, 2021). According to some authors, this has the potential to influence the level of representation and the categorization of narratives as being significant or deserving (Chahbane et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020; Van de Water, 2021). In this context, the inherent racial biases that are frequently visible in theater might result in a biased representation of characters and narratives that primarily coincide with Eurocentric ideas (Chahbane et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020). The following section contains a discussion of the evidence associated with what is known as gendered performance.

The Gendered Performance and Implications for Socioemotional Learning

An additional sub-theme emerged in the literature about gendered performance, which is the concept that gender is a composite of the associated acts that are performed that align with a particular gender role (Chakrabarty, 2011). Judith Butler's (1988) theory of gender performativity asserts that gender is not an inherent quality, but a social construct enacted through repetitive performances. Educational institutions, serving as venues for socialization, substantially influence the formation of this particular behavior (Grissom-Broughton, 2020). The concept of performance in the context of theater

education assumes multifaceted interpretations, hence embodying the notion of meta-performance (Chakrabarty, 2011). Adolescent girls of African descent are engaged in the simultaneous negotiation of their gender identity in daily life and the various roles they assume within theatrical contexts (Gallagher, 2014). This dichotomy offers a fertile ground for questioning and strengthening societal norms related to gender and race (Gallagher, 2014).

Recent studies have shown that educational institutions segregating students based on demographic factors like race or gender can lead to a limited understanding of social identity (Kim, 2021; Little & Tolbert, 2018; Ruppel, 2022). According to Sharma (2021), the relevance of drama lies in its capacity to serve as a platform for investigation and expression, wherein it can either challenge or reinforce societal norms. Black adolescent females may find this environment conducive to exploring non-traditional gender narratives (Kingsberry & Jean-Marie, 2022). According to Kingsberry and Jean-Marie (2022), Black adolescent females may find a particularly favorable atmosphere for developing non-traditional gender narratives in this context. Additionally, in a study by Fahmy and Osnes (2022) on creating theater workshops for young women, the authors developed *little words, BIG ISSUES: a diversity and inclusion workshop* facilitated in collaboration with U.S. middle school students, where the students imagined a more inclusive community by practicing how to author replies to harmful little words that relate to big social concerns while activating girl-led action through performance-based tactics. This exploration, made possible by drama's unique ability to engage emotions, empathy, and embodiment, has the potential to empower Black adolescent females to

critically analyze their identities and imagine alternative gender narratives that resonate with their own experiences and goals.

Section Summary

This section contained an examination of the correlation between gender and education, with a specific emphasis on Black adolescent females within same-sex theatre education environments. First, an examination of the historical backdrop of gender standards in education, the impact of traditional gender norms on educational environments, and the benefits and limitations associated with drama education were provided. Studies illustrated the interconnectedness of race and gender within the context of education, examining gender-related challenges in academic achievement (Brooms, 2023; Steffen, 2020; Zimmermann & Keynton, 2021). According to the evidence, drama education has several advantages, such as reduced gender-based classroom expectations, enhanced levels of self-assurance (Little & Tolbert, 2018; Zimmermann & Keynton, 2021). However, there are notable limitations of drama education, such as limited opportunities for interactions with individuals of the opposite gender (Zimmermann & Keynton, 2021). Nevertheless, studies also highlighted the existence of certain deficiencies within the existing body of literature and research methodology, providing a rationale for the suggested investigation (Lee et al., 2023; Tanner, 2018)

The intersectionality of race and gender within the realm of education is a prominent and noteworthy topic. The evidence presented in this section indicates that Black adolescents frequently encounter a compounded form of discrimination, double jeopardy, stemming from biases associated with their racial and gender identities

(Kingsberry & Jean-Marie, 2022; Sharma, 2021). The aforementioned circumstances may result in the continuation of stereotypes, the underestimation of intellectual abilities, and the implementation of disproportionate disciplinary actions (Bond et al., 2021). The inclusion of drama education has a notable influence on the formation of perceptions toward Black females, ultimately affecting their preferences for roles and the consequences of casting decisions (Nereson, 2022).

Gendered performance is evident in theater instruction, where racial biases and Eurocentric viewpoints are frequently observed (Chakrabarty, 2011). Non-traditional gender perspectives present a challenge to conventional binary gender norms, and theatre education can serve as a platform for the exploration and articulation of these ideas (Bond et al., 2021). Through a comprehensive analysis of these characteristics, educators and policymakers can enhance their ability to effectively support and advance principles of equity and inclusivity within educational environments (Gallagher, 2014). The following section contains an evaluation of the evidence related to drama education as it relates to the focus of the proposed study.

Black Girls in Educational Settings

In educational settings, young Black women have shown remarkable perseverance and success, often outperforming their peers in several academic metrics. Numerous empirical investigations have shown that Black girls often exhibit a strong sense of self-efficacy and drive, which are crucial characteristics contributing to their academic achievements (Anderson, 2020; Collins et al., 2019). The studies highlight the importance of self-confidence in attaining scholastic achievement, demonstrating how

Black females use their self-assurance to perform academically. Furthermore, the concept of resilience, as discussed by Blackmon (2015), highlights that despite facing many challenges, Black girls often use their inherent strength and unshakable determination to overcome barriers and succeed in the academic sphere.

However, it is evident that there are ongoing educational disparities that disproportionately impact Black females. The National Women's Law Center (2018) research highlights that Black girls often encounter disparities in disciplinary practices inside educational institutions, resulting in obstacles to their academic progress. These practices include higher rates of suspension compared to their Caucasian counterparts, which is directly associated with worse academic achievement and higher rates of dropping out. Additionally, the study conducted by Chance (2021) provides insight into the complex interplay between racial and gender dynamics within disciplinary procedures. The research emphasizes that Black girls often encounter unique problems that are not appropriately handled within the educational system. The imposition of disciplinary measures can have long-lasting detrimental effects on students' perceptions of their school and their academic performance in the future. Furthermore, insufficient education and higher rates of students leaving school prematurely have a negative impact on academic accomplishments among children. This perpetuates the low socioeconomic status (SES) of the community, as educational resources in low-SES communities are often insufficient, thereby impeding students' academic progress and overall outcomes. The aforementioned discrepancies are especially notable when considering Black females, as they constitute 9% of preschool enrollment, 9% of preschool students

subjected to one or more out-of-school suspensions, and 8% of expulsions (American Psychological Association, 2022).

The academic journey of Black girls is significantly shaped by the educational curriculum and the representation seen in instructional materials. King's (2015) study highlights the negative consequences that arise from the absence of representation in publications and educational resources for Black girls in terms of their classroom participation and identity development. The lack of representation in this context may lead to feelings of alienation and a scarcity of individuals to serve as examples, both of which are crucial for the development of a positive academic self-perception. Additionally, Black girls are more likely to attend underfunded schools with fewer resources than white students (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). They are also more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, even for minor infractions (National Women's Law Center, 2018). Furthermore, Black girls face systemic racism in schools, which can lead to lower academic achievement. For example, black girls are more likely to be stereotyped as aggressive and disruptive, which can lead to teachers treating them differently than white students (Gilliam, 2016). Black girls are also more likely to be placed in lower-level classes, even if they are academically capable (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). These disparities can have a negative impact on black girls' academic achievement. Moreover, it is important to note that several curricula exhibit a Eurocentric bias, which neglects to recognize the rich history and significant contributions made by Black folks. Consequently, this perpetuates a feeling of marginalization (Price-Dennis & Sealey-Ruiz, 2021).

Notwithstanding these problems, concerted efforts are being undertaken to effectively address and rectify these inequities. There is a growing momentum around initiatives such as the implementation of culturally responsive teaching and the integration of Black history into curriculum frameworks. The aforementioned efforts, as theorized by Cooper (2020), aim to create a scholarly environment that is more inclusive and supportive for Black females. By recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by Black girls within the school system, there is the possibility of making substantial improvements in their academic experiences and accomplishments. As these programs persist in their growth and development, they inspire a sense of hope and positivity about the potential for a fairer and more successful educational journey for young Black women.

Current Literature Related to Drama Education

The field of drama education encompasses various dimensions, including artistic expression, cultural narratives, and personal growth (Gammon, 2022). It connects with the complex concepts of gender, schooling, and intersectionality, presenting a rich tapestry of connections (Salverson, 2023). An in-depth examination of this convergence provides insight into the various possibilities and obstacles in theater education, particularly pertaining to Black adolescent females in single-sex educational settings (Brooms, 2023). This section contains a review of the literature related to drama education. Consideration is first given to drama education as a reflection of societal norms and biases, followed by a discussion of the intersection of drama education and gender performativity. The intersection of teaching methods and depiction is then

evaluated, as well as issues related to gender and schooling. This section concludes with a summary and outline of key points.

Drama Education as a Reflection of Societal Norms and Biases

According to Okello (2022), drama frequently serves as a mirror for the values, customs, and biases prevalent in society. Throughout history, theatre has predominantly been characterized by tales rooted in Eurocentrism, thereby marginalizing the stories and lived experiences of individuals from non-White racial backgrounds (Gammon, 2022). Researchers have highlighted that the phenomenon of stereotyping in casting can result in the confinement of Black women to particular parts that are shaped by racial and gender stereotypes (Bond et al., 2021; Harris & Davis, 2018). As a result, their opportunities for diverse experiences and the exploration of various narratives become restricted.

Examining the perspectives of Black women on drama education reveals a dynamic reflection of societal norms and biases, where interaction with dramatic tales provides a platform to traverse and question intersections of race and gender. Sawyer and Earle (2019) and Wasmuth et al. (2020) found that Black women combat historical underrepresentation by representing characters who transcend established categories, gaining agency over their narratives and developing more comprehensive identity depictions. Their performances act as counter-narratives, regaining agency, prompting a broader societal reevaluation of biases, advocating for truthful representation, and contributing to transformative debates beyond the theater.

Studies have suggested that the concept of empowerment and self-expression is a significant aspect of individual agency and personal development (Steffen, 2020).

According to Kingsberry and Jean-Marie (2022), drama education, when effectively utilized, can serve as a means of empowerment, enabling students to articulate their thoughts and feelings, engage with intricate emotions, and gain insights into a wide range of viewpoints (Sharma, 2021). Specifically, researchers have increasingly documented how critical empowerment is when working with marginalized students like those from racial minority backgrounds (Sharma, 2021). Thus, the process of identity exploration can be particularly significant for Black adolescents (Kingsberry & Jean-Marie, 2022). Within this context, drama can serve as a valuable platform for the examination and interrogation of both racial and gendered identities (Gabriel, 2021). The impact of drama on these identities can either challenge or perpetuate societal norms, depending on the specific pedagogical style employed.

The Intersection of Drama Education and Gender Performativity

The concept of performing in theatre school holds a twofold importance, based on recent evidence (Boyle et al., 2022; Nereson, 2022). In these particular contexts, Black adolescent girls engage in the complex task of managing their gender expression in their daily lives, while also concurrently managing the roles they assume when performing on stage (Okello, 2022). Additionally, using drama as a medium presents student with the opportunity to challenge conventional gender norms, particularly within a same-sex educational setting where these norms may be both intensified and malleable (Wang, 2021).

Furthermore, the performative part of theatre instruction provides Black adolescent girls with a unique area to negotiate and navigate cultural expectations around

their identities. They can experiment with different aspects of their identity, challenge stereotypes, and broaden their sense of self by embodying multiple personalities and exploring numerous roles (Sawyer & Earle, 2019; Wasmuth et al., 2020). In a mixed-method analysis of community-engaged theatre illuminates Black women's experiences of racism and addresses healthcare inequities by targeting provider bias by Wasmuth et al. (2020) posited that the performative lens transforms into a powerful instrument for self-discovery and empowerment, allowing individuals to not only question gender stereotypes but also modify their conceptions of who they are and who they want to be. Drama education, in essence, becomes a catalyst for self-expression and development, helping Black adolescent girls to transcend boundaries and assert power over their identities both on and off the stage.

The Intersection of Teaching Methods and Depiction

The selection of plays for study or performance within a curriculum can have the effect of either challenging or reinforcing prevailing cultural narratives (Chakrabarty, 2011). Researchers have highlighted the fact that the marginalization of Black girls' experiences may occur within a Eurocentric or male-dominated curriculum, whereas the inclusion of a diverse curriculum might serve to affirm and amplify their voices (Chakrabarty, 2011; Okello, 2022). These issues can magnify pre-existing stereotypes and further contribute to the disempowerment of drama students, and particularly those from marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds (Okello, 2022). Therefore, according to Black (2021) and O. F. Law (2021), the role of instructors is crucial in shaping teacher attitudes and bias. The biases, expectations, and pedagogical choices of

educators have a substantial impact on the experiences of pupils (Black, 2021). There exists the possibility for individuals to either reinforce conventional casting and storylines that rely on stereotypes or to actively oppose and counteract these inclinations (Bond et al., 2021).

Drama education dynamics transcend beyond the classroom, connecting with broader cultural contexts. Jjarrah (2019) found that the plays and storylines chosen for educational settings can impact cultural perceptions and debates outside of the classroom setting. This highlights the potential for drama education to influence individual students and drive greater societal change by stimulating critical observations on engrained biases and preconceptions (Addie et al., 2020; O. F. Law, 2021). Such transformative effects can reverberate across society, generating a more welcoming and empathic cultural landscape.

Drama as a Mechanism for Sociopolitical Engagement

Researchers have also demonstrated a trend in regard to the utilization of drama education as a means of addressing sociopolitical issues (Lee et al., 2023; Sharma, 2021). For example, Tanner (2018) suggested that drama education has the potential to serve as a valuable instrument for actively engaging with and exploring a wide range of broader socio-political subjects. Additionally, Stern (2021) argued that drama serves as a platform for students to engage with and examine complex societal issues such as racism, misogyny, and various types of discrimination, hence cultivating the development of empathy and critical thinking skills.

According to Wasmuth et al., (2020), theatre and drama has long been used to effect societal change. They studied the techniques and outcomes of a theatre project aimed at reducing healthcare disparities faced by Black women and explained that theatrical performances have the potential to shed light on the amount and character of discrimination in healthcare and society, as well as to spark discussions that encourage audience members to rethink their own potential contributions to discrimination (Wasmuth et al., 2020). Furthermore, researchers generally agree that drama serves as a platform for Black girls to share narratives, challenge societal perceptions, and promote change (Gammon, 2022; O. F. Law, 2021). Thus, drama education may provide important outlets for Black adolescents regarding self-expression.

The Perceptions of Teachers and Parents Regarding Drama Education

Parents and teachers can have a significant effect on the influence of drama education (Shem-Tov, 2013). The perspectives held by individuals regarding gender roles, racial identity, and the perceived importance of theatre education can have a substantial impact on the lived realities of Black girls (Goddard, 2013). The presence of a supportive atmosphere can amplify the advantages of theatre education, but a skeptical or dismissive one can restrict its potential (Okello, 2022). Researchers have suggested that drama education occupies a pivotal position, encompassing individual growth, cultural portrayal, and societal conventions (Perrott, 2014; Salverson, 2023). The theater classroom can provide validation, challenge, and personal development for Black adolescent girls (Malagon et al., 2021). However, as Gabriel (2021) noted, realizing its complete potential is contingent upon inclusive and critically engaged teaching that

identifies and actively addresses the numerous prejudices and barriers encountered by these students (O. F. Law, 2021).

The utilization of drama education as a pedagogical strategy for children in secondary school elicits diverse viewpoints from both parents and instructors. While a significant number of individuals appreciate the advantages it offers, there are some who hold certain reservations (Omasta et al., 2021). The holistic development of children is frequently acknowledged by parents who recognize the multifaceted benefits of drama in fostering emotional, social, and cognitive growth (Savage et al., 2022). This recognition stems from the understanding that drama offers a multifaceted educational experience for their children. The experience of observing their children's performances can evoke a sense of pride among parents, particularly when they discern a noticeable enhancement in their child's self-assurance and self-worth (Gray et al., 2019). The creation of a safe environment is highly valued by parents who recognize the benefits of drama, as it provides a structured setting for children to freely express their emotions, engage with complex topics, and navigate conflicts (Cayak, 2021).

However, certain parents may hold the belief that allocating time to drama could potentially undermine academic development by diverting attention away from core academic courses. Parents may express apprehension on the possibility of adverse peer influences, such as bullying, particularly when their child faces academic challenges or deviates from stereotypical societal expectations, such as that men in theatre or drama are less masculine and should focus on STEM education (Savage et al., 2022). Cultural or personal beliefs might influence the perception of elements within the realm of drama by

parents originating from conservative backgrounds (Omasta et al., 2021). These individuals may experience discomfort with regards to specific roles, attire, or themes, perceiving them as unsuitable or incongruent with their value system. Furthermore, in a study by Zhou (2019) examining the drama education differences between China and western countries, STEM education was seen as more desirable over theater and other arts in China compared to western countries. Some parents may perceive drama instruction as a potential academic diversion and feel uneasy with components of theater that go against their principles due to scholastic concerns, societal expectations around gender roles, and conservative cultural beliefs.

The utilization of drama as a pedagogical tool has been observed to enhance interactivity and engagement in educational settings, particularly in instances where the subject matter is abstract or difficult (Omasta et al., 2021). The promotion of classroom cohesion can be facilitated through the implementation of drama exercises, which have the potential to cultivate a collective identity among students, fostering interpersonal connections both between themselves and with their instructor (Savage et al., 2022). The pedagogical technique of role-playing can facilitate the development of empathy and comprehension among students by enabling them to metaphorically experience the perspective of others.

Differentiated instruction in the context of drama education has the potential to accommodate a wide range of learning styles and skills, so fostering inclusivity and yielding positive outcomes for a varied student population. Teachers have several concerns that impact their professional practice and the educational environment (Gray et

al., 2019). The incorporation of drama into curriculums may be perceived as a formidable task due to existing constraints on instructional time and resources. Educators may encounter challenges in rationalizing the incorporation of this particular subject matter within a multitude of academic objectives (Hismanoglu & Çolak, 2019). A subset of teachers lacks formal instruction in theater education, resulting in diminished confidence and inadequate preparation to seamlessly incorporate it into their instructional practices (Gray et al., 2019). Differentiated instruction in drama education provides a path to inclusivity by accommodating diverse learning styles; however, concerns about limited time, resources, and alignment with academic objectives impede its implementation; this is often exacerbated by teachers' lack of formal theater education, which leads to diminished confidence in seamlessly integrating it into their instructional practices.

Other challenges with drama education exist. Implementing drama activities in the classroom can occasionally result in lively and exuberant behavior, perhaps giving rise to challenges in maintaining effective classroom control (Lee et al., 2020). In contrast to more objective disciplines, the evaluation of drama is often perceived as subjective, posing difficulties in ensuring equitable grading of students (Hismanoglu & Çolak, 2019). Overcoming these challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach that includes innovative instruction, resource allocation, teacher training, and sensitivity to diverse cultural and identity dynamics.

It can be observed that parents and instructors both acknowledge the potential benefits of including theater education into the curriculum. However, it is important to note that they also harbor legitimate apprehensions over this approach (Savage et al.,

2022). The process of weighing the advantages in comparison to the difficulties necessitates engaging in discourse, providing education, and fostering a collective aspiration for the comprehensive growth of individuals in the middle-school age group (Gray et al., 2019). When effectively incorporated, theater education can undeniably serve as a significant asset within the secondary school curriculum.

Section Summary

Evidence presented in this section demonstrated how the field of drama education is a multifaceted area of study that delves into the realms of artistic manifestation, cultural storytelling, and personal growth (Eriksen & Lyng, 2018; Salverson, 2023; Trezise et al., 2023). The significance of single-sex educational contexts, especially for Black adolescent females, is particularly noteworthy (Stern, 2021). According to the research, drama education has the potential to empower students through the facilitation of self-expression, emotional engagement, and the exploration of varied narratives (O. F. Law, 2021). Moreover, it has the potential to allow students to question and confront prevailing societal conventions and biases, especially within contexts that are segregated by gender (Schupak, 2018). The intersection between theatrical education and gender performativity holds significant importance, as it provides a platform for Black females to actively challenge conventional gender norms and counteract prevailing prejudices (Boyle et al., 2022). The adoption of drama education can provide avenues for the exploration of diverse roles and the cultivation of leadership abilities.

The correlation between gender and drama education is intricately connected since the representation of diverse genders in the realm of dramatic arts substantially

influences the educational milieu. According to critical educators, achieving emancipation from social oppression necessitates the elimination of social disparities, inequities, and stratification (Chahbane et al., 2021; Kauli & Thomas, 2022). Nevertheless, empirical evidence indicates a decline in self-esteem among female students in democratic educational systems (Kauli & Thomas, 2022). An all-encompassing viewpoint on existence recognizes the significance of imagination, which empowers individuals, notably females, to construct alternative narratives that question prevailing assumptions (Meehan, 2022). However, adolescence is often associated with a decrease in self-confidence, a critical outlook, and feelings of personal inadequacy (Malagon et al., 2021). Drama education has the potential to effectively tackle these concerns through the acknowledgment and appreciation of women's achievements, the encouragement of higher aspirations, and the fostering of a gender-neutral self-identity (Eriksen & Lyng, 2018). The following section contains a review of the current status of drama education literature.

Black Girls and Drama Education

Within the context of middle and high schools, girls of African descent often meet unique challenges, resulting in a series of intense experiences sometimes referred to as drama. According to research done by Green et al. (2020), the intersectionality of race and gender may contribute to increased levels of stress among black girls, making them more vulnerable to experiencing conflict and chaos. The indications seen in this context are characterized by their complex nature, which includes socially related arguments, rumors, and the persistent feeling of social marginalization. These interactions have

significant implications, exerting a profound impact on the psychological well-being and emotional stability of these young individuals. Therefore, it is crucial to engage with the perplexing issue of drama as it manifests within this particular group. Furthermore, the persistent social pressure to adhere to conventional standards of beauty and societal expectations adds another layer of complexity to the ongoing discourse. This encompasses concerns related to hair, skin tone, and body shape (Onnie Rogers et al., 2022). The lack of adequate representation and diversity in media and popular culture exacerbates these complex difficulties. Therefore, the responsibility of addressing these distinct experiences lies with educators, parents, and other adult caretakers in the lives of young black girls. It is crucial for them to not only recognize but also actively address these challenges by providing consistent support and a range of resources to help these girls navigate through these complex obstacles. In this approach, the objective is to facilitate the empowerment of these young black girls, fostering their development in intellectual, social, and emotional domains.

Another significant element that contributes to the heightened emotional intensity experienced by Black adolescent females in middle and high school is from the widespread prevalence of stereotypes and prejudices. Gadson and Lewis (2022) shed attention on the detrimental effects of unfavorable stereotypes portraying Black females as aggressive or confrontational. The presentation of black females in an unjustified manner contributes to the development of misinterpretation and conflict among individuals, since they are often subjected to unfair categorizations as confrontational or aggressive. As a result, individuals find themselves entangled in an intricate chain of

disputes and disciplinary measures. Unfortunately, these preconceptions have the regrettable consequence of creating an increasingly negative perception, which further marginalizes young black girls. Consequently, this poses a significant challenge for them to get the necessary assistance and understanding from both educators and their peers. Furthermore, it has been shown by Lamboy et al. (2020) that these stereotypes have a detrimental impact on the way in which black girls are seen and treated by both their peers and educators. This creates an atmosphere that is conducive to the emergence of interpersonal conflicts and tensions. In order to cultivate a more supportive and inclusive academic environment for black girls, it is crucial to address and destroy prevailing misconceptions.

Furthermore, the intricate interconnection between race, gender, and socio-economic position functions as a catalyst for the challenges faced by black females which can contribute to heightened drama and conflict within school settings. According to research published by Vox (2019), there is evidence to support the notion that black girls from economically poor households have additional challenges resulting from the intersection of poverty and prejudice. These pressures exacerbate the intensity of drama and conflict inside educational institutions. Remarkably, the report unveils that Black girls as young as five years old are already bereft of the presumption of innocence, receiving less support compared to their white counterparts of the same age. The aforementioned assumption propels educators and other individuals in positions of power towards an inaccurate conviction that Black girls exhibit a more mature disposition, resulting in the administration of more severe disciplinary measures in comparison to

their white female counterparts. This discrepancy becomes notably more pronounced for Black girls between the ages of ten and fourteen (Vox, 2019). The educational environment is significantly impacted by the consequences of pressures that arise from the intersection of poverty and prejudice. The prejudices mentioned above contribute to the significant inequities faced by Black girls when they come into contact with law enforcement, educational institutions, and the criminal justice system. These discrepancies have profound ramifications for their future outcomes. The aforementioned information emphasizes the need of acknowledging the unique experiences of black girls originating from various origins and addressing the systemic factors that contribute to the perpetuation of challenges in their lives.

In order to address the challenges faced by black girls in middle and high school, it is crucial to prioritize the adoption of interventions that focus on fostering their social and emotional well-being. For instance, the study done by Carter Andrews et al. (2019) highlights the significance of facilitating opportunities for Black girls to develop healthy peer connections, get mentorship, and enhance their conflict resolution abilities. By establishing a nurturing and enabling environment inside the educational sphere, educators and administrators have the ability to redirect the trajectory away from potential turmoil for these Black girls.

Challenges of Drama Education and Socioemotional Learning

The attainment of goals in drama education yields concrete outcomes for pupils, cultivating a feeling of achievement and enhancing self-worth (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). The concepts of empathy and perspective taking are fundamental to understanding

human behavior and social interactions. Empathy refers to the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, while perspective taking involves the capacity to adopt another person (Strahan & Poteat, 2022). The practice of acting necessitates pupils assuming the roles of their characters, so facilitating their comprehension and ability to sympathize with diverse perspectives, emotions, and experiences (Collie & Perry, 2019). Group talks centered around character motivations and tales serve to enhance and foster profound dialogues pertaining to comprehension and empathy.

The intrinsic usefulness of group conversations centered on character motives and storylines amplifies the significance of theatre education and the viewpoints described previously for Black females. These discussions broaden their comprehension of the dramatic storylines they encounter and give a forum for significant discussions about the difficulties of identity, ethnicity, and gender (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). Studies on Black women and girls explained that they can extract deeper meanings from stories by diving into character motivations, linking them to their own experiences, and negotiating the numerous intersections of their identities (Sawyer & Earle, 2019; Wasmuth et al., 2020). Furthermore, these discussions develop empathy by enabling participants to put themselves in the shoes of various characters, promoting a more nuanced view of the issues experienced by people from various backgrounds (Wasmuth et al., 2020).

Participating in improvisational activities necessitates students to promptly make judgments that have a direct impact on the development of a scene, thereby emphasizing the immediate ramifications of their choices (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). The situation necessitates a high level of sensitivity. Participating in theatrical activities might

occasionally elicit delicate or disturbing subject matter. Educators must exercise prudence by ensuring that the educational material is suitable for the age group and by fostering a secure and supportive environment for students (Strahan & Poteat, 2022). Secondary school pupils exhibit a broad spectrum of emotional maturity levels (Korpershoek et al., 2020). It is imperative to organize activities in a manner that accommodates the diverse needs of students, ensuring that none are overwhelmed or excluded.

The potential for perpetuating stereotypes or misrepresentations arises when characters or events are not treated with cultural sensitivity and knowledge, hence posing a danger in this regard (Collie & Perry, 2019). Although theatre can serve as a potent medium for delving into emotional experiences, it is imperative to discern between authentic sentiments and those enacted for the sake of a theatrical part (Estrada et al., 2021). Continuous reflection and debriefing have the potential to facilitate this process of differentiation. Theater education offers a dynamic and engaging approach to fostering socioemotional development in pupils of secondary-school age (Donahue-Keegan et al., 2019). Incorporating authentic scenarios, emotions, and choices within an educational framework can provide students with invaluable opportunities for self-reflection and empathy development (Strahan & Poteat, 2022). Nevertheless, for theatre to maximize its efficacy in promoting socioemotional learning, its implementation must be carefully considered, focusing on the student population's inherent difficulties and the heterogeneous nature.

Drama education is an instructional approach that necessitates students'

comprehension of historical experiences to shape their present understanding (Moeller, 2021; Preston, 2019). The curriculum is a product of social negotiation and construction, bridging the individual's internal world and the external environment (Moeller, 2021). It facilitates the creation of meaning and the meaningful reinterpretation of experiences (Shuster, 2019). The cost associated with theatre education is both reasonable and justified, as it serves the dual purpose of facilitating learning and providing fun (Ruppel, 2022). Nevertheless, there has been a lack of attention by the Ministry of Education and the School Board toward the significance of aesthetics and the cultivation of artistic expression (Posey-Maddox, 2017). In the final years of drama education, students exhibit a comprehensive grasp of dramatic form and theatre conventions (Trezise et al., 2023). This underscores the importance of drama education in fostering an appreciation for form by means of aesthetic portrayal of pivotal moments within dramatic works.

The primary objective of drama education is to impart to pupils a comprehensive comprehension of one's own identity in connection to others while also facilitating the acquisition of effective communication abilities (McGuire et al., 2020). Additionally, drama education endeavors to foster a spirit of curiosity and dedication toward continuous learning throughout one's lifetime (Preston, 2019). Nevertheless, there are experts who contend that the inclusion of drama in a student's educational journey is essential since it effectively stimulates their emotional and experiential learning, enabling them to actively participate in a purposeful environment (Stern, 2021). The significance of the drama teacher's position lies in their need to recognize their own assumptions and the prevailing worldview (Black, 2021). It is imperative that educators exhibit a proactive

and adaptable approach, while emphasizing the need to engage in purposeful activities when facilitating the learning process.

Importance of Drama Education for the Black Community

Within the Black community, drama education is profound and multidimensional, functioning as a transformative platform that addresses historical imbalances, empowers individuals, and encourages greater societal change. According to Carey et al. (2021) and Manzi et al. (2020), drama education allows Black people to question dominant prejudices, express their authentic voices, and modify narratives that have traditionally excluded their experiences by interacting with theatrical tales and embodying different roles. This transformative potential of drama education is significant in the Black community, where historical and structural biases have resulted in underrepresentation, misrepresentation, and a lack of agency (Addie et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020). Through theatrical expression, Black communities may challenge prejudices, tell untold truths, and encourage good change within their communities and throughout society.

Perspectives of Black Students Regarding Drama Education

At its foundation, theater education provides a platform for Black people to recover their identities and narratives, which are frequently disregarded or distorted in mainstream media. In a study by Dunn et al. (2020) on training theatre students of color, they posited that theatre can actively contribute to a larger story that is both authentic and multifaceted by participating in the development and performance of stories. Specifically, this active participation voices a platform to be heard, amplifying opinions that would otherwise go unnoticed and highlighting the complexity and diversity of their experiences

(Addie et al., 2020). Furthermore, drama education allows Black people to explore complicated issues like racial identity, discrimination, and resilience in a safe and creative atmosphere (Gallagher et al., 2017). Embodying characters and investigating their motivations allows for nuanced talks about the nuances of race and how it intersects with other parts of identity, such as gender and socioeconomic background.

Gaps in the Literature and Rationale for the Study

Upon thorough analysis of the extant scholarly works and discussions pertaining to the convergence of theater education, gender, racism, and same-sex schooling, it becomes evident that some deficiencies exist within the current body of knowledge. For example, although there exists a substantial body of study on the intersection of gender and education, as well as distinct scholarly inquiries into drama pedagogy, there remains a dearth of literature that specifically investigates the unique experiences of Black adolescent girls in drama courses (Johnson, 2021; Ruppel, 2022; Schupak, 2018). Additionally, a significant portion of scholarly literature often approaches race and gender as distinct factors (S. L. Campbell, 2020; Little & Tolbert, 2018). The exploration of the intersectional experiences of Black girls, particularly within the realm of theater education, remains a relatively understudied area. A significant proportion of research conducted in the field of education also heavily relies on quantitative data, so potentially overlooking the profound insights and nuanced perspectives that qualitative research can provide (Goddard, 2013; Shuster, 2019).

Furthermore, although there is an increasing dialogue regarding the need for diverse curricula in literature and history courses, there is a noticeable lack of emphasis

on the impact of representation, or the absence thereof, in drama curricula on the experiences of Black adolescents from their perspectives. For instance, Jjarrah (2019) examined the impact of drama education on students, but the study was quantitative, which did not allow for the students' perspectives to be analyzed in-depth. Additionally, Lee et al. (2020) garnered significant insight into drama education, however, it was a meta-analysis. Therefore, the study was limited in the lack of new perspectives from students. The mainstream literature frequently discusses Black adolescents without adequately including their own voices, narratives, and agency, resulting in an underrepresentation of their perspectives (Senior, 2021).

Few studies in literature examine the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers within the same study. Dunn et al. (2020) examined the perspectives of drama teachers. Additionally, Váradi (2022) studied socioemotional learning through music education. However, it was a comprehensive literature review on student perspectives and did not review teacher or parent perspectives. However, a comprehensive examination of the influence of drama education on students' socioemotional learning from multiple perspectives has not been undertaken. Such a study could provide valuable insights into the holistic effects of drama education on various stakeholders' perceptions and experiences.

Opting for a qualitative approach enables a comprehensive investigation into individuals' perceptions and experiences, facilitating a thorough understanding of the subject matter. Therefore, this study aims to explore the perspectives of Black adolescents, parents, and drama teachers regarding the influence of drama education on

socioemotional learning, shedding light on their complex understanding, navigation, and influence of their experiences. Through the utilization of a qualitative descriptive methodology, one can gain a comprehensive understanding of individual experiences while concurrently discerning commonalities and recurring themes across several individuals (Doyle et al., 2019). This phenomenon has the potential to illuminate both distinct and common obstacles and prospects. Qualitative descriptive studies facilitate the gathering of extensive and nuanced contextual information (Billups, 2019). Through a comprehensive analysis of several educational institutions and their theatre programs, one can gain insight into the sociocultural, institutional, and pedagogical elements that shape the experiences of Black female students. Conducting direct interviews, focus groups, and collecting observational data can offer primary perspectives, hence prioritizing the inclusion of Black girls' voices in the study.

Considering the highlighted deficiencies, conducting such an investigation would provide a noteworthy scholarly contribution to the realms of education, gender studies, theatre, and intersectionality. This study has the potential to provide valuable guidance to educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in their efforts to establish theater education environments that are both inclusive and empowering. The results of this study have the potential to impact the selection of theatre curricula, instructional methods, and overall school policies in order to foster an inclusive, fair, and representational learning environment for Black adolescent girls in single-sex educational settings.

In summary, a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design has the potential to yield a thorough and nuanced understanding of the complex interplay

between race, gender, and theatre instruction for Black adolescent females. Considering the gaps that have been found in the existing body of research, conducting such a study is not only pertinent at this time but also imperative for the progression of inclusive educational methods. This research aims to shed new insights on well-known inquiries regarding gender and equity within the field of education. Additionally, it seeks to contribute to the expanding body of literature in drama education by providing robust evidence from classroom settings that highlights the aesthetic, social, and academic benefits of an intermediate/senior drama curriculum (see Gallagher, 1998). Furthermore, this research endeavor aims to make a valuable contribution to the ongoing scholarly discussions surrounding gender and education. By providing up-to-date research and addressing pertinent feminist, social, and academic inquiries pertaining to drama education, this study seeks to fill a crucial gap in the existing literature (see Gallagher, 1998). This study will also propose potential avenues for future research within the broader inquiry of equity in education, as it will deliberately examine the variables of ethnicity, color, class, and gender in its analysis.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter consisted of a review of the literature related to this topic. The search strategy used to identify relevant studies was presented first, followed by the theoretical framework underpinning the study. A synthesis of the literature related to key variables and constructs of interest was then offered, in accordance with themes that emerged from the extant evidence, specifically gender and schooling in drama education was discussed (Chahbane et al., 2021; Farrier & McNamara, 2013; Shuster, 2019). Subsequently, a

detailed examination of gendered performances and their implications for socioemotional learning ensued (Ruppel, 2022; Senior, 2021; Trezise et al., 2023), highlighting the multifaceted nature of these interactions. Furthermore, the challenges inherent in drama education and their impact on socioemotional learning were thoroughly explored (Gammon, 2022; Lee et al., 2023; Steffen, 2020), revealing essential facets of this educational landscape. Identifying gaps in the literature and discussions on research design and methodological considerations paved the way for the rationale and justification of the forthcoming study. Gaps in the literature and research design and methodological issues are presented, leading to the rationale and justification for the proposed study. After conducting an in-depth examination of existing academic literature and discourse surrounding the intersection of theatrical education, gender, and racism, it is apparent that some shortcomings are present within the current knowledge base.

The primary objective of this study is to provide novel perspectives on widely discussed topics concerning gender and equity in the realm of education. Furthermore, the aim of this study is to make a scholarly contribution to the existing literature on drama education. This will be achieved by presenting strong empirical evidence gathered from real classroom environments, which will emphasize the various artistic, social, and academic advantages associated with an intermediate or senior theatre curriculum. Moreover, the primary objective of this research endeavor is to provide a significant addition to the continuing academic discourse on the topic of gender and education. This study aims to address a significant gap in the current literature by offering current research and addressing relevant feminist, social, and academic questions related to

drama education and socioemotional learning. Furthermore, this study will help identify feasible directions for future research within the wider investigation of equity in education since it will intentionally scrutinize the variables of ethnicity, color, class, and gender in its analysis. Chapter 3 contains a presentation of the method to be used to achieve the aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Drama education is an important way in which students can gain self-confidence and creativity and build problem-solving skills while exploring their self-expression. However, with increasing pressure on school administrators to increase students' standardized test scores to meet state and national standards, educational leaders are forced to devote less time to students' education in the performing arts (Simamora, 2020). Therefore, many students do not have the opportunity to enhance their socioemotional learning and development through drama education. The purpose of the proposed qualitative study is to understand the role of drama education in socioemotional learning and leadership development for Black females during adolescence. Educational leaders may use the study's findings to evaluate the prioritization of arts education in secondary schools.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology utilized in the study. First, I discuss why I chose a qualitative methodology with a descriptive qualitative research design. The methodology section outlines the participant selection process, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, as well as the data analysis plan. Next, I describe the measures to ensure the study's trustworthiness by addressing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. I also discuss ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent and protecting the confidentiality of the participants. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a summary of the methodology.

Research Design and Rationale

I used qualitative research methodology in this study. Qualitative research is used extensively in educational research due to its flexibility in exploring and understanding human experiences and perspectives (Bush & Amechi, 2019). Indeed, qualitative research emphasizes the subjective and interpretive aspects of human experiences. Qualitative researchers seek to understand individuals' underlying meanings, values, and beliefs, as well as people's interpretations of their experiences (Mulisa, 2022). Qualitative research methods, such as focus groups, interviews, and observation, allow for collecting rich and detailed data that provide a nuanced and complex understanding of a phenomenon (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Qualitative research is often preferred when a researcher seeks to learn about a phenomenon from the standpoints of the involved parties and thoroughly understand their opinions and perspectives (Steccolini, 2022). Consequently, qualitative research is widely used in education (Amadasun, 2021) because it allows for a comprehensive exploration of the viewpoints and experiences of the participants. I used the qualitative methodology to address the phenomenon of drama education, socioemotional learning, and leadership development of Black adolescent females.

The qualitative study used a phenomenological research design to examine the lived experience of black females during adolescence regarding how drama education influences the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent

females. The primary goal of a phenomenological investigation is to explore, describe, and understand the context of a phenomenon from the viewpoint of the research subjects (Agazu et al., 2022). Phenomenological research is particularly suited for examining emerging or complex phenomena, as it allows researchers to gather information from multiple viewpoints and understand the complexities and nuances of the experiences being studied (Moustakas, 1994; Stutterheim & Ratcliffe, 2021). A phenomenological approach to research captures the complexity of social reality and human experiences, allowing for the analysis of complex phenomena and the development of ideas based on empirical evidence (Patton, 2016; Prosek & Gibson, 2021). Through this study, I aimed to explore and understand the participants' subjective experiences and perspectives through in-depth interviews. Therefore, I chose a phenomenological research design to give a detailed account of the experiences of the Black women who participated in drama education.

Methods

In this methods section, I describe the detailed methods used to select and recruit participants and to collect and analyze data. Specifically, I review the inclusion criteria for the participants, instrumentation, recruitment methods, and the data collection and analysis processes. These components are essential for addressing the research questions in a qualitative study and provide a comprehensive understanding of the data collection methods used.

Participant Selection

The target population was Black females who participated in drama education during adolescence. For this population, the sample comprised 10 Black females who met predefined inclusion criteria, which require that:

- 1.) Participants must be Black females between the ages of 18 and 25.
- 2.) Participants must have participated in drama education in a private, community-based, or school setting for at least two years when they were aged 11-18.

The participants were screened through a participant screening questionnaire (see Appendix A). Answers to the screening questions were scrutinized to ensure that potential participants met the inclusion criteria, as detailed in Appendix A.

Procedures for Recruitment

To select participants for the study, I used a mixture of convenience and purposeful sampling approaches (S. Campbell et al., 2020; Stratton, 2021). Convenience sampling allows researchers to select participants who are conveniently available (Stratton, 2021). Qualitative researchers often use purposeful sampling to identify research participants with extensive knowledge of the research problem, making this sampling strategy appropriate for the study.

I recruited participants in several phases. In Phase A, I used convenience sampling and leveraged my professional network, which consists of professional

connections with drama educators, and requested that my network disseminate the recruitment flier to individuals within the field of drama education who met the established inclusion criteria. In Phase B, I used social media sites servicing drama educators, parents, and students to recruit potential participants via purposeful sampling. See Table 1 for a list of social media groups that were queried.

Table 1*Social Media Groups for Drama Educators and Performers*

Facebook group name	Number of members
Group A	14,200
Group B	12,300
Group C	1,500

I obtained the permission of group moderators, who were asked to post the recruitment flier (Appendix B) on the group's platform. This multi-phased approach allowed for recruiting 10 previous drama students necessary to attain data saturation. Data saturation is discussed in detail in the data collection procedures section below.

The recruitment strategy for this study involved the distribution of a recruitment flier, which offered an overview of the investigation and included a QR code for interested parents, students, and teachers to access further information and complete a participant screening questionnaire (Appendix A) as a SurveyMonkey form to assess eligibility for participation. Once a participant completed the screening questionnaire and was deemed eligible for the study, I emailed them a participant welcome letter (Appendix C) and an informed consent form to return via email (Appendix D). The informed consent form explained the study's voluntary nature and the participants' freedom to discontinue participation at any time.

Procedures for Participation

Once a participant completed and submitted the informed consent form, I sent them a link to an online scheduling application to choose a time and date to participate in the semi-structured interviews. At each participant's selected time and date, one-on-one interviews were conducted via the Zoom telecommunications software, as this platform provided a safe research environment. The interview method was suitable for the study as

it enabled direct engagement with participants. I was responsible for following the interview guide (Appendix E), posing open-ended questions, facilitating the sessions, and ensuring clarity in communication. Each participant participated in one interview lasting between 25 and 60 minutes, giving each participant time to expound on their points of view.

Data Collection Procedures

The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' explicit written approval. I recorded the audio for the interview using the Zoom recording function. I used an iPhone audio recorder function as a secondary precaution. The audio recordings served as the source material for the transcription process. The audio recordings were safely saved after each interview on a password-protected encrypted cloud drive. I saved the recordings using a pseudonym for each participant, such as P1, P2, ..., and P10, to ensure the confidentiality of the participants.

According to Hennink and Kaiser (2022), data saturation is the stage in the data collection process where no new insights or issues are uncovered during interviews, and the data collected begins to repeat. This stage is crucial for determining the sample size's suitability and ensuring the collected data's content validity (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Based on findings from other research on sample size (Guest et al., 2020; Vasileiou et al., 2018), eight participants often result in data saturation in 96% of interview-based qualitative investigations. Therefore, a sample size of 10 Black females should have adequately answered the research questions with saturation. However, if data saturation

had not been achieved after ten interviews, I would have conducted further interviews until data reached saturation.

Instrumentation

There were two instruments in this qualitative study. The researcher was the first instrument, acting as a human instrument for data collection. The second instrument was an interview protocol (Appendix E) consisting of open-ended questions that served as the qualitative tool for data collection. I developed the interview protocol based on the study's purpose, research questions, and theoretical framework. The interview questions focused on key inquiries about the participants' perspectives on how drama education influences Black adolescent females' socioemotional learning and leadership development.

The open-ended interview questions allowed for a systematic exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives. The interview questions were structured to elicit a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of Black female drama students (Table 2).

The interview protocol was validated in terms of content using three mechanisms. First, I used peer review by others who earned a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership. I considered and incorporated appropriate feedback from the reviews into the interview protocol. Second, I submitted the interview protocol to my dissertation committee for expert panel review. I incorporated all changes and feedback into the interview protocol prior to submission to Ashland University's HSRB for approval. Third, I conducted a field test with two individuals who met the study's inclusion criteria.

I proceeded through the data collection and analysis process during the field test to ensure that the interview questions sufficiently answered the study's research questions. These procedures ensured that the interview protocol addressed the research questions within the chosen conceptual framework for the study.

Table 2

Interview Question Development for Black Female Drama Students

Interview question	Research question and construct
1. Please describe your experiences with drama classes in middle school or high school? [Icebreaker] <i>Prompting:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Did your experiences differ in middle school and high school?</i> 	N/A
2. How do you think drama classes influenced your self-awareness?	RQ1, Socioemotional learning
3. How do you think drama classes influenced your ability to understand your emotions?	RQ1, Socioemotional learning
4. How do you think drama classes influenced your socialization with other students?	RQ1, Socioemotional learning
5. How would you describe your leadership skills?	RQ2, Leadership development
6. How do you think drama education helped the development of leadership skills?	RQ2, Leadership development
7. What skills learned from drama education do you use when in a leadership role?	RQ2, Leadership development
7. What challenges did you encounter with drama classes? <i>Prompting:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Did you encounter any challenges with drama classes due to your race?</i> <i>Did you encounter any challenges with drama classes due to your gender?</i> 	RQ1, RQ2, Socioemotional learning

8. How do you think drama education helped you form your identity?	RQ1, RQ2, Socioemotional learning
<i>Prompting Questions:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can you describe your identity before you participated in drama?</i> • <i>How would you describe your identity now?</i> 	
9. Can you describe an experience in drama class where you expressed your identity as a leader?	RQ2, Leadership development
10. How do you think drama classes have influenced your adult life?	RQ1, Socioemotional learning
11. Is there anything you'd like to discuss about drama classes or education that we haven't covered?	N/A
[Closing].	

Participant Exit from the Study

There were two ways in which participants were able to be exited from the study. First, a participant may have asked to be removed from the study. If this situation had arisen, I would have destroyed all information gathered from the participant, including the participant screening questionnaire, informed consent form, audio recording, and interview transcription. Second, upon completing the semi-structured interview, participants were exited from the study through a debriefing protocol incorporated into the interview guide. During this debriefing time, I informed participants that I would contact them twice after the interviews. First, I would contact them for an interviewee transcript review (see Rowlands, 2021). Second, after completing the data analysis, I would send each participant a one-page summary of their data for member checking (see Candela, 2019). The member checking email included a brief summary of the study's problem, purpose, and preliminary findings and thanked the participants for their interest and participation. This email served as each participant's exit from the study.

Data Analysis

Audio recordings were uploaded to Otter.ai for transcription. Although the automatic transcription capabilities of Otter.ai were used, I performed a thorough line-by-line comparison with the audio recording to edit the transcription to guarantee its authenticity and accuracy. All interviews were transcribed and edited within one week, allowing for familiarity with the replies and accuracy. To safeguard the participants' privacy, identifying information such as names, localities, and names of schools were omitted from the transcription, in addition to using pseudonyms to preserve the participants' identity and confidentiality (see Hamilton & Finley, 2019). I analyzed the data using the qualitative analysis software, NVivo Version 12.

I analyzed the data collected from semi-structured interviews through thematic analysis, an approach commonly used to analyze large amounts of verbal or textual data (Lindgren et al., 2020). Through data analysis, a researcher organizes and dissects the data to identify patterns and themes relevant to the research questions, enabling the researcher to make inferences. I analyzed the interview transcripts using Braun and Clarke's (2019) method for thematic analysis, a six-phase guide. The six phases of thematic analysis are presented in sub-sections below.

Phase One: Familiarization with Data

In this phase, I became familiar with the interview data by reviewing the transcriptions and comparing them to the audio files. I read each interview transcript from start to finish to get an overall understanding of the data collected. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), the familiarization phase often involves multiple readings of the

interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2019). After I read each participant's interview from start to finish, I read each interview according to the interview questions across participants. During this phase, I redacted the participants' personally identifiable information in the interview transcripts to protect the participants' confidentiality.

Phase Two: Coding

Phase Two is the coding phase. In this phase, I categorized the data into meaningful units, known as codes (see Saldaña, 2014). During this phase, I created a codebook that outlines the codes for categorizing the data. I applied codes to the data to identify the participants' significant ideas, thoughts, and opinions. Some codes were derived from constructs from the study's conceptual framework.

Phase Three: Theme Development

In Phase Three, I reviewed the codes and combined them to form axial categories. I refined codes in this phase so that the categorized data could be used to extract themes. The themes represent patterns and relationships from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). To extract themes, similar categories were grouped together to form themes. Some emergent themes were derived from the constructs in the conceptual framework.

Phase Four: Thematic Map

Phase Four involved creating a thematic map that reveals the connections between codes and themes. The map helps researchers to organize the data analysis logically and coherently (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This approach allowed me to identify the congruency of themes and the differences between themes.

Phase Five: Refining Themes

I examined the thematic map in Phase Five and evaluated whether any new themes had emerged. I renamed and redefined the codes, categories and themes, if necessary, to ensure the completeness of the analysis. If themes were similar, I redefined them into a new overarching theme, thereby removing redundant themes. Discrepant cases were addressed in this phase. In this study, a discrepant case was defined as a code that was applied to only one participant's data. Discrepant cases were analyzed to understand if they can be combined into other codes or categories. If, after recategorization, discrepant cases remained, I discussed them in the research findings.

Phase Six: Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this final phase, I looked holistically at the data and data analysis to ensure that each research question has been addressed logically. I assigned themes to the research questions and ensured that all research questions had answered through the data analysis. I also interpreted the data in the context of the study's conceptual framework. Finally, after data analysis and interpretation was complete, I summarized each participant's data and perform member checking to ensure the credibility and validity of the study (Candela, 2019).

Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, it is essential to consider the suitability of instruments, procedures, and data. Lemon and Hayes (2020) define the trustworthiness of a study as the level to which the researcher has confidence in the quality of the data, transcriptions, and procedures used. It is imperative to address four crucial components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This subsection outlines these four

trustworthiness components and describes the measures I used to ensure that my study adhered to these standards.

Credibility

The credibility of a study, akin to internal validity, refers to its ability to capture its participants' perspectives accurately (Pessoa et al., 2019). Rose and Johnson (2020) claim that credibility in qualitative research involves ensuring the results are believable from the participant's perspective. The participants' trust in the study's findings is maintained by ensuring that the data collected accurately reflects their experiences and that the recordings are not altered (Johnson et al., 2020). The research design is one major factor that can contribute to its credibility. Achieving data saturation ensures credibility in qualitative research (Johnson et al., 2020). The study's credibility can also be increased by providing themes and subthemes using actual participant quotations (Daniel, 2019). Thus, I enhanced the study's credibility by ensuring the data reached saturation and using verbatim participant quotations. I further addressed credibility through memoing and journaling to ensure my reflexivity (see McGrath et al., 2021).

Interviewee transcript review and member-checking are other mechanisms researchers employ to ensure credibility. After completing the semi structured interviews, I emailed each participant a copy of their transcribed interview for interviewee transcript review (see Rowlands, 2021). Participants had the opportunity to clarify their assertions, and I made any changes to the transcript requested by the participant. After the data analysis was complete, I made a one-page summary of each participant's data for member checking (Candela, 2019). Member checking, as recommended by Candela

(2019), is a key technique used to enhance the credibility of the dissertation, as participants are considered the foremost judges of their own experiences (Johnson et al., 2020). In the member-checking process, a researcher asks participants to review the findings, interpretations, and conclusions to ensure they are consistent with their experiences and perspectives. By involving the participants in the analysis and comprehension of the data, member checking improves the validity and reliability of the research results. These procedures can also increase the level of reassurance between the participant and the researcher.

Transferability

Transferability in a qualitative study is the applicability of a study's findings to different populations and contexts (Amin et al., 2020). Lindgren et al. (2020) emphasized that transferability examines how well the study's findings may be applied to different populations, environments, or situations. I established transferability by ensuring that the selected participants were diverse and were derived from different types of drama programs. Ensuring that drama students, parents, and teachers represent multiple types of institutions and geographical locations enhanced the transferability of the study's findings.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), transferability in qualitative studies can be enhanced through a comprehensive and meticulous description of the procedures and methods used to generate the research's conclusions. To achieve this, I provided an in-depth account of the research methodology, including sampling sufficiency and thick description. The application of sampling sufficiency, or the appropriate sample size

representation of the phenomenon and population under investigation, and the use of thick description, or the comprehensive understanding of the study's phenomenon and its comparison with other situations, served to reinforce the transferability of the study (Alam, 2021).

Dependability

Dependability refers to the congruence and consistency of the research outcomes (Rose & Johnson, 2020). The purpose of dependability is to establish a framework through which the researcher can assess the alignment of the data analysis with the standards established for the chosen research design (Johnson et al., 2020). I concertedly provide sufficient information to enable future researchers to repeat the study. Studies that feature well-documented and reliable research methods are dependable (Rose & Johnson, 2020). I created and reported an audit trail throughout the research process in my research journal to ensure dependability. The audit trail helped ensure that the study details were recorded and could be replicated by others.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the ability of others to verify or substantiate the findings obtained in a research project (Johnson et al., 2020). To ensure confirmability in my study, I used reflexivity, which involves constant self-reflection on what I observed, learned, and perceived during the research process (see Ravitch & Carl, 2021). To minimize potential biases and maintain trustworthiness while employing reflexivity, I acknowledged my prior experiences, allowing the reader to assess the validity of the presented findings (see Amin et al., 2020). To this end, I maintained a reflective journal

to document personal reflections during the interview procedure, thus providing a process to check that my biases do not influence the data collection phase.

Limitations

Limitations refer to factors that restrict the extent of the research findings and the generalizability of the results (Yaacoba & Newberryb, 2019). Limitations can affect the validity and reliability of the study and may limit the researcher's ability to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the findings. There are several limitations of the study. First, the study gathered data from a small number of drama students, potentially limiting the transferability of the findings (see Johnson et al., 2020). I mitigated this limitation by ensuring the study met data saturation. If 10 interviews had not yielded data saturation, I would have continued to conduct interviews until repeating thematic patterns can be identified (Guest et al., 2020).

Selection bias may be a limitation, as participants volunteering for the study may live in the same region of the country. If this is the case, the sample may not represent the general population. To mitigate this limitation, I ensured that I chose participating participants from various institutions, including public and private schools. I continued sampling participants until I obtained a sample representing geographical regions throughout the U.S. and various types of institutions to improve the transferability of findings.

Third, data was collected using virtual interviews, which has several notable limitations. Virtual interviews can exclude individuals without technological competence or access to an internet connection (Keen et al., 2022). Virtual interviews are also limited

by internet connectivity, which can be unreliable. Finally, individuals alter their behavior based on the interview modality, which limits a true assessment of nonverbal communication (Keen et al., 2022).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative research was to understand how drama education influences the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent females. In Chapter 3, I provided a comprehensive account of the research design, methodology, and data analysis plan used in the study. First, I discussed the rationale for choosing a qualitative research tradition with a descriptive qualitative research design. Next, I discussed the participant selection logic, inclusion criteria, and the requirements for participation in the study. I also discussed the data collection procedures to be followed for the semi-structured interviews and data analysis procedures using thematic analysis. Next, I discussed issues of trustworthiness and the procedures I will follow to ensure the study's credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Lastly, I described the study's limitations and provided potential solutions to mitigate the identified limitations. In Chapter 4, I will next present the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Drama education allows students to explore the experiences of different characters, with the potential to allow for emotional expression and leadership development. However, before this study, how drama education impacted the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black girls was understudied in the literature. To address this gap in the literature, 10 Black women who engaged in drama education in their adolescence were interviewed and asked how drama education impacted their socioemotional learning and leadership development. In Chapter 4, the findings from this study are presented. First, the findings related to RQ1, which examined how Black adolescent females believe drama education influenced their socioemotional learning, are presented. Next, the findings related to RQ2 are presented. RQ2 examines how Black adolescent females believe drama education influenced their leadership development. The findings of this study provide evidence for the importance of drama education in helping Black adolescent females emotionally and develop into strong leaders.

RQ1 Results and Findings

The first research question addressed by this study was:

RQ1: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their socioemotional learning?

Thematic analysis of the participants' interviews yielded four themes related to the socioemotional learning of Black adolescent females. Theme 1-1 explores how drama helped Black girls understand and express their emotions. Theme 1-2 explores how

drama helped Black girls form their identities and build confidence. Theme 1-3 demonstrates that drama helped Black girls' mental health, and Theme 1-4 explores how drama education impacted Black girls' socialization with peers.

Theme 1-1: Drama Helps Black Girls Understand and Express Their Emotions

Theme 1-1 explored how drama helped the participants understand and express their emotions. Two axial categories were used to develop this theme. Category C1 was that drama helps Black girls understand their emotions; Category C2 was that drama helps Black girls express their emotions.

Category C1: Drama Helps Black Girls Understand Their Emotions

Eight participants (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, and P10) spoke about how drama education in middle and high school helped them understand their emotions. P1 indicated that drama education helped her view her feelings through the lens of a character. She explained:

I can see myself. I can see how I could react to certain situations and how that would change. I think that I learned more about myself through my understanding of a character, a choice, or how this reaction would affect people play out in a drama.

By understanding how her characters would react to specific situations or the choices her characters would make, P1 found that she would reflect on her own choices and feelings to find a better understanding of her emotions. P4 also learned about her emotions by comparing her responses to those of her characters. P4 explained:

As you're doing drama, and you're learning about who a character can be, or who a character is, you have to draw similarities. Okay, can I relate to this character? Or is there anything about this character that I can see in myself? Is there something about the character that I don't like? Is there something about myself I don't like? Drawing those comparisons and differences helps you learn about your emotions.

Participants P1 and P4 use their characters' responses to situations to learn about themselves and their emotions. Thus, drama influenced the socioemotional learning of these participants by helping them discover and understand their emotions.

Other participants spoke about how drama helped them understand why they felt a specific way and better understand their emotions. P8, in particular, explained that she didn't have a full grasp of her emotions before engaging in drama. She said:

I think it helped me process my emotions. I know that I was emotionally fragile. I didn't know how to understand my emotions or why I was feeling a certain way, whether I was feeling really happy, whether I was feeling really sad, whether I was angry. Drama helped me learn the difference.

P8 described herself as emotionally fragile before engaging in drama education, and drama helped her develop an understanding of whether she was feeling happy, sad, or angry. P6 also believed that drama helped her develop emotionally. She said, "I feel like if I wasn't exposed to many different genres when it came to drama and different showcases I participated in, I wouldn't understand how to develop the emotional side." Multiple other participants also spoke about how drama helped them understand their

emotions. To give equal weight to all participants' ideas, excerpts from their interviews regarding understanding their emotions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Drama Education Helped the Participants Understand Their Emotions

Participant	Excerpt
P1	"I think it's helped me to understand my emotions through the lens of a character. I could see myself being and look at myself outside of the situation, and inside of the situation."
P3	"Drama does help me in the aspect of understanding my emotions. I don't like voicing them and talking to people about them, but I feel like performing helps me understand and cope with them."
P4	"I think drama helped my self-awareness, especially in partnership with the other arts that I was studying at the time; I think one thing about acting is you have to be believable as a character and you have to be aware of what the character is. For you to understand who the character you're playing is, you have to be aware of yourself."
P5	"I think that like, stepping into the shoes of someone else's experience, like creates so much depth of empathy, like to imagine yourself experiences, I mean, that's, like, totally outside of you. I think it's helped me understand my own emotions and be like, why do I feel this way? How does it reflect in my actions, I'm very, I feel like in tune with my emotions."
P6	"I think you got to know who you are as well. I feel like you have to know who you are as a person. There will be challenges if you don't know who you are."
P7	"It helped me understand my emotions. And it helped me experience them in a little bit more of a healthy way. Because I got to understand like, even if, like say, if there was like an argument between me and another student, or like a situation like that, like, we will have to put those aside those problems aside to get the dance finished, or get the performance finished or work as a group doing certain assignments."
P8	"In theater, it was very easy to say how you felt when you were playing a character because you were put in the mindset of: How would this character react? How would I react if I was this character? It's about becoming another person, and then thinking another way, but to do that, you have to understand yourself."
P10	"I've learned that over the years, I think, probably in part, in part to do this, that doing theater all my life is that I articulate and understand how I'm feeling very quickly and very well"

Thus, based on the participants' experiences, drama education impacts the socioemotional learning of Black girls by helping them develop and understand their emotions.

Category C2: Drama Education Helped Black Girls Express Their Emotions

In addition to helping them understand their emotions, six participants spoke about how drama education helped them express their emotions. For instance, P1 explained:

I think it helped me express my emotions. I think and express a lot of what I'm feeling instead of thinking about it from a dramatic standpoint, blowing it up. I think it's like a way of expressing myself in a very healthy and productive way. It gives me a place to fully zone into something, put my heart into it, and express any emotion that I have.

P1 believed that drama provided her with an outlet for feelings and emotions that would be otherwise unproductive. P10 also indicated that drama helped her channel her emotions productively. She explained:

It does help my emotions because I am able, at that moment, to know when I'm starting to feel a different type of emotion. When I get angry, upset, or the different emotions that come with everyday life, drama helps me show my emotions and channel them into something. I can use my emotions productively rather than just being upset.

For P1 and P10, drama provided them with an outlet for emotions that could interfere with their goals and daily lives. Thus, the participants indicated that drama allowed them to express their emotions and channel them into a productive setting.

Other participants spoke about the importance of drama in giving credence and expression to their emotions. For example, P5 also indicated that drama class provided her with a place where she felt comfortable expressing her emotions. She said, “I feel like it gave me the means to express myself in a place where I could express myself.” For P5, drama allowed her to express otherwise uncomfortable emotions. Similarly, P6 said, “You get to take the emotion out of yourself. You can showcase that feeling of emotion through your movement and your expression.” P6 found that drama allowed her to express emotions through her artistic craft. P8 believed that theatre enhanced her ability to connect with others through expression. She said, “Theater gives you that push to talk to others, to work with others, to laugh, to cry, to feel and express everything. I sometimes felt stifled otherwise.” P8 believed that her emotional development would have remained stifled and stunted without the freedom to express her feelings in drama. P9 also believed that she grew through the ability to express her emotions in theatre. She said:

I think it did well to put my voice into my emotions. I had been told I had a very monotone voice, and I still personally think I do. So, if anything, it shed some light on how I want to express myself.

For P9, drama allowed her to express her emotions and helped her understand how she wanted to express herself. Thus, based on the participants' interviews, drama helps Black girls express emotions and channel them productively into their art.

Theme 1-2: Drama Helps Black Girls Form Their Identities and Build Confidence

Theme 1-1 explored how drama helped the participants understand and express their emotions. In Theme 1-2, the participants explained that drama helped them form their identities and build confidence in those identities. Theme 1-2 was extracted through the combination of two axial categories. In Category C3, the participants explained how drama helped them form their identities. In Category C4, the participants indicated that drama helped them build confidence.

Category C3: Drama Education Helped the Participants Form Their Identities

Many of the participants believed that drama helped them form their identities. For example, P5 explained:

I feel like, as a middle schooler, I was very shy. I felt like I didn't know who I was, and I didn't have a strong sense of identity. I okay with not volunteering to put myself out there. I was very self-conscious. In high school, I established a more refined sense of identity due to drama. I was putting myself out there more, giving directions, and taking charge more, so I feel like I grew as a person through drama, which was reflected in the arts that I participated in.

P5 believed that drama helped form her identity; when she began drama in middle school, she indicated that she did not have a strong self in her identity, but through drama, she began to understand herself. P6 also believed that drama helped her understand her

identity. She said, “I will say it allowed me to tap into who I am. It helped me form my identity.” Like P5, P6 believed that drama helped her understand her identity.

Participants P7 and P10 believed that drama influenced their personal and social identities. P7 said, “I think it helped me have more discipline with myself for the first time. Throughout high school, I had to take charge of myself, who I was, and where I wanted to go. It helped me become who I am.” According to P7, drama provided her with a mechanism for self-discovery. P10 spoke about how drama influenced her personal and social identity. She explained that drama helped her understand how her identity fit in with those of others. She said:

High school is like finding your friends and knowing who you don't want in your life. I'm not in the job crowd, and that's okay. I know the jocks. I'm cool with the jocks. I'm neighbors with the jocks. We're friends. Ok, cool, I don't have to be with you, and I don't want to. Through drama, I decided to start being me unapologetically in high school. Even if I apologize for it at times, my friends know that I'm me. Being me was cool to discover in high school through the theater world with my theatre friends. It was a whole new self-discovery.

For these participants, drama allowed them the freedom to express themselves and forge and solidify their identities. The participants collectively indicated that drama allowed them a place to express their emotions and understand themselves on a deeper level.

All participants were asked how drama influenced the development of their identities. To give equal weight to all participants' ideas, their responses to this interview question are presented in Table 4.

Table 4*Drama Influenced the Formation of the Participants' Identities*

Participant	Excerpt
P1	"I think it's helped me by exposing me to more black plays, and just black art in general. It's helped me tap into and develop my creative self and how to express myself through creativity."
P2	"I believe drama helped me to form my identity because it allowed me to be unapologetically who I am today."
P3	"Before drama, I was just a regular kid. I didn't really didn't have that extra eye or creative. You tap into a different world. I watch movies differently now and I listen to music differently now. I'm different now."
P4	"I don't know if it changed my identity, in the sense of I was one way before and I was one way after. I think. It helped me embrace my identity."
P5	"I think that it's made me very proud of who I am. It's shaped my confidence. I think it's transformed how I view myself."
P6	"I was still trying to figure out who I was in high school, but when I got to college, that's where it hit me. I didn't know who I was. Drama helped me understand and embrace who I am."
P7	"It helped me to form my identity. Before I participated, I was very shy. I was very quiet. I would think of myself more so as an introvert. Now, I'm way more outgoing and way more willing to take that leadership role as well."
P8	"It has helped form my identity. If I had never taken theater, I would be completely lost in life."
P10	"It helped me form my identity. Before drama, I'm not sure I knew who I was, but now I'm coming to understand my wants, needs, and desires."

Based on the findings shown in Table 4, the participants overwhelmingly agreed that drama helped them form their identities. Many participants described themselves as being shy and introverted before participating in drama; drama education, however, allowed them to find their voices. Other participants indicated that drama allowed them to build confidence in their identities and genuinely understand who they are and their aspirations for the future. Thus, the participants demonstrated that drama education helps Black girls develop and understand their identities.

Category C4: Drama Improves Black Girls' Confidence

Eight participants (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, and P9) believed drama helped them improve their confidence. For instance, P1 believed that drama helped her be confident in her self-expression. She said, "I think it helped me realize that after doing a play, I was much more open to talking and expressing how I felt. I was more confident talking to others." P1 struggled with self-confidence and did not feel entirely comfortable expressing her feelings. However, drama helped her become more confident in her self-expression and facilitated her interactions with others. P2 also became more confident through drama. She said, "It gave me a voice. Using drama gave me a voice. As I grew older and went through college, I was able to find what works best for me and ways to maneuver." P2 believed that drama allowed her to be more vocal about her needs and desires, becoming confident in her self-expression.

Participants P3 and P4 also explained that drama helped them improve their confidence. P3 said, "Now, going into college and being able to make [characters] become the same person I am on stage, that same confidence level helps me show my true self. My true self comes out in my everyday life now." P3 believed that drama helped her understand her characters, in turn, helping her understand herself. As her understanding of herself grew, her confidence also grew. Thus, drama gave her the confidence to express her identity. P4 also indicated that her expression through characters gave her the confidence to express herself. She said:

Through drama, I was okay with people seeing me. That led me to create and be able to speak up for myself because I was able to speak up as a character; I was

able to show my individuality through a character. That gave me confidence. It

kind of bled through into me.

P3 and P4 believed that their expression through characters helped them build the confidence to express themselves. Thus, the participants believed that drama helped them build their confidence.

Other participants spoke about how drama increased their confidence. To give equal weight to all participants' thoughts, excerpts from each participant contributing to this theme are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Drama Helped the Participants Build Their Confidence

Participant	Excerpt
P1	"I feel like I was very shy and very much in a shell before I decided that I wanted to be in a play. I realized you can't be shy in in a show. When you're on a stage with lights on you, you have to be comfortable in front of people. I have to get out of my shell and talk and be active if I want to be seen. I have to express myself in some type of way.
P2	"It allowed me to become more vocal about different things. As I continue to go on and go into college. It allowed me to go out and try different things that I probably would not enjoy as much."
P3	"I feel it helped my self-awareness because once you start getting on stage more and more, you build a different type of confidence and a different side of you. I got in tune with my performing side and being able to see that I do become a different person on stage."
P4	"I always attributed the performing arts as a big way for me to find my voice as a child. I felt like I struggled with communicating how I felt, and communicating who I was as a person in a child's body. And it wasn't until I started performing, that I started to develop confidence."
P5	"If you were not in that space, then people might think you're weird. But in a space where that is celebrated, it's like you have so much more self-confidence and you value the things that you thought were flaws in yourself."
P6	"I think it helped me find my way out, just voicing my opinion and not shutting down. When someone says something to me, I'm able to have

- confidence in my voice. I'm able to project and not just like, talk very low. I'm able to have that confidence within my voice.”
- P8 “It helps you understand that some things just aren't meant to be. I think that's a good lesson to teach people. It helps you get over stuff very easily and helps you come to terms with it. I worked so hard to fail and not get what I needed. But at least I tried; I put myself out there. At least I auditioned, at least I worked to get something, and finding value and working to get something is a great comfort for not getting the exact results you thought you were going to get. So that can help you in drama.”
- P9 “I'm not the type of person to put myself out there. Drama helped me put myself out there.”
-

Based on the participants' interviews, drama education helps Black girls build confidence in themselves and their identities.

Theme 1-3: Drama Helps Black Girls' Mental Health

Six participants (P2, P3, P4, P7, P8, and P10) spoke about how drama influenced their mental health by helping them navigate challenging circumstances in their childhood and adolescence. For instance, P4 said:

I feel like, as a child, there were trials and tribulations that I went through. There was a lot of adversity that I experienced, but when I was able to get taken from my home life and was put in a play or a dance program, it allowed me to shift my focus. I felt like there was something that I not only enjoyed but was also positive. It just took my mind off of things that were at home. So, when I wasn't at home, it was always something that I felt like it gave me light in my life.

P4 indicated that she experienced adversity in her childhood and adolescence due to her family's circumstances. Drama provided her with a positive outlet, allowing her to become distracted from her negative experiences. Like P4, P7 also used drama as a positive outlet to cope with adversity at home. P7 said:

I will say drama was a way out for me as well. When I was in middle school, my parents were going through a divorce. So, I was going through the transition from being with my father to being with my mother full-time. That was a hard transition, but dance and theatre made it easier. I had something to look forward to at the end of the week. It made it so that I had a goal I was working towards. It allowed me to tunnel my vision to where I'm paying attention mostly to that goal and not to other stuff that didn't have to do with me. It gave me something positive to focus on instead of the negative stuff at home.

Like P4, P7 used drama as an outlet, as “a way out” from her personal circumstances. P7 also indicated that drama helped her improve her mental health by setting positive goals and working towards them. For these participants, drama helped them cope with adverse circumstances at home.

Two participants (P3 and P10) spoke about how drama provided them with an emotional escape. P10 explained:

It was a way out. It was an escape for me. It was my emotional escape, not only an escape but a tool to use whatever I'm feeling in real life, an outlet, not only an escape but an outlet to what I was feeling. It's great for my mental health.

P10 believed that drama helped her cope with whatever emotions or circumstances she may be encountering in her real life, providing her with a temporary emotional escape. P10 further believed that this escape contributed positively to her mental health. P3 also used drama as an emotional escape in a supportive setting. She said:

When I'm performing, if I have a horrible day, I can go to practice, and even though practice might be hard, long, and stressful, I will come out not even thinking about what I went into it. Being in the atmosphere of creators and like-minded people, doing what I love, and expressing my feelings helps me escape into a different world that doesn't revolve around what I was already thinking about in the real world.

P3 found that drama helped her cope with her life adversities by providing a supportive setting for self-expression. Her drama program allowed her to focus on her characters, providing an emotional escape.

Three participants indicated that drama had a positive effect on their mental health, influencing their depression and anxiety. P2 said, "Utilizing drama did help me with my depression and my anxiety. I felt less depressed and anxious when participating in drama." P2 explained that she battled depression and anxiety in high school. Drama helped her cope with those feelings by "showing me that I wasn't alone." P2 found support in her drama community, which helped alleviate her depression and anxiety. P8 also explained how drama influenced her depression, saying:

As an individual, I had a lot of emotional stuff going on in my life. I was very sad for the majority of my middle school to high school life. I wasn't happy. I didn't know why I wasn't happy, but I just wasn't. When I was in theater, I could become someone different. I could become someone happy. I could become an entirely different human. You can be an entirely different character, and it will help block out all the problems that you have. I think I learned to be happy through acting.

P8 believed that through her creative expression, she was able to cope with her depression and learn to be happy. Based on the participants' experiences, drama helps some Black girls cope with adverse childhood experiences and alleviates depression and anxiety. Thus, drama can positively influence Black girls' mental health.

Theme 1-4: Drama Helps Black Girls' Socialization

The fourth theme extracted from the participants' interviews is that drama helps Black girls' ability to socialize with their peers. For instance, P2 said:

I'm able to blend in or socialize with all different people from different walks of life and different backgrounds, just because I put myself in different predicaments during the drama. That way, it made it easier for when real-world situations happened.

P2 believed that her varied experiences in drama acting through different situations allowed her to gain varied perspectives on individuals from diverse backgrounds. She believed she was better able to connect with others because of her varied perspective. P10 concurred with P2, saying, "It opens you up to being more available to meeting and understanding more people because I have the tools to analyze how you're thinking. I've learned that I'm a very versatile friend who understands a lot of different people." P10 believed that drama helped her forge connections with others, allowing her to understand different people.

P5 and P8 explained that drama allowed them to form lasting friendships with other individuals in their drama cohorts. P5 said, "You're playing around with people and having fun. That creative energy and being around people who share a passion with you

is always going to create great friendships and lasting friendships.” P5 believed that drama allowed them to form lasting friendships with their peers. P8 expressed similar feelings, saying:

I was able to be more social with people. I think that is what theater can do. It can make you a more sociable person. It can make friendships form faster. You can do those exercises where you work together, which helps with collaboration. I'd say that if you've done theater in your life, you have learned to work together with other people. You learn to be one and the same person.

P5 and P8 believed that they were able to forge lasting friendships with people in theatre because of the environment of collaboration and unity present in the dramatic arts.

The other participants also indicated that drama helped them with their ability to socialize with their peers. To give equal weight to all participants' thoughts, excerpts from each participant contributing to this theme are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Drama Helps Black Girls Socialize with Their Peers

Participant	Excerpt
P1	“I think it helped because it put me out there. More people would know that I was a person in a drama field or like a production.”
P2	“I believe that drama classes helped in many different ways because I was able to do so much in my drama class where it wasn't just confined to one specific role in drama. I was able to adapt very easily and just go with the flow.”
P3	“It helped me a lot. When you are in drama, you get to meet people from all walks of life and all different types of personalities. You learn how to work with them in a working environment and then just a regular social environment.”

- P4 “There's always a camaraderie towards the end of production because you're working with each other so closely; there's always a sense of camaraderie. So, there's always been some sense of community in my acting classes or productions that I've worked in.”
- P5 “I think it's helped. Drama was how I made friends, and it helped that, like, arts in general, are so expressive. If so, you have to trust the people that you're with and feel like a judgment-free zone. So, I feel like formulating friendships in that sort of safe space was helpful because you weren't worried about this person judging me.”
- P6 “You get to talk to people who you may not know and connect with others. There are people in there who may have done drama longer than you who can give you some tips and clues on what will be good and helpful for you.”
- P8 “A positive was that I could communicate with a lot of people, I got a lot of extroverted, and I was made around a lot of extroverted individuals. I got more confidence being social.”
- P10 “But in the theater friend group, I think because of how, again, vulnerable the arts are, and then not only that, but how much time you guys are spending together like on a daily that you're forced after school to be there from such and such to such and such time. you're not only working on the play, but you're working on classwork. Nobody has time for all the extra games, okay, nobody's doing that. So, for the most part, that's who I ended up being very close with.”
-

The participants collectively demonstrated that drama education can influence Black girls' ability to socialize with their peers. The participants indicated that they had greater confidence in social settings due to drama and forged lasting friendships with peers. Thus, drama contributes to Black girls' socioemotional learning by helping them form interpersonal relationships.

Summary of RQ1 Findings

Thematic analysis of the participants' interviews yielded four themes related to the socioemotional learning of Black adolescent females. Theme 1-1 explored how drama helped Black girls understand and express their emotions. The participants explained that drama allowed them to understand the complexity of their emotions and provided a

positive outlet for those emotions. Theme 1-2 examined how drama helped Black girls form their identities and build confidence. Many participants indicated that their identities had not fully formed prior to engaging in drama education in middle and high school. However, through drama, they were able to explore and solidify their identities. The participants also explained how drama education positively influenced their self-confidence and self-expression. Theme 1-3 demonstrated that drama helped Black girls' mental health. The participants indicated that drama allowed them to escape the adversities of their lives. Drama further helped alleviate depression and anxiety in some participants. Finally, Theme 1-4 explored how drama education impacted Black girls' socialization with peers. The participants overwhelmingly agreed that their interpersonal relationships were strengthened through drama education.

RQ2 Findings

In RQ1, the participants spoke about how drama influenced their socioemotional development. The second research question guiding this study was:

RQ2: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their leadership development?

The participants identified four ways in which drama helped them develop leadership skills. First, in Theme 2-1, the participants discussed how drama helped them learn essential communication skills for leadership. In Theme 2-2, the participants discussed how drama helped them learn to collaborate with others, which they believed is critical for their abilities to lead teams and be effective team members. Theme 2-3 describes how drama helped the participants with organization, planning and time

management. Finally, in Theme 2-4, the participants discuss how drama helped them learn to adapt to challenging situations, facilitating their adaptability as leaders.

Theme 2-1: Drama Helps Black Girls with Communication Skills

The first theme extracted from the participants' interviews for RQ2 was that drama helps Black girls with communication skills. P1 indicated that drama taught her essential skills in public speaking. She said:

I learned a lot of public speaking and a lot of projecting skills. I have to do a lot of presentations for different classes and clubs. Even just when I'm organizing things, I have to know how to speak fluently and loudly to make sure people get what I'm saying. So, I learned those skills when I was practicing for plays. I can't just mumble because I have a microphone. I have to speak up.

P1 believed that drama taught her to have confidence in public speaking, projecting her voice, and enunciating properly, all of which are critical for optimizing communication.

P6 believed that drama built her confidence in her communication as a leader. She explained:

My leadership skills are based on confidence. There's a lot of lack of confidence and low self-esteem. I used to be afraid of what people may say. I used to be afraid. When it comes to drama, you have to be comfortable being upfront. I learned to be confident in speaking and communicating with others, which helps me as a leader.

P6 believed that drama taught her how to speak effectively in front of others, which gave her the confidence to lead and communicate her ideas. P9 also believed that drama helped

her communicate by allowing her to interact with others. She said, “I have a professional attitude when it is needed. I'm a conversationalist. I helped my fellow employees by starting conversations.” P9 believed that drama helped her start and maintain conversations with others, which helped her maintain effective communication in the workplace. For these participants, drama helped them learn how to communicate effectively with others in a manner that facilitated their communication as leaders.

Theme 2-2: Drama Helps Black Girls Build Collaboration and Teamwork Skills

The second theme extracted from the participants' interviews for RQ2 was that drama helps Black girls build collaboration and teamwork skills. P2 believed that drama helped her learn how to be an active listener, an essential component of working as a team and being a leader. She said:

Drama taught me that when it comes to being a leader, sometimes you also have to know when to lead, when to sit back and listen and take in other people's opinions, and when to use their opinions to shape what you're trying to do. I think drama taught me to listen to different points of view, listen to different voices, and adapt to different situations.

P2 indicated that drama taught her to value others' opinions and collaborate with others toward a common goal. P2 also explained that leaders must utilize their team effectively and place the strongest individuals for each task in the proper places. She said:

As a leader, you also have to observe the different people that you're working with. You're able to get to know them and point out who is best at what, so I think drama definitely teaches you who can do certain things and who is stronger in

different aspects. Being a leader is also about putting your strongest people in those roles where you know they're going to thrive and what will make them strive as individuals.

P2 believed that drama taught her how to utilize different team members, capitalizing on their strengths. Thus, the participants believed that drama helped them build collaboration skills essential for leading teams.

Leaders, especially transformational leaders, often need to encourage and uplift their teams through inspirational motivation. P4 indicated that drama helped her understand this aspect of transformational leadership. She said:

I have a heart for people, which involves understanding that even though you're all working on a project and coming in your essence, your sense of community, you still have to understand that different people are going through different things. We might all be here for one job, but somebody could still be affected by what's going on in their life, and being able to see that and acknowledge that and allow them to have their feelings or encourage them to get through something or even just be there can be a shoulder for them to kind of lean on at their time of need, it builds the community stronger. It makes the production better because they can trust you more as a partner, as an actor.

P4 spoke about inspirational motivation, a property of transformational leaders where leaders uplift, encourage, and motivate followers. P6 also spoke about this aspect of being a leader. She said, "I'm here to pour into people, because I want to be that person that uplifts others. I learned that from my mentors and drama teachers." P6 indicated that

she learned how to be a transformational leader from her mentors and drama teachers, who taught that skill through example.

A large component of being an effective team member is being receptive to constructive criticism and working towards the betterment of the team. P5 believed that she learned this leadership skill in drama. She explained:

I'm very receptive to feedback. I think a lot of that has to do with drama because you're constantly getting notes, and you're not taking it personally. It's not that you did it wrong. It's just that there's this vision, this collective vision, that you might have to mold and change to fit. So, I think I'm very receptive to constructive criticism. Being receptive to the comments and criticisms that people have makes a great leader. You can't lead if you can't be willing to change and hear other ideas.

P5 indicated that she learned how to respond to feedback constructively and is responsive to feedback that allows for collective visions and teamwork to be realized. P7 also indicated that she learned the ability to take and give constructive criticism through drama. She said:

When you have to tell someone, hey, that dance step is off, or you're singing is off key, it can be perceived as negative and sometimes it hurts people's feelings. But that's not how you mean it; let's tweak it a little bit, and we can make it better. So, it helped me develop those skills in being a leader, part of a group, and able to work together as a collective. It's important for Learning how to give other people

criticism in a way that's not offensive in a way that they can understand exactly what you mean.

P7 found that drama helped her take constructive criticism, which, in turn, allowed her to give criticism constructively to teammates as a leader. Participants P5 and P7 indicated that they learned how to take and give constructive criticism, which they believe is important for their ability to lead others and contribute effectively to teams.

Theme 2-3: Drama Helps Black Girls with Organization, Planning, and Time Management

The third theme extracted from the participants' interviews for RQ2 was that drama helps Black girls with organization and planning skills. P1 indicated that drama helped her develop planning skills, especially regarding having a contingency plan. She explained:

Know your products, know your people, know your audience. Know what you're doing, and don't just go out and do something. When I have a product or have something that I have to organize, I make sure I've thought of every little piece of what could go wrong and have a backup plan and a contingency plan for it. That's like when you're in a play; if the mic goes out or if the stage light doesn't work, you have to shift; you can't just stand there and wait.

P1 indicated that drama taught her to think through different situations, anticipate problems, and have backup and contingency plans. P3 also believed that drama helped her develop planning and organization skills, including foresight to anticipate challenges. She said:

Drama helped me learn how to work with a lot of different moving parts, not just with gear but in life in general. Being in that creator-like environment helps you in different workplaces because you know how to get multiple things done simultaneously. In drama, many parts are moving, and it's all on that one person to make sure that everything comes together. Being in a regular job, I see how stuff unfolds, and I automatically tap into that. Categorization: this needs to be done. First, you need to do this. You need to be here second. Being able to approach situations with organization and planning, I learned in drama.

According to P3, drama helped her learn how to plan through projects in sequential, logical order. Thus, the participants believed that drama helped them learn how to organize and plan, an essential leadership skill.

Some participants believed that drama helped them understand and learn skills related to attention to detail, which contributes to both short-term and long-term plans.

For example, P4 said:

I have an eye for detail. I have an eye for, I wouldn't say perfection, not perfection, but for greatness. With drama, even though it's expressive to put on, I feel like for a great production, you have to pay attention to the detail. You have to pay attention to the small things for the big picture to come together as needed.

P4 believed that proper planning and attention to detail is imperative in both drama and leadership. P4 believed that she's a strong leader due, in part, to her eye for detail, which allows for plans to come together properly.

The participants also spoke about how drama helped them learn time management skills. P4 indicated that time management is critical for her ability to lead. She said:

Time management is also a big thing. When we're putting on productions, you only have a certain amount of time to learn and make the production your own. If you're not paying attention to the time that it takes to prepare, you're in trouble.

It's the same with leadership.

P4 believed that the time management skills she learned in drama helped her lead effectively, as time management is critical for planning and organizing projects and people. P9 believed that she learned time management and the ability to multitask through drama. She said, "I do have decent multitasking skills. I learned how to manage my time and multitask in drama." P9 identified multitasking as critical to drama; multitasking is also critical for time management and project planning. Thus, drama helped the participants develop organization, planning and time management skills, facilitating their development as leaders.

Theme 2-4: Drama Helps Black Girls Learn Adaptability

The fourth theme extracted from the participants' interviews was that drama helps Black girls learn adaptability. According to D'Auria & De Smet (2020), effective leaders must adapt to different situations when presented with challenges. P2 believed that drama provided her with the ability to adapt to challenges, thereby enhancing her adaptability as a leader. She explained:

Sometimes, people go off script. When you're being a leader, sometimes you have to go off script. Most times, you're given these plans and different things that are

set in stone, but at the same time, everything can't always go smoothly. Like in drama and in shows where things can happen, things can change, and you have to be able to adjust and change them right there in that instant. I think that played a very big role in leadership and knowing that you have to be ready to go with the flow. You have to be approachable and adjustable in any situation.

P2 likened the adaptability required of leaders to the adaptability required of directors and performers in the creative arts. She explained that individuals sometimes do not follow scripts or plans, and effective leaders must be able to adapt to new circumstances. P8 also indicated that drama helped her adapt as a leader. She said, "I learned to go with the flow and adapt to different changes. You have to adapt as a leader." P10 also indicated that drama helped her adapt to changes in her daily plans. She said:

My days are usually planned out to a t. For the most part, I know what my day is going to look like, but if it deviates from that, then that's okay. I know how to work around it. There's a very big planning element to any leadership position, but also the ability to adapt. Leaders must be adaptable.

For P2, P8, and P10, drama helped them learn adaptability, which is essential in leadership situations.

Summary of RQ2 Findings

The second research question evaluated ways in which drama influenced Black girls' development as leaders. The participants identified four ways in which drama helped them develop leadership skills. In Theme 2-1, the participants discussed how drama helped them learn essential communication skills for leadership. The participants

indicated that drama taught them to communicate effectively through projection and confidence. In addition, the diverse nature of drama facilitated the participants' abilities to communicate with diverse individuals. In Theme 2-2, the participants discussed how drama helped them learn to collaborate with others, which they believed is critical for their abilities to lead teams and be effective team members. The participants indicated that they learned to be effective teammates by working with others in theatre. The participants also discussed how drama helped them learn to receive and give constructive criticism, which is essential for leading and being on teams. In Theme 2-3, the participants described how drama helped them with organization, planning, and time management. The participants described how drama helped them with planning out details and ensuring they account for all facets of a production or project. Finally, in Theme 2-4, the participants discuss how drama helped them learn to adapt to challenging situations, facilitating their adaptability as leaders.

Summary

In Chapter 4, the results and findings of this phenomenological qualitative investigation were presented. Two research questions were investigated in this study. RQ1 examined how drama influenced Black girls' socioemotional learning. The findings for RQ1 indicated that drama helps Black girls understand and express their emotions, form their identities, and build confidence. Drama also positively influenced Black girls' mental health and impacted their socialization with peers. RQ2 examined how drama influenced Black girls' leadership development. The findings for RQ2 indicated that drama helps Black girls communicate and collaborate with others and work effectively

and efficiently on teams. The participants also indicated that drama helped them learn organization, planning and time management skills and adaptability. The participants indicated that these leadership skills learned in drama positively contributed to their development as leaders. Chapter 5 will include a discussion of the findings in the context of the academic literature and transformative learning theory, the study's conceptual framework. Recommendations for action and future research will also be presented and discussed.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research

Socioemotional learning is the process by which individuals learn to understand and manage their emotions. Socioemotional learning is critical for setting and attaining positive goals (Frey et al., 2019), feeling and showing empathy for others (Lobczowski et al., 2021), and establishing and maintaining positive relationships (Ng, 2023). Effective leaders are thought to have strong socioemotional development skills (Liu et al., 2021). Through drama education, students can learn how to communicate their thoughts and emotions effectively (Van de Water, 2021) and how to collaborate with others as efficient teammates (McCarthy & Carr, 2015). However, before this investigation, it was unclear how Black young adult females viewed drama education and its influence on the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent females. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative research was to understand how drama education influences the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent females. Two research questions were investigated, the findings of which were presented in Chapter 4. RQ1 contained an examination of Black adolescent women's perceptions of how drama influenced their socioemotional learning and development. RQ2 contained an examination of Black adolescent women's perceptions of how drama influenced their leadership development.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the study's findings. The findings are discussed in the context of the academic literature regarding socioemotional learning, leadership development, and transformative learning theory, the study's conceptual framework. Evidence-based recommendations for practice and future research are also presented and

discussed. Implications of the study include an enhanced understanding of how drama can positively influence Black women's development into leaders, potentially enhancing the diversity of those seeking and attaining executive positions in the workforce.

Summary of Findings

Two research questions were addressed by this phenomenological qualitative investigation. RQ1 first examined how drama education influences Black adolescent females' socioemotional learning. Four themes related to socioemotional learning were identified.

Table 7

RQ1: Socioemotional Learning- Drama helped Black girls...

Theme	Results
1-1 Understand and express their emotions	Drama allows Black girls to understand the complexity of their emotions and provides them with a positive outlet for those emotions. The participants indicated they found drama to be a safe place to express multifaceted emotions
1-2 Form their identities and build confidence	Many participants indicated that their identities had not fully formed prior to engaging in drama education in middle and high school. However, through drama, they were able to explore and solidify their identities. The participants also indicated that drama helped them build confidence in the development of their identities, facilitating their self-expression.
1-3 Mental health	The participants indicated that drama allowed them to escape the challenges associated with their childhood and adolescence, alleviating depression and anxiety for some participants.
1-4 Socialization with peers	The participants overwhelmingly agreed that their interpersonal relationships were strengthened through drama education. The participants believed that they formed lasting friendships with their peers in drama while how to connect with diverse individuals.

RQ2 examined how drama education influenced Black adolescent females'

leadership development

Table 8

RQ2: Leadership Development- Drama helped Black girls...

Theme	Results
2-1 Develop effective communication skill	Theme 2-1 According to the participants, participating in drama helped them communicate confidently with peers, superiors, and followers. The participants also believed that drama facilitated communication with diverse individuals by exposing them to viewpoints and perspectives.
2-2 Collaborate with others	The participants spoke at length regarding how their ability to work on and lead teams was facilitated by the collaborative nature of drama productions. Some participants also discussed how drama helped them be receptive to constructive criticism, which they use for the betterment of teams as leaders.
2-3 Learn skills related to organization, planning, and time management.	The participants believed that their ability to multitask derived from the multifaceted nature of drama productions. They also indicated that they learned to have contingency plans in the case of anticipated and unanticipated challenges.
2-4 Learn to adapt to challenging situations, facilitating their adaptability as leaders.	The participants indicated that drama allowed them to escape the challenges associated with their childhood and adolescence, alleviating depression and anxiety for some participants.

Collectively, the findings of this study indicate that Black adolescent females learn communication skills, collaboration skills, organization, time management, and adaptability through participation in drama.

Discussion of Themes

In this study, four themes were identified for RQ1 and four themes were identified for RQ2, which explored the socioemotional learning and leadership development, respectively, of Black adolescent women participating in drama. This section contains a discussion of themes identified in this study.

Discussion of Theme 1-1: Understanding and Expressing Emotions

In Theme 1-1, the participants described how drama helped them understand and express their emotions. Socioemotional learning is how individuals learn to understand and manage their emotions (Frey et al., 2019). Emotional management can be challenging for adolescent females (Callahan et al., 1994). Many adolescents fear self-expression and believe that their emotions are unimportant to others (Green, 2007). Without an appropriate outlet for expressing emotions, emotional development can become stunted (Vaquera et al., 2017), leading to challenges with emotional attachment to others later in life (Pennebaker, 2012). The participants found that drama helped them understand their emotions and allowed them a safe place to express those emotions. The participants specifically discussed how their characters' decisions and emotions allowed them to understand how they would respond to similar and different situations.

Drama teaches students to express different emotions. Individuals portraying characters must truly adopt the character's essence, embodying their emotions and reactions to different situations (Grodal, 2009). Actors must learn about their own emotions and express the application of their feelings in their characters' responses (Smith, 2022). Scholars argue that actors who do not genuinely invest in becoming a character cannot truly express the character's emotions, rendering the character unbelievable (Chekhov, 2013). The participants indicated that through embodying and understanding their characters, they learned about the complexity and depth of their own emotions, thereby contributing to their socioemotional learning and development.

Discussion of Theme 1-2: Forming One's Identity

Adolescence is a tumultuous time in which children are forming their identities and personalities, differentiating themselves from their parents and peers (Kroger, 2004). The participants indicated that drama helped them form their identities. Many participants spoke about drama as a transformation; the participants indicated they were reserved and shy before participating in drama and grew into the outgoing, gregarious and assertive individuals they are today. Numerous researchers highlight the importance of drama education in facilitating the personality development of adolescents and young adults (Alfonso-Benlliure et al., 2021; Gallagher, 2001). For instance, Alfonso-Benlliure et al. (2021) showed that adolescents with drama experience showed higher levels of fluency, flexibility, originality, and self-perceived creativity. Furthermore, Gallagher (2001) argued that drama education is critical for participating young women's abilities to imagine life's possibilities. Through creative expression, young women can try new approaches to life situations and explore the complexity of human emotion in a safe and supportive environment (Gallagher, 2001).

Formation of identity is critical for Black women. Shorter-Gooden and Washington (1996) found that Black adolescents tend to express their identity in terms of a collective, based on the intersectionality of race, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Racial identity was found to be the most salient source of identity, while the domains of gender, relationships, and career were also important to developing adolescent women (Shorter-Gooden & Washington, 1996). Thus, mechanisms by which Black women develop individual identities and learn self-expression are critical for

personal development (Davis, 1998). This study positions drama education as an important means by which Black adolescent females can explore their identities and develop strong individual identities.

Discussion of Theme 1-3: Improving Mental Health

The literature suggests that Black adolescent women often struggle with some aspects of their mental health. Indeed, many Black adolescents are challenged by adverse childhood experiences, especially in urban environments (Hampton-Anderson et al., 2021). Many Black families are still challenged by the implications of systematic racism present in American society, forced to live in inner cities in low socioeconomic communities and settings (Schell et al., 2020). Structural and systematic racism can also influence the mental health of developing adolescents (Banaji et al., 2021). Black adolescent females have reported experiencing depression and anxiety due to racism present in schools and communities (Seaton & Douglass, 2014) and due to microaggressions (Loyd et al., 2022). Thus, Black adolescent females experience challenges with their mental health.

The participants indicated that participating in drama improved their mental health. Many participants spoke about how drama provided them with an outlet, an escape from their daily lives and tribulations. These findings are consistent with other reports in the literature. For instance, Stephenson (2023) found that drama education allows children to have a creative outlet, allowing them to cope with traumatic experiences. Frydman and Mayor (2021) argued that drama education should be enhanced in U.S. schools as a trauma-informed therapy for children coping with adverse

experiences. Multiple participants also discussed how drama helped alleviate depression and anxiety, consistent with the notion that drama can help adolescents explore complex emotions that may impact them negatively (Mogro-Wilson & Tredinnick, 2021). Thus, drama can help improve the mental health of participating Black adolescent females.

Discussion of Theme 1-4: Increased Socialization and Interpersonal Skills

The participants also indicated that drama helped them socialize with peer and develop interpersonal skills. A strength of drama education is its emphasis on collaboration; actors, producers, and set managers must work together for a production to manifest successfully (Cawthon & Dawson, 2011). Therefore, drama teaches students to collaborate with each other, honing individual skills while working for the betterment of a collaborative team (Stuft, 2013). According to Denham and Brown (2010), a critical component of socioemotional learning is “learning to play well with others” (p. 653), which facilitates academic success by building collaborative skills. According to the participants, drama allowed them to develop individually while still taking constructive criticism from mentors and other students, thereby strengthening their interpersonal skills and abilities to socialize with other people. In this way, drama education enhanced the socioemotional learning of the participants.

Theatre often involves understanding cultural differences and individuals’ emotional and visceral responses to different situations (Pavis, 2003). The participants indicated that theatre helped them navigate complex relationships with culturally diverse individuals outside of the classroom environment. This finding is consistent with findings in the literature. For example, West (2021) found that drama education helps adolescents

build peer relationships between culturally diverse individuals. Furthermore, Gonzalez (2017) argued that theatre helps students navigate challenges at cultural crossroads. Thus, drama education and theatre enhance students' ability to form personal and professional relationships with individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Discussion of Theme 2-1: Development of Communication Skills

The second research question analyzed how drama education impacted the leadership development of Black adolescent females. Communication skills lie at the center of nearly all leadership theories (Northouse, 2021). Leaders must effectively communicate their vision to followers while articulating the necessary steps for achieving a shared vision. Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) argued that leadership is essentially shared between leader and follower, necessitating that leaders have a strong ability to communicate with others. The participants indicated that they learned how to communicate effectively and articulate their ideas meaningfully but sensitively. Thus, through theatre, Black adolescent women can learn communication skills necessary for success as leaders.

Many of the participants spoke about their communication skills in terms of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders inspire their followers by articulating a shared vision that includes all team members as necessary components for a team's success (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Strong transformational leadership involves motivating individuals to contribute to a higher team goal, which necessitates articulating a vision and steps for success (Gillespie & Mann, 2004). The participants indicated that

their drama teachers taught them to communicate effectively, facilitating the communication skills they would eventually employ as leaders.

Discussion of Theme 2-2: Development of Collaboration Skills

Theatre productions ultimately require collaboration. Main actors, supporting actors, stagehands, set managers, and directors must work together for a successful theatre production (Cawthon & Dawson, 2011). The participants described theatre as strongly influencing their ability to collaborate with others outside of theatric productions. The ability to collaborate with others is also an essential leadership skill (Slater, 2005). Transformational and democratic leaders, in particular, focus on collaboration with others. Transformational leaders involve followers through the process of intellectual stimulation, seeking unique approaches to challenges with projects and facilitating the development of unique solutions (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Democratic leaders directly involve followers in the decision-making process, emphasizing that diverse perspectives often allow for creative and intelligent solutions to problems (Wilson, 2020). Wilson (2020) argued that academic environments require a hybrid of democratic and transformational leadership. The participants in this study indicate that this notion may be due in theatre education, as collaboration and valuing the opinions of others is foundations for success in theatre.

Reports in the literature indicate that African American women often feel marginalized in U.S. workplaces, regardless of economic sector (Adebayo et al., 2022). Indeed, Black women in leadership roles report having to work harder than their White peers to gain the respect of their followers and colleagues (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis,

2010). However, a strong ability to collaborate with followers can help leaders gain followers' respect, facilitating progress towards goals (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Black female leaders who employ democratic and transformational leadership report feeling more accepted by peers, followers, and teammates (Porter & Daniel, 2007). Thus, drama education helps Black girls develop their collaboration skills, which helps them develop as leaders.

Discussion of Theme 2-3: Development of Organization and Planning Skills

The participants indicated that drama helped them develop organization and planning skills. According to transformational learning theory, leaders must develop effective plans and articulate steps for success (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Drama producers must organize individual personalities for a collective goal, the success of a theatrical production (Cawthon & Dawson, 2011). This process often extends beyond collaboration, as skills must be taught in sequential order in increasing complexity, necessitating strong planning and time management (Cawthon & Dawson, 2011). Furthermore, the organization of individuals within a team requires planning and a strong understanding of an organization's mission (Bass & Riggio, 2010). The participants indicated that they learned how to organize projects and individuals, how to plan a project effectively from start to finish, and how to manage their time and the time of followers.

Discussion of Theme 2-4: Development of Adaptability

Leaders must often adapt to challenging situations and often face adversities, necessitating strong problem-solving skills (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Indeed, adaptive

leadership is becoming increasingly prevalent in the academic literature (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive leaders focus on anticipating future needs and changes and adapting to new situations that are presented (Heifetz et al., 2009). The participants indicated that they learned how to be adaptable through drama education. Collectively, they explained that drama involves anticipating challenges and having contingency plans for all possible outcomes. These findings are consistent with those in the literature. For example, Alfonso-Benlliure et al. (2021) found that adolescents who participated in drama view themselves as creative and show a higher capacity to adapt to change than other adolescents. Thus, drama education helps Black girls learn adaptability, an essential leadership skill in most situations.

Conceptual Framework Discussion

Transformative learning theory was chosen as the theoretical underpinning of this study. According to Bukuski (2020), transformative leadership is a field of study that is emerging while consistently inspiring leaders to realize its ideals that are aligned with modern challenges. The concept of transformative experiences applied to students is a pivotal dimension of education. The participants spoke about how drama influenced their identities. Specifically, in Theme 1-2, the participants spoke about how drama helped them form their identities, solidifying their identities and helping them build confidence in their unique self-expression. Transformative learning theory underscores the dynamic nature of drama education, emphasizing individuals' continuous growth and evolution. Ansell et al. (2021) described the role of teachers as initiating transformative programs that drive positive change within schools. Similarly, Blackburn Miller (2020) examined

how drama education can promote transformative learning that impacts students' growth, development, and interpersonal skills. The participants in this study rearticulated these findings, indicating that they grew as individuals, learning about their identities in a transformative environment.

Transformative learning theory posits that individuals undergo substantial cognitive and emotional changes through critical reflection on their experiences (Mezirow, 1997). In teaching, transformative experiences occur when educators deeply engage with their students, leading them to reevaluate their beliefs, teaching methods, and objectives. These experiences challenge students to question their assumptions, adapt to evolving educational landscapes, and enhance learning through constant growth. The participants described how drama influenced the development of their emotions, driving them to explore different avenues of self-expression.

Transformative experiences often stem from the intricate relationship between students and teachers (Ansell et al., 2021). These interactions serve as moments of revelation, shedding light on a teacher's profound impact on a student's life. According to Ansell et al. (2021), such interactions can kindle a profound change in the students' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Transformative experiences call for students to engage in reflexive practice, critically how they approach their academics and impacting non-academic areas of life (Swanson, 2010; Weinberg et al., 2020). Weinberg et al. (2020) explained that through self-reflection, students can identify areas for improvement and adaptation driven by their transformative experiences, leading to changes in their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. In this study, the participants

explained how they grew socioemotionally; they learned how to collaborate with others.

They learned how to understand and express their emotions, improving their mental health through the provision of a positive outlet for their feelings. Individuals who undergo transformative experiences tend to embrace innovation in their everyday approaches (Cranton, 2002). They may incorporate fresh strategies, technology, or unconventional methods into common situations. Moreover, teacher education plays a pivotal role in fostering transformative experiences. These transformative experiences empower students to think creatively, fostering continuous growth.

Implications for Educators

The study has numerous implications for educators. First, the study highlights the ways in which drama education can influence the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent females. Educational leaders have acknowledged the decline of theatre and arts in the K-12 school system (Elpus, 2022). Elpus (2022) analyzed the factors influencing drama education offerings in U.S. high schools. As student enrollment increased, the likelihood that schools offered arts courses in any discipline increased. Traditional public schools had the greatest likelihood of offering arts education compared to private schools. The proportion of students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch was also associated with the probability of offering arts courses, with decreased arts availability at schools serving greater proportions of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program. Collectively, these findings indicate that as the socioeconomic status of communities increases, public school offerings of art decrease. The participants in this study highlighted the importance of drama in helping them cope

with their childhood and adolescent adversities and challenging familial circumstances.

Decreased offerings in artistic education could have negatively influenced the participants' socio-emotional and leadership development. Consequently, this study underscores that educational leaders should consider the ramifications of decreasing arts offerings. Decreasing funding for drama education may not solely deprive students of a mechanism for self-expression but may also hinder their socioemotional learning and their ability to develop into articulate, effective, and strong leaders.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study had several limitations that can be addressed through future research. First, this study solely examined the experiences of Black adolescent females regarding how drama education influenced their socioemotional learning and leadership development. Future research could explore the experiences of other groups of minority students regarding the same phenomenon. Women from other minority groups may derive meaning differently from drama education in a way that influences their socio-emotional learning and leadership development. Additionally, examining the experiences of Black women aged 26-35 could provide valuable insights into how drama education impacts socioemotional learning and leadership development across different life stages. Second, the study drew participants from the midwestern portion of the United States, which may limit the transferability of the research findings. Future researchers could aim to broaden the geographical scope of the study, involving Black adolescent women from other geographical portions of the United States. Finally, leadership development is acknowledged to be a continuous and evolving process (Bass & Riggio, 2010). A

longitudinal study examining the experiences of participants across their careers could better help educators and researchers understand how drama education influences career development across a lifespan.

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Appendix A: Participant Screening Questionnaires

This appendix contains screening questionnaires for each of the three target populations. T

he screening questionnaire contains one question that will direct the potential participant to the relevant participant screening questions:

1. Did you participate in drama education as an adolescent (Ages 11-17). [Yes/No]
2. Are you Black or African American? [Yes/No/Prefer not to answer]

A response of No or Prefer not to answer disqualifies a potential participant.

3. What is your biological sex? [Male/Female/Prefer not to answer]

A response of Male or Prefer not to answer disqualifies a potential participant.

4. During what years did participate in drama education? Please select all that apply.
 - a. Grade 6
 - b. Grade 7
 - c. Grade 8

- d. Grade 9
- e. Grade 10
- f. Grade 11
- g. Grade 12
- h. None of the above

The participant must choose at least two years to qualify for the study.

5. What was the setting of your drama education class or program? Please select all that apply.

- i. Private company
- j. Community class or program
- k. Drama class in middle or high school
- l. None of the above

A response of None of the above disqualifies a potential participant.

6. What is your current age?

- m. Under 18
- n. 18-25
- o. 26 or older

An answer of Under 18 or 26 or older disqualifies a potential participant.

7. Please leave contact information for the researcher:

Name:

State:

Email Address:

Phone number:

Appendix B: Recruitment Flier



RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

Davina Ware, a doctoral student at Ashland University, is seeking Black females who participated in drama during their adolescence to speak about their experiences with drama education.

Participant Criteria:

- ✔ Must be 18-25 years old
- ✔ Must have participated in drama for at least 2 years in middle or high school
- ✔ Must be a Black female

Participants Will:

- ✔ Scan the QR code to complete a screening questionnaire (5 mins)
- ✔ Participate in an audio-recorded Zoom interview (45-60 mins)
- ✔ Review the transcript from your interview by email (10 mins)
- ✔ Review a copy of the study's findings by email (20 mins)

For More information, Contact Davina:
davina@ware@gmail.com



SCAN ME

Appendix C: Participant Welcome Letter

Date: XX/XX/2024

From: Davina Ware

Subject: Request to Participate in Doctoral Study Interview

To: Participant

Hi Participant name,

My name is Davina Ware, and I am a doctoral student at Ashland University. I am recruiting drama students, teachers, and parents to participate in my doctoral study. By way of this letter, I would like to invite you to participate in a virtual interview to answer X open-ended questions about your experiences with drama classes and education.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to explore how drama education influences the socioemotional learning of Black adolescent females. Implications for positive social change of this study include understanding ways that drama educators can help the social and emotional learning of Black women through drama education.

Why I Need You?

I will need you to schedule a time I may conduct a virtual interview with you that will take place during Zoom. During the interview, I will ask you X questions approved by my dissertation committee at Ashland University. The topic of questions will all surround your experiences with drama education for middle and high school students. Once the

interview is complete, I will transcribe your responses and provide you an opportunity to check the content for accuracy.

Please contact me so I can schedule some time to conduct a virtual interview with you.

I am attaching an informed consent form to this email. Once you have read it, please contact me if you have any questions. If you consent to participate in this study, the informed consent form asks you to reply to this email with the words, "I consent."

Thank you for your consideration and participation in this study,

Davina Ware

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study about the role of drama education and the influence it has on the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent females.

The study's title is Drama Education: In the Lives of Black Girls (Exploring how Drama Influences the Socioemotional Learning and Leadership Development of Black Adolescent Females)

This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study seeks 8 volunteers: who meet the following criteria:

Drama Students:

- Must be 18-25 years old
- Must have participated in drama during middle or high school for at least 2 years
- Must be a Black female

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Davina N Ware, a doctoral student at Ashland University.

Study Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to understand how drama education influences the socioemotional learning and leadership development of Black adolescent females.

Procedures:

This study involves the following steps:

- Participate in confidential, recorded, interviews via zoom/skype (45-60 minutes)
- Review a typed transcript of your interview to make corrections if needed (email option available) (10 minutes)
- Review a 1–2-page summary of the researcher’s results and provide your feedback (20 minutes)

Research Questions:

RQ1: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their socioemotional learning?

RQ2: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their leadership development?

All interviews will be scheduled at a time that is convenient to the counselor/participant.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So, everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not. You will be treated the same regardless of whether or not you join the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You

may stop at any time. The researcher will seek 18 volunteers for this study. Please note that not all volunteers will be contacted to take part. There is no compensation for participants.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study should not involve more risk than the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life.

This study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The aim of this study is to benefit society by informing professionals regarding the experiences of drama students, parents and teachers with socioemotional learning.

Privacy:

The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the researcher must remove all names and identifying details before sharing; this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Codes will be used in place of names. Your first and last initials will be used with a number. Data will be stored on a hard drive belonging to the researcher. The hard drive will be placed in secure/locked storage. The hard drive will be password protected. Data will also be stored on a computer belonging to the researcher with a secure password. Data will be kept for at least five years, as the university requires.

Contacts and Questions:

You can ask questions of the researcher by email: dware3@ashland.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Ashland University's Research Participant.

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Ashland University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you understand the study well enough to participate, please reply to this email with the words, "I consent."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davina Ware', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Davina Ware, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Ashland University
Dware3@ashland.edu
(614) 312-3477

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Appendix E: Interview Guide

Date: _____

Respondent Number: _____

1. Introduce self to the participant

Thank you for participating in this study and your willingness to complete the interview process. My name is Davina Ware, and I'm a student at Ashland University conducting research on how drama education influences the social and emotional learning of Black adolescent females.

2. Introduce the research question, the purpose of the study and answer any initial questions the participant may have.

The purpose of my study is to explore how drama education influences the socioemotional learning of Black females. The research question I'm trying to address are:

RQ1: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their socioemotional learning?

RQ2: In what ways do Black females who participated in drama education during their adolescence perceive its influence on their leadership development?

3. Thank the participants for their participation in the study.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in my study.

4. Review the informed consent form and answer any questions the participant may have.

Before we continue, I need to verify that you have signed the consent form and understand the ethical standards for this interview. All personal information will be

stored electronically and may only be accessed to me via a password. Raw data will be kept in a password-protected cloud drive only accessible to me. When the information from the interview is published in the final study, participant confidentiality will remain. All transcripts and recordings of the interview will be kept private on a password-protected computer accessible to me only. Do you have any questions about the consent form or any of the measures taken to preserve your confidentiality?

5. Provide the participant with a copy of the informed consent form for their personal records and review.

Here's a copy of the informed consent form for your personal records and review.

6. Begin recording the interview.

Do I have your permission to begin recording the interview now?

7. Introduce the participant using their respondent number, the date and time of the interview.

During this interview, I'm going to refer to you as Participant (Insert participant number). Today's date is (insert today's date) and the time of the interview is (Insert Today's time). RQ

8. Start the interview using the interview questions.

Interview question

1. Please describe your experiences with drama classes in middle school or high school? [Icebreaker]

Prompting:

- *Did your experiences differ in middle school and high school?*

2. How do you think drama classes helped or hurt your self-awareness?

3. How do you think drama classes helped or hurt your ability to understand your emotions?

4. How do you think drama classes helped or hurt your socialization with other students?
5. How did drama classes help you express your thoughts and feelings about your race?
6. How did drama classes help you express your thoughts and feelings about your gender?
7. What challenges did you encounter with drama classes?

Prompting:

- *Did you encounter any challenges with drama classes due to your race?*
- *Did you encounter any challenges with drama classes due to your gender?*

8. How do you think drama education helped you form your identity?

Prompting Questions:

- *Can you describe your identity before you participated in drama?*
- *How would you describe your identity now?*

9. Can you describe an experience in drama class where you expressed your identity?

10. How do you think drama classes have influenced your adult life?

11. Is there anything you'd like to discuss about drama classes or education that we haven't covered? [Closing].

9. Ask any follow-up questions.

10. End the interview and stop the recording. Explain to the participant of the member checking and transcription review process.

We have reached the end of this interview. Thank you for your participation in this study and sharing your personal experiences with me. I appreciate your transparency and honesty in each of your responses. Do you have any questions about the interview or the research process?

As a reminder, I will take the audio from these recordings and transcribe them verbatim. I will be emailing you a copy of the interview transcript. It would be great if

you can review the transcript and make sure that you're comfortable with all of the responses. If you'd like any changes to be made to the transcript so that it more accurately reflects your thoughts and ideas, please let me know. That's an important part of the research process.

11. Thank the participant for the participation in the study.

Thank you again for participating in my study. You can contact me at any time if you have any questions or concerns.