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Qualitative Study of Public Policy Affecting Public University Students: How Positive Psychology May Lessen Racism

Russell F. Peck
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Health Sciences and Public Policy

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Russell Peck

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Review Committee

Dr. Mark Gordon, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. John Walker, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2024

Abstract

Qualitative Study of Public Policy Affecting Public University Students: How Positive
Psychology May Lessen Racism

by

Russell Peck

JD, Suffolk University Law School, 2006

MBA, Bentley University, 1996

BA, Eastern Nazarene College, 1986

AS, Mount Ida College, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Public Policy Administration

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February 2024

Abstract

Racism, racial inequity, and racial violence, including micro-aggressions (slurs and fearful glances) are endemic in modern American society. Finding ways to eliminate or at least mitigate racism and racial violence is important, not only for public safety but also to ensure equality, fairness, and social harmony among every stratum of American society. The purpose of this study was to determine if teaching positive psychology in Boston, Massachusetts (MA)-area university college classrooms helped improve race relations. The primary research question involved determining factors that create racism and racial violence in society. The second research question was about if an education policy that includes positive psychology can be a useful strategy for reducing racism in a Boston, MA-based public university. A qualitative survey among 40 randomly-selected college students was administered. The survey was used to measure beliefs about racial views, aggression, micro-aggressions, educational levels, compassion, and whether participants had knowledge of positive psychology. Data were coded using thematic analysis. Results showed most participants were more accustomed to thinking positively. In addition, they reported they experienced racial slurs and other subtle racism (such as seemingly harmless jokes) that, if internalized, would later be expressed as racial slurs. Most participants believed racism was inherent in races other than their own. Positive social change is possible if education policy includes positive psychology that encourages racial and social harmony.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends, including most of all, my mother and teacher, Paula H. Peck, who passed on in the Lord on September 29, 2013. She taught me how to love the English language, how to read, and, most importantly, how to express my ideas. I have learned valuable lessons through her instruction, insight, encouragement, and time spent with me, and I now hope to share them through this dissertation. Without the foundation of her encouragement and guidance, this paper would not have been possible. I also dedicate this to my late father, Russell Peck, whose logical mind and excellent memory have been an inspiration in proceeding with this work. Finally, I am dedicating this to my wife Vana, whose faithfulness has been inspirational. Even when the challenges of loss, depression, and grief came upon us, Vana helped walk me through and overcome those trying times.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if teaching positive psychology in university and college classrooms in greater Boston, Massachusetts (MA) helped improve race relations by modifying critical race theory (CRT). This study involved identifying racism, racist thought, racist speech, and highlighting the unfairness and injustice of such racism as well as offer positive solutions. Positive psychology is commonly used by psychologists to deal with anxiety and depression in patients, as well as addressing the underlying causes of anxiety and depression, which are fear and anger (Satterfield, 2016).

The advantage of teaching positive psychology as an adjunct to CRT in greater Boston college classrooms is improving potentially global-scale social welfare by educating the next generation of multi-national college graduates in order to spot and address racial injustices in their communities. Across the world, there is more interdependence between nations' economies for global trade and education. Global businesses cannot function properly if racism continues to take root within their networks. My premise was that teaching positive psychology is the foundation of future research as a means of giving the next generation of college-educated leaders and influencers tools to address and lessen racism in their society. Positive psychology is used to address major issues involving racism and CRT. It is critical to adequately deal with issues of race, racism, racial violence by offering potential solutions for dealing with such racial incidents and discrimination. Greater Boston is home to many world-class universities, leading to businesses and institutional training. People take advantage of the

region's opportunities, thereby increasing diversity among races and racial backgrounds. Greater mobility in the world, due to convenience and improvements in air travel, has allowed international travel and relocation to different foreign nations to become commonplace. Having so many different cultures with different languages, cultural backgrounds, and moral standards can lead to cultural conflicts. Economically caused cultural conflict can lead to racism, which can then erupt into racial violence (Crawford, 1998). This study was necessary to identify racism, including racism based on white privilege, as well as possible positive ways to reduce racism and racial violence as a matter of public education policy.

According to Murray (2016), other races and racial groups are now attempting to emulate white privilege by, for instance, buying status cars. Emulation is not a constructive way to properly deal with racism in public universities in the Boston area. It was the partial objective of this study to examine racism in the Boston area (specifically in public universities) and then offer a way to reduce and alleviate such racism, using the theory of positive psychology.

I proposed to examine effect of racism and racist thought on Boston area public university students and examine if the theory of positive psychology can help lessen such racism. According to Noyes (2020), CRT "divides the world into two groups: the oppressors and the oppressed." Noyes said CRT divides the oppressed into smaller cultural groups "defined by race, sex, sexual preference, gender identity, etc.".

Chapter 1 includes an introduction, background information, the problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, theoretical and conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and a summary.

Background

Racism is not easily defined or handled and needs a more flexible approach through public policy venues such as making distinct changes in the education system. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), CRT has six basic tenets: White society's traditional reaction to minorities in America, including Black Americans, was inherently racist. White over color means that in every aspect of life (business, education, and housing), whites in America prevail over individuals of color and other minorities. Social construction is where society sees people based on their color, hairstyle, and physical build, and then names them with derogatory language to classify them as inferiors. Differential racism is where one minority in one type of job is favored over another separate minority. An example of this would be the preference for hiring migrant Mexicans in California's agriculture industry over Asians. Intersectionality of racism is where a person could simultaneously be part of one discriminated racial group and yet part of another socially accepted group, such as a Black Catholic, and the final is the white story line.

Each country deals with racism in its own typically traditional way. White over color racism has both a material and psychological purpose. This racism is commonplace, and therefore very difficult to eradicate. This allows for interest convergence, which means that Whites have little reason to end racism since it benefits upper-class Whites in a tangible way and lower-income Whites in a psychological way, (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

Differential racialization in law and social sciences is the way society favors one minority and discriminates against another in the labor market (Delgado & Stefancic 2012). For example, if Mexican-Americans are needed by the agriculture industry, they are favored over Blacks. If Asian-Americans are necessary for the electronics industry, they are favored over Mexican-Americans. This kind of treatment is due to racial classifications.

Addressing racism with positive psychology can meet different needs generated by CRT. Positive psychology promotes love, understanding, and positive and happy thinking. According to Seligman et al. (2009), the key elements of positive psychology are: wisdom, good knowledge, courage, basic humanity, strong sense of justice, curiosity, love of learning, good judgment, ingenuity, social intelligence, and perspective.

These problems often lead to negative thinking. We often see the paradox of one example of racism leading to further issues of racism and racial violence. Cantave (2007) described the paradox whereby institutional racism against Blacks ironically leads to Black communities committing acts of violence against each other. Institutional racism

against Blacks leads to racial disharmony in the Black community, which then promulgates inter-racial violence within this community not only against its members but also towards other racial minorities. Racism creates a negative environment, which leads to Black-on-Black and Black-on-other minorities violence and killings. Racism must end if there is any hope of minority violence ending.

CRT offers no solutions to lessening or eliminating racism. It involves identifying the many aspects of racism (including institutional racism). However, it does not offer methods of reducing racism by perpetrators who may be from many different racial and ethnic background). That was the identified gap in knowledge. Positive psychology should be part of the curriculum in American higher education as a matter of public policy. The identified research gap involving how to effectively reduce or eliminate racism that is experienced by Boston-based college students by using CRT to identify these negative racial experiences and then adapting positive psychology education, to lessen such racism and its effects was the focus of this dissertation.

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), some of the tenets of CRT are that racism is an ordinary occurrence in American society, difficult to cure, and relies upon material determinism. Material determinism occurs when the White upper class benefits materially from racism, while the lower, or working classes, are impacted psychologically. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) stated most people have little reason to eradicate racism. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) stated social construction means that race is a creation that results from social thought and social relations. Pazich and Teranishi

(2014) addressed the concept of using affirmative action as part of public policy as a means to seek social justice among racially marginalized citizens in Brazil and India. According to Pazich and Teranishi (2014), even with affirmative action, the dominant elite group still maintains control over what people see as the cultural norm. Lack of access to higher education and control of the elite is not a problem just for these countries but also globally, (Pazich & Teranishi 2014).

Interest convergence means that the elite or top controlling group will seek racial justice only to the degree that it serves the best interest of the controlling or elite group. Intersectionality refers to the fact that discrimination can be against a particular race or particular gender as well. Pazich and Teranishi (2014) claimed “education has become heavily tied to social mobility and middle-class status in contemporary Brazil, so the relative lack of schooling for Blacks has severe consequences for income distribution and standard of living” (p. 55). However, minorities tend to not have equal access to a good education and thereby are economically stuck in their particular class. Interest convergence is present in the White middle and upper classes. Their interests in politics and economics tend to involve best serving their socio-economic group. The group to suffer the greatest discrimination are Black females, who suffer discrimination not only by the White ruling class but also males of their racial group, who also treat them as inferiors.

According to Pazich and Teranishi (2014), majority rule allows some minority justice if that justice serves the greater interest of the majority. Whites learning to teach in

predominately minority urban schools still do not want to study anti-racist teaching and maintain White hegemony, (Matias et al. (2014). Furthermore, Whites trying to help improve the minority and African-American situation still keep to their “white” thinking. Matias (2014) argued not acknowledging a person’s whiteness was an act of racism. Fine, et. al., (2004) argued lack of understanding or acknowledging White racialization of identity contributes to racism. CRT involves blaming whites for racism, even if the dominant group (no matter what the color) is racist too.

Schick (2003) argued teachers can be taught to teach anti-racist thinking. Race matters and means that all people have identifications that are based on racialization, (Schick, 2003). People can deny that race plays a part in their lives, but if teachers want to be primarily anti-racist, they must admit that all people are affected by racialization (Schick, 2003).

Today’s dominant group will be tomorrow’s minority group and minority groups today may become tomorrow’s dominant group. The problem of racism, including ethnic groupings, will still exist. One needs to develop research where the solution is based on something not requiring a dominant group, and therefore not a theory based on a dominant victimizer versus minority victim type of thinking. I propose that racial equality and harmony may be achieved by teaching positive psychology and removing divisiveness.

Su (2007) claimed CRT has progressed beyond its background in legal theory. Originally, CRT led to changes in public policy, including colorblind laws. These

regulations, which were designed to reduce racial inequalities, have instead perpetuated the continuation of racial inequality including in education. Su suggested communities of color need to challenge educational institutions by demanding they offer alternatives such as school reforms and community outreach, Su stated an alternative view of education needs to be part of the conversation about anti-racist teaching. Su discussed the education situation in Bronx schools, which have metal detectors and police officers assigned to hallways. In addition, a parent group seeking educational reform called Neighborhood Parents Together (NPT) called for added rigorous safety patrols, (Su, 2007). The anonymous student group, YP, did not agree with the NPT's recommendations and felt many students were being treated inhumanely (Su, 2007). Harsh new safety patrol protocols caused upset within the student body. YP invited safety officers into a workshop to discuss issues concerning patrols and actions of students. This solution was one example of why educational institutions in the greater Boston area needs to have more positive psychology research done. Learning how to amicably resolve conflict will help in terms of addressing the larger issue of racism and racial violence in modern American society.

Brown (2015) claimed during the Zoot Suit Riots, a series of conflicts between June 3 and 8, 1943 in Los Angeles, California in which American servicemen and White Angelenos attacked and stripped zoot suit-wearing children, teenagers, and youths. Most of the violence was directed towards Mexican-Americans, Zoot Suit-wearing African-Americans, Italian-Americans, and Filipino Americans.

The cause of the riots was that the press, politicians, and police held individuals wearing flashy zoot suits were subversives who represented a threat to the public and American way of life, leading to the theory that race was the underlying cause of crime and violence. The U.S. Navy had sailors take taxis in Los Angeles looking for people dressed in zoot suits, and the Mexican-American community especially was treated unfairly and harassed by the military and by the police (Brown, 2015). The only positive outcome from this riot was that injustices towards the African-American community, as well as the Mexican-American community, were better studied and addressed by California politicians.

With Boston's rapidly growing and mobile international society, there was potential for racism and racial violence. Race is traditionally defined as characteristics related to sociological and biological factors in terms of a person's physical appearance, factors such as skin color, hair color, eye color, and bone structure. In Boston's mixed and multidimensional society, the traditional definition of race was not as applicable. For instance, some people who are part Hispanic, part Black, or part White, define themselves as Pan-American.

The Boston Marathon bombing attack of April 15, 2013, stemmed from cultural differences and was a form of racial violence. Dzhokhar and Tamerlan, the Tsarnaev brothers who planned and carried out the attack, were born in Chechnya, a part of Russia's Muslim community and were Caucasian Muslims. They were White actors who perpetuated racial and ethnic violence as part of a Muslim supremacy agenda.

Muslims sometimes perform heinous acts of violence, but other times racist acts happen against them. Martino and Rezia-Rahti (2008) used the post-colonial, feminist, and queer frameworks to describe and explain teaching differences of Muslim culture and the significance among women concerning the act of Muslim veiling. Gender relations relate to differences in cultures, which then lead to ideological clashes and racism, and then racial violence.

The Boston Marathon bombing could be interpreted as a cultural and racial act of violence, not just an act of terrorism. According to Sampson (2005) both racial and ethnic violence, not just between Whites and Blacks, has occurred in Boston between immigrants from different countries. Even the practice of wearing the hijab can be considered racist. Mahmood (2005) claimed that “the veil more than any other Islamic practice, has become the symbol and evidence of violence Islam has inflicted on women” (p. 136). It is against the law in America to promote violence against women. This is a possible conflict because freedom of religion is also an American value and legal right. Muslim women who wear the veil are therefore subject to racism on both sides of this issue.

In Philadelphia, there is Black upon Asian violence happening in schools. According to Washington (2010), Asian students on the Asian floor at South Philadelphia High School were targeted for racial violence despite police being there to protect those students. There needs to be a plan and way to stop such racial violence and threats of violence. Murray (2014) claimed the ratio of Black-to-White justifiable homicide in

Boston was one in six. In 2014 3.7 cases of Black-on-White justifiable homicide compared to 24 White-on-Black justifiable homicide cases. These statistics support that White-on-Black racial violence continues, along with other forms of racism.

According to Cheeks and Carter-Francique (2015), CRT has evolved into the idea that institutional racism is endemic in schools of higher education. Boston-based institutional racism can lead to systemic racial oppression. Historically white colleges or universities (HWCUs) distance themselves from individuals coming from historically Black colleges or universities (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015). Institutional racism can lead to rioting and racial violence (Kilpatrick, 2015). The object is to stop institutional racism as well as the violence that can then ensue. According to Kilpatrick (2015) the U.S. should focus on stopping inequality in America.

According to Cheeks & Carter-Francique (2015), CRT concerns the social situation of a person's life and the experience of their racial group. This is expressed via narratives regarding their lives, which, when examined, can lead to certain analytical conclusions about society and race.

CRT is a theory that racism is part of ordinary society. It is a system of White over color hierarchy. It is difficult to address appropriately. It serves to benefit the White upper class and working classes by putting down races of color (Delgado & Stefancic 2012).

According to Compton (2005), positive psychology involves using the scientific method. It is unique in terms of the fact that it does not seek to replace the rest

of psychology, but rather encourage positive human development and experiences, and develop progressive institutions. Positive psychology is designed to help its adherents find happiness, and the expectation is that happy, satisfied people would be devoid of racial hatred. Compton (2005) claimed positive psychology involves using research, interventions, and psychological theory to understand what is positive, adaptive, and creative in human lives. Sheldon and King (2001) found positive psychology shows how human beings can adapt and learn new skills as they increase their strength and happiness.

This study involved merging CRT and positive psychology by defining the racism problem that Boston area public university students are affected by and then offering a positive remedy to address, lessen, and eliminate such negative racial thinking and actions. Positive psychology is the study of happiness. The religion Christianity supports such a concept along with the possibility of eternal peace. Racism involves acts of unfairness and unjust actions by one group towards another. It is not a group of acts leading to the happiness of others or an act of peace. Racism is, therefore, un-Christian. Racism does not lead to peace but instead leads to racial tension and then, in some cases, to racial violence. Such racial violence is counter-productive to a peaceful society.

Problem Statement

The problem was that it was unknown whether and how subtly institutional racism often was, whether racist actions continue to exist at public universities in the

greater Boston area, and what may be effective in terms of reducing effects of that racism in terms of positive psychology.

Racial violence can be a severe problem, not only in greater Boston but also worldwide. Perpetrators of racial violence can be females as well as individuals of more advanced age. I focused on students in public universities and colleges within greater Boston. Sylvain (2015) argued that acts of racism are occurring on American college campuses. Some acts are subtle, such as campus parties with racial undertones. Others are more blatant, such as acts of vandalism where overtly racist symbols, such as a hangman's noose, are found on campus (Sylvain, 2015). I addressed whether racist actions are occurring at local public universities and teaching positive psychology can alleviate or even prevent it.

Public policy is an effective way to address civic problems. Adapting public policy to include teaching positive psychology in higher education curriculum can be useful in terms of making positive change. The goal was to determine if teaching, positive psychology as a matter of Boston-based higher education public policy ameliorated racism in the community. Presently, CRT does not involve positively determining how to lessen racism. In this study, I identified racism affecting Boston public university students and examined how positive psychology, can be taught and thereby help reduce racial remarks, micro-aggressions, prejudice, and educational and career discrimination.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine if teaching positive psychology in the college classroom reduced and/or eliminated racism in Boston-based public university students.

I conducted an interpretivist study and used a naturalistic approach to data collection with observations and interviews to determine if teaching positive psychology in the college classroom will lead to success in terms of overcoming negative and hateful racist thinking. I focused on racial experiences of Boston-based college students. I identified effects of negative racial language and actions including racial violence and determined if teaching positive psychology positively affected not only minority students but also White students. The second part of this survey was used to determine if practicing positive psychology lessened or eliminated racism by helping students appreciate other students' needs and perspectives (especially minority students) and become more sensitive to them.

There are deep and systemic racial problems in greater Boston. Despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964, inception of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), and presumptive social enlightenment of the modern Massachusetts population, racism, poverty, unequal access to quality education, and employment opportunities still exist (Reeves, 2020). These racial incidents continue to negatively affect Boston society, especially minority populations and most especially minority students at Boston public universities, especially when they are seeking jobs and

summer internships at places like the new Seaport District, an area many claim is now “Whiter” than before), just two miles away from the UMass/Boston campus, (Ryan et al., 2017).

According to Ryan et. al., (2017), “many Boston campuses reflect new levels of diversity, with more international students than ever before”. Although factions within American universities are trying to address the idea that actions of governments and institutions are either racist or not racist, this is an untrue oversimplification of racial problems in the U.S. and in university culture. For Black students, opportunities are not given, and individual and institutional racism against Black Americans continues.

According to Dungca et al. (2017), Black student enrollment has not significantly increased in the last 35+ years. Positive psychology courses at Boston-based colleges could help inspire minority students, including Black students, to pursue their dreams fully as well as graduate successfully and with optimism beyond their academic career and into successful future endeavors. Studying effects of teaching positive psychology and its inherent sensitivity to the needs of others, including minority students, to students in the Boston area was necessary to address if this was a successful method to reduce racism in the Boston area.

The Black community is a significant part of U.S. culture and represents 12.6% of the U.S. population, (World Book, 2019). Racism, regardless of any form, is a concern for all American communities, including those in public universities in the Boston area. This study involved defining aspects of racism that involve not only the African

American population but also all demographics, and then determining if teaching positive psychology in these settings can play a meaningful part in overcoming this racism.

To properly achieve this goal, the qualitative approach was employed. Racism and racial violence in communities is both a sociological and behavioral problem. Racism is a public policy problem that has to be understood and addressed through the lens of sociology and behaviorism. Part of racism results from how people are brought up to think and the ways they are later influenced to change or to re-examine the way they think. Participants disclosed their age, educational grade level, proclivity towards compassion as well as violence, and their observations regarding whether positive psychology can potentially lessen racism in the public education arena.

I addressed their opinions about the most effective ways to address racism and reduce racial violence. The gap in research is that there is a lack of research regarding racism in the past. Even when dealing with modern racist events, research does not address solutions to this problem. My study involved closing this gap by offering potential solutions. The objective of this study was to find a method to successfully remove racist and ethnic stereotypes within greater Boston college communities. My primary goal was to ultimately create a fairer and more productive global society.

Research Questions

In this study I used the following research questions.

RQ 1: What are the causal drivers which create racism and racial violence in Boston society?

RQ 2: How can teaching positive psychology as part of a Boston-based college education framework impact and lessen racism and thereby decrease racial violence in Boston?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

A gap exists in current racism research and no studies currently exist offering solutions regarding how to reduce and possibly eliminate racism. My study proposes to fill this gap by offering a plan to help mitigate racism by teaching positive psychology in college classrooms, focusing on greater-Boston university settings.

My goal was to develop a theory of what racism was doing to public university students in the Boston area and how they can successfully address that racism.

In this study, I address racism, racist thought, racist speech, racial violence, discrimination, work discrimination, educational discrimination, injustice, inequity, and solutions which result from positive thinking, positive psychology and tenets of both CRT and positive psychology.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundations supporting this study were CRT and positive psychology. CRT began in the early 1970s, when the societal, legal, and cultural gains made during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s were being lost or rolled back, (Delgado, 2009, p. 1510). Mainstream American media (such as CNN) covers stories daily about racism, and these stories show that racism is still a problem in towns and cities across America. This includes the Boston area as well

Instrumentation

To gain a better understanding of the problem, I used initial qualitative questions. Results from original qualitative testing informed and helped develop subsequent qualitative survey questions

In this qualitative study, I collected the age, gender and educational level of the participant in order to address how those factors affected their experiences, beliefs and actions.

Eitle, et. al., (2002) argued three threat-level hypotheses define current U.S. Black and White race relations, the economic threat presented by the burgeoning Black population, sociopolitical threat of rising Black political power, and the threat of Black on White crime and violence.

According to Eitle et al., (2002), the relative size of the U.S. Black population compared to the U.S. White population, presents a potential threat to White Americans. Social control is used to keep the White population in positions of dominance, and Whites in power seek accommodation with the minority group to maintain power, (Eitle, et. al., 2002).

Racism may start in early childhood when people begin to notice or are made aware that people look different and these racial differences are noticed in society. Racism, like xenophobia, is a sense of distrust of strange or unfamiliar people. Distrust of others is not an example of positive thinking or using positive psychology, but rather the polar opposite. Mainstream media can play upon people's fears and distrust through their

coverage of racially charged incidents. Education regarding tenets of positive psychology can be used to address these issues.

One of my survey questions will be attuned to this aspect of racism because I will ask the nationality (s) and ethnic group (s) with whom the participant self-identifies. This was asked to determine what the participants believe was racist, racially insensitive, and what was racially discriminatory based upon their racial self-assessment. As well, these participants will be asked about their knowledge of and (possible) belief in positive psychology.

Nature of the Study

Participants were asked the following 12 qualitative questions:

IQ1: Have you ever experienced racism and/or racial violence in your life, and can you explain how it affected you?

IQ2: How did this affect you over the long term?

IQ3: Did such racism and racial violence occur in your school system, and if it did, please describe it in full detail?

IQ4: How did you address such racism and racial violence in your life or the lives of others?

IQ5: Are you familiar with general psychology principles?

IQ6: Are you familiar with the tenets of positive psychology?

IQ7: Do you believe that positive psychology can be used to lessen racism and reduce racial violence in our society, including here around the Boston area?

IQ8: How effective do you find positive psychology is in addressing anti-racial speech and racist comments and even racial violence?

IQ9: Can racism be eliminated from our society, and how would you propose to do that?

IQ10: After employing the tenets of positive psychology to yourself as well as towards others, how effective and how long will it take to change society for the better?

IQ11: In the political campaigns, where did you see the most racism, and where did you see the least?

IQ12: As a university student, do you feel that positive psychology and its tenets should be used more or less in political campaigns, concerning the issue of racism, immigration, and racial violence?

Based on the participants' responses, I formulated new questions. I used the sequential exploratory design. The is qualitative study involved using an experimental design. I asked my participant group if they had actively chosen or taken any particular courses in high school or college that addressed contemporary issues concerning racial violence and racism and what they recommended for improving those educational courses. The group was asked whether education courses might have influenced their understanding of racial violence and racism.

Key concepts were racism and positive psychology education. The key purpose was to determine if teaching positive psychology in the greater Boston college classroom was an effective method to reduce Boston-based racism and discrimination (as identified

by CRT theory.). This study involved polling and surveying beliefs and responses of Boston-based university students to survey research questions and analyzing this raw data using qualitative methods analysis.

Interview questions were asked of participants. Interviews were performed in-person. This was done to ensure reproducible records of results, which were analyzed at a later date. Coding and thematic analysis were performed on the participants' qualitative data.

Methodology

In this study I used discourse and CRT analysis. Discourse analysis is the analysis of language beyond the sentence, (Linguistic Society of America, 2016). What is said by one person to another can be interpreted in many ways. For example, in virtually every context, using the racial epithet n**er," is considered very racially inflammatory. However, if sung by a Black person describing another Black person in a rap song, this epithet elicits a much different response in the listener.

CRT holds that the legal system, power brokers, and issues of race are controlled by institutions that apart from individual racists, control American society and keep it under White control, (Yosso, 2005). For example, a Black participant might consider hearing a white person use a racial slur as very racist. However, the same Black individual might believe it was hip or acceptable to use the same epithet when greeting a Black friend (who might also believe this was perfectly acceptable, non-racist language, in the context). It was examined if teaching positive psychology in the college classroom

would lead all students to drop certain racially inflammatory words from their vocabulary to avoid the possibility of insulting anyone or inciting potential racist violence.

Discourse analysis is an analysis of the language used in a continuing discourse of many sentences in which both the speaker and the auditor interact (Nordquist, 2015). During the qualitative part of the research in this study, I will be the auditor and analyze the different uses of language, words, and sentences (such as the use of slang, idiom, and thought construction) in the participants' responses. If positive or warm wording was used, (which may reflect upon exposure to positive psychology in the participants' background), I will then enquire if that participant was aware of positive psychology theory. The words that people use reflect on their relationships and actions with others. People can make excuses for their racist thoughts, but their actual feelings are reflected in their discourses.

The American population is experiencing an increase in population diversity, and are living in much more ethnically rich culture and society. The U.S. will have to deal with issues of prejudice, discrimination, inequalities involving economic opportunities, asset acquisitions, and justice that are the result of racism (Schaefer, 2014). The goal of this study was to find a way to positively eradicate racism without causing overt social unrest.

There was limited quantitative data on current causes and solutions of racial violence. I have chosen the qualitative method to study this phenomenon because it was flexible and can be tailored to obtain relevant data. The problem of racial violence is

critical to the stability of Boston (as well as the U.S.) Finding answers to mitigate this problem could have broad future applications.

This study involved using a survey of local Boston college students. Their opinions were important to understanding causes and potential solutions to racism and racial violence. It was more efficient to collect answers to survey questions at the same time.

Definitions of Operational Terms

Positive psychological education: Education which involves traditional skills and happiness (Seligman et al.,2009).

Positive psychology: The study of happiness,”

Critical Race Theory (CRT): A progressive political struggle for racial justice with critiques of conventional legal and scholarly norms which are themselves viewed as part of illegitimate hierarchies that need to be changed.

Institutional racism: Societal patterns that have the net effect of imposing oppressive or otherwise negative conditions against identifiable groups based on race or ethnicity (Head, 2014).

Correlational research: Research that involves looking “at the strength of the relationships between variables, events, or phenomena”, (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 332). Such events would be racist events, including those of racial violence, such phenomena would be racist thinking, and such variables would include age, gender, income, and education, for example.

Racism: “The belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, and that a person’s social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics.

Racial separatism: A belief, most of the time, based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another, (Anti-Defamation League 2001, p.1).

Racial violence: Violence caused by racial factors or committed for reasons related to race.

Assumptions

There are aspects of this study that are believed but cannot be definitively proven. I assumed people with an affinity towards aggression and violence are more likely to be involved with racial violence. The likelihood of showing such a definitive relationship could only be determined if violent criminal records of offenders could be cross-correlated with interviews regarding racist feelings and beliefs of such offenders. The likelihood of getting such offenders to cooperate with a study and at the same time admit to their crimes and misdeeds was unlikely since it would lead to self- incrimination. Trulson and Marquart (2002) studied interracial violence in the Texas prison system and found that racism and violence interconnect.

It was hard to identify who perpetrators of racial violence are, especially since perpetrators tend to wear disguises, cover their heads with hoods, and avoid photo recognition of their faces, etc. Anonymous street mobs tend to hide their identities after

racial assaults and negative activities to avoid the law and public censure. Many people demonstrate unjust racial views but tell others they are not racists.

Another assumption is that people expressing compassion and non-violence are also less likely to be racist. However, this may not be accurate. A further assumption is that participants were honest when disclosing their racial points of view as well as being honest when it comes to self-reporting about incidents of violence in their lives. I assumed those who participated in racial violence first made racial comments to others that were left unchecked, which then advanced to acts of racial violence.

Scope, Delimitations, and Limitations

This study was centered on the concept that racist thinking and racist language use under the right conditions can lead to racial violence, and teaching positive psychology in the college classroom may mitigate racial incidents. This focus was chosen because is a problem that must be confronted and mitigated using peaceful methods. This dissertation included Boston area colleges and universities. No corporations or corporate participants were in this study, except if they were college or university participants.

I first addressed prior CRT research to identify sources of racist thought and then determine if participants had been exposed to racist comments, racial injustice, discrimination, racist speech, and racial violence. I then focused on positive psychology and its tenets which can be taught in college classrooms to reduce racism and racist thought.

In Chapter 1, I addressed prior research on CRT, its impact in the past, and its impact on public policies regarding racism, and general understanding of what qualitatively causes racism.

This was a survey of what a random sample of Boston-based university students thought and felt as well as experienced about racism and whether or not learning the tools of positive psychology might be useful to mitigate current racial tensions. This was an original study. Survey answers regarding participants' exposure to racism, racist thought, racial violence, and discrimination and racial violence were already studied before the bulk of survey questions were completed. Transferability was addressed. Past participants' results can be successfully compared to current collected data. The real challenge was to compare past with current attitudes and transferring this data to obtain verifiable conclusions using current data analysis. I might have subjects disclose feelings of racial bias and discrimination resulting from seemingly innocuous incidents.

Bias in the study could arise if subjects are either overly accusatory and believe everything has racial overtones or are so private that they do not address acts of racism. It is not possible to know which people are privately thinking racist thoughts.

Significance

This study involved determining if teaching positive psychology in Boston-area college classrooms will help improve race relations, not only in the Boston area but also nationally and internationally. College students who learn this peaceful method of improving race relations will use this mindset not only into their own countries and

communities but also into places of employment. My goal was to recommend adapting K-12 education guidelines to teach positive psychology to younger students in order to help keep them from harboring bullying, discriminatory, and racist thoughts.

Summary

Chapter 1 includes a framework for embracing new philosophies of methods to reduce racism as a matter of public education policy in Boston-based institutions of higher learning. Chapter 1 also includes a discussion of CRT and positive psychology. Since there was little if no prior research in this area, my investigation was original.

Chapter 2 includes an examination of the prevalence of racism and the problem and involves using positive psychology in the college classroom as a peaceful method to reduce racism. Chapter 2 includes the results of my extensive literature search.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify racism in the Boston area affecting public university students and determine if teaching positive psychology in Greater Boston-based higher-education classrooms can be an effective method to reduce or eliminate racist thoughts and actions of public university students in response to such racist incidents.

CRT was the basis for this research and was used to define and identify racial incidents. I recorded incidents of racism and determined if teaching positive psychology in the Boston college classroom proved effective in terms of in reducing racial episodes according to participants.

According to Griffin et al. (2011), racism is prevalent in U.S. society. Racism and racial violence are significant problems. There are white supremacist groups and Black militant groups and political extremist groups. There are gangs of every ethnicity. Some promote or perpetrate acts of racial violence or promulgate ideas of racial supremacy.

Racism includes prejudice and unfairness, which are endemic in American society, including in public universities (Griffin et. al., 2011). First, factors leading to creating a racist environment were determined. Ways to lessen and resolve racial issues before racism can become entrenched and possibly evolve into racial violence were formulated. Incidents of racism were studied, analyzed, and cataloged, and methods to mitigate racism were addressed using positive psychology. Teaching the theory of

positive psychology will help reduce and eliminate both causes of racism and the number of incidents and severity of racial violence.

Ladson-Billings (2003) argued social studies in the school curriculum have advanced institutional racism in terms of politics, history, economics, and social environments for to students. Ladson-Billings claimed “racism is ‘normal’, not ‘aberrant’, in American society” (p.8). Crenshaw (1988) claimed that the current legal paradigm’s incrementalism was too slow to curb racism effectively.

Ladson-Billings (2003) argued educational publishers create racism in schools. Bell (1992) claimed racism is a permanent part of American culture. A positive way of understanding different races and diversity is necessary to address negative issues of racism.

Individual cases in the legal system involving racism and racial violence show a pattern that suggests that institutional racism has not changed. A shift in education and thinking of citizens is necessary. Teaching positive psychology with the intent to reduce racism and racial violence may be an answer.

I used Thoreau and EBSCO host databases to find CRT studies about racism and discrimination as well as positive psychology. I used the following search terms: *racism, racial discrimination, privilege, positive psychology will be positive psychology, positive thinking, positive psychology studies, and studies about happiness and lasting fulfillment.*

Positive psychology is designed to addresses many aspects of happiness. It can be used to address exploitation, which is a stressor (Meyers & Meyers, 2003, p.222).

Exploitation originates from power differences between groups, and this can be due to the monetary wealth of one group compared to another, domination of one dominant racial group over a minority, or male versus female dominance. Such power imbalances could be addressed by implementing tenets of positive psychology. The psychology of decency has existed long before the actual theory of positive psychology was introduced. William Penn used the doctrine of his Quaker faith (positive thinking, kindness, and friendship) as the foundation of his relationships with Native Americans so both parties could reach common ground, and in so doing, avoid a war with them (Kenny, 2009).

This literature review includes a concise synopsis of the current literature and will show how my research is relevant to addressing the issues of modern-day racism. The major sections of this chapter include the introduction, the literature search strategy, theoretical foundations, and a literature review, which includes the fundamental concepts of this study.

Literature Search Strategy

At this point in my research, the term, “institutional distancing”, was discovered. Universities spend plenty of resources (e.g., scholarships, special courses, private tutors, etc.) to recruit top-level athletes because of the desire for positive public relations and income generation from successful sporting events. Institutional distancing occurs when minorities are recruited or accepted into a prestigious college or university-based upon athletic prowess. Although these individuals are ostensibly accepted into the academic community of the institution, what occurs was that they find themselves “distanced”

academically and only accepted and encouraged as a means of producing exciting income-generating feats of athleticism for the school. This can increase frustration and feelings of injustice in minority students. This study was interested in determining how this frustration affects racist feelings and potential racist violence occurring at the university level. Such a search for the truth, though, will be tempered with a search for an answer as well, in this literature search and review.

At this point in my research, I began investigating the topic of positive psychology. Although I could find no references linking CRT and positive psychology (which was the research gap I highlighted above), I did find journal articles regarding positive psychology and its teaching at the university level. I discovered articles, such as the one authored by Evans and Rooney (2013), which discuss methods in psychological research. Such methods will have relevance to how the interview survey will be developed in this qualitative research. In Gander, Proyer, & Ruch (2016), positive psychology ‘interventions’ are discussed. From this material, I will propose a ‘positive psychology’ educational intervention for Boston-based college students dealing with the problems of racism, racist violence, and institutional racism.

The two major theories that my dissertation will draw upon are CRT and positive psychology. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) discuss the origin and premise of CRT. They describe CRT theory was, its early origins, its relation to other movements, its basic tenets, the level of racism in the world, and law reform, among other topics, Delgado & Stefancic (2012). Reviewing this book showed me that racism was not always overt. It

can be subtle, as subtle as a store clerk not making small talk with a minority person or a teacher failing to recognize a student based on their race, Delgado & Stefancic (2012). Some acts of racism are obvious. Some are perceived as racially motivated, but may not rise to the level of true racism, and some acts fall into the category of ambiguity. For example, what if a salesperson ignores a person of color? Was it racism? Has the salesperson shown prejudice? What if the item is sold at a higher price? Was that poor negotiating on the part of the buyer, or was it an act of discrimination and unfairness based on the racial feelings of the salesperson? This was what Delgado & Stefancic set out to determine, (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p.2).

CRT also affects the rule of law and the balance of power. According to Delgado & Stefancic (2012), CRT is a 'movement' and "a collection of activists and scholars' who wish not only to study but also change the relationship among races, racism, and political power, (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p.2). According to some CRT literature, even American history seems to have been re-written with a particular racial skew, Bolgatz (2007). Ladson-Billings says following a "racial script" leads to racism being minimalized in such areas as social studies. Even in today's society, if the nightly news covers inflammatory acts of racial violence and racism, they tend to be covered in 30-second segments, and then the news shifts to focus on other events. The lack of deep public investigation to determine and highlight why these racist events occurred creates a vacuum in our American society that was left to fester.

The lack of in-depth public media investigations of racism and racist events, including incidents of institutional distancing at the public university level, may be related to a phenomenon that was described by Bell (2015), who speaks about the advent of hate crimes. One example was when a minority, usually a Black individual, calls a Southern white person “a cracker.” This act was considered a misdemeanor but was classified as a hate crime. The general legal concept at play was that although such a verbal statement does not constitute a serious felony, it was considered a breach of public peace and warrants law enforcement action, Bell (2015). Fighting words can ultimately lead to racial violence and racist activities.

But there are limits on how much protection the government and our legal system will provide to those who desire to stop racism. The theory of public good was offset by the theory of freedom of speech. According to Cornell University’s Legal Information Institute website, the Supreme Court decision, *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*, 505 U.S. 377 (1992) found that burning a cross or displaying the Nazi swastika was an act protected by the First Amendment and that an ordinance barring that expression was unconstitutional. In the majority decision, the late Justice Scalia found that the ordinance which made publicly burning a cross or displaying a swastika illegal was unconstitutional. There were certain issues with this decision, which included the differences between content discrimination and viewpoint discrimination, the latter of which the Supreme Court would not invade. The Court did not wish to impede upon the constitutional rights of its citizens to have a viewpoint on the issue of freedom of speech – a right that was held

sacrosanct in the United States. But others could argue that if equality for all citizens and everyone's rights are held sacrosanct, then our government (most especially the Supreme Court), should uphold the protection of all American citizens from a speech that disturbs public peace. As in the case of the use of the word "cracker" above, hate speech was considered a misdemeanor and can be adjudicated as such.

Scalia was likely to have been concerned that even that sentencing enhancement law could have a chilling effect on free speech. This decision clearly shows that the First Amendment of our legal system allows some citizens to have the right to free speech even when it was offensive to others and can lead to bad outcomes in our society. Scalia determined that, even if the speech constitutes a hate crime, such criminal sentencing may have a serious effect on the concept of free speech. This Supreme Court decision may also have the unintentional effect of permitting the legal system to turn a blind eye to blatant acts of racism. This theoretical tolerance may indeed have an effect that should be examined in future research studies.

Of course, though *R.A.V.* found the city ordinance banning blatant acts of racism to be unconstitutional, this case does not prevent hate crime laws from still demanding the prosecution of those persons who use burning crosses or Nazi swastikas to intimidate, influence or attack the civil rights of individuals who have been specifically targeted in the hate crime. In the peer-reviewed journal article, "There Are No Racists Here", one sees that even though *R.A.V.* intended to protect (and does protect) free speech rights, the law does not turn a blind eye to racism in our society or our schools, (Bell, 2015, p.351).

Bell (2015) tells us that although the Supreme Court allowed other states to regulate cross burning in other cases, the Court continued to refuse to overrule its R.A.V. decision, (Bell, 2015, p. 359). In *Renton v. Playtime Theatres, Inc.*, 475 U.S. 41 (1986), “expressive content” was allowed despite a city regulation that focused on mitigating real problems that free speech would create, Bell (2015). In the R.A.V. case, the City of St. Paul said that the city ordinance had been put in place so as to avoid discrimination against a protected minority class and not to hurt the right of free expression of the accused. Here the theory seems to be elucidated as being one to reduce discrimination and racism, not one to impede the general freedom of speech rights of citizens.

Theoretical Foundation

The real race theory, of course, was CRT. This cannot be better expressed than in the journal article edited by Ladson-Billings (2003), who finds that social studies taught in secondary education almost completely lacks dealing with the fact that, although races do not vary that much as far as D.N.A. was concerned; they do have significant cultural differences that are not properly expressed in the school curriculum. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings states that not only are racial differences not properly addressed in the general social studies curricula but the topic itself has also been relegated to the very small sub-section of discrimination issues within the social studies curriculum. Ladson-Billings wants more coverage of racial issues, believes that injustices in our legal system arise precisely because they are not treated as diversity issues and issues of democracy

and equality, and feels that CRT has an important goal of making the American legal system fairer to minorities, including Black Americans.

If the RAV case can teach us anything, it is that it was hard for a juror to know what was in the heart of the perpetrator. Does the person have criminal intent when they speak racially charged words? One of the goals of this study was to determine what was in the heart of the participants regarding racial issues, issues of diversity, and issues of equality. Our democracy strives for equality, and it also should strive for racial harmony. Ladson-Billings believes our legal system, despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964, has failed to improve race relations as much as it should have by now. According to Bell (2003) in the case, *Virginia v. Black*, 538 US 343, 358 (2003), the Court agreed to have states regulate cross burnings. This seems to contradict the Supreme Court's ruling in *R.A.V.* that local government should have no part in regulating racist expressions, due to free speech rights. So, then what does this mean? It means that the legal system (on a state-by-state basis) was trying to balance out the needs of the people. The legal system does not want to curtail free speech and free expression. On the other hand, it does not permit racially charged events to harass or harm protected classes. Ladson-Billings believes that our society needs more truthful minority history taught in our schools and that we need a better legal system. Bell notes that some academics worry that local governments would regulate racial speech and punish people for racial epithets and slurs. Furthermore, arresting people all around the country for their speech would be impractical. Not only would it swell the courts' caseloads but it would also be and be

hard to prosecute since, as mentioned above, one person's slur was another person's greeting.

Adherents of CRT likely do not believe in the Supreme Court's belief that hate crimes are based on 'evidence of motivation', (Bell, 2003, p. 359). Such critics see regulation of hate speech as one group of laws that must be enforced and that 'hate crime laws' are the second set of additional penalties. According to (Bell, 2003, p. 360), these critics are suspicious of the idea that speaking racial slurs was an indicator of the potential to commit hate crimes. They do not agree that the actual motivations for hate crimes can be properly determined. This may result in police charging more people with hate speech rather than with committing hate crimes, (Bell, 2003, p. 360).

According to Bell (2003) jurors cannot read what was in the mind of the defendant. They cannot determine if bigotry caused the defendant to act in a way that constituted a hate crime. The problem with this, according to the critics, was that RAV determined that hate speech is a protected act of free expression; therefore, a conviction would be unlikely.

Expecting the divided legal system to solve the hate speech/hate crime problem by court action alone was unlikely. The system was not designed to accomplish such a goal. The internal motivations and thoughts of a defendant, according to (Bell, 2003, p.360), are almost impossible to know, unless of course, the defendant makes a full confession of their thoughts upon arrest (or was captured on video making such a statement).

From my review of this literature, I agree with Ladson-Billings that teaching accurate minority history in schools is an excellent way to encourage young people to be more tolerant of their thoughts and their actions towards others. Ultimately, seeking to address the problem of racism and racial violence may best begin in school. Ladson-Billings promotes teaching racial sensitivity in social studies classes. I promote the idea of teaching positive psychology in the college classroom. The basis for both theories lay in the belief that teaching young people racial tolerance and sensitivity during their formative years may not only reduce racism and improve racial equality but also reduce future instances of hate speech or hate crimes.

Positive psychological development is very important for people's well-being, but it continues to be underappreciated, including by psychologists practicing today, (Compton, 2005, p. xi). According to (Compton, 2005, p. xi), it was a mistake for professionals to not recognize the efficacy of positive psychological development. Around 1989 William Compton created a course at Vanderbilt University based on teaching the psychology of well-being, (Compton, 2005, p. xii). According to Compton, Martin E. P. Seligman created the concept of "Positive Psychology" six years later and became the founder of that area of psychology. One of the major assumptions of positive psychology theory is that humans need to develop a feeling of well-being. A second primary assumption is that positive psychology will help people have better lives. Therefore, fully understanding the theory of positive psychology is of great importance in

understanding how it can be leveraged to address racism, racist violence, and racial issues, first in Boston-based college classrooms and then, hopefully, in our society.

Martin E. P. Seligman said that positive psychology is not just the study of weakness and damage; but also, the study of strength and virtue. This thought applies to the problem of racism because if we can refocus university students to build upon their shared strengths and virtues, then we can begin the journey of eradicating racism. Martin E. P. Seligman went on to say: “Treatment is not just fixing what is broken; it is nurturing what is best within us”, (Compton, 2005, p. 3) According to Kennon Sheldon and Laura King, (Compton, 2005, p.3), “Positive psychology is an attempt to urge psychologists to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potentials, motives, and capacities.” The lack of research on the use of “positive psychology” to combat racism was the documented research gap this study hopes to fill.

Prior research shows that, according to Lee Duckworth, et al. (2005), pleasure, engagement, and finding meaning are the three most important constructs of positive psychology. Seligman wants clinicians to focus on helping their patients increase pleasure, engage with their environment, and find meaning in their lives. How does this theory then translate to a method to reduce racism? It addresses racism because the presumption was that if an individual was seeking to enjoy life by engaging positively with their environment and thereby finding meaning, then that person should have no interest nor time to engage in the negative pursuits of racist thought, speech, or violence.

According to Lee-Duckworth, the real mission of positive psychologists is to help patients find the “good life”, (Lee-Duckworth, 2005, p.362). In 1961, Rogers determined that people had the power to discover and express their “authentic selves”, (Lee-Duckworth, 2005, p. 632). Later in 1962, the psychologist Maslow, (Lee-Duckworth, 2005, p. 632) expressed the process by which people could become “self-actualized.” According to Lee-Duckworth, Maslow first linked self-actualization to positive psychology in a chapter entitled, “Toward a Positive Psychology” found in his text, *Motivation and Personality*.

One of Maslow’s contemporaries was Marie Jahoda. According to (Lee-Duckworth, 2005, p. 632) in her book, *Current Concepts of Positive Mental Health*, Jahoda wrote that psychological well-being should be understood in its own right for the good of the person. These concepts are the basis of today’s theory of positive psychology. I chose this theory because it can be argued that racist thought can be construed as a mental-health disease. Having positive, not negative, mental health may lead to a positive mental attitude devoid of hatred and racist thoughts, speech, and actions.

The study purpose postulates that positive psychology may have a positive effect on reducing racism and racist thought. This was a valid premise since positive psychology teaches that if one were finding complete self-actualization in the pursuit of the “good life” and personal responsibility, then one would have little room for negative thoughts about others (including racist thought.) If the goal were to eradicate racist

thoughts, and ultimately prevent racial violence, encouraging young people to find happiness might be a good start.

However, racism cannot be overcome just by removing negative thoughts. Positive psychology is not the opposite of negative mental illness, Lee-Duckworth (2005). Instead, positive psychology is based on positive emotions in a unique psychological process that follows a separate “neural substrate” and serves a separate evolutionary function in people. This process requires specific thought and actions which follow a separate and distinct pattern to accomplish. According to Lee-Duckworth, civility (i.e., cooperation, friendly alliances, and loyalty) invites more positive consequences than incivility. In the same manner, positive psychology involves three kinds of happiness, though happiness is not necessarily definable, Lee-Duckworth (2005).

According to Seligman (2002) present positive emotion is a momentary sensory enjoyment happening right now. Future positive emotion is about hope, faith, and optimistic beliefs, Lee-Duckworth (2005). The concept being studied in this paper surrounds what is meant by being happy and having a good life, and will be learning the tools to lead a good life to eliminate or greatly reduce feelings of racism and racial discrimination?

Martin Seligman is one of the key theorists of positive psychology and is known for his positive psychology-based inspirational mantras such as: “Use your signature strengths and virtues in the service of something much larger than you are”, (Seligman,

2002, p.236). The key concepts of positive psychology help led to a scientific understanding of what causes happiness. The message is clear. Positive psychology is about the individual focusing on the qualities of a satisfied, happy person – namely, “humanity, temperance, and persistence”, (Seligman, 2002, p.263). In 2017 young rival gang members opened fire in Braintree’s South Shore Plaza, creating a scene of anger, fear, and sadness. This event was the antithesis of the teachings of positive psychology.

Why does this dissertation theory offer hope to address racism? Because the expectation was that a happy and satisfied person was not a malcontent and that those with a positive and happy attitude will have little room for racial hatred or violence.

American democracy was established by the Declaration of Independence and by the formulation of the Constitution. This legal philosophy was, in part, based on the thoughts of John Locke, a major theorist at that time promoting the “pursuit of happiness”, Seligman (2019). According to Seligman, (2019), John Locke wrote the pamphlet, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, which inspired Thomas Jefferson to formulate the idea of “peoples’ inalienable right to ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, Seligman (2019). This right to the pursuit of happiness is logically followed by a practical and scientific way of finding happiness, which may be better understood in the light of positive psychology and its tenets.

If one wants to examine the origins of the American concept of an individual’s right to the ‘pursuit of happiness,’ one should understand (besides Locke), Aristotle, and Epicurus. According to Adler (2016), the happiness that Aristotle described was not the

instant joy that some people often feel but overall happiness about their lives as a whole. Adler tells us that for Aristotle, a happy person cannot truly know that s/he has had a happy life until they reach life's end when they will realize if their life has been 'fulfilling' or not. Today positive psychology can provide a path to find that 'fulfilling' life.

Literature Review

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

One of the most significant positive psychology studies which exemplify key variables in this study was the mental health study of (Ho, H.C.Y., Mui, M., Wan, A., Ng, Y., Stewart, S. M., Yew, C., Lam, T.H., Chan, S.S., 2016, p.2), entitled *Happy Family Kitchen II*. This mental health study was consistent with the scope of this study, even though the methodology used was the quantitative method. Most of the writings about racism and racial violence and even the studies on positive psychology I have found have been made employing the qualitative methodology. This quantitative study of the *Happy Kitchen* sheds light on how positive psychology can be used to reduce racism and racial violence, by promoting a happy family life to those who are exposed to the danger of racist thought and the prevalence of racist violence. The theory is that a happy family is a safer family structure. What the "Happy Family" study offers is an understanding that in Western civilization positive psychology has been focused on the individual's progress, but in the Eastern tradition, the family is the focal point, (Ho, et al., 2016, p.2). This study finds that many urban families have demands on them that are in dramatic conflict, (Ho et

al., 2016, p.2). This conflict can be bad for proper family communications and family connections that are essential to a family's wellbeing, Ho et al. (2016). The research in (Ho et al., 2016, p.2) found that positive psychology can be used for more than just individual contentment.

The key concepts are “personal wellness, happiness, resiliency, positive thought, and negative thought reduction”, (Ho et. al., 2016, p.2). In studies involving both a patient population and the general public, according to (Ho et al., 2016, p.2), the use of positive psychology has helped reduce depression in people and increased incidences of optimistic thought, gratitude, and even feelings of joy. However, it must be noted that the Ho study was of Chinese families, traditionally a population that prioritized a shared harmonious family relationship over individual happiness, (Ho et al., 2016, p.2). The one potentially important result of this study will be to determine if non-Chinese participants are willing or able to place shared family values and harmony above personal happiness and joy.

Positive psychology at the family level has a major effect on individual-level subjective happiness, and mental and physical health has been improved by incorporating positive psychology at the family level, (Ho, et al., 2016, p.2). Ho believes that positive psychology has a known greater effect on society, as well as personal psychological health, but that data regarding the physical health of participants in positive psychology was limited, Ho, et al. (2016). According to (Ho et al, 2016, pp. 2-3), positive emotion regulation interventions were able to enhance mental health and subjective well-being of

participants, as well as improve some physical health aspects (e.g., reducing headaches, stomachaches, cramps, and sleep concerns as well as reducing the number of visits to medical clinics for physical ailments).

Ho finds that positive psychology employed in a Chinese family community atmosphere is a very effective way to create joy and gratitude in the participants, (Ho et al., 2016, p.3). Hopefully, such findings can be applied to Western communities, including communities of color. According to (Ho et al., 2016, p.3), positive psychology in the family setting has shown that employing this 'positive intervention' will improve the physical life of the family members. In the Ho study, this involved Chinese families who cooked and dined with family members, (Ho et al., 2016, p.3).

The Ho study focused on five basic themes: *Listening, Savoring, Gratitude, Flow* and *Joy*

Definitions

Of positive psychology studies that have been done, over half of the participants had completed a university degree, according to Giannopoulos (2011). In other studies, positive psychology has been examined involving the concepts of pleasure, engagement, and meaning. The literature as a whole shows the importance and effectiveness of positive psychology intervention to enhance well-being and a sense of happiness. The research that was the focus of this study was to determine if teaching positive psychology to college students was an effective, non-controversial method to decrease racism and potentially, racially-based violence.

My proposed synthesized lens has elements of both CRT and Positive Psychology. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), CRT contains six specific elements:

The first element states that white society's traditional reaction to minorities in America, including Black Americans, was inherently racist and therefore ill-treatment.

Another element was "white over color" which means in every aspect of life (business, education, housing, etc.), whites in America prevail over those of color and other minorities.

The third element of the lens was "social construction", where society sees people based on their color, hairstyle, and physical build, and then names them with derogatory language to classify them as inferiors in our society.

The fourth element of the racial part of the lens was called "differential racism", where one minority in one type of job was favored over another separate minority. An example of this (cited above) would be the preference for hiring migrant Mexicans in California's agriculture industry over Asians.

The fifth element was the "intersectionality" of racism, where a person could simultaneously be part of one discriminated racial group and yet part of another socially accepted group, such as a "Black Catholic"

Finally, the sixth element of the racial lens was the white "story" line about people of that particular racial group.

The lens of positive psychology was that people can learn to accept diversity and can feel good about it.

I propose that the synthesized positive psychology lens of wisdom, knowledge, love of learning, judgment, social intelligence, courage, valor, integrity, kindness, loving, justice, fairness, leadership, self-control, prudence, humility, appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, spirituality, humor, and zest, offers a roadmap for helping society overcome its inherent ill-treatment of minorities, Seligman (2002). Such a combined lens offers hope for mankind's happiness and love and social intelligence and, it was proposed, will combat and overcome negative racist thoughts, actions, and racial violence. For example, if positive psychology were taught to individuals in the judicial system, including law enforcement, I propose that there would be fewer instances of police brutality, including shootings, of people of color, because of the concept of "guilty because of color" would be eradicated.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine if positive psychology can be employed in college and university education to reduce racism and racial violence. In this chapter I address the research design and rationale, my role as researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions for this study are quite clear and focused. I am developing my survey instrument. As far as positive psychology was concerned, there are no published instruments that study that area, though there are seminars concerning positive psychology. I will develop my survey instruments from these. The instruments will be appropriate for the current study. If modifications were needed, they were made at the end of the first survey iteration as issues arise.

This was an original study about the synergy of CRT and Positive Psychology used as an educational platform to reduce racism. There are no completely appropriate studies to base this study on, so I will develop my platform. I believe that the study group will have little to no difficulties with understanding the scientific terminologies that I will employ because they will all be students of higher learning. However, I plan to answer any questions and define each term before the students begin their survey to ensure each participant clearly understands each question.

It was strategically important to do this sort of qualitative research first because then one has a framework on which to build that does not come from one's own biases. Instead, it comes from the research data collected from open-ended questions, which are answered by the research participants. This ensures that the data collected was not tainted by one's own bias but was fresh data gathered from the public, or in this case from college and university students.

The purpose of this study was to determine with the qualitative method, what are the leading causes of racism and racial violence, as determined by Boston-based public university students, as well as determining if a potential method of reducing or eliminating the racial violence and racism was possible by employing the principles of positive psychology. Racism is a group of negative thoughts, concepts, actions, and violent trends by one race towards another. Minorities experience & express racism as well as members of the cultural elite. Racism, at its root, is a mechanism whereby one race will maintain power and control and bolster their "collective ego" over all the other minorities in their society by using the cultural and physical differences of other races to denigrate and discriminate against them. I propose that, for racism to be addressed and reduced, elements of positive psychology should ultimately be used not only by the perpetrators but also the victims of racism. Positive thinking allows a society to find a real way to overcome the damage of racial speech, thoughts, actions, and violence. For example, Nelson Mandela, of South Africa, overcame apartheid by adopting a system of reconciliation between whites and Blacks in his country, Seligman (2019).

Racism in America is no longer just a matter between whites and Blacks. America now has a more diverse population, and racism can be found in many different ethnic and racial backgrounds, for example, between Christians and Muslims or between Black, Asian, and Hispanic street gangs. Boston colleges and universities contain students spanning the globe and contain individuals from virtually every ethnicity and background. It is very human for one to accept the familiar and to reject the unfamiliar. One could make the hypothesis that racism is, unfortunately, a very human foible where cultures accept themselves because they are familiar with their looks, morals, and mores; they immediately reject the looks, morals, and mores of other dissimilar cultures.

To create harmony in our society and to strengthen thought and creativity in our understanding of the different sciences and arts, tolerance of diversity is necessary not only in our society but also in Boston's universities

The idea of equality for all mankind is enshrined in the American Constitution. Enculturated racism, which attacks such equality, is a bane to having a successful, productive, and happy society. The purpose of this dissertation was to provide a potential option, if not a solution, to racist speech and thought and actions. The first goal was to offer positive tools (in the form of positive psychology) to college students to help them address and overcome the effects and actions of enculturated racism. The second goal was the expectation that these enlightened students will return to their communities and workplaces and help overcome racism there. Finally, it was hoped that the positive theories of positive psychology would be taught to individuals who once perpetrated acts

and thoughts of racism so they can learn to overcome their incorrect thinking and actions and become redeemed, reformed members of society. The potential for a peaceful society is only overshadowed by the violence found in societies where racism and racist violence abound.

The research traditions implemented will be the older research tradition CRT from the 1960s. The younger research, from the 1970s used, will be positive psychology theory. Does the question now become what educational public policy can be developed that will positively deal with issues of racism and issues of finding racial harmony? Introducing positive psychology and its use and teachings into Boston-based institutions of higher education may be part of the answer. Today, in a diverse city with a diverse student body, it is crucial that Boston addresses the issues of racism, bullying, and racial violence and finds a way to achieve racial tolerance and understanding using positive means.

Role of the Researcher

For the qualitative study, 40 random college students from this cohort will be recruited for the interview. This was the minimum amount necessary for a qualitative study, according to Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013). I will serve as the researcher, and my subjects will be randomly selected students currently enrolled in a Boston-area public university.

No issues arose which would necessitate any revelations of personal or professional relationships with participants, (nor with any instructor or supervisor in the

institution.) Any such relationship could be construed as involving “power” over participants. This was not likely because I have no academic power over the participants, nor will I have any personal or professional relationship with the students at the institution where I will be seeking participants for this study. As the dissertation author, it was my exclusive role to be the observer and as such, will only seek to define the meaning of survey terms to participants as necessary. However, as the author of the dissertation, I do not wish to add my bias to this information.

Under Issues of Trustworthiness later in this chapter, I addressed any insights that I have about personal or professional relations that I may identify before I select my cohort. I will be objective and passive during the research and will ensure that there will be not even a hint of superiority on my part as the interviewer. The best research is performed with abject humility.

A major ethical concern was the confidentiality of the individual participants in the study. The expectation was that to encourage participants to provide truthful whole answers to the qualitative survey, the participants must receive guarantees that their responses are 100% confidential. I will not be doing a study based on my work environment, though I may choose to receive guidance from a focus group, first held with the same age group as in my study, through my work environment. Furthermore, the question of incentives to participate was relevant. Innocuous incentives are acceptable and ethical. Some incentives rise to the level of being unethical as “undue influence not of coercion but a corruption of judgment”, (Grant & Sugarman, 2004, pp.717-718). I plan

to use minimal incentives to participate in the study, including free pens, a free calculator, or perhaps a small-denomination gift card—items that can be considered valuable to a student but not ethically excessive or manipulative.

Grant and Sugarman (2004) question when was it ethical to offer an incentive for a participant to stay with the research? The advantage here in this study was that I will seek to interview the subject and then have them answer the qualitative questions. I do not anticipate a need to re-interview the subjects, nor to contact them later to do a second study. However, if necessary, I will make adjustments to my study protocol to schedule follow-up interviews as needed. Therefore, because I do not anticipate having to keep the students available for follow-up studies, I do not believe I will have to offer them more valuable incentives that could potentially be construed as unethical. My particular research study will be done exclusively with voluntary participation. There will be no grade advantage to college or university students taking this survey.

The role of the researcher was to be an observer in the research and possibly an observer-participant during the time that the open-ended qualitative analysis of the subject was being studied. As the sole researcher, I will primarily be an observer, not an observer/participant. I am not an instructor, donor, or affiliated in any way with the institution I select. Therefore, I will have no power relationship over any of the students/participants and cannot add any bias to my research as such. To eliminate any other areas of researcher bias, I plan on giving minimal assistance to the student/participants (besides general clarification of terms and concepts) so that their

opinions, choices, and information are as pure as possible. The use of incentives may help enroll sufficient students, who will reply with interest and careful attention. With the IRB review, I hope that giving an incentive like a high-quality pen or a good calculator would be acceptable.

According to Xu and Storr (2012), qualitative research was not inferior to quantitative research and does not necessarily follow the same rules (as quantitative research.) Instead, qualitative research helps to eliminate the prejudices of certain types of evidence, Xu and Storr (2012). The role of the qualitative researcher was to free or unblock what was evidence and to redefine what was and will now become evidence. The role of the researcher was to become the true instrument of qualitative research. A researcher in a qualitative study such as this one must take the time to realize that the more experienced the researcher was, the better the quality of the data obtained, Xu and Storr (2012). An experienced researcher was one of the keys to having the highest quality data and providing the best evidence from which the most accurate conclusions can be drawn. Just as strong and irrefutable evidence was important to an attorney or judge, so here the evidence was important to the researcher and writer of this dissertation. Practical evidence originating from the actual experiences of the participants was highly valued and much sought after by researchers, (Xu and Storr, 2012, pp. 5-6). Xu and Storr (2012) also tell us that the researcher's ideology and values will likely affect how evidence was constructed. The gathering of data and constructing evidence from it, which was the role of the ethical researcher, may cause the researcher to have some legitimate concerns. For

instance, beginning researchers questioned whether it was ethical to publicly observe their potential participants without the participants' prior knowledge. Some researchers believed that this might be deceitful while others did not believe such covert observation to be unethical, (Xu and Storr, 2012, p. 6).

Some researchers would consider covert research to be less biased, considering that the participants were acting naturally and were not trying to shield their actions and responses from observation. The truth of this matter lies somewhere in between. Having taken a course in a Boston area public university, regarding multicultural relations, the class assisted me in understanding the needs of a diverse population. Only then should the actual qualitative survey question(s) be asked developing a meaningful survey. My personal biases may be affected by the racial violence that I witness on U.S. news programs. I feel that other races feel frustrated economically and socially, but at times so do members of my race. In some cases, racial minorities being unsatisfied at not being hired or promoted in companies, sometimes immediately claim discrimination based on their race. Violence only creates further problems. When a person fails to respond positively to lawful orders and instead chooses to run from those orders, this can lead to a bad or even to a violent outcome. Those are my personal biases, but I will seek to overcome any bias and look for total objectivity. One way to keep my bias out was to not having me interpret what participants mean by their statements. One overcomes bias by asking people with different life experiences including different cultures how they feel about home life, work life, and how the world in general and in specific treats them. A

better understanding of the views of others helps one identify and eliminate biases once closely held to the research. Like any researcher, when bias was presented to the researcher we have to see if it does indeed exist and then address it, by changing one's mind about what that bias was and where did it come from.

The next consideration was the power that a researcher may have over the participants. Here the participants are students in a Boston university, and, as stated above, I don't believe my role will involve any teacher/researcher or student relationship. The researcher in this study will not have power over the participants to enforce participation. The only possible power relationship issue that could arise would be if a teacher/professor of any of the subject students decides to influence the student directly. This can be avoided by asking the instructors to not force the students to participate, to insist that this was a 100% volunteer situation, that the participants may decline at any stage of the interview and survey, that they may not participate if so desired, and to assert that at all times they are to remain anonymous.

The biases and power relations are managed by self-realization by the researcher of his feelings and values and their effects on the survey instrument in this research. According to *The Five Forms of Teacher Power* (2015), the teacher and student need power, so they will have a feeling of control over their destiny. This was important for the researcher and the participant as well. Both must believe that they have control over their destinies and are making the right decisions.

Teacher power was the right of the teacher to ask students to do something, *Five Forms* (2015). Here in this study, the researcher has the researcher power to ask the participants to be honest about their feelings about race and their actions towards others, especially those of other races as they respond to the survey questions. To maintain objectivity, any emotional ties to study participants should be limited. The researcher should have a positive relationship with the participant, but it should be one of respect and honesty so that the results are accurate and true. Likeability was important for participant cooperation, but it was more important that honest answers are given to the researcher. Reward power must also be considered and controlled. The researcher should limit the amount of reward given to the participant in order not to unduly influence in any direction the responses of the participant. This was how the survey and interview will properly manage power relationships.

To avoid conflict of interest, this study will not include anything related to my place of work. Not only will I not involve any of my employees but I will also not conduct any research at my office. I am an attorney, and it would be inappropriate to involve any research in my office because of client confidentiality. All interviews will be held at the selected university. I do not believe that incentives will need to be used, but just to make sure that there are participants, I will be prepared to provide a small item upon completion as a thank you gift, if the review board feels that this was acceptable.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population that is being studied was the diverse student body (aged 18-65) of a Boston-based public institution of higher learning. The sole incentive here was the presumption that the participant, by agreeing to participate in the study, wishes to be part of a scientific study seeking to advance social justice and will ultimately receive the intrinsic reward of self-satisfaction for their good works.

I have chosen to complete this qualitative study in Boston (not only because it is my hometown) but also because Michael Curry, the current president of the Boston chapter of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), made this statement that Boston-based racism: “is the elephant in the room that none of us wants to talk about”, Johnson (2013).

Furthermore, due to Boston’s importance in the shaping of America during its war for independence. It was one of the major cities of the world, certainly world-class in terms of education and innovation; however, as with all urban centers, it has had its problems social unrest, racism, and economic segregation. It was important, therefore to both learn how Boston society has attempted to overcome racism in its past as well as to measure the current conditions of racism in the Boston area. Groups of minorities concentrate in areas of Greater Boston and live in economically challenged areas. According to Johnson (2013) Mayoral candidates John R. Connolly and Martin J. Walsh, (the most recent former mayor of Boston) each mentioned the topic of racism in Boston

twice in their campaigns. According to Johnson, some Bostonians took this fact to heart, and others recoiled at it being mentioned. Former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, now deceased, proclaimed his greatest achievement was healing Boston's festering racial wounds. This was an exaggeration since, according to Johnson, issues of racism are still in play in Boston.

I will select my research population using Researcher Bias Management, Justification of the Use of Incentives, Methodology, Identification of the Population, Identification, and Justification of the Sampling Strategy, which was the purposeful sampling strategy, Edmonds (2011), as my criteria. I will follow subsections on how the actual participants are known to meet such criteria as well as the number of participants that have been selected and the reason for that number. The specific procedure for participant identification, contact, and recruitment, will also be discussed later in this chapter, along with the discussion concerning the relationship between saturation and sample size.

In the world of increasing impersonality and reliance on analytical computer servers, there still was a very strong argument for the employment of humans to be the research instrument. (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, and Cheraghi, 2014, p. 2) state that human researchers are more effective observers and analysts of human behavior than computers or analytic instruments can ever be. For instance, a human researcher reacts quicker than a computer to the environment surrounding it (Sanjari et al., 2014, p. 2). The human researcher also has a greater ability to absorb and react to the

environment. Albert Einstein, for instance, did research by daydreaming and making what he termed “thought experiments” to allow insights that other non-human instruments cannot easily develop, (Kennefick, 2005, p. 43). The human researcher becomes the instrument of choice because a human can quickly draw upon many experiences and memories, which are forms of prior data, and then analyze any new data against past understanding, (Sanjari et al. 2014, p. 2). According to Sanjari et al. (2014), not only can a human’s research see the whole forest, but they can also take that evidence and draw conclusions. This allows a human to process new data quicker and give instant decisions based on what the human researcher has learned.

By having open-ended questions, one can learn as a researcher what exactly the current research participants are thinking regarding issues of racism and racist violence. An understanding of those “drivers” can then lead to a more accurate and effective survey and analysis of the qualitative data.

My goal was to recruit 40 participant students of all races and ethnicities, which I don’t believe will present a problem because Boston universities are populated by students from all over the world. One recruiting requirement was that potential participants must have some sort of an understanding of current race relations and are willing to discuss them. In this way, bias can be eliminated since they will understand the issues of racism on an experiential level. Ultimately, I expect to hold 40 in-depth interviews. I theorize that I will be able to survey a good cross-section of students and document their views concerning my premise that teaching positive psychology in

college courses may be an effective tool to reduce racism in college/university level environments.

Though this was not a statistic directly about racial violence, it should be noted that although African-Americans constituted only about 13% of the entire population of the United States of America, they accounted for 24% of all hospital patients being treated for injuries from violent episodes, BJS (1997). Approximately 70% of the violence was perpetrated by spouses, ex-spouses, current or ex-boyfriends or girlfriends, relatives, friends, or acquaintances. That leaves 30% of the remaining violent injuries caused by non-recorded parties, which may include those involved in racial violence, BJS (1997). Males were involved in most cases of violence where the parties did not know each other, BJS (1997) My sample will reflect this trend by having at least 30 male subjects, and the remaining would be at least ten women.

There are many different ways to sample the population to determine if someone has experienced racism or racial violence. One can ask a screening question such as, “Have you ever been involved in an incident involving racial violence or related to someone involved in such violence?” Such a question would lead to what was called “purposeful sampling”, Edmonds (2011). According to Edmonds, purposeful sampling is the art of picking the right situations or participants that have a lot of relevant information following and support the purpose of the particular study being performed.

Since this study will be conducted at a public university or college site, I will have some contact with the participants and will observe them for a prolonged period before

interviewing them for selection. I intend that by watching the students' interactions beforehand, I will be able to find a random sample of unbiased participants who will provide honest and straightforward answers. Honesty and candor are the main criteria for choosing who will be the participants in this qualitative survey, Edmonds (2011).

The number of participants will be 40, just above the minimum of 30 interviews required for a qualitative research sample, per Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013). The rationale for arriving at that number is that I have selected to use the "Purposeful Random Sampling," (PRS) method. According to Patton (2001) PRS entails realizing that the potential purposeful sample was much larger than what one researcher can correctly handle. The entire student population sample in Greater Boston is over 150,000. To gain credibility, I will follow PRS standards and employ a small sample size from this huge population. For example, 40 interviews with consenting students would be within the usual range of study, and these subjects would be chosen randomly and without regard to what the outcome would be.

Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) claim that sample size does matter in qualitative research. Furthermore, according to Francis et al. (2010), in semi-structured interviews, the analysis leads to an understanding that data saturation occurs when no new theories or related concepts arrive from the last interviewees. Qualitative research was interested much more in the meaning of the results than in the frequency of responses.

Data saturation occurs at a sample interview size of 30, (Marshall et al., 2013, p.13), and approximately 80% of all qualitative studies done have under 40 interviews, (Marshall et al., 2013, p. 17). According to (Francis, et al., 2010, p.1230), the sample number was very important considering that too large a sample size raises ethical concerns of exposing too many participants to unnecessary questioning, while too small a size raises not only ethical concerns but also calls into question the qualitative scientific issue if enough data has been adequately gained to make a meaningful understanding of the data. According to (Francis et al., 2010, p. 1230), there was no agreement about exactly when enough data has been reached to be effective in qualitative research. Francis et al., p.1229) propose a new method of determining when data saturation has occurred beyond existing normative or normal behavior when theory-based interviews exist. Briefly, this fairly new method of determining when data saturation has occurred was based upon Francis et al.'s study on data saturation in what is called "theory-based interview studies" which suggests that this newer way to determine data saturation may apply to other types of studies such as this dissertation study.

Francis et al. (2010) demonstrate the newer idea of sample saturation by having two different studies examined. In the first study, they employ the theory of "planned behavior," and this was developed to identify the three belief categories, which are "behavioral, normative, and control", (Francis et al., 2010, p. 1229). An initial sample of 10 participants was employed with a stopping criterion of three. A stopping criterion was

the number of participants the study will allow that have no newer ideas than what the initial sample participants were providing, (Francis et al., 2010, pp. 1229-1231).

The concept of saturation was very important in the determination of the proper sample size, Mason (2010). From the Mason peer-reviewed journal article, 560 dissertation studies were identified from theses.com. In that study, Mason's results showed that the mean sample size was 31, and this was with a non-random distribution.

The participants that have been chosen in this study are currently enrolled college students who indicate some understanding of current racial events and concepts and who express a willingness to participate in this study honestly and completely. There will be a stopping criterion of 10 participants. If the sample exhibit no further new ideas, the sample size will lock in at a total of 40 participants. These 40 participants will be contacted originally when they sit in their class for the first or second day of classes. This way, they will not be burdened with excessive college-level work and will have time to answer the survey questions.

Instrumentation

Since this was an original project involving the study of racism and racial violence and attempting to influence educational public policy to address it, one must first learn what was driving racism and racial violence before attempting to address such endeavors successfully. By using both qualitative data and data analysis methods, one can gain the most profitable return on time invested in finding the information. Both methods offer information in different areas of insight. Qualitative data and analysis allow a

predictive model to be formulated which may be accomplished in a later study; but in the case of new and original research, one must consider if it was not wiser to first employ the qualitative method, where one interviews and observes different participants first, to learn what those potential qualitative coded drivers will likely be.

Most of the data presented in this dissertation will be collected from researcher-developed instrumentation I devise which will provide a basis for instrument development, with literature sources, and pilot studies.

The instrumentation methods I will employ are an observation sheet and interview protocol. I will witness the surveys being completed and then conduct an interview based on the survey responses. I will ask the participants to explain their views on racism, racial violence and their views of positive psychology tenets and principles, and whether or not they feel these principles will be an effective method to reduce racism and racial violence.

Yusuf, Q., Asyik, A. G., Yusuf, Y. Q., and Rusdi, L. (2017) found that a successful qualitative study could be held with as few as one participant with the researcher using an observation sheet and interview questions. As part of my research, each participant will first receive the research questions and then be interviewed about his or her responses.

To be unbiased the criterion for selecting the participants was to open up the participant pool to any UMASS state university student who was willing to express their opinions and experience with racism. The hope was that the participants will have some

basic understanding of psychology principles (but this was not a requirement as I plan to offer explanations of all terms before the study begins.) I expect that their consideration that “positive psychology” will be a potential help or even solution to racism will be finally determined.

I will employ random sampling, including asking participants to their friends to participate. This could possibly be considered “snowball” sampling. Snowball sampling, sometimes referred to as “chain referral sampling,” was a method that improves the recruitment of participants and was very popular in many studies. According to (Marcus, 2017, p.636), who believes that asking participants to recruit others to a study has a positive, beneficial effect on data collection, As the researcher, I would not be directly recruiting these other “snowball” participants. This would reduce any bias for gathering public university student participants in this study.

Purposeful sampling was used in “qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest”, Palinkas (2015). Purposeful random sampling will be employed for this study since it allows a random sample of public college and university students to be obtained. To maintain randomness, numbers could be given to study volunteers, and then I will draw 40 ticket numbers. That way, the choice was random, and this would work well with purposeful sampling.

This sampling strategy was justified since it was the goal of this study to determine, without bias, what the actual experiences and thoughts are of Boston-based

public university students. I might find it difficult to recruit the entire 40 students independently, so employing a “snowball” method will not only assist with recruitment but also widen the search. It will allow me to recruit a more diverse population which will provide a more accurate understanding of what student thoughts are concerning racism and racial violence.

To be manageable, 40 in-depth student surveys will be given on a Massachusetts public university campus. The study by Marshall, et al. (2013) helped me determine that 40 survey participants would result in a good sound study. Potential participants will be enrolled in a Boston-based public university. They will be recruited on-campus and vetted to determine their sincerity in helping with this study. To comply with IRR and URB rules, before the study begins, each participant will be asked for their age and gender and be informed in writing that they must be 18 or older to participate. Once I have ascertained that all participants are over 18, age will not be analyzed nor be a determinant. Despite their age, all participants will be equally treated and surveyed.

The base number of interviews will be 40; however, if a response to this survey was found to be popular, there was room to interview up to 100 students. The minimum number of 40 and the maximum number of 100 interviews allow for a fair bell curve of responses can be properly developed. Participants will be contacted on public university campuses in the Boston area.

As already mentioned, according to Fusch and Ness (2015), data saturation can happen with as few as “six interviews.” I have decided that I will conduct at least 40

interviews. I believe that this number of interviews should lead to data saturation and provide a good idea of the effects of racism and racial violence on the Boston public university students as well as the participants' views regarding positive psychology as a potential answer to reducing racism and racist thought.

According to Mason (2010) saturation may be found quicker when the researcher was more experienced in surveying the participant. An experienced researcher knows how to better research the effect of keywords and concepts with his/her participant and understands the deeper context of the words the participants use. This study was novel, and I will be creating my instrumentation tools. Although I would not qualify as an "experienced" researcher, I feel confident that I will be able to collect the data and analyze the information appropriately.

The sufficiency of the data will be derived from the questions I have developed to help participants answer the following two research questions:

The first research question has to do with the causes of racism and racial violence. To obtain sufficient data from the respondents, I have devised a series of seven survey questions in survey format that can be found in Appendix A. To comply with IRR and URB rules, before the participants commence, they should be asked for their age (Note: to participate you must be 18 or older.) and their gender.

The second research question relates to the participants' understanding of positive psychology. To obtain sufficient data from the respondents (noting that this was novel

research and more detail was necessary to find answers to the research gap), I have devised a 20- survey questionnaire (which can be found in Appendix B),

There are a number of ways I plan to collect valuable data in this study. First, a survey of the participants will be made to identify relevant concepts and themes involved with racism, racist violence, and positive psychology. I will use an observation sheet to collect and record valuable data. The observation sheet can include the tally of the number of participants that act one way towards racism, for instance, and those participants who react another way. This can include a frequency percentage from that primary data. Primary data will be obtained from the participants' answers to the questions found in the Appendices.

Having an interview and focus group in the study will help examine current data. Focus group protocols are a little different. (Kohli, 2014, p. 367) studied a focus group with four Black participants, four Latina participants, and four Asian participants who were enrolled in a social justice education program in California. All participants were educators in the state of California. The assumption that Kohli likely has made was that these are the primary minority groups in California. Kohli assumes that whites are all one group and that they are in the majority, (which may not be true now even if it were true in prior decades and prior generations.). It was more likely now that there was no one clear majority group across America, though the Caucasian group is still seen to be in power.

Kohli's study developed data that showed that the participants had experienced real racism in their lives as well as having "internalized" that racism in their K through 12

educations before becoming educators themselves. The teacher participants in the Kohli study claimed, at the time of the study, that they had done the work to reduce or eliminate the effects of racism in their lives and the hurt which it had caused within them”, Kohli (2014). The participants in the Kohli study also believed that it was important to have dialogues with other teachers during their teacher-prep times to ensure that the lessons they all develop to teach would confront racial inequalities in the classroom. In this study, a participant revealed the following example of experienced subtle racism in the form of racist thought. According to (Kohli, 2014, p.367), this participant claimed they experienced racism when some of their students would say, “You’re a cool Black person.” The participant felt this implied that because the educator spoke “like a white person”, the educator was accepted by the students. The educator also felt this comment suggested the students felt that other Blacks in school were not “cool” and not “acceptable.”

Archived data also has its place in qualitative research. There was not much existing archived data regarding the factors influencing racial violence and racist behavior. One reason was that most of the current research that has been accomplished has used the qualitative method of reporting about racism and racial violence, and individual explicit mathematical variables have not so far been developed.

Alsaikh, Ramzan, Rawaf, and Majeed (2014) mention that the use of social network studies was becoming much more popular, especially among a younger participant pool, which was compatible with the target population of this study was

proposed. Facebook was now being considered for health research and might be a suitable location for a study on racial violence, considering that topic's relationship with human health care. In the Alsaikh et al. (2014) study, the results were sent to the ENDNOTE database and were recorded on it along with the inclusion and exclusion processes (i.e., what data was included in the results and what data was excluded and why.). The selection criteria, according to Alsaikh et al. (2014), was based on an intervention using Facebook, or other similar social media networks, as a way to collect data and not make a social intervention. The time and place of the study were included in the search strategy, Alsaikh et al. (2014). Alsaikh et al. (2014) also mention that in their study, the study participants could include healthcare patients and/or members of the community. This study will recruit participants currently enrolled in a Boston-based public university or college who are members, at least for this study, of the Boston area community.

The sufficiency of this data collection method, which in part uses social media, Alsaikh et al. (2014), will include the following proper outcomes categories: "response rate, completeness, missing data, timeliness, cost and perception of privacy and anonymity." The reason why my primary method of data collection will be in-person surveys was that Alsaikh et al. found that only 10 studies (of thousands of other qualitative studies) employed the use of social media in studies conducted in 2013. Nevertheless, regarding data sufficiency in answering the research questions, one must consider the response rate, the completion time of responses, the dropout rate, and the

cost to the researcher, if not to the participant, who must set aside precious time to complete the survey.

Published Data Collection Instruments

Developed Theories

The key theory was the study of CRT and the potential to reduce the problem of racism and racial violence by teaching positive psychology in the college classroom. Positive psychology seeks to allow the individual to find satisfaction, if not happiness.

Another related theory to positive psychology and the pursuit of reducing racist violence can be found ostensibly in what was referred to as being the “Divine Command” theory of happiness (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiUscM9hw3c>), Pecorino (2009). As the Hebrews believed many thousands of years ago, God is the Supreme Being, who in His very nature is good, and His very essence is moral. Therefore, being in commune with the Almighty is an act of ultimate morality. The Divine Command theory holds that to find satisfaction and happiness, one needs to live by the commands and rules set down by God (Genesis 6: 1-22, the One-year NIV Bible, 1995).

How did this then integrate into the dissertation? One may ask how a nation or, indeed, a society can overcome the terrible “sins” of racism and racist violence. For instance, Christianity teaches that Jesus is love and compassion, so how can people call themselves true Christians yet harbor racial hatred in their hearts? To find a solution to racism and racial violence, one must not only understand and employ CRT, but one must

also integrate the theory of positive psychology as part of divine command theory”, Holt (2008).

Some questions need to be answered related to the published data. Not much data has been published involving racism, racial violence, and combatting racial violence with positive psychology. However, there are certain studies available that qualitatively measure racism and racial violence.

Franz Boas, an anthropologist who studied racial issues and racial violence, also studied and published data about racism, Davidson (2010). Boas, according to Davidson, collected mountains of published data, analyzed it and made a theory from it, showing that there was no factual racial superiority, including the Nazi German or Nazi Italian ethnicity idea that a superior race has larger brain size. Boas researched races and ethnicities, including Italians, and showed that once living in America, the brain size of all the racial subjects studied did not stay the same as anyone size, Davidson (2010). In the proposed dissertation, there will not be much published data, if any, so content validity and context, and cultural issues will not need to be addressed here. Boas may have some bias in his collected data, because he was Jewish, according to Davidson, and was determined to prove that there was no “superior race,” and that distinct genes did not attribute a larger brain or skull cavity size to one race over another.

If one turns to racism and racist violence-related medical study, one can then see the efficacy of using this purposeful social-media method. (Choiniere, MacDonnell, Campbell, and Smele, 2014, p. 42) used the internet to perform a study on racialized

violence against nurses. To use social media to acquire study-group samples, they first required a board of ethics approval. Then purposive invitations were issued on the internet, through nursing organizations, and to interest groups. Choiniere et al. (2014) received informed consent from each participant. I will obtain a similar informed consent as a requirement from each participant before this study begins.

In both the Choiniere et al. (2014) study and this study, semi-structured interview questions will be used. The questions in this dissertation included, “When have you directly experienced racism in the college or university campus?”, as well as, “Have you ever been a victim of racial violence?” Other questions, such as “Have you ever participated in any form of racial violence?” may be a more difficult topic to broach. However, this survey is not intended to upset the participants but only desires to have them share their experiences and to offer insight in how best to deal with the issues of racism and racial violence, (Choiniere, et al., 2014, p. 48).

Questions such as “Would teaching positive thinking about others, such as in a positive psychology course, be helpful in your opinion for reducing the feelings of racism?” would offer insight and data to support this theory. In the Choiniere et al. study, they found that economic subjugation of the third world by the first world is held to be the cause for the structural racialized violence against nurses, Choiniere et al. (2014). Such economic subjugation leads to negative stereotypes and thinking by certain people, which ultimately translates into racist thought and racial violence. The purpose of this study desires to seek an answer to curb such negative thinking.

This method was justified since it will ask the necessary questions to answer the main research question of this dissertation. The purpose of this study was to prove a theory—namely, that teaching positive psychology in public university classes might be an important way to reduce racial violence and racism in society. The scope of this dissertation study was not to interview the entire population of the public university and college students around Boston. Therefore, this study must build a “testable research hypothesis”, Evans and Rooney (2013). The “testable research hypothesis” of this study was to determine if teaching positive psychology to public university students will have a real effect on reducing racism and racial violence.

According to Zaza et al., (2000), there was a systematic review of evidence regarding the effectiveness of preventative services in an urban community. In (Zaza et al., 2000, p. 44), they looked at both the positive and negative effects of interventions with the community as well as the effectiveness of the information gathered, the economic conditions, and the barriers to the intervention, (Zaza et al., 2000, p. 44). This was similar to this dissertation study, which involves economic factors, as well as barriers to interventions, and the study of the effectiveness of the treatment of the participants. (Zaza et al., 2000, p. 44) looked at the identification of interventions and their outcomes as well as what criteria or rules would be put in place for analysis of the studies and evaluated the quality and content of the studies being performed. The behavior in this study would be how to control violent urges with positive psychology and to study how effective that method would be. The types of interventions are limited in the study, which

was being proposed. For instance, we are looking at the effect of public policy on education and the implementation of positive psychology courses in the public university arena. The (Zaza et al., 2000, p. 45) study had a much broader scope with interventions that included education, environmental changes, policy development, and comparative studies of similar designs. According to Zaza, comparative study designs included experimental designs with historical control groups. In this study, the control group will be approximately 15 participants reflecting upon their experiences in school and public life. Their responses may be different from the approximately 15 participants in the experimental group who first considered how positive psychology taught in university courses could change the effects of thinking on racism and racist violence

Researcher-Developed Instruments

Since there have been no other known studies exploring racism, CRT, and the use of the tenets of positive psychology, I will design and implement my instruments for data collection.

One can examine the total number of study participants who have experienced racism and then look at how many came across a less “virulent” form of racism and those who instead were injured by severe discrimination ranging from insults to physically and psychologically damaging and violent racism. The relationship between saturation and sample size was simple. First, saturation in regards to qualitative research is interpreted as meaning, according to Saunders, Sim, and Kingstone (2018), ‘that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist (researcher) can develop properties of the

category.” As a researcher sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically more confident that a category is saturated.’ This shows the maximum amount of possible data that could be expected under the circumstances. How does the sample size then affect saturation? Morse (1994), concerning ethnography, believes 30-50 interviews are the best sample size for a qualitative study. For this reason, I have chosen the middle number, which is 40 interviews.

The instrument which has been chosen for this research is the personal interviewer as an observer who will ask about 40 questions to the individual participants and record their answers. This could be in conjunction with a survey instrument that was in a similar question format that the participant could answer in a survey/quiz sort of environment.

To determine the best form of the survey instrument, one must, according to (Zaza et al., 2000, p. 45), track the articles reviewed, develop tables of evidence, and classify the important highlights of the intervention and evaluations of the intervention. Zaza et al. tells us that one must be concerned with the proper assessment of the quality of the study’s findings. Reviewers will examine and document any threats to the validity of the study from faulty execution or poor measurement, (Zaza et al., 2000, p. 45). Here, Zaza et al. looks to the identification of other information, including the interventions’ application to other populations, in this case, to racism and racial violence experienced outside of Boston.

Content validity in this researcher-developed instrument will be found by comparing the observed score, which was the “true score,” plus the error, Kimberlin, Almut and Winterstein (2008).

In this proposed research, the iterative process has been centered on CRT, racism, racist violence, and racist statements, as well as positive psychology. Google Scholar has been used as well as census.gov, which was the United States Census website. Most of the searches that were completed were through the EBSCO database of peer-reviewed journal articles.

Each iteration of the search of those keywords such as racism, violence, psychology, and CRT developed some interesting research studies which may have influenced the scope of the dissertation. For instance, the use of those keywords led to the examination of an article by (Grinage, 2014, p. 88) to include other keywords, such as whiteness, social control, and political power through violence. Other keywords now include colonization and racialization, as well as socialization.

One of the reasons why this dissertation study was relevant and important is because this study seeks to understand why, more than 50 years after the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, is America still experiencing deeply entrenched institutional racism. Yes, we have seen positive changes in hiring, housing, education, and economic opportunities for communities of color, but our American society still suffers the ill effects from racism and racial violence, as seen in Ferguson and Baltimore, as well as in other American cities and communities.

There may be little research done regarding the use of positive psychology in classrooms in public colleges and universities. However, by understanding what positive psychology has to offer, even if it does not offer a complete solution, then one, at least, has a starting point about finding what the cure to racism and racial violence is. There are studies individually regarding positive psychology and other studies and dissertations on racism and racial violence. However, this study of racism, racial violence (as defined by CRT), and the potential to use the teachings of positive psychology to mitigate racism is unique.

Procedures for the Pilot Study

Because of the relative scarcity of published data on racism and racial violence and the causes and potential cures for it, I must develop other sources of data collection other than from just relevant literature sources. Noting this, one instrument that will be pursued was a pilot study. According to Marmer et al. (2011), a pilot study can be used to launch the full and comprehensive longitudinal case study. In Marmer et al.'s research, the researchers were looking to explain the relationship between the views of Africa, as found in German textbooks, and German racism. Germany has exhibited racism, especially during the WWII period. Marmer et al. wanted to determine if one potential source of this racism was through racist teaching in these biased textbooks.

Many full studies, such as the Marmer et al. longitudinal case study, can occur over some years, if not decades, as they follow the sample through the different stages in the participants' lives. Interestingly, in the Marmer et al. study, as the participant's age

increases, the reference to the person's color decreases. The image of Africa as being a poor, backward, suffering, and exotic place increases in importance to the older participants, Marmer et al. (2011). The study found that outdated and stereotypical images persisted in the minds of the former German students long after they studied the biased textbook materials in schools, Marmer et al. (2011).

In this study, I may find those racist ideas might also arise in my subject sample in part from classroom exposure to biased and stereotypical ideas concerning Black Americans in American textbooks. If the data support this theory, I will include follow-up questions in my survey to explore it further.

My research will not be a longitudinal dissertation study; however, it would benefit from a pilot study. The importance of the pilot study was not that it is a perfect smaller study, but in fact, that methodological errors may first be identified in the pilot study so that they can be avoided in the larger study.

The Marmer et al. (2011) study also factors in many of the prejudices leading to racism. Marmer et al. (2011) found that racist ideas and stereotypes found in textbook images can lead to racist and inaccurate thoughts, for example, that African Blacks are "lazy, wild, and needy", (Marmer et al., 2011, p. 1). This leads to further stereotypes, such as Blacks are good at sports and music but are not suited to science and mathematics (Marmer et al., 2011, p. 1).

The Marmer et al. study can be used as a guide for my pilot study because Marmer et al. informed me of other relevant research questions I may ask, such as: "Are

people being politically correct in their responses and yet covering up racist ideas,” or “Do racial stereotypes lead to racial misunderstandings, which then lead to racial violence?” The effect of the Marmer et al. study was to present a new potential theory that US students (like the German students before WWII), can develop racist ideas, which may in time develop into acts of societal racial violence, due to racial and stereotypical imagery in educational textbooks, Marmer et al. (2011). The purpose of a true pilot study would be to learn what biases, what errors and what potential causes of racism and racial violence can be found. If my data collection uncovers evidence of similar incidents in the students I survey, I will pursue this theory vigorously.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

In this section, I will provide details for the data collection technique(s) I employ for each data collection instrument and research question.

The location for my data collection will be a Boston-based university campus. I will canvas and recruit 40 currently enrolled students. I will observe and interview the students before the study and answer any questions. I propose it will take about two hours for each student to complete each survey. I will collect data, record the frequency of data collection events, record the duration of those data collection events, record the data in logbooks and make any necessary plans if recruitment ends with too few participants. As I analyze the data, I will also write down any follow-up procedures if there was a need to return for a follow-up interview.

The data will be collected in a notebook, on test sheets of paper. The participants will exit the study after each has answered the survey and interviewer-led questions in person. The participants' names and phone numbers will be collected so they can be contacted if my data analysis (or the IRB) determines that a follow-up interview must be arranged regarding the data found.

Data Analysis Plan

In this chapter I provided a data analysis plan for each type of data collected in this study, I provided a connection of data to a specific research question, the type, and procedure for coding, any software such as NVIVO, which is used for analysis and the manner and treatment of any discrepant cases. The qualitative method, according to (Creswell, 2009, p.15), employs emerging methods.

I, as the researcher, collected the data. To maintain data integrity, consistency and accuracy in all aspects of data collection was crucial. I plan to have each of the 40 subjects I recruit spend about two hours completing the in-person and written interview data collection process. This data collection will be held in a Boston-based public university environment. I expect it will take around 20 business days to a full month to complete this data collection.

Data was recorded both in a notebook that was designed for my observations concerning the emotions and body language of those voluntarily participating in this study. For the survey section of the study, written questions were on a typed sheet, and

the participants will write their answers in a flowing format. While they were answering these written questions, I notated how they respond to the questions.

Since the study was over a month in its data collection period, the follow-up plan for having recruitment problems will be solved by just increasing the time for interviewing voluntary participants. Participants will exit the study after I receive their answers to the survey questions. I will also ask if they have any suggestions for meaningful changes and improvements to the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

According to Mason (2010), it is preferable to have a well-experienced researcher asking the study questions, and with such an experienced researcher, fewer studies have to be done to achieve reproducible and valid results. On the other hand, an inexperienced researcher will usually have to do many more studies before attaining reproducibility and saturation, and yet this lack of experience may still lead to a less reliable qualitative study result, Mason (2010).

With this particular study, I feel that my research and interview skills as a lawyer and a funeral director give me the necessary experience to provide better insight to create an easily reproducible study as well as the ability to gather truthful and meaningful data from this study's participants.

Trustworthiness here means that the study was done in such a professional manner that both the researcher and the peer audience are confident that the results can be

duplicated, all findings are unbiased (and not the result of pre-conclusions), and based on valid data collection performed fairly and reasonably.

Credibility (Internal Validity)

This section discussed the issue of the internal credibility of this study, also known as “Internal Validity”, along with a discussion of appropriate strategies to establish the credibility of this data, such as triangulation, prolonged contact, if possible, member checks, saturation, reflexivity, and peer review.

Triangulation

When performing a qualitative research study, one must consider the multi-method of triangulation. Such triangulation was important because it increases internal validity, (Meijer, Nico, and Beijaard et al., 2002, p.145). By having three different instruments of measurement, (Meijer et al., 2002, p.145), one can triangulate or determine where the actual focus of the study can be found. This was similar to how geographic triangulation was accomplished by radio signal strength and having two or three intersecting lines to find a common intersection point and thereby determining the location of the original signal.

According to (Meijer et al., 2002, p. 146), social science research allows the process by which the dissertation writer or researcher endeavors to verify the findings by demonstrating that the independent measures in the qualitative study either agree with each other or, at the very least, do not overtly contradict each other. According to (Meijer et al., 2002, p. 146), qualitative triangulation sources likely have different strengths and

can give results that complement each other. According to the Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, one of the definitions of the word 'complement' was: "used of two things when each adds something to the other or helps to make the other better" (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/complementary>). Each combination of complementary types of data leads to a successful triangulation of social data, (Meijer et al., 2002, p. 146).

Triangulation by data source regards data that was collected from differing places, times, or different people, (Meijer et al., 2002, p. 146). In this dissertation study, the data will come from different persons and at different times and (potentially) from different places (as I will be using available private rooms in differing departments on-campus) as well. This means that triangulation by data source may be accomplished with the data sources that will be chosen in this study.

Triangulation by method, according to (Meijer et al. 2002, p. 146), occurs when researcher observations are made, interview data was collected, and documents are obtained and analyzed. This type of triangulation will also be employed in my study, considering that researcher observations will be made in a bound notebook, interviews will be conducted, (i.e., I sat and discussed the research questions before the study with the participants, who will then answer the questions on the survey sheets.) Finally, all written data (as appropriate) was collected for subsequent review and analysis.

Triangulation by the researcher was the third type of triangulation, (Meijer et al., 2002, p. 146). This involves having several, at least two, separate researchers gathering

research data separately and then comparing that data. Currently, this dissertation study was not proposing having a second researcher; however, if this study did have one, then each of the research “raters” could check “off” the proper category in which each observation belongs, Trochim (2006). Later, one then calculates the percentage agreement between the two “raters.” Of course, this does not mean that one or both of them are right or wrong, just whether they are reliable or consistent in their ratings. If both raters placed 70% of the observations in the same category, for instance, they would experience a 70% level of agreement and inter-rater reliability, Trochim (2006). That does not necessarily mean that they made the best decisions. In the study at hand, likely, I will not choose triangulation by the researcher.

Another kind of triangulation was triangulation by theory. This type of triangulation, (Meijer et al., 2002, p. 146) employs using different research theories, such as CRT and the theory of positive psychology, to explain the data obtained from the participants in the study at hand. The data obtained either in the pilot study or in the actual study can be then interpreted by the theories that have been presented in this study.

Triangulation by data type, according to (Meijer et al. 2002, p. 146), was when a researcher combines both qualitative data and quantitative data. This would be found in a mixed-methods approach, for instance. In this study, for the time being, this mixed-methods approach for triangulation will not be employed, since the study was solely based on qualitative research.

Therefore, triangulation by theory and by data source will be the two major ways that this study will employ triangulation. Triangulation will be used to demonstrate the reliability of the data in this study.

Member Checks

Another method regarding the trustworthiness and credibility or internal validity of collected data can be obtained by the researcher using “member checks.” Member checking was explained as a way of checking how the researcher’s interpretation of the collected data corresponds to the members of this qualitative survey’s understanding of the implications of the data, Cohen and Crabtree (2006).

According to Cohen and Crabtree (2006), there are drawbacks to this process considering that participants may wish to revise their initial answers to avoid embarrassment or to better please the researcher/interviewer with the answers they believe the researcher was desiring. Of course, in this dissertation, considering the more random selection of public university students, doing member checks will have some value, primarily because I will not know who the participants are before their participation and may not be in a position to reconnect with them after the qualitative survey was complete. However, informal member checking during the initial survey will be possible, since I will be able to examine past data, after the first interview survey, as well as the categories of the data and the researcher’s interpretation of that data with participants of the public university and college students, Cohen and Crabtree (2006).

According to (Bradshaw, 2001, p. 202), the philosophy of the researcher was very important in his or her relationship with the research participants. In this study, I can use CRT to explain the results in light of unfair racial discrimination views of CRT philosophers. If one believes, as a researcher, more in positive psychology philosophy and theory, then one may use those views to interpret the results of those who participate in this study.

According to (Bradshaw, 2001, p.203), contracts and member checks are both parts of studying human participants, also known as “human geography.” (Bradshaw, 2001, p. 203) tells us that ethics committees or “institutional review boards” want both contracts with the participant communities and member checks.

Walden University contains a Walden Institutional Review Board, which desires, in part, member checks. In the case of this research, the participants’ anonymity must be protected and their consent received before they participated in the research. I will provide a consent document for review and signature at the beginning of the questionnaire. It will describe to the potential research participant the voluntary nature of the study and the inherent privacy protections afforded within the study. (Bradshaw, 2001, p. 203) mentions that participants need to be informed about the risks, potential injuries, and possible disclosures of the research data, and recognizes that having a contract should include the participant’s rights as well as his or her required consent before data gathering. My consent document will contain an initial section of the survey, which defines what the participants’ rights are concerning this study. Those rights will

include the right to strict privacy and the right to volunteer answers or to voluntarily terminate the survey and have that particular survey then destroyed, at any point in the interview process.

Bradshaw continues to state that along with these standard contracts, member checks are also very important and lead to data accuracy and credibility, (Bradshaw, 2001, p.203). (Bradshaw, 2001, p. 203) claims that having standard contracts and member checks creates a collaborative, if not a participative relationship and that using both allowed the participants to give “positive and useful” feedback to the researcher. Bradshaw also warns that negotiated participation may not always result in good research outcomes, partly because negotiation involves compromise, not just mutual understanding, (Bradshaw, 2001, p. 204).

Saturation

Noting that the concept of data saturation has been prior addressed in this research dissertation, one now should discuss that there was no one exact solution method to achieve data saturation, (Fusch and Ness, 2015, p. 1408). Furthermore, according to (Fusch and Ness, 2015, p. 1408), data saturation occurs when there are no new data and themes and no new coding, and there was the ability to replicate the results of the researcher by other researchers.

Fusch and Ness (2015) also reveal that smaller studies achieve saturation faster than larger studies. This research dissertation seeks to find 40 participants and, therefore, was considered a smaller study, so it should achieve saturation with that number of

participants. Fusch and Ness then go on to state that with as few as “six interviews,” one can achieve data saturation. However, this depends on the sample size of the population. The sample size was fairly small in the proposed study. However, it should be noted that the size of the actual Boston-based public university student population was much larger, currently over 150,000 plus individuals.

In this study, I will see data saturation occur when no new knowledge or especially no new themes emerge from the interviews and the data that I am collecting.

Transferability (External Validity)

This section involves the description of appropriate strategies to establish transferability, such as “thick description” and variation in participant selection.

Thick Description

Thick description refers to the quantity of data that will be collected in this study. If one does not reach data saturation, according to (Fusch and Ness, 2015, pp. 1408-1409), this will harm the validity of the qualitative research being pursued. Content validity will then be in question, Fusch and Ness (2015). The sample size, in qualitative research, was not usually chosen as the determinant of data saturation, and a researcher’s interview questions should be similar if not the same for each participant so that the research can achieve data saturation, Fusch and Ness (2015). For consistency in coverage, I intend to see that such similar questions are asked consistently throughout the interviews that I conduct as the researcher.

According to (Lewis and Russell, 2013, p.746), thick description was a way of describing the “competing domains,” which cause pressures or “structural violence” that cause youth to make a deleterious decision that harms their health. Those structurally violent factors include economic and political structures, media structures created by advertising an unhealthy demand in youth, and international crime organizations which provide illegal means to gain the products of such unhealthy desires, Lewis & Russell (2013).

Such an understanding of “thick description” becomes relevant to this study because racism and racial violence can develop from social and economic stimuli emanating from the media, which can exacerbate racial tension, and violence by exploiting incidents of societal racism.

In this study, one will develop a “thick description” of the causes and potential cures for racial violence by examining the local (Boston-based) effect of socioeconomic conditions, the effect of the media on racial violence and racial solutions, as well as the effect of local politics, political groups and their ideologies on racial violence.

To collect more data about the potential positive effect of positive psychology upon racism and racial violence, as a researcher I will have to ask follow-up interview questions about how the interviewees view positive psychology and how they may conceive it can be applied to lessening racism and racial violence. For example, in Greater Boston, the cities of Dorchester, Mattapan, and Brockton experience a lot of racial violence (including regular incidents of shootings). Also, Boston has poorer

sections and more affluent sections, all of which are affected by the local media representation. I will ask questions about how the subjects feel about these issues and ask how they feel these incidences of racial inequalities and violence could be better addressed.

The effect of local political groups will also be examined to determine what their influence was upon the survey participants. Some groups offer positive methods to lessen racism, while others have more deleterious effects on racism. Such media and political influence may cause racism and racial violence and runs counterproductive to offering positive solutions to combat racism in our society.

Thick description may be employed to lead to a deeper understanding of neighborhood communities, from which the participants in this study, may come, and explain how there may be a difference in the way economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities address racism and racial violence as opposed to how more affluent neighborhoods address those problems. This survey will need to, in its initial question section, ask where the public university or college student comes from. Other questions in the survey will enquire about the availability of jobs in the participants' community. Other questions about a participant's experience with economic conditions, de-industrialization, negative media reports, and even exposure to organized gang crime, can be measured in the narrative format as well as examined in the survey.

To best safeguard external and internal validity, the study was performed by only having written narrative survey questions.

The environment in which the survey is taken and its description are key to understanding the value and findings of the survey. External validity, according to Davidson (2010), was the ability to take a smaller sample population and broaden the results to the general population and was validated by such methods, which show how the small population was representative of the larger population. In this study, I looked at a smaller population of 40 students. I showed how this small sample will be representative of the larger student body of all Boston public university and college students by comparing the demographics of the smaller population with the demographics of the larger student population. In this way, one can effectively show how external validity exists here, Davidson (2010).

Audit Trails

Dependability in a qualitative study has to do with the reliability and repeatability of acquiring the same data from the same group of participants. One way to achieve this finding of dependability was to conduct an audit trail.

In general, an audit trail was a sequence of paperwork that validates or invalidates the transactions, Rouse (2015) or, in the case of qualitative research, the answers to interview questions that the participants provide.

According to Carcary (2009) in qualitative research, the audit trail allows the research audience to be able to walk through the rational thinking of the researcher and come to a conclusion if the results of the researcher's study are reliable and should be employed in furthering such an interesting study.

The audit trail can improve the trustworthiness of the research, Carcary (2009).

This dissertation will allow the audience to see how the interview questions were developed, the reasoning behind those questions, and the coding response to the answers given by the research participants. The data or evidence will be collected and analyzed, using both a grounded theory method in conjunction with the CRT. Qualitative analysis software, including NVIVO, will also be applied to the data.

Audit trails of the coded surveys will be part of this dissertation. As well, I plan on using triangulation methods to show the dependability of the qualitative data that was developed. In the study by (Flores and Matkin, 2014, p.8) evidence was provided to show that confirmatory comments made by that study's participants about the other participants in the study were effective in realizing Flores and Matkin's goal. In this study, I will also seek to get input from participants about the other participants.

Triangulation

Triangulation means that the researcher can mention similar responses from the participants when that occurs multiple times in the course of the qualitative interviews.

Another study that also mentions the use of triangulation was by (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe and Neville, 2014, p. 545). Triangulation is when multiple data sources are used to create an understanding of the phenomena found in the study and is a strategy that is employed in qualitative research that determines the validity of the data by seeking to understand if the data has convergence or agreement in thought coming from the different participants in the qualitative study, (Carter et al., 2014,

p.545). There was limited use of triangulation in this study as the responses will be first-hand, and the comparison of answers will be by the researcher for the 40 survey interviews acquired.

Confirmability

This section deals with the qualitative counterpart to objectivity, including strategies to establish confirmability such as reflexivity. Confirmability was the level of confidence that a research study's findings are based on the participants, here Boston area public university students, narratives and words are rather than the potential biases of the researcher conducting the research. How do I propose to eliminate researcher bias? I propose to eliminate my own bias as the researcher by asking questions that the participant answers with a participant numeric choice, that was only derived from the participant. As well, I propose that only participant answers will be analyzed and only their answers will be used to make theories from and find answers from the research questions asked. This way my opinion(s) will not be added to the data and thereby my bias will not be added to the pure qualitative data.

Employing Reflexivity

Reflexivity was an important part of the quality of qualitative research and helps ensure the transparency of the qualitative research, Korstjens (2018).

Reflexivity was a manner of reflection by the researcher, Hsiung (2010). During the research process, I will begin to see insights about the nature of the topic of study, here being the causes and potential cures for racial violence. This may indeed act as a

feedback mechanism helping me to modify, re-tool, and adjust the questions that I ask future participants in this qualitative research pursuit.

Reflexivity was defined as the “process of examining both oneself as a researcher and the research relationship”, Hsiung (2010). Researchers want to know how meanings are developed and reproduced in particular cultural, relational, and social understandings, Hsiung (2010). In this dissertation, the interviews of the university students are of the greatest importance since there was meaning-making that comes from those interactive interviews. To properly interpret this information, one must reflect on the contextual meaning of the collected data, Hsiung (2010). To be successful at this endeavor, one must understand the interplay between the participant and the researcher, who ultimately are both involved in the outcome of the research, Hsiung (2010).

In this proposed research, the concern was about the interactions and the opinions of the research questions, and the interviewer’s communicative ability. The research participants’ understanding of the interviewer and his or her questions must also be examined to see the dynamics involved, Hsiung (2010). Qualitative research will be employed in this dissertation because the methodology shows that regarding human social behavior, qualitative research can be applied and leads to a greater and better understanding of the social phenomenon, which has a large influence on public policy, (Creswell, 2009, p. 203). The qualitative method I have chosen to gather data by and analyze data is the survey method. which had prior been discussed as well.

Timing, therefore, is sequential, in this strategy. Qualitative data collection and analysis will help to gain insight leading to an understanding of what was driving racism and racial violence in our American culture. It is very human for one to accept the familiar and to reject the unfamiliar. One could make the hypothesis that racism is, unfortunately, a very human foible where cultures accept themselves because they are familiar with their looks, morals, and mores; they immediately reject the looks, morals, and morals of other dissimilar cultures.

Ethical Procedures

In this section, I will cover agreements to gain access to participants or data, including the actual documents in the IRB application. I will also address the treatment of human participants in documents filed with the IRB. Institutional permissions, including the IRB approvals that are necessary for this dissertation, will be included, as well as any relevant IRB numbers. There also will be a discussion of ethical concerns directly related to data collection/intervention activities and a discussion about if any participant refused participation or if any participant was involved in early withdrawal and a plan on how to address such issues. Data collection was anonymous. It will stay confidential and anonymous. Data storage is on the cloud and is protected by passwords. The data will be destroyed seven years after the dissertation is published. This study has nothing to do with my work as an attorney or as a funeral director. But I will gain insight from this study project.

The major ethical concern was making sure that the anonymity of the participants was maintained at all times while preserving the ability to replicate the study.

It was presupposed that if participants are to give truthful whole answers to the qualitative survey, they must be reassured that their responses are 100% confidential. I will not be doing a study based on my work environment, though I may choose to receive guidance from a focus group, first held with the same age group as in my study, through my work environment. The question of incentives to participate was relevant. Innocuous incentives are acceptable and ethical. Some incentives rise to the level of being unethical as “undue influence not of coercion but a corruption of judgment, (Grant and Sugarman, 2004, pp.717-718). I plan to use minimal incentives to participate in the study, including free pens, calculators, or small-denomination gift cards, which can be valuable to a student but not ethically being deemed excessive or manipulative.

According to Grant and Sugarman (2004), there was a question when it was ethical to offer an incentive for a participant to stay with the research. The advantage here in this study was that I will interview the subject and then have them answer the qualitative questions. I will not be seeking to re-interview them nor to contact them later to do a second study unless the IRB or my data analysis leads me to do so. Therefore, the incentive of a modest gift to reward participation was not considered unethical.

My particular research study will be done exclusively with the voluntary participation of college-enrolled students with a desire to participate in a research study whose goal was to improve education and societal peace through a peaceful method to

reduce systemic racism. There will be no grade advantage to college or university students taking this survey. The intrinsic reward to the participant was the participant's desire to participate in the advancement of understanding in the fields of education and psychology to reduce systemic racism. If there was any researcher bias, I will eliminate its potential effect by giving minimal assistance to the student participants so that their opinions, choices, and information was as pure as it can be. The use of incentives does help in having more participants participate, and they do so with a greater interest in the survey and in carefully answering the questions. With the IRB review, I hope that giving an incentive like a high-quality pen, small-denomination gift card or a good calculator would be an acceptable type of incentive.

I have no personal or professional relationship with members of the Boston institutions of higher education (other than being a former student at several). I also have no supervisory or instructor relationship, which would provide power over the participants. This means I am not in a position to add bias to this study.

Summary

This study was being accomplished with the hope of creating a better and stronger social order where people do not look to skin color to judge a person but look to their actions and their integrity before making judgments about them. The first tenet of positive psychology was that positive psychology can be used to address "exploitation" which is a stressor, according to (Meyers and Meyers, 2003, p.222), that originates from power differences among groups.

Finding a positive, non-violent way to achieve racial justice and social harmony is an important public policy issue and was the goal of this study.

This study will employ CRT as the traditional theory and positive psychology as the new theory being applied. The participant group to which these theories are being applied are the public university students in the Boston area.

Using a combined methodology of CRT and positive psychology was a novel way to not only address racism and its causes but to also offer a positive, non-violent way to educate college students (as a matter of educational public policy) in peaceful ways to reduce and, hopefully, eliminate institutional racism and racially-motivated violence.

I will be the primary researcher of this novel approach and will formulate the types of data collection tools I will use. I will ensure my study meets and exceeds all aspects of IRB guidelines and issues of ethics, trustworthiness, methodologies, data collection, and data analysis protocol.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate how to identify and then reduce racism by employing methods positive psychology. The topic of this study was how positive psychology may be used to reduce or eliminate racist thought and actions involving public university students. This study involved filling the gap in CRT research by offering a potential way of reducing racism and employing the concepts found in positive psychology. The advantage of using positive psychology in terms of combating and lessening racism and racial violence is that social good results due to educational policies and there is more dependence on nations' economies for global trade, as global businesses cannot function properly if racism is allowed to take root within their networks. It is even more critical to adequately deal with issues of race, racism, racial violence, and potential solutions for dealing with such problems.

Greater mobility due to convenience and improvements in air travel has allowed international travel and relocation to different foreign nations to occur on a much larger scale. Schools, workplaces, and institutions have all seen increasingly foreign people participate in local culture. Having so many diverse cultures with different languages, cultural backgrounds, and morals can lead to cultural conflicts. Cultural conflict can lead to racism and often racial violence.

There were two research questions for this study:

RQ1 involved determining causal factors that create racism and lead to racial violence within American culture. RQ2 was more narrowly tailored concerning possible solutions to this problem and whether positive psychology as taught in college-level courses can help reduce racism and racial violence.

This was a novel approach, and there was no pilot study. There was past related research regarding some of the subject matter studied. Questions were designed in part by me. Survey questions were based on prior studies that included strategies for analyzing participant's characteristics and thinking processes to determine their values and personalities in terms of how they affect their views of racism and how to reduce racism and racial violence. Two theories were used to help establish participant codes, which in turn helped reveal emergent themes (see Appendix A).

Setting

Participants in this study were randomly selected among willing students at a local Boston area public university. Other than being part of the public university, there were no organizational conditions which influenced participants or their experiences during the time of study that might have influenced interpretations of study results. The study was conducted was on campus among serious students pursuing their degrees

COVID 19 did have a reductive effect on participation of students, some of whom wore masks and some of who did not. All participants were asked to follow social distancing protocols in the area where they were asked to complete their surveys. This,

however, did not negatively affect most of participants in terms of fully addressing survey questions.

Demographics

The demographics of my study cohort were as follows: females: 19 (47% of cohort with an average age 19.68 years) and males: 21 (52% of cohort with an average age 20.28 years). The average of survey questions in part B (using a five-point Likert scale) was 3.65.

Each participant had to be a present student of the Boston area public university. Participants were determined by this university to be either psychology or sociology students. Participants with the most time available were first or second-year participants. Before completing the survey packet, each student had to record their age and confirm they were currently university students. To confirm that the study had been done with student participants of legal age who represented a dichotomy of races and genders, no other demographic information was collected. No race, political affiliation, religious denomination or ethnic background data was collected.

Data Collection

There were 40 participants and 40 surveys taken. Both written questions were asked as well as multiple choice questions.

The 40 surveys were taken on October 26th and October 29th, 2022. The total number of participants was 40 surveys. Both days I was on campus for 3 hours, collecting data. The data was recorded on 40 paper surveys, which comprise of fourteen pages of

questions, and three pages consisting the complete Consent form, which each participant first read and voluntarily consented to complete the survey. In addition to be fully explained to the student-participants regarding the voluntary nature of this survey, this was also orally explained to the students as they picked up their copy of the survey instrument. The data was recorded right on the survey pages, written by the student/participants.

There were no unusual circumstances encountered in data collection. All the participants received the same survey and it was collected by the researcher. The consent page as well as the survey were all the same and there was no variation in the fact that students were asked to read and if they desired voluntarily consent to taking the survey, which, at any time by them, could be terminated and their survey be destroyed with the student and the researcher as witnesses. In this particular survey, no survey was discontinued and destroyed. All 40 participants finished the survey, though some did voluntarily skip over some of the questions, for whatever reason and yet that did not disqualify their survey response.

Data collection for a Likert Scale analysis combined with a qualitative word analysis, consisting primarily of participant surveys, along with the researcher analysis of the participants' personalities and ethics, along with statements of the student participants opinions, made this data very "rich" in quality. The participants who received the survey packet 100% Agreed with the consent form attached to all surveys and the University students all consented to be surveyed. The students averaged a time of one hour to fully

complete the survey. A number of students did not wish to answer questions regarding critical race theory, namely because they had never taken a course in it, and were unfamiliar with CRT's information and conclusions.

The researcher explained the Consent form to the students who showed interest in taking the survey, honestly and accurately completing it and if a student did not feel comfortable with the survey, then they could immediately stop the process. As well, if they were in the process of taking the survey, if they felt uncomfortable with a particular question, they could skip that question(s) and if they chose, still submit that survey. If they did not wish to complete the survey, they could destroy the it and not pass it in. The survey data was from exactly 40 surveys which was the minimum number of surveys for maximum saturation of the survey sample. The location of the survey administration was in the area between the Campus Center and a communal hall. The communal hall was the area where the sociology department may be found and where the survey instrument was first approved for student participation was allowed and scheduled. The survey was administered three times in that location area until 40 completed surveys were collected. The data was recorded on to twelve pages where participants either circled their answer or in the short narrative response section wrote their answers onto the paper survey. There was no difference in how the data was collected. I explained the consent agreement to the students who were interested in taking the survey. I explained that there would be no identifiers allowed on the survey so that it would remain confidential and untraceable. I brought extra pens with me and passed those out. The rest of the data

collection was as I expected it to be. The students were quiet, and they passed in the surveys quietly and orderly. There were no unusual circumstances since I held a letter from the sociology department authorizing me to use their conference table and later with more participants interested in taking the survey, I moved to a place in the building where they had more tables and chairs. There was one primary data collection instrument and that was the twelve-page survey. I can say as the researcher that participants comments to me were very positive concerning the survey. I appreciated their interest in the survey. The data was collected in ink writing on the paper. There was not anything really unusual during the survey except for some people being curious on what these participants were writing about, though they did not disturb the participants. The only variation in the data collection plan was that though some data was collected in the sociology office conference room, most of the data was collected in the sociology study area. This was good since I could see all the participants and if anyone had a question they could signal me, directly.

Data Analysis

I chose to analyze data I have received in the 40 surveys by the qualitative analysis approach. According to David Thomas, in the report “A general inductive approach for qualitative data analysis, (Thomas, 2003), your first objective was to ‘condense’ the raw data in a short summary format. The purpose of using an inductive method was found in three items, namely are creating a succinct and extensive variety of “test data’ into a short summation form. Secondly, we will look for a clear tie between

my research objectives and the summation findings which came from the collected raw data, (Thomas, 2003). Thirdly, the purpose of this “inductive approach”, (Thomas, 2003) was to develop the theory which models the underlying structure of the structures which are found in the raw data left by the participants in the survey. For Survey A, the codes include, the inherency of prejudice, strong racism among those of different races, the inherency of racism among those of different cultures. Codes are defined as, “a system of words, letters, numbers or symbols that represent a message or record information secretly on in a short form.

The short form that is part of the definition, was what I developed for Survey’s A and B, of this study. There are codes for the “Inherency of Prejudice”, “Definite racism among different races”, “racist teachers teach racism,” and Racism can come from teachings.” These codes then can translate to “larger representations including categories and themes,” according to (Saldana, 2021, p.18). I had earlier proposed using NVIVO to analyze the data; however, I found using Saldana’s qualitative methods protocol was more efficient. Here, the codes just mentioned led to the Researcher’s development of the category of “Inherent Racism among the Races.” Another category that was developed was “Racism from Racist Teachings” as well as “Racist Teachers teach racism.” These codes and categories, are defined, only to root out racism, and not to divide our society into different groups. Other codes like “Discrimination Slurs”, “Negative effects of Discrimination,” and “Sufferings from Discrimination, lead to categorization as the larger

category of “Negative Slurs cause Discrimination.” Beyond this category the larger theme was “Negative Racist Speech is Discrimination.”

As the researcher I read and re-read multiple times the surveys. I determined what the participants meant and how they were expressing their feelings and their understanding of a very serious subject (which racism is) and how the participants defined that concept. I also recorded how they felt about and understood racism and if they felt that positive thinking and positive psychology could be employed to less racism as well as lessen racial violence. For instance, with the acknowledgement of such starting code words like “inherent racism”, inherent prejudice, racist teachings, we then could make a category of “negative slurs help cause discrimination.” Codes like positive thinking and positive psychology led to “student interest in taking advanced courses to address racism.” Codes for friends protect each other from racism was turned into the category of “Friends help stop racism in the class.” On the negative side of the card original key words made a category, “Racism in the classroom can spread racial unfairness, discrimination, and injustice. An outlier but an interesting group of codes came from one student participant, who said she was “bubbly” and that her positive attitude protects her and other students from racist pain. Positive bubbly personality deals well with those trying to hate others. This natural attitude then translates into a concept category that “Positive bubbly thinking overcomes racism.” Other code words like affection, love, empathy translated into a category “affection and love make a real impact on reducing or ending racism.” One group of code words including “racism” and “social

anxiety” and “personal anxiety” lead to a category of “social and personal anxiety among races” becomes “racism exacerbates social and personal anxiety.” As well, the codes form learning and applying positive psychology to CRT led to a category of “Applying Positive Psychology to CRT may increase its inclusion.” This was a new concept and many reject that CRT should be modified, and many others reject the truth about CRT. So, this was an outlier, but it still needs to be properly looked at and addressed.

To understand what the public university student participants believe about racism I chose to explore the number of times inherent racism in society was cited by the survey participants. They mentioned inherent racism, i.e., occurs naturally in the surrounding society, in 20% of the surveys. The source and definitions about racism and its causes are in response to Research Question One. Racism caused by racist teachers from the survey data analysis, shows racist teachers in 11.25% of the survey responses. Although I am not searching for statistical significance, this data helped set the general context and overall beliefs of the participant pool.

According to the student participant responses, discrimination as a current driver for racist concerns of the participants is rather small, yet still significant at 2.5% of this survey’s results. Prejudice though, was six times more prevalent and a concern, for the university student participants. The average age for this study was approximately of 20 years old; representing a relatively a young sample. Nonetheless CRT was discussed and ruminated upon by approximately 20% of the participants. They did not necessarily believe that positive psychology would make CRT more acceptable and thereby

influential on society's acceptance of racial events that happened decades ago. CRT however was about 3 times more important to these students than was their own happiness. Hate speech, at 3.75% of the student participants survey results, was a greater concern for these student participants than was discrimination, which was 2.5% of their survey concerns. Governmental caused racism was somewhat more important to this student survey pool, at 3.75%, which was the same percentage as the student participants were concerned with and responded to "generational" racism also at 3.75% of the responses. A larger response by the student participants was to repetitive racism which 6.25% of the participants reported was a concern with racism at work, school and in stores. 3.75% of public university students reported uncontrolled anger and cruelty caused racism.

For Research Question 2, this survey examined the public university student response to reducing or eliminating racism based on using positive psychology had 22.5% responding with positive psychology as being part of the solution to reduce or eliminate racism. Unlike the Research Question 2's original thoughts, here, racism was not caused by lack of purpose. Boston is a rather progressive city as a number of students alluded to and from their responses, this public university student participant sample are mainly highly motivated students with strong academic backgrounds participant 39, in response to whether the pursuit of truth and love offer a remedy or solution to racism and racist prejudices was somewhat negative at a value of 3.45 from the Appendix spreadsheet. Participant 39 was somewhat positive in their thinking but not by much.

Social and environmental pillars, which if they are working well, then you have a minimization of racism. This could be the subject of a later research project. Participant #39 believes that if you repair the economic problems and the environmental problems, this will help resolve the social problems. On question 4, Participant 39, when asked how many racial incidents happen in a year, they answered that as a non-American several incidents happen within a week. One would surmise that by seeing themselves as a non-American, they may be setting themselves up for rejection and belief that they feel a greater number of incidents happen to them than to other minorities. Participant 38 has codes about generational racism and links that with racist jokes, which lead to racial slurs. In response to the question do racist thoughts come from racist teachers, participant 38 believes that kids watch and learn racist acts from watching them and this guarantees that these acts will be “exhibited in the children.” For instance, here we see those codes as racist, standup to racism, positive psychology, empathy and love, and Arab and 911 jokes all were repeated once. But they are very specific in their meaning.

From participants 39 and 40 we see that the key codes are economic need for a cheap workforce, which was true in the Great Depression and in the current depression, where it is hard to fill jobs, but many do not wish to work, because of racism in the workplace. Two codes that were linked turned out to be mental health and being hurt at a young age which causes a deep hurt but that positive thinking and psychology can strengthen the person and help shield them from future pain when

I had planned to ask question 10 but I found the participants did not have enough time to answer it within the 30-minute timeframe to answer this final question. Therefore, I waived the question & did not collect any data on it during the survey collection period.

In Survey B from Appendix B, the data was more about the individual and how he or she actually thinks. This collection of data depends on the use of the five value Likert Scale. Likert Scale was defined as, When, responding to a Likert item, respondents specify their level of agreement or disagreement on a symmetric agree-disagree scale for a series of statements. Thus, the range captures the intensity of their feelings for a given item, Carifo, & Perla, R. (2007). As I am the researcher, I believe that I needed to design a Likert scale that was symmetrical, which would support validity of the results of Survey B. There were two agreements with the statement that I asked the student participants to consider, as well as a middle choice with a Neutral value and then with Likert choices which disagreed with the statement made by the researcher and which would lower the score for agreement with the test statement. The score (2) with a value of (-1) meant the statement was unlike the participant and a score of (1) this participant was very much unlike the statement made in the body of the question. A score of (3) was considered a neutral answer, and had a value of zero (0). A score of 4 had a positive (+1) value, while a score of 5, had a value of (+2). Five being the most positive and 1 being the least positive evaluation of not being like the statement made by the researcher's Survey B Likert like statements. Specific codes about individual participants, maintaining security

and privacy, show who the participant either was or maybe. Survey B reflects on the character and attitude of the student participant, while also their experiences and lack of experience, thereof. Here, in this study, we learn of the student's feelings, their level of boredom or their level of commitment, as well as their ability to focus on the task at hand and how to succeed at working in groups. Below find the 20 graphs for Survey B, Questions 1-20.

Graph Question One, is somewhat left skewed and shows a mean average of 3.175 or rounded to 3.2, which is 6.7% more positive than a neutral response to the first question, "Even when I am by myself, I never get bored," this may not seem like much above a neutral response, but this goes to the curiosity of the participant as well as their interest in the larger world, see (Seligman, 2002). In Question Two, which goes to the "Good Judgment" of the participant, here with the survey participants, or sample group, the mean average was a response of 3.75 or 25% more positive than a neutral response. This means that participants are 25% better with their judgment than neutral participant. Question Three asks about the open mindedness and thrill of learning and this relates to this dissertation's goal of determining the attitude and open-mindedness and in the Boston community open-mindedness towards all the races. The average mean was 4.375 or rounded to 4.4 which was approaching a value of 5 and is very positive in the question format and response. This was a goal of true brotherhood. Question Four asks if the participant ". come(s) u with new ideas for fun things to do often." This goes to ingenuity of the participant. This creativity was opposed to stereotyping people and

things like racism, which was the ultimate in unfair stereotyping. Here in Question Four graph, the average response was 3.9 or rounded to 4.0 which means it was like the person who was very positive. If realizing the Likert values of 1 to 5, which are actively selected, this was a near perfect graph of left hand or negative skewed. Question Five tests for social intelligence and that was relevant to this dissertation surveys since a more socially intelligent person, has learned to some degree to overcome their prejudices and strives for social justice and fairness. Here in Question Five, was “If I am feeling happy, or sad angry, I always know why,” was very much like me with close to a 5-value selected. Here Question Five in this study has an average mean of ‘3.3’. What this can be interpreted means that the average response by this studies’ Boston area public university students were just about a 3 or neutral value of this question. They were slightly more positive than a neutral person, but only about 10% more positive and in agreement, about the value of social intelligence in our society. I attribute this weak response due to the average age of the participants which is 20 years old.

I surmise that the young age of the participants means that they likely have limited experience in social ques and norms and may be seen as naïve or “green,” not referring to the environment but to social skills. Question Six, was about valor and the statement is, “Even if I am given a hard time, I still do what is right. The mean average for this question was 4.05 or rounded to 4, which was a positive position just not as positive as a “5” value would be and then such a person would be a stickler for doing what was right, at least in their opinion. Question Seven concerns “I know the things that

really matter most in life.” This statement goes to valuing life and have a positive plan for it. Eliminating racism should be part of that valuing of life. Professor Seligman finds that this goes to the person’s proper perspective. See (Seligman, 2002). The average mean was 3.95 which can be rounded to 4. Again, this was a very positive question and a very positive answer. This is significant since the frequency here was at a maximum, in a left skewed curve. It was a left skewed or which can be called a negative skewed graph. Looking ahead to Question Eight, the average mean was 4.075 and that means this was a rather positive question and a positive answer to it. Again, like Seven it was left skewed. And the mean value of 4 was repeated 14 times in this slightly negative skewed graph. The question asked in Eight was, “When I get what I want, it was because I worked hard for it.” This high value response to a question about doing hard work to get what you want fits, the student participant base who believe in hard work at a Boston area public university that this “hard work” translates into what they want, a respectable degree and a career to start which will generate money and allow a later purchase of a home and with love and commitment, a family life. But being a 4 it was cautious optimism since it was not a 5 or up near that level. Question Nine was, “I will lie to get myself out of trouble” which has a 2.95 mean which is much more to the negative side. The graph for Question 9 was with a negative tail and more of an increasing linear graph and not a curved skewed graph. Participant Nine picked a four-value stating that he was like the person who lies to get out of trouble. A lower value was closer to not agreeing with this statement and closer to real honesty. Question Ten was agreed to by participant 40. The

value “4” was picked. agreed that they “helped my neighbor or fellow students in the last month (without being asked).” This also has a left negative skewed curve. This question goes to the kindness and generosity of the participant, according to Seligman, 2002. This was a sign of generosity. The average value for this question Ten was close to the most positive 5, but the average was actually 4.5. It was the same left negative skewed curve. Question 11 concerns the following statement, “Even if my sibling(s), friend(s), or cousin(s) and I fight a lot I still care about them.” The curve for this question was more of a straight line from 1 to 5 values on the Likert Scale. This question seeks to find out how strong the loving nature of the participants is being studied. Here in Question 11 the mean was equal to 4.5. The fact that a Likert value of three was very low in frequency suggests that either the person does love their relatives and others, or they do not, but they are not neutral in their views. The next question goes to the gratitude of the survey participant. If a person is grateful of life, they will see the value in all people even when mistakes are made. Question 12 states, “I forget to tell my teachers ‘Thank you’ when they have helped me.” The mean was 2.1 which in a reverse scale, which Professor Seligman used here, would mean this statement was very much unlike the survey participant. This means the participant was not like a person forgetting to thank their teachers and be ungrateful. An answer of “5” like with participant “40” would mean that the participant is honest in stating that they forgot to tell their teachers thank you. Question 13 was a modification statement. The statement was “When I graduate from this Boston area public university, I think I will be a very happy person.” A “5” means that they are very much agreed such an

accomplishment as graduation will make them happy. Here the average mean was 3.575 which rounds up to 3.6. This amount was closest to 4 or that the statement is like the participant. The students in this selection will most likely be happy people because of, in part, their graduating from a Boston area public university. In my data collection we were low on the “2” answer but this can happen any time there was uncertainty in data collection and a lack of randomness. The shape of the graph though mimics, the standard left skewed graph. This student body will likely be happy when they graduate.

Question 14 was about the uniqueness and value of human life. This analysis comes under the theory of spirituality. People who value human life and who believe each person was special and has an important purpose in life was a key factor in analysis, according to (Seligman, 2002). Question 15 was about “I love to watch the clouds above, the flowers in the field and the change of colors in the trees during the fall,” all having to do with appreciation of beauty. Though the one response, signifies very much unlike the survey participant was chosen 4 times and shifted the smooth curve, it still shows that either you felt strongly about the beauty in nature, or you did not. The mean average for Question 15 is 3.325 or rounds to 3.3 which was just above neutral but on the positive side. Question 16 was about the statement, “Even if I do not like someone, I treat that person fairly.” This goes to the concept of fairness, which was necessary in justice and in addressing the issues of past and present racism. The average mean here was 3.525 or rounded to 3.5 just a bit above a neutral stance. Fairness in many ways has to be figured from a neutral point of view. Though it does follow the general left skewed chart, it also

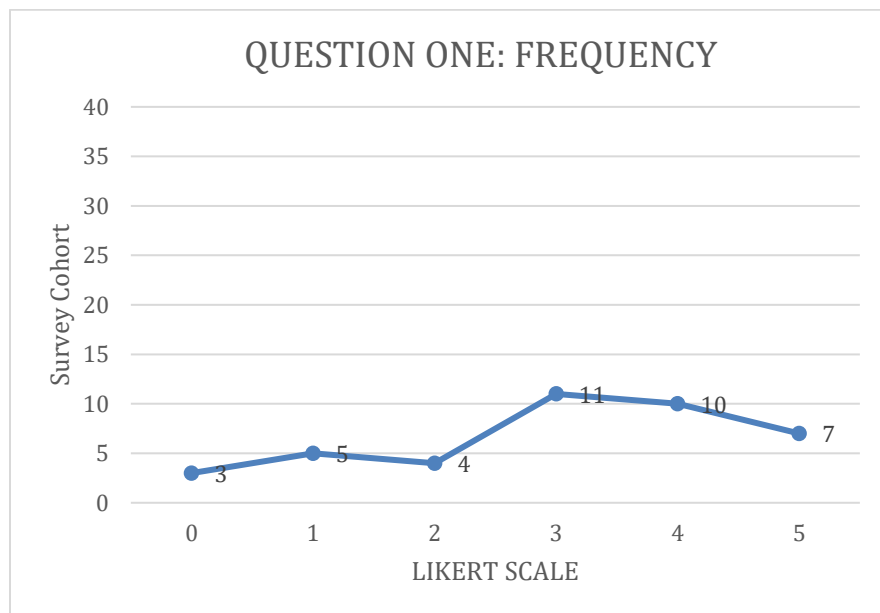
shows a slight deficiency in answer “2” which it was felt as being unlike the person to agree with the statement, “Even if I do not like someone, I treat that person fairly.”

Question 16 was the last personality type multiple choice question with the strict Likert scale of 1 to 5.

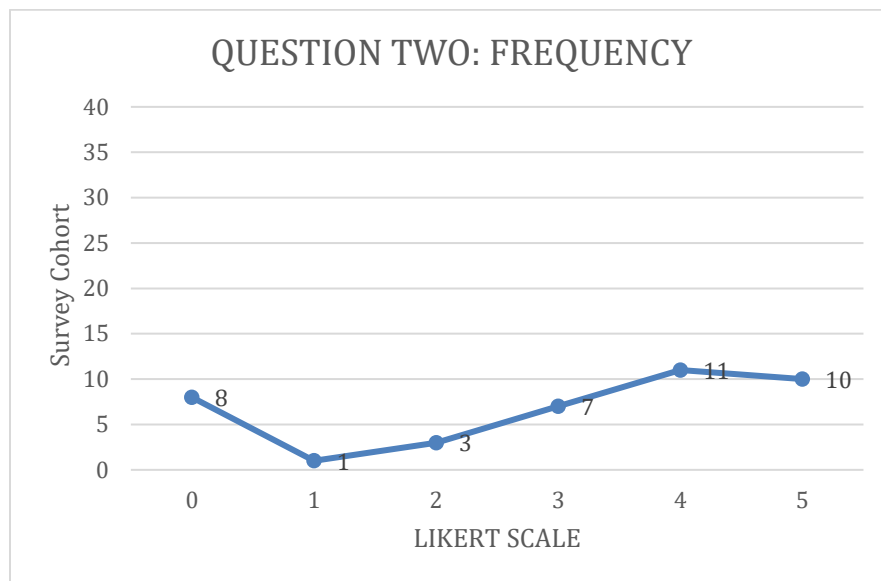
Question 3 was the most positive thinking response question at a mean of 4.375. That question asks “I come up with new ideas for fun things to do often” which on its face describes the most positive thinking person in our survey sample. Likewise, Question Nine has the second lowest average mean of 2.95. The question asked there was, “I will lie to get myself out of trouble.” But a 2.95 here, means that it was unlike the participant to lie when in trouble so this was not the least positive choice and please do not be fooled that a 2.1 for Question 12 was the lowest, because that was as well, a reversed scale question where if you score low (2.1) you are saying that the statement “I forget to tell my teachers ‘Thank you’ when they have helped me” was **unlike me**, with a 2 response. Question One, “Even when I am by myself, I never get bored,” was the least positive of the straight Likert score questions, with an average mean of 3.175. Participants are just slightly more positive than a group of neutral people would be.

Questions 17 through 20 are all ‘Yes and Agree’ question with the statement concerning racism or ‘No and Disagree’ with the statement about racism. One would expect the most negative of the Likert scale participants to be in the ‘No and Disagree’ For instance Question One is the least positive answer. To see how it correlates to

question 18 and 19, which both the least positive short answer to racism question, that of a “4” response. Answer 18, of the first respondent was, “0” or no response. And their answer to 19 was as well a zero. The opportunity to answer was there but either they did not wish to answer or did not feel qualified to. The most negative personality in Part A now answers Question 17 in Part B. The question was, “Do you feel that practicing positive- thinking was best for your life, the lives of others and for your country? Participant Nine responds with a positive answer, “Yes, it encourages a healthy mindset and understanding the positive things in life.” This response was from the least positive person in Part A, which examined people’s inner attitudes. Participant Nine for questions 18 and 20 scored 0 since they said they were not sure and did not answer those questions. Participant Nine did answer Question 19 concerning, “Do you feel, both as a person in our present society, and as a Boston area public university student, that you are ONLY defined by your race. Participant Nine responded, “No, at least I hope not, I want to be defined by who I am and my actions. As the researcher I would extrapolate that if this was the least positive person statistically then overall most participants on the Likert chart curve feel similarly about these two questions.

Figure 1*Survey B, Question 1*

This graph represents 9 respondents (22%) who claim boredom when alone. However, 17 participants (42%) do not claim to be bored with their life, and claim to be engaged with life and positive activities. The remaining 14 participants either did not answer or had no reply.

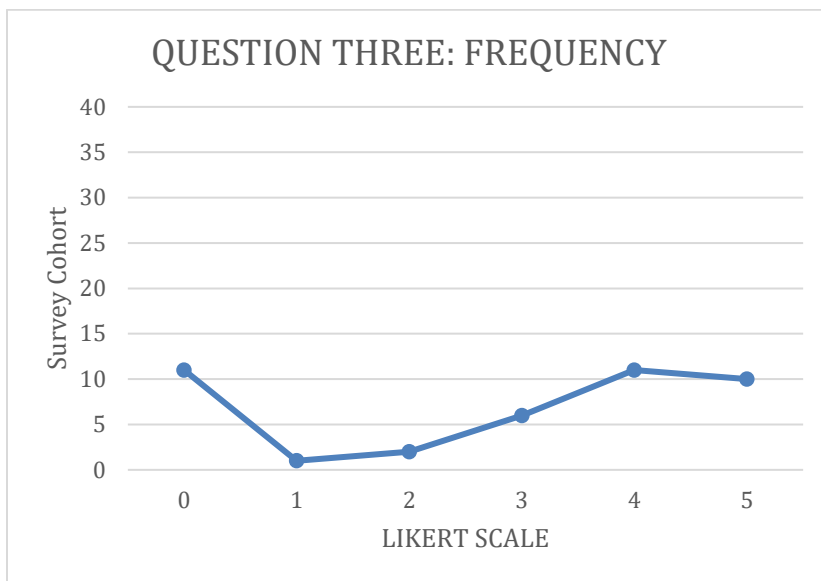
Figure 2*Survey B, Question 2*

This chart reflects 21 participants (52%) who claim to have good problem-solving skills.

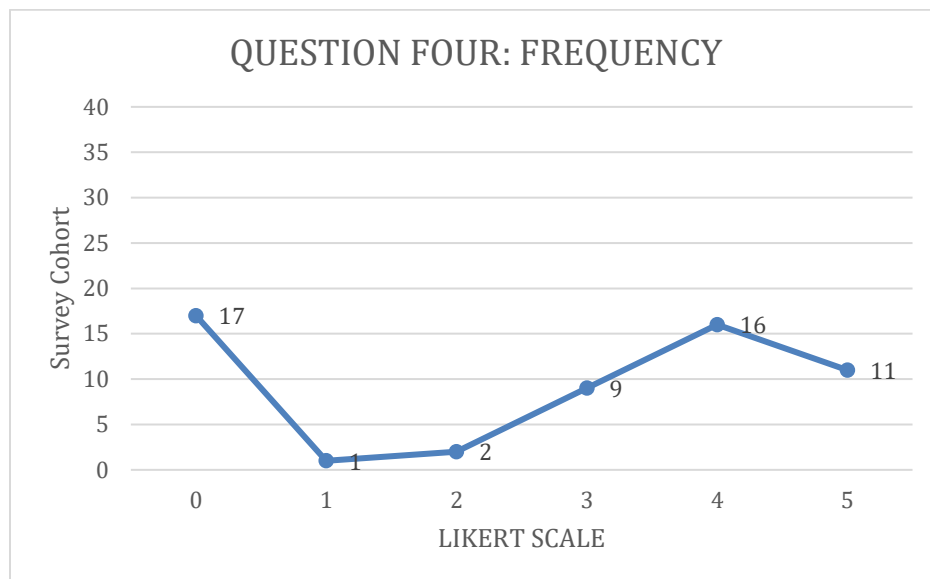
Four participants responded that they did not have such skills and 15 participants (37%) either didn't understand the question or failed to answer.

Figure 3

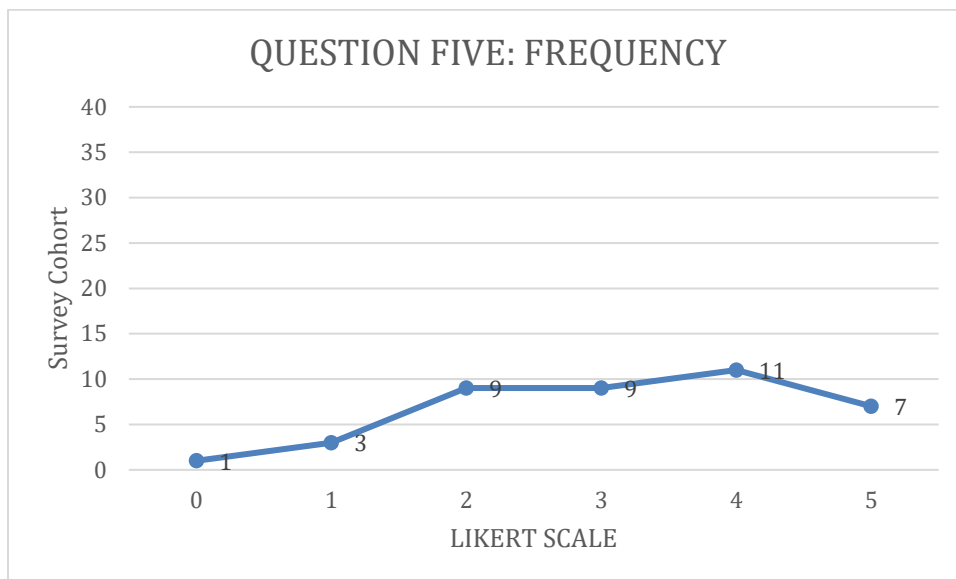
Survey B, Question 3



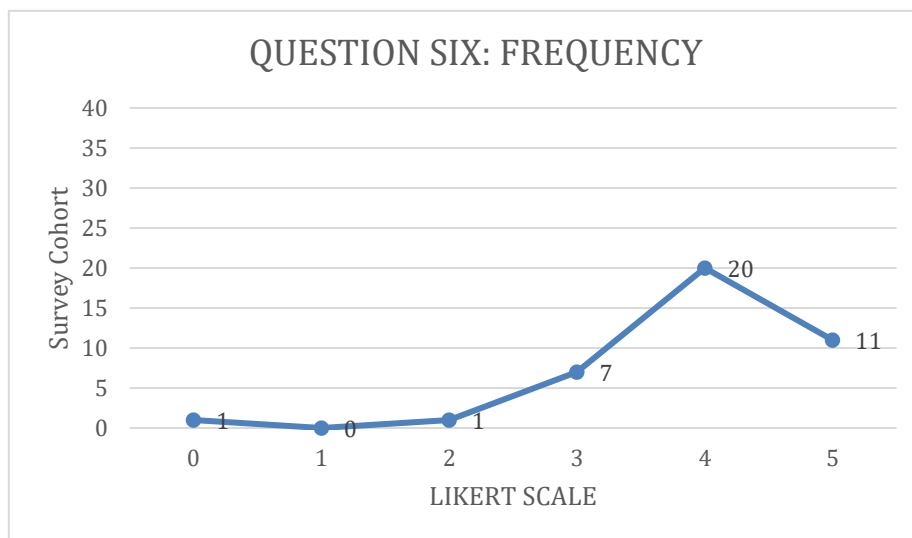
This graph shows that 21 participants (52%) show joy when learning something new, which pertains to the participants' enthusiasm towards life and learning new ideas and skills. The remaining respondents either didn't answer the question or responded that they did not find joy in learning new things.

Figure 4*Survey B, Question 4*

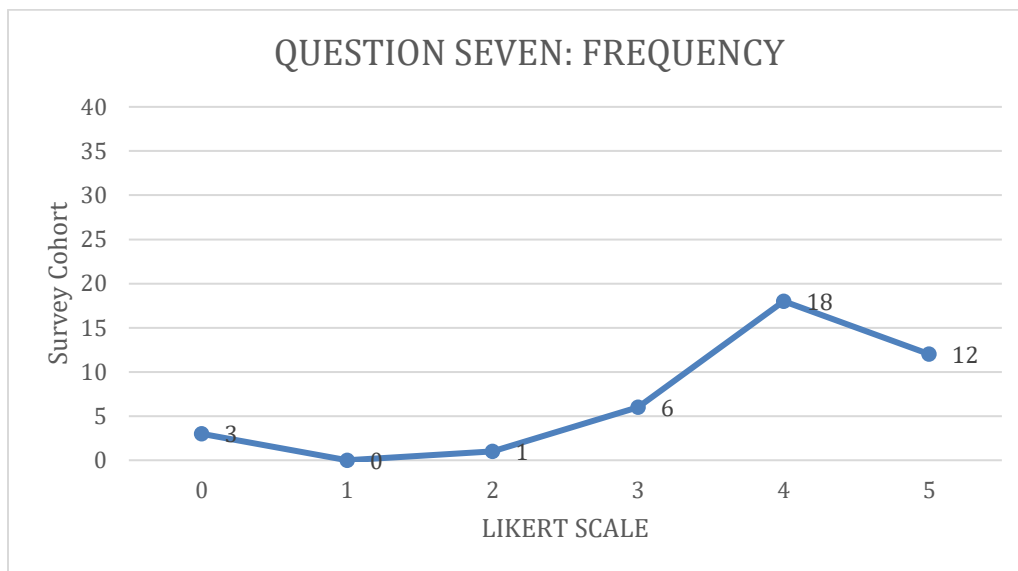
This graph shows that 26 participants (65%) either didn't answer or were neutral (showing a lack of creativity and enjoyment of life). However, 27 respondents (67%) did claim to come up with fun things to do, which reflects their level of enjoyment towards life in general.

Figure 5*Survey B, Question 5*

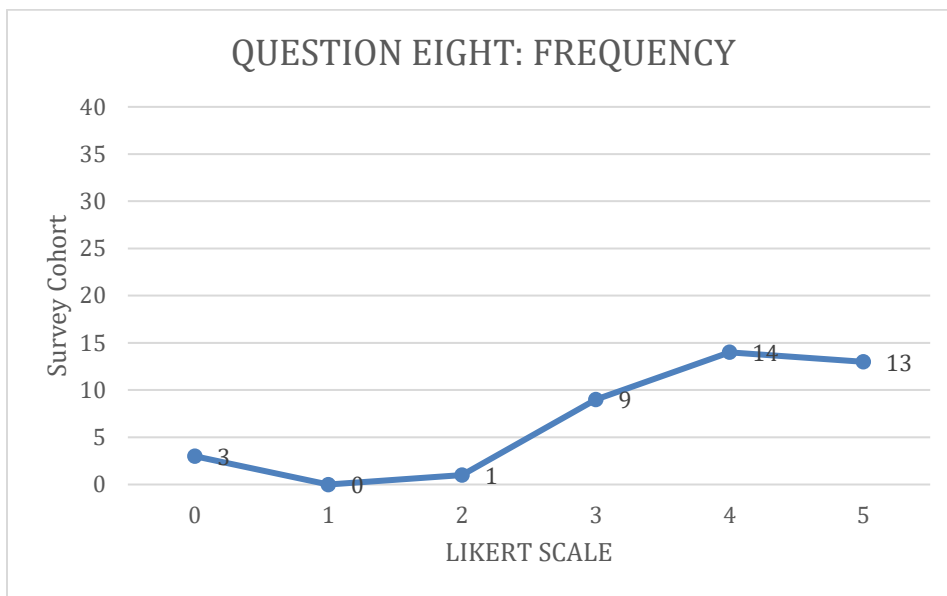
This chart shows an interesting finding. 18 participants (45%) claim to understand their feelings; however, 13 participants (32%) claim to either not have such insight or are neutral on the subject.

Figure 6*Survey B, Question 6*

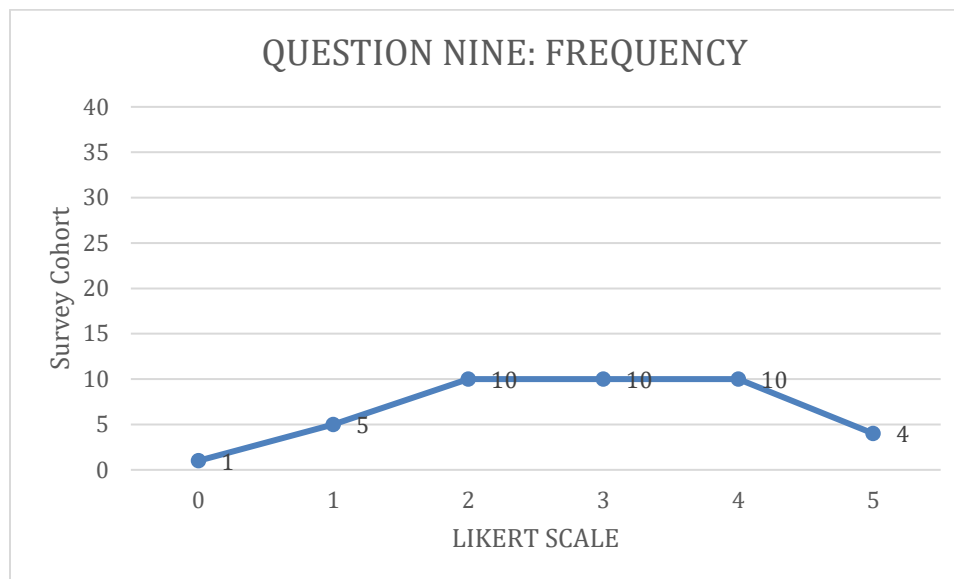
This chart shows an overwhelming percentage of participants (31, i.e., 77%) would practice fairness and follow a “Golden Rule” response. Only 1 participant claimed to respond to a negative stressor with negativity. This is an important result, as it shows that more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of my sample practice positive thinking and behavior.

Figure 7*Survey B, Question 7*

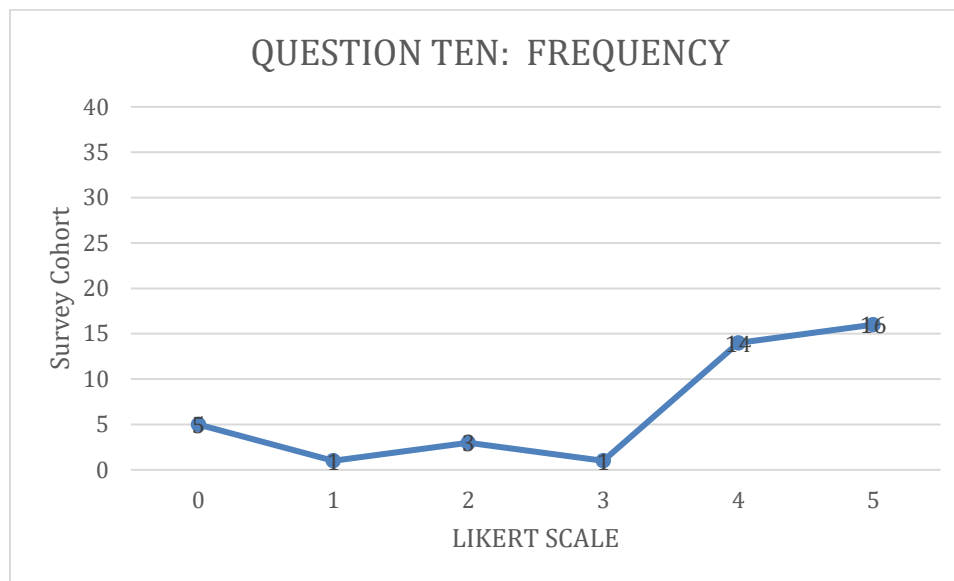
This graph shows that 30 participants (75%) feel they know what really matters most in life (a positive outlook and behavior). Only 1 participant responded in the negative, and 9 either didn't answer the question or were neutral on the subject.

Figure 8*Survey B, Question 8*

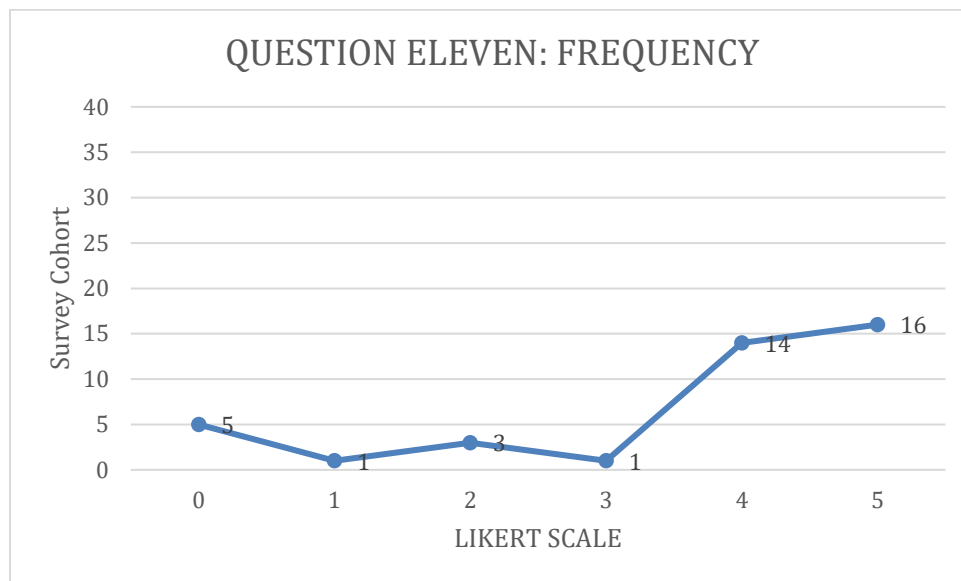
This graph shows that 27 participants (67%) feel they work hard for their achievements. Only one responded in the negative and 12 either didn't have an opinion or were neutral on the topic. This shows that 67% of the study participants claim a positive work ethic, which includes not exploiting others to satisfy a need.

Figure 9*Survey B, Question 9*

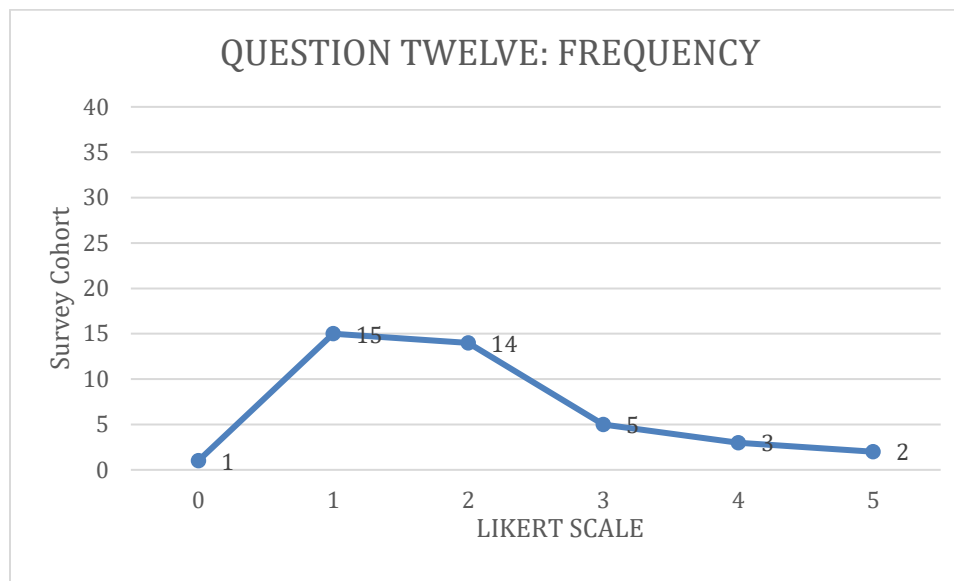
This chart shows that 15 respondents (37%) claim that they will never lie to get themselves out of trouble. 11 participants (27%) were neutral or did not answer. 14 respondents (35%) claimed that they would lie to get out of trouble (a trait that can lead to blame, racist thoughts and racist actions if these participants decide to transfer blame to more vulnerable minorities if it would save them from taking responsibility).

Figure 10*Survey B, Question 10*

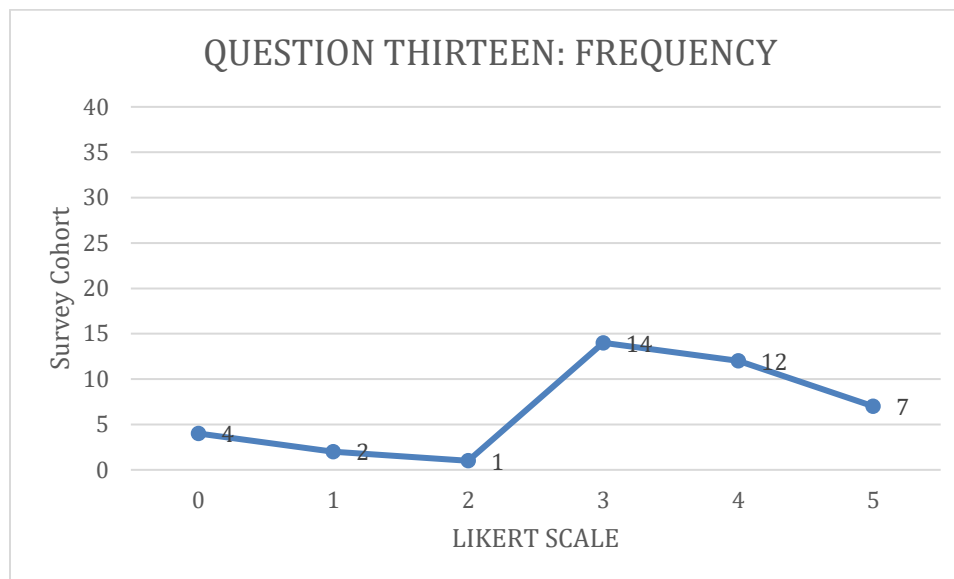
This chart gauges empathy, kindness and helpfulness towards others. 30 respondents (75%) claim that they would help another without being asked, modelling positive thinking and behavior. Four (10%) said they would not, and six didn't answer or were neutral on the subject.

Figure 11*Survey B, Question 11*

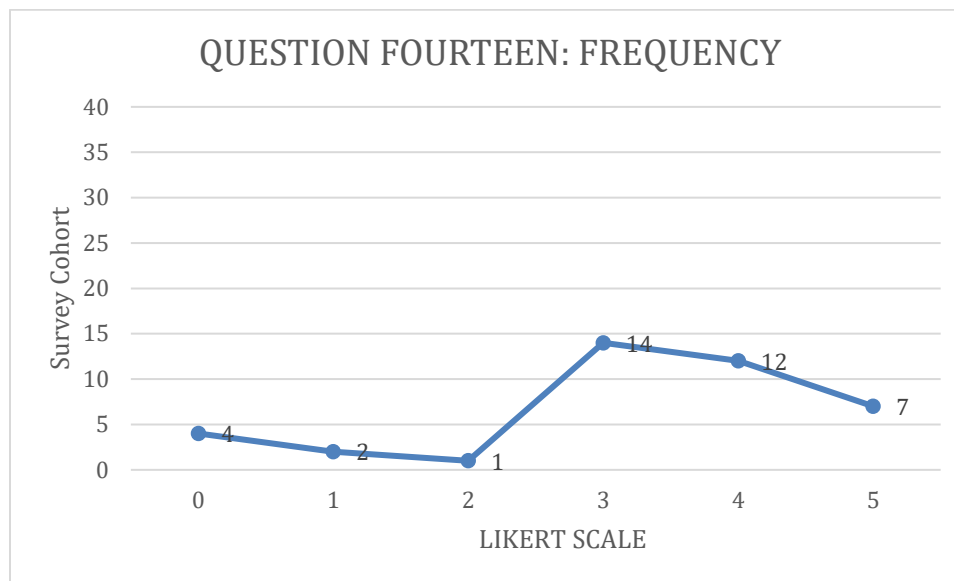
This graph charts forgiveness. 30 participants (75%) would forgive others who have caused them hurt. Six did not answer the question or were neutral. Four (10%) respondents claimed that they would not care for someone if they had hurt them, even if that person were a sibling, friend or cousin.

Figure 12*Survey B, Question 12*

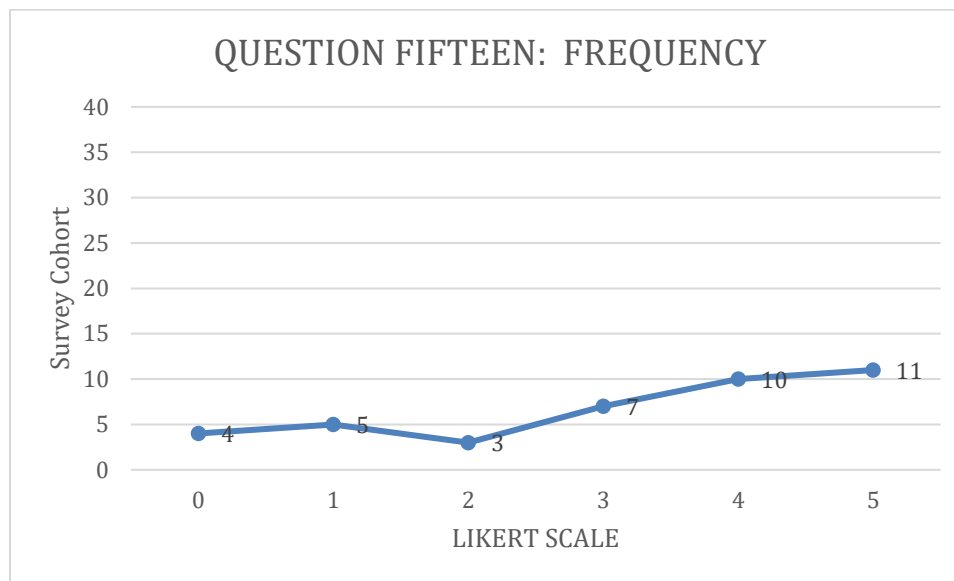
This table reflects a negative skew (with the tail being longer on the right side) because the answers have flipped, with #1 showing a very negative trait & #5 showing a very positive trait).

Figure 13*Survey B, Question 13*

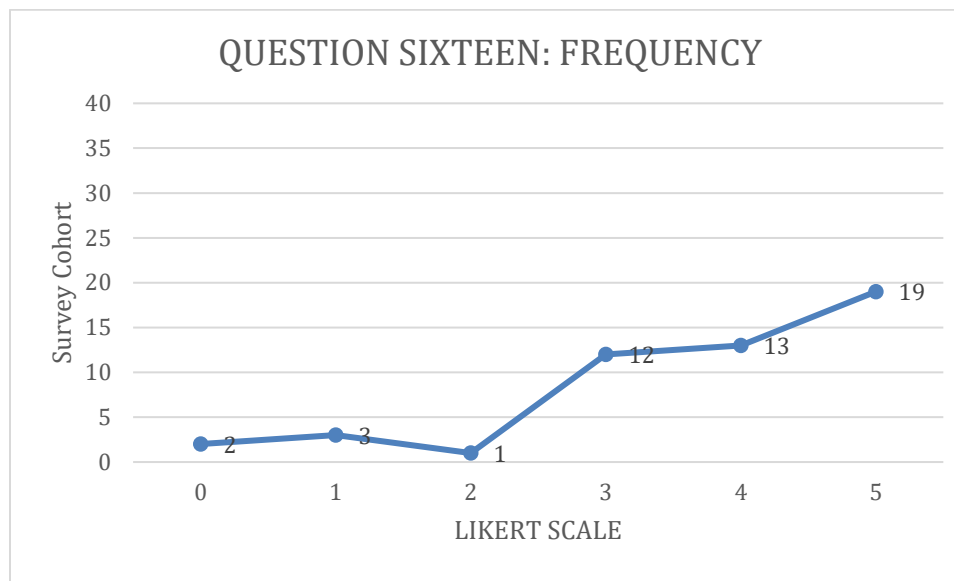
This table reflects that 19 respondents (virtually ½) are very hopeful and positive about their post-graduate future. 14 are neutral; therefore, this may impact future positive outlook.

Figure 14*Survey B, Question 14*

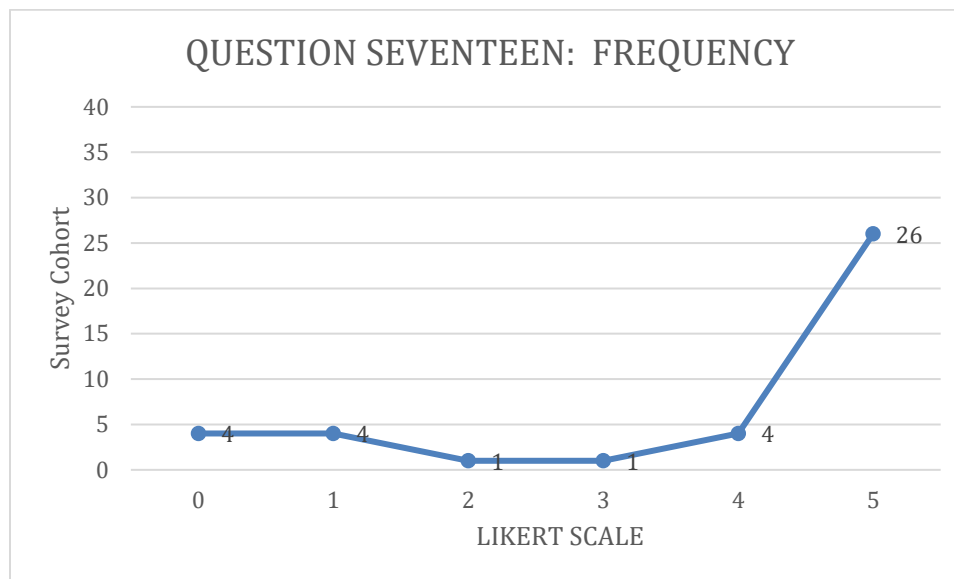
This table reflects that 19 respondents (virtually ½) are very hopeful and have faith in humanity. However, 14 are neutral and 3 demonstrate misanthropic ideas; which may become racist ideas or other negative traits.

Figure 15*Survey B, Question 15*

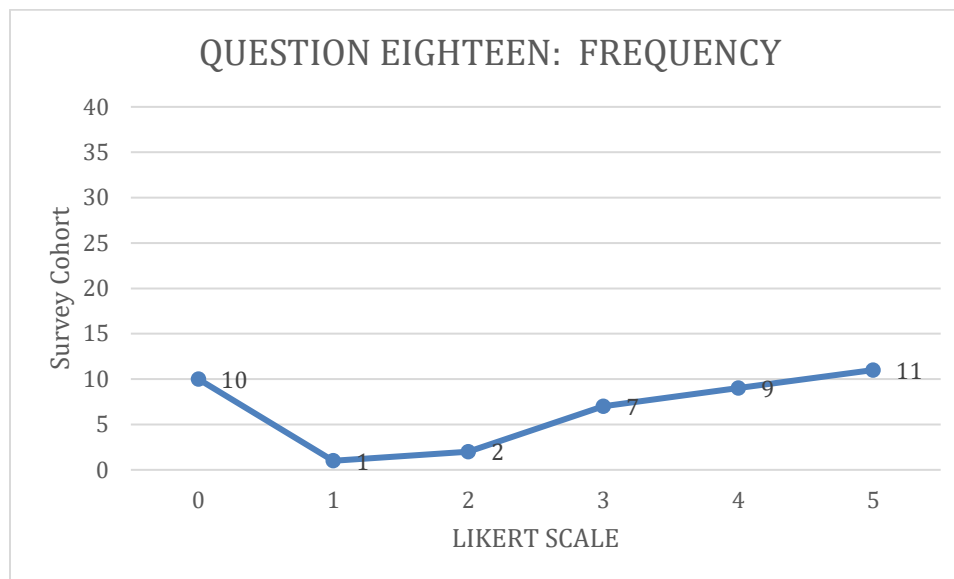
This table shows that 21 respondents feel very close to nature and the beauty of creation surrounding them. The remaining 19 participants either were neutral or declared finding no joy in nature – a negativity that could reflect a lack of positivity in life, the environment & towards mankind.

Figure 16*Survey B, Question 16*

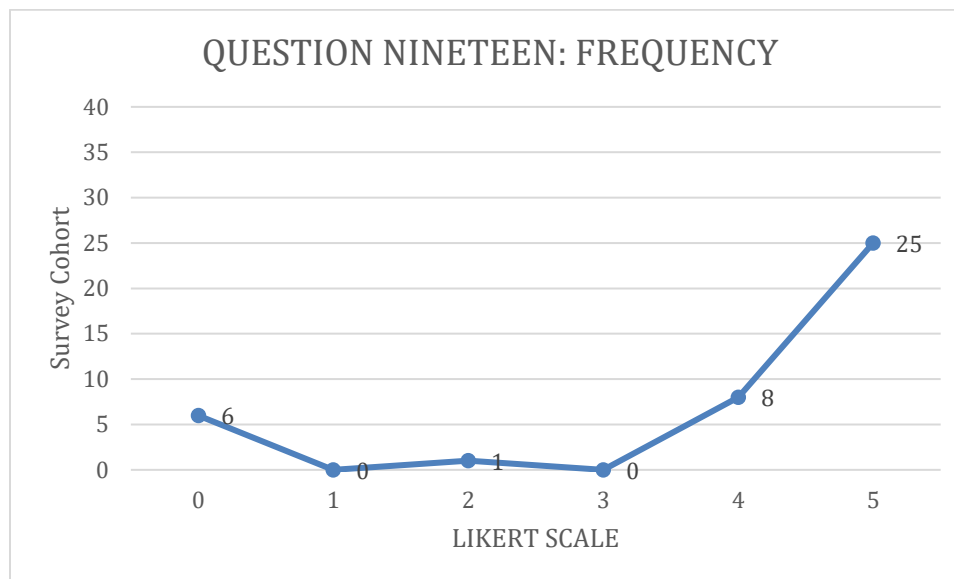
This graph shows that 32 participants (80% of all participants) expressed feelings of kindness and fairness towards others. 12 were neutral and 4 expressed feelings of misanthropy (which might lead to racist ideas.)

Figure 17*Survey B, Question 17*

This graph shows my interpretation of written responses to the question posed. 30 respondents (75%) believe that practicing positive thinking will benefit themselves, others & this nation. Five do not think practicing positive thinking is beneficial and the remainder were either neutral or did not answer.

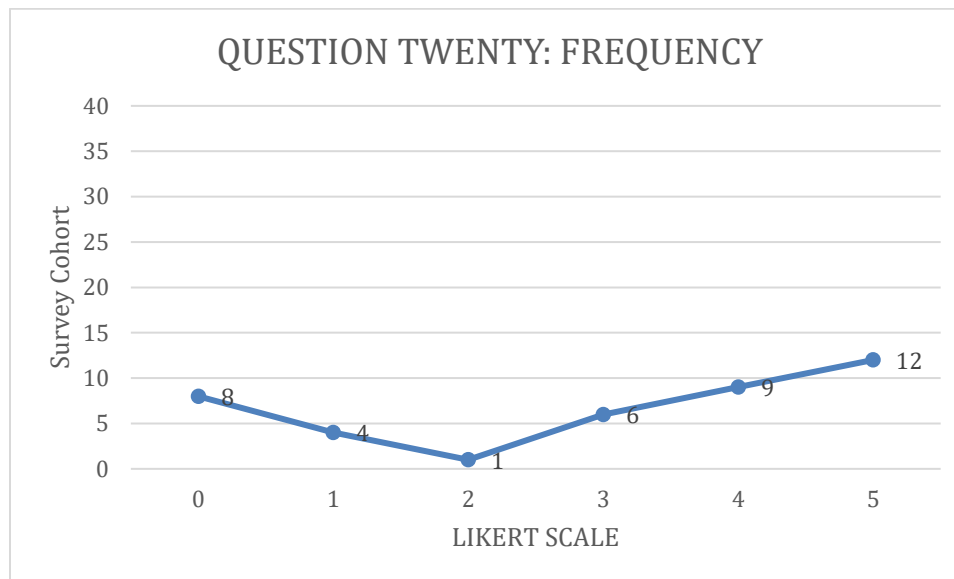
Figure 18*Survey B, Question 18*

This graph shows my interpretation of written responses to the question posed. This chart reflects 10 respondents who didn't answer because they didn't know or didn't understand Critical Race Theory. However, 20 respondents did understand the question and replied in the affirmative that Critical Race Theory may lead to more fairness and greater inclusion in society

Figure 19*Survey B, Question 19*

This graph shows my interpretation of written responses to the question posed.

This graph shows that 33 respondents (82%) felt very strongly that they are not defined ONLY by their race.

Figure 20*Survey B, Question 20*

This graph shows my interpretation of written responses to the question posed. This graph reflects that 14 respondents (35%) either didn't understand the question or were not familiar with Critical Race Theory. However, 21 participants (52%) responded that they did feel that adding positivity to Critical Race Theory studies can improve understanding & personal development

Survey B allows the researcher to see into the enthusiasm and excitement of the student. Participant survey 40, expresses this enthusiasm in “being thrilled when I learn something new.” An open mind and open heart are both necessary elements in reducing racism and racial hatred. In question seven of survey 40, the survey participant feels that it was like them that they,” know the things that really matter most in life.” This question goes to the theme of having “Perspective” about life. This was an important quality since a person with a positive perspective about life has little time for racism or harboring hatred against anyone. Those with perspective take the time to consider the other person’s life and what was fair and equitable to them. They have positive perspective.

In Appendix C you can see that predominately the scores from 3 to 4.5 are in the majority. Scores approaching 5 which are the most positive survey participants are tailing off. In Appendix E you can see the percentage breakdown of the most popular thematic responses. In Appendix F you can see the pertinent response(s) –per participant—which highlight individual beliefs, values and experiences.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthy data was data that was obtained with relatively no bias and not misrepresented by the researcher, goal and administration of the data collection techniques Nowell et al.16(1) (2017). Hence, saturation, reflexivity, and peer review are the three ways which I believe will confirm the credibility of this study of racism, where it likely occurs and how to deal with it in a positive and overcoming manner. Peer review would be appreciated and there was much to learn from the surveys of the student

participants. Reflexivity means to me that any bias which I bring about these subjects, namely, racism, racist events, discrimination, must pass through my filter. As the interpreter of the data, my personal views on racism are clear to me and I strived to minimize bias. I see racism in many different people and in different ways. Some people use racism like a battle cry, denouncing some people they know little about. As one of the participants said, they swear and denounce people and mention their race, in order to get the attention of the crowd. Other people are more subtle and put the person down by limiting their duties in the workplace and in so doing are subtly discriminating against that person or people in their racial group. I believe that both actions are racist in nature and must be eliminated from society. Many nations may call our nation racist and it is undeniable that the US has a history of some racism among some Americans, of various colors. Even in homogeneous cultures within the US (and abroad) racism starts with verbal and written taunts, such as in the beginning of Nazi thought in the 1930's, which by 1940 turned into concentration camps made by the Nazi's to eliminate races and ethnic groups which Hitler did not like. And today we witness racism in the Gaza strip where thousands may die and have already died because of their ethnicity and because of their color, which is colorism.

Credibility was when people believe in you or in this case believe in the veracity of the research and its accuracy. In Chapter 3 there was an explanation of the implementation and/or adjustments credibility strategies. There are eight indicators that the research was credible. First, why was the study done? In this case it was done in

order to answer two primary research questions name RQ1 which first asks about racism, the causes of racism, racial slurs, racial 'jokes and other micro-aggressions, which all can lead to racial discrimination. Credibility, an issue of 'Trustworthiness' as well includes the concept of the internal credibility of the data and was known as "Internal Validity" which includes a discussion of appropriate strategies to establish the credibility of this data, such as triangulation, prolonged contact, if possible, member checks, saturation, reflexivity, and peer review. Saturation in qualitative research, was found when the researcher reviews the data and observes repetition in the data being received, here in the 40 surveys, to the point when the researcher stops seeing new themes, ideas, opinions or patterns in the data and in its codes, categories, themes, assertions and theories. (Saldana, 2021, pp. 18 & 312). Here in my dissertation, I have surveyed 40 public university students asking them to respond to questions about the racism they have experienced as well as questions regarding their understanding of positive psychology and positive thinking, (Seligman, 2002).

This study is transferable. Transferability is how well the analysis fits into a context other than the one studied. As well, one asks "Can the results of the study inform other contexts/research? Yes, because my research uses a prior studied method of how happy, i.e., positive, can a person be and in so being happy can well deal with racist events and address racism in such a way as to reduce its effect. Reliability and transferability seem to be related as concepts and basically it means that whether a tool

such as a survey was done, it will give a consistent answer yielding the same results if applied under different settings.

Dependability was part of the trustworthiness and repeatability of the data that was collected during qualitative research. Dependability was key to trustworthiness of this researcher's data, since it establishes that the research study's findings as being consistent and repeatable. Here, in this research, the findings are consistent with the raw data I, as the researcher, collected. I realize that if the same surveys with section "A" and section "B" were used today, the results would be similar and expected, and that this was consistent and repeatable. Of course, if this survey was given again today, if the economy had worsened and students started university courses a year or two later, this might have a logically acceptable later, by say six months or a year in the average, age of the university participant in first year psychology and/or sociology courses, where many of our participants came from. If other researchers were examining my data, they would come to similar findings, interpretations and conclusions with my data.

This same level of consistency will be found as further dependability of data, because of the follow-up questions some of them being, the qualitative questions which are operationalized by having an interview and asking questions as the interviewer goes along. These questions included:

Question one, "Have you ever experienced racism and/or racial violence in your life, and can you explain how it affected you?"

Question two, "How did this affect you over the long term?"

Question three: “Did such racism and racial violence occur in your school system, and if it did, please describe it in full detail?”

Question four: “How did you address such racism and racial violence in your life or in the lives of others?”

Question five: “Are you familiar with general psychology principles?”

Question six: “Are you familiar with the tenets of positive psychology?”

Question seven: “Do you believe that positive psychology can be used to lessen racism and reduce racial violence in our society, including here around the Boston area?”

Question eight: “How effective do you find positive psychology is in addressing anti-racial speech and racist comments and even racial violence?”

Question nine: “Can racism be eliminated from our society, and how would you propose to do that?”

Question 10: “After employing the tenets of positive psychology to yourself as well as towards others, how effective and how long will it take to change society for the better?”

Question 11: “In the political campaigns, where did you see the most racism, and where did you see the least?”

Question 12: “As a university student, do you feel that positive psychology and its tenets should be used more or less in political campaigns, concerning the issue of racism, immigration, and racial violence?” See (Peck, 2023).

Confirmability means that there was a clear relationship between the data and with the findings about the data analysis. My research here includes a novel approach, which by its nature of being unique, possibly not, at least in sections that are not on a clear Likert scale, be confirmable. If another researcher reviewed the survey, it would likely result in similar findings, i.e., similar codes, categories and theme/answers. There was nothing missed since I asked the two most important to my study, research questions. My study focused on causal factors which create racism and racial violence in present society. I also investigated racism which included but was not limited to, slurs, racist hate speech, racist 'jokes', acts of discrimination and racist events which call for racial and ethnic hatred and hateful racist events. The secondary research question focused on the role positive psychology has in reducing racism. I believe other researches would not need to make any major changes to their approach.

Results

I have organized research questions (RQ)1 and (RQ)2, by themes found in their related support survey questions. (RQ)1 dealt with causal factors which lead to racism and racial violence. After performing my survey at a Boston area public university, I found that both the freshmen and their professors were more open and had the time to take the 30-minute survey. Asking, "What are the causal factors of racism", some of the students may never have contemplated, furthermore this would be more time consuming and making it by the minute less likely that the average participant would have enough time to complete 40 total questions. So, in light of that by asking instead "Have you ever

experienced racism and/or racial violence in your life, and can you explain how it affected you?" By answering this question, the potential answers were also answering at least to the participant body, what are the causal factors of racism, as evidenced in their lives. The themes uncovered in the data from RQ1 are:

The 1st theme was Worldwide Inherent Racism (20% of the participants believe that racism is inherent in all the world's people.)

The 2nd theme was Racism is Taught by Racist Teachers (11.25% of the participants felt that racism was caused by racist teachers.)

The 3rd theme was Lack of Experience with Discrimination (the young @20 years cohort reported not experiencing discrimination. They may not have yet experienced it nor identified with it.)

The 4th theme was Prejudice (15% of the participants used the term "prejudice". which was seemingly a word most favored in the media as well.

The 5th theme was Race (only 1.25% of the participant answers included the word "race" which doesn't seem to be causing a lot of unhappiness among the cohort).

The 6th theme was Hate Speech (3.75% of the participant answers included "hate speech")

The 7th theme was Governmental Racism (3.75% of the participants believe governmental racism was a minor but significant concern.)

The 8th theme was Generational Racism (3.75% of respondents' answers included generational racism.)

The 9th theme was Multiple Racial Incidents (6.25% of the answers describe a concerning trend with participants experiencing multiple negative racial events, e.g., racism spread by racist teachers, by racist media, by government(s) and political leaders, etc.).

The 10th theme was Government-sponsored White Privilege. (Several respondents believe that the US government supports white privilege, to the detriment of all other racial minorities).

The 11th theme was Side-Effects of Racism (many of the participants reported that racism in general creates hurt and then uncontrolled anger in the victim).

(RQ)2, concerns what themes, strategies, philosophy, or science will address racism by either lessening it or eliminating it--methods, which, if properly employed, may significantly help in reducing racism in some quarters. The themes uncovered by the responses to (RQ)2 are:

The 1st theme was Protectors (a school friend, etc., being a shield of sorts to protect their participant friends. This 'protection' lessens the negative effect and pain of racial slurs and racist events on the participant.

The 2nd theme was Bubbly Personality (a participant's "bubbly personality" can help heal and overcome racist events and protect against racial slurs.

The 3rd theme was Positive Psychology Helps and Protects Victims (in conjunction in both themes above) positive psychology was shown to help and protect the

young study cohort from the hurt, pain and fear from racial slurs, prejudice and general racist events.

The 4th theme was that Positive Psychology Provides Clarity (one participant said in the survey, “Why I think what I think.”) Positive psychology provides clarity in dealing with facts and logic and with developing positive solutions to racial problems.

The 5th theme was Positive Psychology Balances CRT (positive psychology may balance the CRT theory and allow it to have better inclusion in our society and in our history).

The 6th theme was Properly Applied Psychology Can Negate Racism (if positive psychology was properly administered it can be used to counter the negative outcomes of uncontrolled racism).

For instance, look at “Black Lives Matter” which was a short-lived movement which sought better financing for ostensibly the lower-class minority which called for home loans among other progressive social laws. That discussion was seen in survey #15. Survey 1 shows that a student participant had to face a racist incident and “was going through a very hard time, it affected my mental health in negative ways.” In participant 2 survey, they have the opinion, “Racial prejudices are inherent in other races because of the standard thought processes people have.” When asked if racial events happened to participant 2, they responded, “Not really any because I am a very bubbly person.” Her bubblyness seems to counteract those negative thinkers who in some instances taunt people with racial slurs, but not them since they are so “bubbly.” Being

bubbly may employ some of the tenets of positive thinking/psychology. Participant 2 had never taken a positive psychology course. Participant 3 feels that racist thoughts come from teachings by racists. According to them, racial events occur “Almost every day in social media, including Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, etc., and outside the school” (public university in Boston). Participant 3’s strategy in dealing with racism was to “stay away from people that disrespect my race.” They handled racist comments “by focusing on myself.” Participant 3 was an outlier because they feel that, both as a Boston area public university student and because of their experience with war in their native country, they are “Only defined by their race.” The effect of a racist incident on participant 6 caused them to be “emotionally distraught for over a week and in the moment, I didn’t address it, but I ended that friendship. Racial events happen infrequently because I have developed strategies to prevent them.” Finally, participant 6 said that “racism isn’t about lies or hate. It’s about systemic inequality and resource hoarding.” With participant 8, in response to the question “Are racial prejudices and ideas inherent in other races?” participant 8 said, “Naturally, no. Nobody is born with racial prejudice of any kind.” So racial prejudice seems to be something that is taught and learned, not automatically found in any human.” Another significant finding with participant 8 is their response to the survey question: “Do racist thoughts come from racist teachers?” which they answer as follows: “Yes, and by those in power who want to keep control by implementing socioeconomic class division.” Finally, participant 8 responded that they were unsure that their influence on people could change them on an individual level. According to

this participant, “Real change needs to take place on a systemic level. When asked the number of racial incidents and where the racial events happened, participant 9 said, “Probably 3 to 4 times a year and that usually happens off-campus.” Participant 12 answered question one about inherent racism in all races as, “I think all races have the ability to be racist. One race was not more racist than another. However, it was undeniable that some races (white) have been provided with structural support, whether it be government, law enforcement, etc.” Participant 13 states that, “Maybe one to five times a year”, (do they experience overt racism). Usually, the questions are about where I am from or that I have to speak English. Usually the racist events are off-campus and in the workplaces. Participant 13 says, regarding following truth and love, that “I will always stand up for others when needed, I will continue to educate myself and others.” To participant 13, standing up for other’s rights was how they chose to address combating and overcoming racism.

Participant 13 also holds that practicing positive thinking was best for their life, the lives of others, and for their country. In specific participant thirteen stated that “Yes, I think if we all thought positively about our lives and what happens, in our day to day (life) we would have a better outlook on life and we all would be much happier. So positive thinking and positive psychology does have a place in lessening racism and educating people to make better choices in their lives. But according to participant thirteen, Critical Race Theory, hereafter CRT, there “was not a way to make CRT more “fair.” “You take those courses to educate yourself in the reality of what many people of

color face in this country. There has been no fairness in their treatment in this country. So, if you take a CRT (course) you should understand that. In conclusion here, it was likely that positive psychology will not properly address CRT or make it more inclusive in our very diverse population. However, that was not to say that positive psychology does not have a place in lessening racism, lessening hate speech and along with empathy, compassion and love, a way of effectively lessening if not in some areas eliminating racial hatred and discrimination. According to participant sixteen says, "Negativity fuels more negativity." Yet, participant 16 feels that positive thinking could make CRT fairer and more acceptable to others in society and allow for more inclusion. In specific participant 16 said, "I believe to educate someone (in this case someone who was a racist; you have to educate them and make them understand your side. The only time I would encourage non-positive thinking was if they're really ignorant and don't want to change. Participant 24 holds that positive psychology could keep them calm. Participant 25 holds that positive psychology would allow him to have a clear head during a racist event. Participant 27 believes that positive thinking, "helps people mentally cope better. As well as allows for a more positive life. No, according to Participant 34, I'm not defined by race, but by things such as "how smart I am, and how I look, at, believe in, etc. Participant 34 also believe that yes, positive psychology can "of course because if people think positively people may be less racist. Racism stems from hate and anger. Less anger equals greater positivity. Participant 35 said, "If you think negative you will be met with negative responses." Participant thirty-five goes on to state that "I love to practice

positive thinking because it helps me have a better outlook on life.” In response to RQ2, participant 35 states, “A lot of people in the media hate CRT, but I think learning about it and better understanding it can benefit society. If we have a different approach, it could allow better teachings.” Participant 36 states, “I believe that racists do not teach directly. I think that racism was taught indirectly because of social media and the world that we live in. When subjected to a racist event participant thirty-six “ignored the incident because they did not want to make a problem in a public place” and this was known as ‘avoidance.’ They ostensibly ignored the racist act because of a desire to be “polite.” Participant 37 believes that “racial prejudices are not inherent to people and are an ideal that was spread through others to incite hate.” Participant 37 also states concerning “teaching of racism was formative and comes from a number of factors, those wishing to succeed will find ways to express their failures. Participant 37 said that though never having been a victim of racism nor discrimination, nonetheless, they feel that “being someone with white skin typically means that people view you as an oppressor.” They also stated that “it saddens me that there are those out there who so willingly embrace hate rather than discourse.” Though different from question 3, this participant answered question four with, “I experience maybe 2 or 3 “racially motivated incidents a year and they most frequently happen when I am out with a friend of color, typically at public events.” This participant had not taken a positive psychology course but had taken a college level psychology course which significantly “introduced some concepts of positive psychology.” Participant 37 also “believe(s) that the way the interaction would

be by de-escalation and talking to the offenders (in an) 1-on-1 to find some common ground.” In response to question 2, “Do racism and racist thoughts come from teaching by racists?”, Participant 37 believes that “a good percentage of the time that the case. Kids watch & learn exhibiting racist behavior guarantees the same acts will be exhibited in the children.” Racist incidents caused this participant to “changed how I look, what I wear, how I act, even what I eat. I no longer associate myself with people I once knew. In response to where these racist events took place participant 37 said, “I ‘ve lost count honestly, mostly public places, occasionally on campus more often bars, parks, malls etc. Participant thirty-nine holds that “racial prejudice can be identified as a result of economic result of economic factors that affect social systems. In all areas of the world there are working class people that can be identified as a “cheap work force” that was exploited. This exploitation was the racism. Finally, participant 40 feels that, “Positive thinking can positively improve one’s understanding in critical race theory.” “This can result in a positive outlook on life.”

Survey A was based on novel codes which the researcher decided on after analyzing the 40 surveys. Question 19 was answered by some of the participants as being homogenous societies that were known not to accept others races which at the same time seems to be not A much of a problem in America. Homogenous population whether Asian, African, South American Arabic, among others seemingly have more racial problems when they are asked to assimilate races much different from their own. The Code which I made for this was called the “Melting-Pot, Adjustment” Some people in

America find for instance this melting pot works well and other times not so well, but an argument could be made that even a melting pot needs some positive psychological thinking if it was to work well. There are limitations to transferability especially in the case of the Survey “B” part of the survey which focuses on the personality of the university student participant and how they react and interact with the rest of the world including interacting with racially motivated detractors in society in the Boston area. As the researcher I asked the student participants to be honest and forthright in their answers or if they were uncomfortable with a question to skip that question. As the researcher I believe that especially the data from the Likert scale based on the research work I did, by following the type of qualitative study that Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman did was very transferable (Seligman, 2002), since it seeks to understand the positive thinking of groups of participants. The other data based on racism, was also transferable to other qualitative type studies, but was more age dependent, because what one age group believes was racism, was much different than what past United States generation may have seen or experienced in the 60’s, 70’s, 80’s and other time periods when civil rights were lacking or when civil rights were being politically fought for.

Strategy implementation was the process of turning plans of action into reaching a desired outcome, as seen in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. The objective here was to show how the personalities of the student participants affect their viewpoints either for positive or for negative and then how that individual reacts to racially charged events in their lives and how personality affects the outcome of racism, racial prejudice, slurs, racial

discrimination and even racial violence on the students and how accurate are those predictions.

As the data was statistically analyzed participant 12 had the most negative thinking answers overall and also received the most negative questions. The curve was left skewed with a standard deviation of .6178. It was a measure of dispersion around the mean. With a mean value of 3,67 we can show the spread of a normally distributed data population. This goes to help make predictions based on a normal distribution. Having such an ability to predict answers leads this study to have proper confirmability.

Participant 12 made the following conclusions. On Survey Part B, participant 12 answered that they are opposite positive thinking people and do get bored. Getting bored is a negative thinking pattern. Participant 12 was neutral about identifying with being a problem solver with friends or others. This too was a negative trait. Negative people get bored and do not see solutions when problems arise with friends or others. As well in question 5, participant 12 tells us that if they are feeling happy, or sad or angry that it was unlike them to know why. This goes to participant 12 not being in touch with their feelings, which also was a negative trait, since if one can't even understand their own feelings how can they understand others feelings. Participant 12 was not in touch with their feelings or their anger or sadness or happiness. As well on question 14, which states that "Even if I do not like someone, I treat that person fairly, was much like participant 12," which though come what likely, still shows a coldness which was like participant 12, to somewhat of a degree .Participant 12, failed to address the questions of positive

thinking, self-improvement and improvement of others, seeking inclusion of CRT, if indeed they have an opinion on it, whether or not participant 12 feels defined by their race and if positive psychology or thinking could help one's understanding of CRT. Finally, look at Question 12, which had the most negative thinking answers. How did participant 12 answer question 12? The question there was if the participant agrees with the statement, "I forget to tell my teachers 'Thank you' when they have helped me." Participant 12 holds that she does thank her teachers and has that gratitude. But they still did not complete the survey nor did she address key thinking issues, which was in a way rather negative.

How can positive psychology be used to lessen and remedy racism? The research tells us (Richeson, J.A., 2018) entitled "The Psychology of Racism," that racism is 'a sign of a lack of psychological maturity an integration.' Richeson has the belief that racism is prevalent, which was a theory in agreement with the Survey Part A, where the code "inherent racism" transforms into a larger theme that racism was worldwide and is reflected in the many foreign students in a Boston area public university. In (Richeson, 2018) there is evidence where anthropologists having studied contemporary hunter-gathering tribes who follow 'the same' cultural ways do not usually participate with hostility to other similar groups. This fluidity of group membership was not indicative of being racist. The fact that different groups interact and inter-marry and make marriage "alliances" shows that these groups are not exhibiting signs of racism (Richeson, 2018). An opposing view was that when humans are shown signs of their own mortality, they

become anxious, greedy, prejudiced and aggressive, (Richeson, 2018). Racism is then a psychological response to feelings of inadequacy (Richeson, 2018). In my current study we find that the average public university student has a positive response to stresses.

This positive response was found in the positive responses in the average of the Survey Part B, questions and answers. This positivity should partly shield these survey participants from racist feelings. At an average Likert score of 3.45, which was positive thinking, Participant 39 gave very detailed and interesting results about racism.

According to Survey Participant 39 racism is developed for obtaining a cheap work force. And this participant feels that they are a constant victim of this racism. Participant 39 feels that this constant racism comes from the fact that they are non-American.

Accordingly, they felt that positive thinking helps the victim not take the comments in a harmful way. Though their understanding of positive psychology was not a traditional one, they still employed positive thinking to reducing the negative effects of racism.

Participant 39 sees that there are three pillars necessary to lessening or eliminating racism which are the intersection of the problems with our economy, our environmental problems and social problems in our country. However, as the researcher I am not in the position to find nor believe that this was mostly just a problem for America, when racism now was worse in many other countries. America was addressing this problem; many other countries are not. Furthermore, with our open borders, criminal racists are emigrating from other countries into America. Racism is a worldwide problem including in communist countries.

It was also proof that positive psychology and thinking reduce and lessen racism if one looks at the most negative of the surveys averages and then review how well those participants did or did not do with addressing racism. Survey 6 has an average positivity score of 2.85. Three was considered neutral, so this value was slightly negative thinking. Next, let's analyze what Survey participant 6 wrote about resolving racism in Survey 6, Section A. Here survey participant earned a low score for three primary reasons. First, they failed to answer the questions about watching the clouds above, the flowers in the fields, and the change of colors in trees during the fall seasons. These questions go to the theme of creativity and gratitude for the gifts of creativity. And the question about forgiving and treating justly a person who you do not like goes to the themes of forgiveness and justice. Survey Participant 6, failed to answer this key question of justice and compassion and mercy. Similarly, Survey Participant 1, also with a low 2.85 survey average, failed to address questions 17 to 20. This meant that issues like social responsibility, caring for others, and creativity in compromise to gain inclusion in social values, also was not addressed by Survey Participant 1. These are unmistakably also issues, codes, and themes of successfully addressing racism, racial violence and racial discrimination in society. Without these virtues, which this respondent failed to address, you cannot possible have a positive and successful handling of racial issues in our society. Participant one by not answering 17 to 20, either reflects that they do not know how to apply positive psychology or that they do not want to apply it. Furthermore, they are not interested in the inclusion of CRT with Positive thinking. There was truth in both

theories but this participant was not willing to take that chance to find peace with others. I also understand upon reflection that many students having worked over 30 minutes on average with the other survey questions probably also tired of answering questions and gave up on the final four short answer questions.

The first item which I looked at as the researcher was the implied and given codes for this study. The codes I discovered began with “inherent prejudice.” As a code, “inherent prejudice or racism” was a very prevalent code. This went on to “racism among different races” and “Racism can come from Racist Teachers.” These are followed by a code, “Slurs lead to Racial Discrimination.” One student survey participant had taken a positive psychology course. As the researcher I accept this as “Positive Thinking or Psychology, as a code. Another code was “Not a Victim because of friends.” In other words, if you had friends in your classes, you were insulated from racial slurs or ‘jokes’ and were not emotionally or physically hurt from the taunts of others. Survey participant 2 presented a new concept and code, “happiness and positive responses.” This stems from the participant believing that as a happy person who thinks positively, they can overcome racial discrimination. Participant 2 also believes that they handled a racial incident in the best positive manner. Among public university students this was a very prevalent feeling. From what I witnessed as the researcher I found that these students were very kind, peaceful and helpful. And they were grateful as well. Another code Participant 2 exhibited was that, “Positive Thinking Can Overcome Negative Thinking” or succinctly, “Positivism overcomes Racism.” This is closely related to a code, “Spread

Love and Positive Thoughts.” Another related code was “Positive Thinking makes Fairer Choices.” “Bubbly Personality Loved,” was a concept code based on the personal disclosure one participant made about themselves which was an admission that was totally private and untraceable. The next code was “Positive Thinking Helps CRT adoption.” The next apparent code was “Social Media Can Promote Racism.” Social media can promulgate racial ideas and prejudices and racist discrimination. The challenge here that the survey participants find was how to use positive thinking to make fairer decisions with social media and yet not introduce negative thoughts such as racial slurs and discrimination speech. Although it is true that some countries experience less racism than America, it is still possible that U.S. racism can occur because it is a very big “mixing pot” with many non-indigenous races. One can expect some racism because of the mixing of non-homogenous races. Positive thinking and positivism and positive psychology all give us hope that such a code as “Love and Positive Thought overcome Racism,” was a code that was important to addressing racial issues.

Another code was “Latent Effects Racism” which entails people being racially slurred but having some racial jokes ignored and racist ideas be seen as “ok” when they were not. This leads to a code and to a category when “Friends Forgiven with unresolved racism.” What this “Latent Effects of Racism” translates into was emotional distress that then causes later breakups when the victim can no longer accept the intolerance of the racist. Overall, positive thinking including with Participant 11, lead to more happiness and less victimization by racists in the larger world. New codes were created with

participant 12 such as “Anger Response as Racist Victim.” As well a new code could be found in, “Lack of Positivity training and no Psychology Training” led to subconscious racism.

The public university students seemingly made choices not to be racists and not to succumb to racism but to stand up to it. This was one of the reasons that positive thinking student participants answer with kindness and positive thinking and in so doing lessen the negative effects of racism.

Positive thinking according to Participant 13 leads to a happier life. Participant 13 feels they can better understand and appreciate CRT when they can understand CRT from a positive and objective point of view. But they are also realistic about the unfairness and cruelty that has been shown towards those of color. Those with no positive strategy towards handling workplace racism can expect limited success in stopping racism. Survey participant 14 has codes about teaching positive psychology creating a good atmosphere. Code would be “Positive Psychology Creates Good Day.” The next code with participant 15 was “Inexperienced in Understanding People Leads to Racism.” As well, a code “Overcoming Racism with Self-Confidence,” was an important code springing from this participant’s understanding of their ancestry and accomplishments. Another code which has deep implications was found in Participant 16’s survey analysis. Here we have a code which was, “Social Media unaware of social implications.” The participant’s responses were that racism comes not just from teachers but from the tv and movie media.

Participant 16 experienced “other whites making racist and prejudiced comments. The patterns which I, as the researcher saw, were ones in primarily with RQ1, or the “A” Survey which focuses on the causes of racism, the discriminatory effects of racial slurs, racial unfairness which spreads injustice, including economic injustice. There also was positive thinking and positive psychology which along with an individual’s ‘bubbly personality’ can actually help protects university students from racial pain. In general, positive thinking seems to overcome racial discrimination in the public-school arena, from what the student participants are reporting in the survey. And it was not easy to combat social media and internet racism, since on one level legislators are concerned about 1st Amendment rights to free speech balanced by a concern not to promote speech which can be riddled with racist comments. There may be jokes on Twitter, for instance, which may be prejudiced if not racist. It was a challenge to eliminate such racism but needs to be carefully addressed so as not to violate the rule of law and the Constitution. Participant 16 feels that it is important to ignore rude comments and speech of others and replace them with a code “Civility”. According to Participant 16, people deprived of positive thinking tend to focus on their own personal reaction to racism. Participant 16 sees others as “being multi-faceted” and not necessarily defined by their race. After examining Participant 16’s survey, it can be shown that they believe that by adding positive thinking to CRT, it will help others understand and appreciate CRT, in a positive manner, that was realistic and which offers positive solutions to addressing past wrongs. Positive thinking helps others to better understand how to positively address racial issues

of the past and present. Participant 17 has been a victim of some racist incidents. Participant 17 feels they have been isolated from others because of their Indian/Asian background. They feel marginalized because of differences in American English and Indian languages. Participant 17 feels that they have been racially and socially isolated. Participant 17 though they feel truth and love will overcome racism, they also do not agree that positive thinking and its tenets can make CRT fairer and more acceptable to others in society. According to this code and thought there was no compromise nor negotiation. As a researcher I can understand why a number of people believe this, but was taking a hardline to those who have not been involved in past injustices, should they be lumped in with others who have benefited or worse yet be directly involved? Cannot positive psychology lead to a deeper understanding of CRT? Can unfairness lead to true justice? This participant seems to feel that either full restitution or reparations are due, even when our nation faces potential insolvency. The code word here is "Positive Psychology Cannot Improve the Inclusion of CRT." Participant 17 mixes both negativity including feelings of isolation, with inexperience in how to benefit all peoples and as well experience "Forgiveness of Others."

I also note that the code "Affection & Love" were also found in the surveys. Survey "A" dealt with racial prejudice as seen in Participant 16, a 21- year- old white female's point of view. In column "O", we see that the average response of participant is I 3.44 which was somewhat positive thinking. The mean which represents the sum of total values in a data set divided by the number of values, [_ \(bing.com\)](http://bing.com). According to

bing.com, the mean measures the Bell curve of values which was the “central value around which a set of values, tends to cluster”. Mean (or the arithmetic average) was the sum of all the scores divided by the number of scores , (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016) Concisely, the mean is the sum of observations divided by the number of observations. The median in Survey B with the participant’s ages was 19.83 or rounded up an average age of 20, for the respondents. The mode is the value that is most common in a dataset. Here, in the study, the average age was calculated by adding the ages up in the completed surveys and dividing that number by 40. The average age of the participant in this study was about 20 years old.

The Mean value of the responses given are calculated for each individual participants 1 to 5 answer given, which for a non-response earns a zero and each negative thought response equals a 1, while a 3 was for a neutral but actual response, and a four was a positive response, while a five was the most positive thinking ideal enthusiastically accepted positive thinking. Again, one was “do not agree”, 2 was “somewhat disagree” and 3 was “neutral or neither agree nor disagree” and 4 was “agree” while 5 was “totally agree,” with the given statement, which are based on the tenets of positive thinking as it relates to positive psychology.

Question3, in my survey, was the one question with the most positive answers. What was so notable about that was that Participant 12 chose “5” meaning participant 12 most readily agreed to the positive statement

In Martin E. P. Seligman's book, *Authentic Happiness*, (2002), he in effect, pre-coded the nodes including for curiosity, love of learning, judgment, ingenuity, social intelligence, perspective, valor, perseverance, leadership, self-control, prudence, humility, appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, spirituality, forgiveness, humor, and zest. The five key "Categories" to positive thinking in the participants of this survey are 1. Wisdom, 2. Knowledge including the love of learning, 3. Courage, 4. Humanity and 5. Justice which includes Citizenship and Fairness.

The codes I developed are the following. – 1. Gratitude, 2. Hope, 3. Spirituality 4. Humility and 5. Forgiveness. These are the positive potential traits of the survey participants. This information and codes will be used to determine how in RQ1 the student participants react to and deal with racism, racial prejudice, racial slurs and racial discrimination. As well the character and outlook of these participants will be compared to their response to questions 16 to 20 in the survey part B of my research survey.

Codes specific to Part B which in part asks about racial issues and includes the Category C1 which is Negative Beliefs, as well as Racist Teachings, Racial Anger, Irrational racist thought, racial discrimination and Colorism.

Granting Kindness, Lessening of Racism, Positive thinking directly Lessing Racism, is another positive psychology code, Empathy & Love, are as well in Category 2.

Those that have scored lower than 3 in the Likert scale and who have avoided the harder questions about racism and have not been scored as being positive thinkers in

Survey B, which looks to find the truly positive thinkers and separate them from the negative thinkers and those who do not wish to think and find answers.

Summary

The results of my research uncovered a great many themes, pertaining to both perceived causes & proposed remedies for racism.

Racism is inherent in all races, unfortunately. For public university students in the liberal Boston area, you will still find racism in the workplace, in the schools and even in stores. Racial jokes may seem harmless to some people, but they are the precursors to racial slurs and those not only hurt people they can leave their victims with lifelong pain. Participant 27 believes that racial prejudice was inherent in other races and was part of the media, society, social groups, help with the upkeep on these ideas. The media and government have a role in how people are views and treated and even discriminated against. Some participants had more experience with course knowledge, and they had a deeper understanding of “social norms” and “economic” and “environmental” causes of racism found in teachings involving racism. In particular, racial prejudice and racist ideas are inherent in other races. Furthermore, racial prejudices can be the “result of economic factors that affect social systems. The “working class” are a “cheap” workforce which can be “exploited” by racists, all over the world. In this public university case, the students out in the workplace are likely part of the cheap workforce and have experienced more racism in the workplace than they do in the university itself.

In analyzing Section “A”’s questions we find that racial prejudice and ideas are “inherited” in other races. According to participant 40 they believe that racism comes from the racist’s environment and was taught “by others.” Participant 40 felt that they had been a victim of racism and were discriminated against. When you cross reference participant 40, their mean average range of positivity was 4.3 in the questions that Participant 40 answered. They were positive in their world outlook that the Seligman analysis found and yet they recognized they had been exposed to racism and had been discriminated against. Participant 40 said that this racist event and discrimination had negatively affected their mental health and they asked the racist to stop their “discriminatory jokes.”

In regards to the second research question which asks whether or not positive psychology and positive thinking. The mean average response for Section B was 3.51. This means that the students are somewhat positive in their response to life and to overcoming racism. If 3 would be the average response then the public university students would have been neutral. And if 2 was the mean average then the public students would have been seen as being negative toward their view of life. It was my interest that the mean average in the future would step by step head to a 4 and ultimately, if possible, to a 5 response.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate how to identify and then to reduce racism by employing methods such as “positive psychology.” The nature of this study was to determine which are the personalities of the University student population whose personality and character more effectively addresses racism, racial events, racial discrimination, racial slurs and racial violence, if any.

The primary research question (RQ)1 was “What are the causal factors which create racism and racial violence in present society?” (Peck, 2023). Racism includes but is not limited to, slurs, racist hate speech, racist ‘jokes’, acts of discrimination and racist events which call for racial and ethnic hatred and hateful racist events. Research question two was (RQ)2: “How can teaching positive psychology as part of a Boston-based college education framework impact and lessen racism and decrease racial violence in Boston?” This was a novel approach and there was no pilot study; however, the researcher had studied some related research in some of the subject matter. The nature of this study was to determine the sample participants and the sample size and generate the sample size number of surveys which leads to proper data collection as long as it has a consent form attached which explains and discloses the terms of the survey study to the potential participants. This study was conducted in part so one could better understand what constitutes the term “racism” and “discrimination” and “racial slur” and other forms of racist events, (RQ)1. The other reason (RQ)2 was to determine what are public

university student's response to such racist events, slurs, racial jokes, discrimination and other racial bad acts. My findings in this study are the following. First, the public university students overall have a positive attitude towards life and towards their studies. From their responses to the survey, they were very happy to take the survey and overall, they wanted to share their understanding of what racism is and what it is not, with me. They honestly overall had not experienced racial violence, and this was likely because they are a relatively young group with an average age of 20 years. Some of this group of participants viewed racial jokes and jest as funny but not as a racist event. However, other students in this group believed that jokes that seemed innocuous, could actually be or turn out to be damaging to them and to others and therefore should be not laughed at, but instead extinguished. The next level of racist acts are racial slurs. Slurs, according to some of the participants, hurt them and in one case hurt their "psyche". What this means was that the hurt from a racial in some cases, made to a young person, can hurt them, for many years as they grow up. Such slurs can lead to discrimination in school, in the workplace and in public events, and in shopping centers, among other venues. Racial slurs can end friendships right away. Happiness which helps overcome these negative events, comes in part from positive thinking. Society benefits from the peace that was generated from positive thinking and positive psychology. Another find was that racism is inherent among races and is found in schools. Racist teachers and teachings can have a negative effect on young students. People expressing "bubbly" positive personalities and thinking can effectively help overcome the racism in others. Since public schools are part

of civil government and are controlled by government, governments have racism in them. This was in agreement with the findings from the surveys that racism is inherent among all races. Student survey participants also found racism embedded in TikTok, Facebook and other media portals. Many student participants believe that happiness requires positive thinking, love and affection. Some student participants. Some student participants did not believe that racism was inherent in all world's people. But they did believe that positive psychology could improve the inclusion of Critical Race Theory in the thoughts of others, concerning their views of racism in America. Participant 12, found that governments support white privilege. Such unfair privilege leads to discrimination. To avoid discrimination the government should strive to treat all peoples equally.

My key findings are as follows: There was no racial violence that was found in this study with the University students. However, there were racial incidents, mainly verbal and some discriminatory. Some University students experienced racial slurs which were upsetting to them and other University students though concerned viewed some of the racial remarks and potential slurs as being bad "jokes." Other University students saw these remarks as offensive. And still other students felt that any racial comment was slur and that the people, including other students, making those bad comments, should be stood up to, re-educated on proper manners, or somehow punished for making those unnecessary remarks. Some students felt that racism was "inherent" among other races. Others felt happiness and love can overcome "racism." Most of the

students had not taken a course in positive psychology. However, many students had taken “Introduction or General” psychology or were in the process of taking such a course. Many University students found that social media such as TikTok and Facebook had racist talk and disrespectful ‘chats’ on them.

Some students who had natural “positive thinking” including one having a “bubbly” personality found that her “bubbly” personality helped insulate her from racial slurs, discrimination and other racial events. According to some University students, there was less racism in their countries but that can be caused by homogeneity of the cultures in their country compared to the large diversity of races in the U.S. America has a “melting pot” not seen in many other countries. There was a cost to the University students when a “friend” makes a racial statement which hurts others. Racism therefore was a negative emotion and a negative belief, which was supported by the responses of Participant 12. The average answer value of Participant 12 was 2.1 which shows that they are not positive thinkers. As well Participant 12 admitted to finding racism, racial discrimination and angry racism, in stores, schools and work. Participant 12 reports that each year they experienced 13 racial events per year, which was much higher than the response rate of the other 39 University participants. Participant 12, found angry racists were found in daily life at places such as work, school, stores and even in pubs.

This dissertation also finds that one race was not more racist than another. Positive thinking helps Critical Race Theory achieve its goal which was to be accepted by other races. Whereas it was true that there is more political, governmental and police

support for whites, still whites are not necessarily more racist they just have more support. This is likely because of the tax structure which is supposed to help those in need without devastating those that pay more into the system. Regardless whites have more support, which may lead to racism. We see these ideas expressed by Participant 12.

Participant 18 expresses that they see the pain that those of color have endured. CRT has expressed the pain and unfairness exhibited in America from 1860 to 1960.

Interpretation of the Findings

This was a novel approach so there was no peer-reviewed literature. By its very nature this study extends the knowledge in the areas of psychology, sociology, racial studies, education, and criminal and civil bad behavior.

The conceptual framework was positive psychology and its tenets. There was little past research applying these concepts to lessening racism, especially racism at a public university.

Chapter Two asked for peer-reviewed literature. I searched for some, but frankly there was little to none since my premise was researched in a novel manner. It was my premise that with typical racism and the typical types of factors causing racism, that I was interested as a researcher to determine if the tenets of positive psychology could be employed to reduce racism in the public university realm or not. No research was attempted to show, in the past, that positive psychology could be employed to lessen and even less likely to eliminate racist events, jokes, slurs, unfairness, and discrimination. Furthermore, where it seems unlikely especially with a sub-group of the participants, who

are identifiable as more aligned with negative thinking about the world, which was in a Likert scale of 1 to 5, likely a 2 score which was fairly negative. The average score for this participant pool was 3.85 which means that most of the student survey participants personality wise were somewhat positive thinkers, but not very positive nor mostly positive thinkers. There was a lot of doubt and skepticism in the participant pool. The literature I depended upon was the research study by Dr. Martin E.P. Seligman. His book, "Authentic Happiness" was key to my understanding of what at the time in the 1990's was meant by positive psychology, starting with the paper by Sigmund Freud, (1923) entitled "Thus the competitiveness." In Sigmund Freud's book, he defines positiveness as being pleasurable whereas negative thought was unpleasurable. Martin E. P. Seligman went on further to define the tenets of positive psychology.

I do not as a researcher make broad wide conclusions and hence, I do not exceed the data, instead I stick exactly to what the participants give as their answers about racism, its causes, their personal experiences with racial incidents and how it made them feel.

How I as the researcher define my research was that unlike the past research done by Martin E.P. Seligman which was about happiness and the pleasure derived from positive thinking, my research was about using positive psychology and its tenets as a tool. The tenets of positive psychology are:

- Analyze and interpret the findings in the context of the theoretical and/or conceptual framework, as appropriate.

- Ensure interpretations do not exceed the data, findings, and scope, and,
- Ensure recommendations do not exceed study boundaries.

The findings of the proper codes, categories, themes, assertions and theories are as follows. There was a belief in university students that there was inherent racism in those of other races. The students tend to see racism in the Boston area to be infrequent. Of course, none of them likely has lived in the trouble sections of Boston. The University students tend to believe they successfully have dealt with racism when it does become apparent. Giving positive thoughts gains positive thoughts was one conclusion that I have come to, thru the submitted data.

The literature I dealt with in Chapter 2 dealt on the one hand with negative thought and was about experiencing racism, in class, but more likely out in the world, including at work, at the bars, at sports and entertainment venues. Jessica Lee published an online article in Snopes in 2020 claiming David Bowie, in the past, identified Adolf Hitler as an early rock star, and Roger Waters, Rock Star of Pink Floyd, was a current example, when Roger dressed up in a Nazi-Like Costume. See [Roger Waters: Police launch investigation after Pink Floyd co-founder dons Nazi resembling uniform at concert | PINKVILLA](#)

Some interpretations regarding positive thinking and virtuous behavior and the reduction of racism and racial violence are reflected in Survey participant 33, who received the highest positive thinking score of 4.65. The only ones near that score were those with a 4.18. In survey 33, this student in question 14, answered that it was very

much like him to, "...believe that each person is special and has an important purpose in life." A person with such a strong view of his fellow human that they are special with an important purpose in life, was likely not going to be a racist or involved in racial violence, since they value all of humanity, in a very strong way.

Notice that in Survey 33 this survey was the most positive survey with an average score of 4.65. That means that this participant was the most positive thinking of the 40 participants. How does this compare with my Survey A on racism. Remember this is a novel approach so there was no directly peer-reviewed literature as mentioned in chapter 2. However, there are studies about teachers and racism as well as community racism, and other studies on the benefits and effects of positive thinking and psychology.

If you refer to survey 33 section A on racism, then Research Question 2 would be answered in the affirmative if the very positive participant 33, has a better way of handling racism and racist events.

Looking at participant 33 response to racism says that this participant believe that racial prejudice and ideas are inherent in other races. Participant 33 also believes that racism and racial thoughts come from teachings by racists. Participant 33 also states that they have been the victim of a racist event, slur, joke or an act of discrimination. Participant 33 states they have been stereotyped as a Muslim for following their religion. It is very significant that a person with the highest positivity score is one who seemingly faced some of the hardest discrimination and feelings of anger by others. Over time Participant 33 tells us that this discrimination has lessened and yet was still found in

society. Despite being positive thinking, Participant 33 states that they “always put up a fight.” Most importantly according to Participant 33, they spoke up for themselves and put down the racist event from continuing.

Participant 33 had a Likert score of 4.65. Compare this with a score of 3.40 for Participant 39. This was a drop of 1.25 in positivity or a 27% percent less positivity. How does that relate to Participant 39’s handling of racism according to the survey? Participant 39 states that racism was a result “of economic factors that affect social systems,” In the opinion of participant 39, “work class people that can be identified as a ‘cheap work force,’ that can be exploited. Here participant 39 was less positive that racism was inherent and taught by racist teachers, but instead believes that racial prejudice and racism are economic factors and affects societies. These become social norms which result in a reflection of economic and environmental problems.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations to trustworthiness that arose from the execution of the study was not know the details of what on survey participant felt was a real racist incident while another survey participant saw a more violent or harmful racist event. Impressing the student to reveal what the actual fact pattern was, was important for the research to learn what venue and under what conditions did racially discriminatory or violent events occurred. For instance, one University participant number 8, felt that they experienced racism “once every two years when I am with my mother or family.” This could be interpreted that racism for that family was somewhat to very limited over a two-year

period and only when the participant was with her family. Other participants such as Participant 18, just gave the number 2, for the number of racist events that occurred. It was for this reason that whether the person was positive and looked at things from the most positive point of view, it was difficult to know whether they could see the full reality of racism. It would be helpful to have the University student go into deeper detail of what actually happened in that “racial incident,” to be able to better categorize it.

The fact that only forty surveys were done in order to meet the minimum requirements for a qualitative study, was possibly, but not necessarily, a limitation on the trustworthiness of this study. However, in qualitative research 40 surveys was considered enough to allow the verification of the study.

Upon the execution of the study, I learned both about the individual participant and what they thought and believe and what the group as a whole believes. The age range of the study was limited to some degree since the age range hovers around the age of twenty. However, the participants had many different experiences and there was trustworthiness found in such a study because of the many unique opinions and revelations of facts in this survey.

Recommendations

Further research should be done first asking what the University student had studied about in the psychology course(s) which they had taken and how those courses influenced their thinking. It was, after all, important to understand what a person believes was a negative racist incident and what was an unfortunate or angry comment,

but no necessarily racist in nature. Some of the university student participants were more positive in nature than others. The strength of this survey was that the average response was from a positive point of view. The average response was mean of 3.67. This shows that the student participants leaned to that positive side and this was reflected in their answers. This was a strength. The fact that students were inexperienced in both their understanding of the tenets of positive psychology and in their definition of what racism was and racial discrimination. Very few student participants said they had seen any significant amounts of racism and racial incidents, regardless of the fact that downtown Boston has in Dorchester for instance, a number of racial crimes and shootings. University student survey 8, stated, "Boston is very progressive, so I think I will be judged by my actions." This was an admirable trait, but it tends not to see the rest of reality. This was a limitation to this study.

This study was based on two major themes. First theme was that racism can be subtle such as in seemingly harmless jokes, that if internalized can later be expressed as a racial slur. Such a group of slurs can desensitize those employing the slurs, and later be transformed into racist actions, including the possibility of violence but more likely into discrimination and into the desire to separate the victim from the general population. It was my recommendation to further this survey to older generations at the public university. As well this survey can be expanded to the workplace if the management of the workplace is open to such a study being done. A deeper study of the positive emotions that Sigmund Freud wrote about (happy, content, excited, calm) could be

examined, as well. Upon the conclusions from the positive response, then the negative emotions that Sigmund Freud wrote about could be studied, such as (anger, hatred, sadness, upset, scared). These are within the study boundaries since many of the current study participants mentioned in their responses, happiness, excitement, anger, pain or sadness, and other relevant emotions.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The potential impact for positive social change at the individual level is that this study allowed and encourage the student participants to see themselves in a true light and then to see whether their thinking was neutral to the outside world or in reality positive now towards the outside world. A follow-up survey could have been done or could be done five years from now, if asked for at the time of the original survey which would shed light on whether more experiences in the real world would mean that the students would experience more significant racism in the work place and in the sports arena and even in entertainment places. At the family level, the family could have more discussions about racism and whether it had impacted their family, and how to deal with racism on the family level. At the organizational level, this study can show that educational and sports venues can also bring racism into the lives of the general public. However, in this my study we did not find that the student participants had experienced this kind of racism. More they had experienced racial jokes and potential discrimination. There was little or no racial violence reported. Boston may be progressive in the educational area of

a public university, but this fails to explain racial prejudice and violence in the Dorchester areas, of Boston, for instance. It was not part of this study to find if racial shootings could be addressed by positive thinking, alone. Instead, a better policy towards the needs of society could develop in university students who first studied the tenets of positive psychology and the tenets of Critical Race Theory but only if these students learned more about both psychology and what the history is of our society.

Happy people are those satisfied with their lives. From what I observed as the researcher 95% of the student encounters I had at the Boston area public university, were at least on the service, happy. They were willing to take the survey, they were smiling, and they were kind. One or two of the participants may have said that they were negative thinkers, but that could be since they are skeptics or prone to doubt. Most of the respondents were on the positive side of thought having on average from the Likert scale a 3.85 where 4.0 is somewhat positive and 5.0 was extremely positive in thought. Just as with individual positive thought there was a social benefit since people like to be around happy people. A family that as a whole practices positive thinking was going to have a happier life together and when problems do arise, they will be better equipped to work out the situation and find better and more creative solutions. In an organization, the positive thinking and positive psychology will best serve them because on each proposed project invariably there will be a person who wants to spoil the project for a number of reasons. One reason was that the proposed project may need a lot of money and be taking away potential funding from their project. Or the proposed project may represent

more work for the doubtful skeptic. In this survey instrument, it became apparent that there were only a few negative thinkers and mostly people, at least in the university level who have open minds and can see the proper use of positive thinking to improve their methods and achieve the greatest success. The use of positive psychology may not necessarily be used to improve the inclusion or acceptance of other races that the Caucasian race can properly learn from the facts presented by CRT on its own merits. Participant 13 said, "I think there was no way to make CRT more fair". You have those classes to educate yourself in the reality of way many people of color face in this country. You do not go to the experts with implementing positive psychology, instead you approach the community because they are on the level of the participants and want the tenets and strategies of positive thinking working in the lives of those they care about.

I believe as we begin to conclude this study that Contact Hypothesis, which recommends positive contact with people of different cultural backgrounds can actually reduce prejudice and increase important understandings and trust through in person meetings as well as through the media, (Richeson, 2018). Richeson also identifies the "Common Ingroup Identity model, which has a common goal which reduces a feeling of competition or threat for competition by being part of the same community, nation, team with a sense of unity and cooperation. And just like with my survey of a local, public university which has a great amount of multiculturalism, this allows a celebration of uniqueness and diversity which improves the self-esteem, "mutual respect and positive attitudes of in this case the survey participants. With multiculturalism people can

appreciate the history, culture and contributions of other groups as well as their own, (Richeson, 2018)

Conclusion

My first conclusion was that most of the participants and this would be reflective of the general population pool of university students in the Boston area, believe that racism was inherent races other than theirs. This can be translated that blacks can see whites as racist and vice versa. Also, one middle eastern country can see the other side as being racist, while the other side sees them as being racist. In reality, both sides have racist factors and divisions which think radically and tend to forget their own misdeeds and lacking.

The second conclusion was that among Boston area public university students the majority experience a few racial comments and jokes and even slurs in a year. Predominately though, currently they do receive as many racial incidents as did students in the 1970s during bussing and unrest with the Vietnam War. That being said, many of the students who did experience racism, most of it was not on the university campus, but more likely in the workplace and at the shopping centers or sports and entertainment arenas. Participant 21 in said that positive psychology would help them to have a “better understanding” of what was going on in people who acted as racists towards them. Participant 21 believes that a “group effort.” Is more likely to create positive change in others resulting for their belief in positive thinking.

There was an outlier opinion with participant 23. Instead of believing that racism was inherent for all the other races, they believed racial prejudice was not inherent in other races, rather they are taught different because “race was a social construct” developed as justification for oppression.

This opinion was slightly radical and was reflected again in question 2 of the Survey Research Question -A. Does racism and racist thoughts come from teaching by racist teachers? Participant 23 answered that racism can come from racist teachers but “it may also be that a person was subconsciously racist and can unknowingly spread ill habits to others.” Participant 23 admitted to being the victim of a racist event, slur, joke or an act of discrimination, but said, “Yes, but I don’t really care.” Participant 23 believes they can unknowingly spread ill habits to others. Another participant twenty-four did not take the racial incident personally and did not insult them back as they did not wish to lower themselves to that level. This was the third conclusion I have come to as a researcher. A better policy than just standing up to the racist was just to ignore them as much as possible, but short of violence. In the case of violence then the police must be called. The third conclusion was that it makes sense to have a positive thinking mind when raced with racists, since their hatred can lead to injustice and ultimately to war. It was much better to be a peacemaker who can stand up to the racist but hold onto peace and kindness that ultimately overcomes the troubles.

The fourth conclusion comes from participant twenty-nine who concluded, “Truth and Love offer a remedy because it shows kindness and how a person should be. From

collecting First Day series stamps, I learned of the Civil Rights Bus Rider, Rosa Parks, who showed love and kindness and changed her life and the lives of others by going from the back of the Southern bus and moving forward to the front of the bus, with courage and love in her heart, and that led to her success in overcoming racism.

Finally, I have found 12 relevant themes that came up throughout this study, which are as follows:

1. Inherent worldwide racism among races: 15.40% of respondents felt that racism is prevalent world-wide amongst all races.
2. Positive Attitude: 15.40% of respondents felt that having a positive attitude was important for not only their lives but also others'.
3. Positive Psychology & Thinking works: 15.40% of respondents felt that using positive psychology and thinking lead to a successful life and help reduce racism.
4. Racial Slurs and Discrimination: 12.80% of participants shared that they have been the victim of racial slurs and/or discrimination.
5. Racist Teaching by Racist Teachers: 10.24% of respondents believe that racist teachers teach racism in a variety of settings.
6. Maturity is a solution: 7.70% of participants felt that responding to racism with maturity (e.g., non-violence) is a viable solution to racism.
7. Boston is now more open and more tolerant: 7.70% of respondents felt that Boston has become more enlightened and welcoming of all races.

8. Experience with Prejudice & Unfair racial acts: 5.12% of respondents claimed to have been the victim of prejudice and/or unfair racist events.
9. Negative thinking: 5.12% of participants responded to survey questions with negative attitudes.
10. Experienced Racism & not happy with way I handled it: 5.12% of participants claimed to have been the victim of racism and did not feel that they handled the situation satisfactorily or effectively.
11. Affection and Love: 0.00% Even though it was not reported (because the researcher believed the participants did not understand the question), the researcher felt that Love and Affection are an extremely important factor in reducing and/or eliminating racism. This topic merits further study.
12. Friends and Family give Protection: 0.00% Even through it was not reported, (because the researcher felt the participants did not fully understand the question as it relates to society and not to the individual). The researcher felt that his topic merits further study as well.

Most of the public student participants in this study were slightly on the positive thinking side with an average answer about their personality being around 3.8. In the graphs 1 and 2 you can see that they had answers in the 3, 4, and up to 5 score on the Likert Scale. Noting the young average age this group did not have all of the life experiences that many people have had. Therefore, of those experiencing the ills of racism mostly they have not experienced it too much. For them, racism was more casual

slurs and racist “jokes” but does not seem to be in the format of racial violence or long-term racial prejudice or injustice. So far this group at the public university level has been spared the life-long racism which was overwhelming in nature. That those public university students and others do not fall to racism and racial hatred was based in part on the virtues that Dr. Seligman emphasizes which are “wisdom and knowledge, Courage, Love and Humanity, Justice, Temperance and Spirituality and Transcendence,” (Seligman, 2009, pp.132-133). Here the tenets of positive thinking combined with overcoming racism and racial violence are found in Aristotle, Plato, Aquinas, Augustine, the Old Testament, the Talmud, Confucius, Buddha, Bushido, the Koran, Benjamin Franklin, all have the basic six virtues of positive living. In my dissertation results I found that predominantly the survey participants were on the positive side. They have an internal code that they follow. Whereas it was positive in thought they can either chose to improve that over time leaning to the higher positive values or if they slip or fall, succumbing to negative thought and ultimately the loss of that virtue that they are starting life with now. Positive thinking and psychology do have a positive effect in reducing racism and racial violence. The teachings of the major religions do have a positive effect on addressing racism. One just needs to be open to learning and practicing these virtues.

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Appendix A: Survey Research Questions A

1. In your opinion, are racial prejudices and ideas inherent in other races?
2. Do racism and racist thoughts come from teaching by racists?
3. Have you ever been the victim of a racist event, slur, joke, or an act of discrimination?
4. (If yes to question 3), What effect did that racist incident have on you, and how did you address this situation?
5. How many racial events happen to you in a year, and where did they happen, for instance, on-campus, off-campus, in the workplace, in clubs or bars, or at a sports or entertainment venue?
6. In your prior response to question 4, did you believe that your response to a racial incident was justified, and were you happy with the way you handled this situation?
7. Do you feel that you handled the racist slur, comment, act, or racial discrimination in the best possible manner?
8. Have you ever taken a public university-level course in positive psychology? If not, any other psychology course which includes the concept of positive psychology?
9. How do the concepts of positive psychology allow you to better approach the racist acts of those using comments, slurs, or overt discrimination against you and/or others?

10. *How will your pursuit of truth and love offer a remedy if not be a solution to the racism and racial prejudice of others?* NOTE: QUESTION 10 WAS WAIVED DURING THE SURVEY PROCESS DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS AND WAS ULTIMATELY REMOVED FROM THE DATA COLLECTION

Appendix B: Sample Research Question 2: A 20-Question Survey B, Questionnaire

Eligibility Questions (not part of happiness survey but necessary for starting the survey)

What is your age? _____

(Note: to participate you must be 18 or older.)

What is your gender? _____

Instructions: Please circle the answer most appropriate to your experience(s) as a Boston-area public university student.

Question 1: How do you feel about this statement, “Even when I am by myself, I never get bored.”

5. Very Much like me

4. Like me

3. Neutral

2. Unlike me

1. Very much unlike me

Question 2: How do you feel about this statement, “If a problem arises during a game or activity with either friends or others, I am good at figuring out why it happened.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 3: How do you feel about this statement, “I am thrilled when I learn something new.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 4: How do you feel about this statement, “I come up with new ideas for fun things to do often.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 5: How do you feel about this statement, “If I am feeling happy or sad or angry, I always know why.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 6: How do you feel about this statement, “Even if I am given a hard time, I still do what I think is right.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

According to (Seligman, 2002), the question above addresses the valor quotient for the participant in this survey.

Question 7: How do you feel about this statement, “I know the things that really matter most in life.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 8: How do you feel about this statement, “When I get what I want, it is because I worked hard for it.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 9: How do you feel about this statement, “I will lie to get myself out of trouble.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 10: How do you feel about this statement, “I helped my neighbor or fellow student in the last month (without being asked).”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 11: How do you feel about this statement, “Even if my sibling(s), friend(s) or cousin(s) and I fight a lot, I still really care about them.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

This question relates to the potential for love and forgiveness by the participant.

Question 12: How do you feel about this statement, “I forget to tell my teachers ‘Thank you’ when they have helped me.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

This question addresses the potential for gratitude in the participant.

Question 13: How do you feel about this statement, “When I graduate from this Boston area public university, I think I will be a very happy person”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

Question 14: How do you feel about this statement, “I believe that each person is special and has an important purposed in life.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

This question addresses the spirituality of the participant.

Question 15: How do you feel about this statement, “I love to watch the clouds above, the flowers in the field, and the change of colors in the trees during the fall.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

This question was devised according to Seligman (2002), to determine the participant’s ability to appreciate beauty.

Question 16: How do you feel about this statement, “Even if I do not like someone, I treat that person fairly.”

5. Very Much like me
4. Like me
3. Neutral
2. Unlike me
1. Very much unlike me

The question addresses the participant's inherent capacity to feel fairness.

Question 17: Using your prior responses as the basis for formulating an important understanding of who you are, do you feel that practicing positive thinking is best for your life, the lives of others and for your country?

Yes or No (please circle one)

In two sentences please explain your thoughts below:

Question 18: Do you feel that positive thinking and its tenets could make Critical Race Theory fairer and more acceptable to others in society, which, in turn could lead to greater 'inclusion'?

Yes or No (please circle one)

In two sentences please explain your thoughts below:

Question 19: Do you feel, both as a person in our present society, and as a Boston area public university student, that you are **ONLY** defined by your race?

Yes or No (please circle one)

In two sentences please explain your thoughts below:

Question 20: Reflecting back upon your studies and understanding of positive thinking, do you believe that adding positive thinking studies to Critical Race Theory

studies can improve one's understanding of Critical Race Theory and applying it to your
life?

Yes or No (please circle one)

In two sentences please explain your thoughts below:

Appendix C: Average of Participant's Likert Scores, Genders & Ages

Likert Score: 0 was no response, 1-3 are more negative & 4-5 are very positive responses

SURVEY PARTICIPANT	AVERAGE SCORE
1 Female, 18	2.85
2 Female, 21	3.85
3 Female, 21	4.15
4 Male, 18	3.5
5 Male, 25	3.3
6 Male, 34	2.85
7 Male, 18	4.5
8 Male, 19	3.45
9 Male, 21	4.15
10 Female, 21	3.8
11 Female, 18	3.15
12 Female, 21	2.85
13 Female, 20	3.55
14 Female, 18	3.2
15 Male, 20	4.15
16 Female, 21	3.15
17 Male, 19	3.95
18 Female, 18	3.1
19 Female, 19	3.35
20 Male, 18	3.65
21 Male, 18	3.05
22 Male, 20	4.35

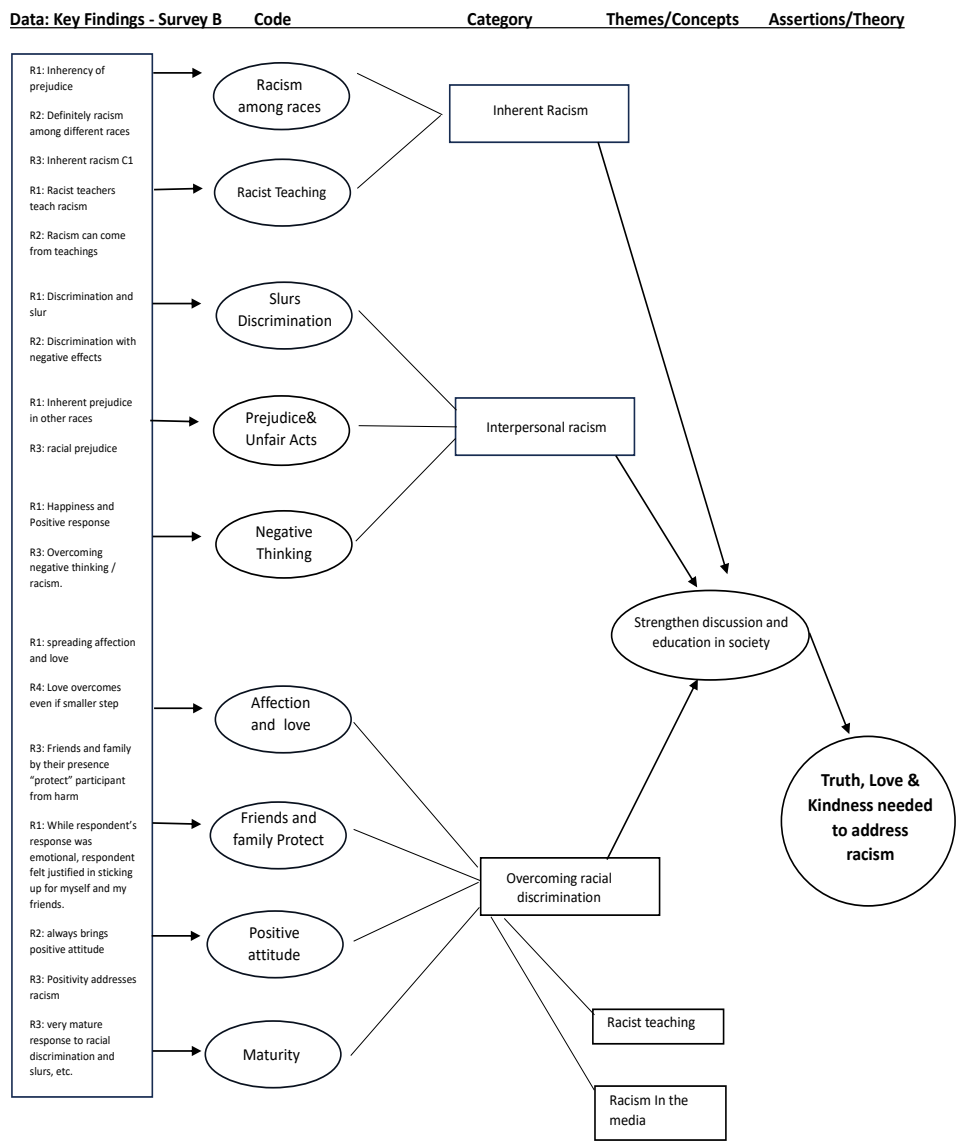
23 Male, 18	2.65
24 Male, 19	3.15
25 Female, 21	4.55
26 Male, 18	3.95
27 Male, 19	3.9
28 Female, 20	4
29 Female, 19	4
30 Male, 18	3.9
31 Male, 18	3.55
32 Female, 18	3.4
33 Female, 19	4.65
34 Male, 21	4
35 Female, 20	3.95
36 Male, 21	4.3
37 Male, 23	4.2
38 Female, 21	3.75
39 Male, 21	3.45
40 Female, 20	4.19

The demographics of my study cohort were as follows:

Females: 19 (47% of cohort with an average age 19.68 years)

Males: 21 (52% of cohort with an average age 20.28 years)

Appendix D: Coding Flow Chart



Appendix E: Common Themes Which Arose From The Study Responses

COMMON THEMES		FREQUENCY	%
Inherent worldwide racism among races	6	0.1538462	15.40%
Positive Attitude	6	0.1538462	15.40%
Positive Psychology & Thinking works	6	0.1538462	15.40%
Racial Slurs and Discrimination	5	0.1282051	12.80%
Racist Teaching by Racist Teachers	4	0.1025641	10.24%
Maturity is a solution	3	0.0769231	7.70%
Boston is now more open and more tolerant	3	0.0769231	7.70%
Experience with Prejudice & Unfair racial acts	2	0.0512821	5.12%
Negative thinking	2	0.0512821	5.12%
Experienced Racism & not happy with way I handled it	2	0.0512821	5.12%
Affection and Love	0	0.0	0.00%
Friends and Family give Protection	0	0.0	0.00%
			100.00
	100.00%		

Appendix F: Pertinent Participant Survey Responses

<u>Participant #</u>	<u>Participant's Specific Comments</u>
1	Definitely inherent racial prejudice & ideas exist.
2	Inherent racism because of the standard thought process people have.
3	Racist thoughts and racism come from racist teachers
4	Positive psychology helps me come up with WHY?
5	Racism is inherent and racist thought from racist teachers and yes have been a victim of racism
6	Inherent worldwide racism exists and racism does come from racist teachers
7	Not totally clear there are racist teachers
8	Boston is much better with less racism
9	Every race/ethnicity might believe something about another race w/o self- realization
10	Not happy with their response to racist incident, but did ask racist to stop
11	Positive thinking is best to learn from
12	Government-sustained white privilege
13	A racist incident reminded me that I am an Indian
<u>Participant #</u>	<u>Participant's Specific Comments</u>
14	Tiers of race
15	Boston is much better with less racism

16 Racist incidents temporarily depress the victim, then they get happy when they heal

17 Racial prejudices are not inherent in other races

18 The concept of positive psychology would allow better approach to be kinder and more sympathetic

19 Boston is much better with less racism

20 Race does not define me; I have many traits

21 Racism learned through environments like a family

22 If we are positive, we will be open to everyone.

23 I thought I handled the racial joke ok because it was between friends. PP teaches us to be kinder

24 I did not take the racial incident personally. I did not insult them and did not want to lower myself

25 Concepts of positive psychology allow you to keep a clear head in certain situations.

26 I think that if you are positive then you will be a happier person.

Participant #

Participant's Specific Comments

27 Racial prejudices are inherent in other races and media and social groups help sustain racial ideas

28 I experienced racism a couple of times at a grocery store. The incidents bothered me. I tried not to have a reaction

- 29 I believe that racial prejudice and racist ideas are inherent in other races since racial problems are in world
- 30 It was a (racial) joke & nothing was addressed.
- 31 Racial jokes are often just what people call "light jokes" but they are not light & it's rude
- 32 I didn't argue or get really mad after I experienced a racial incident
- 33 The more negative people in this world, the more we need to spread more positive vibes
- 34 Teaching positivity will promote less hate
- 35 Throughout history US & world laws and judgment education system have allowed racist teachings to spread
- 36 I ignored the racist incident because I did not want to make a problem in a public place

Participant #

Participant's Specific Comments

- 37 Positive thinking is best, & I believe it has a huge effect on mental health & acuity. I learned to be truthful & positive in face of adversity
- 38 Growing up with prejudices teaches racism, which eventually gets carried out throughout generations of family
- 39 Do not believe in positive thinking aka "How am I meant to be happy if the world is ending?"
- 40 No response