

2019

# The Relationship Between Race-Related Stress and Coping Strategies of African American Men

Rynata Trevyce Leach  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Rynata Leach

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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

The Relationship Between Race-Related Stress and Coping Strategies

of African American Men

by

Rynata Leach

MA, Walden University, 2015

BS, George Mason University, 2010

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research was to identify coping mechanisms that African American men use when they perceive race-related stressors. Race-related stress derives from the occurrence of racism and discrimination that individuals, generally African Americans in the United States, experience in addition to daily life stress. Race-related stress may involve cultural racism, individual racism, or institutional racism. The coping mechanisms used by African American men when perceiving race-related stress were identified through the use of an online survey that consisted of 3 instruments: The Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version (IRRS-B), Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief COPE), and People of Color Racial Identity Attitude Scale (PRIAS). Participants were required to be African American males, ages 18 and older. Eighty-five participants completed the study. The data was analyzed through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as a quantitative methodology specifically using multiple regression. Results of this study indicated that there was a moderate statistically significant correlation between race-related stress (cultural racism, institutional racism, and individual racism) and coping mechanisms (active coping, planning and religion) of African American men. This research has the potential to set the foundation for a greater understanding of racism and how it affects African American men specifically.

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## Dedication

To my Angel, in heaven, Jholie Deborah Renee Moussa, you have pushed me in ways that you could never imagine. You were my motivation to finish, and now I am done, and I am forever thankful for you. To my mother, your hard work, late nights, and multiple phone calls to complain were extremely appreciated. To my beautiful sunshine, Ava, you are the reason that I do everything, so that you know that you can do any and everything that you want to accomplish. The world is yours, and this is proof.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Race-Related Stress and Coping Strategies of African American Men**

Racism has been a part of the American landscape since the inception of slavery. However, social media and smartphones have made racism increasingly familiar and a constant reoccurrence in American discourse. On August 12, 2017, White Nationalist groups including the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and neo-Nazi organizations held a rally in Charlottesville, Virginia to protest the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee, a leader of the Southern Confederacy. The rally began with attendees marching down 4<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets in Charlottesville with lit torches in darkness. In the sunlight of day, the chanting began: “White lives matter.” The reprisal chant of “All lives matter,” often the mantra when the words “Black lives matter” are chanted, was not a focal point.

The lives of African American men lack sufficient scholarly attention (Johnson, 2016). African American men comprise 7% of the U.S. population and 48% of the African American population, yet there is a limited amount of research on African American men’s positive contributions to society, as well as on their mental health (Johnson, 2016). Johnson (2016) contended that the existing research on African American men has focused on disrobing them of their manhood by presenting them as criminals and absent fathers who do not hold much value in society. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1963) professed, “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in the moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy” (p. 23). African American men are often looked at as thugs, criminals, and deadbeat dads, when in reality they are much more, such as providers, fathers, sons,

brothers, businessmen, caregivers, doctors, and lawyers. Furthermore, African American men deal with a great deal of stress based on their skin color (Brown, Bell, & Patterson, 2016). It is important to uncover how African American men cope with life stressors, especially when these stressors are race related.

This study examined the relationship between African American men and their coping mechanisms when faced with perceived race-related stress. In this chapter, I focus on developing an understanding of racism and the different components associated with it, as well as why there is a need for further research on race-related stressors and the coping strategies of African American men. Additionally, I address multiple issues involving African American men such as racism, perceived race-related stress, and coping mechanisms.

## **Racism**

Racism is a topic that many are aware of but are unwilling to discuss. African American men are being challenged on a daily basis due to interpersonal interactions and attitudes that are based on societal norms and institutionalized policies and practices (Garcia & Sharif, 2015). *Institutional racism* includes specific or indirect instances of racial discrimination, manipulation, disparity, and supremacy within an organizational or societal context (Clair & Denis, 2015). Within a context of institutional racism, policies and practices may have a negative impact on educational opportunities, socioeconomic status (SES), mental and physical health resources, and the criminal justice system for African American men (Garcia & Sharif, 2015). For example, the effects of mass incarceration among African American men extend after individuals have been released

from the penal system through voter disenfranchisement, inability to qualify for social programs, and lack of employment opportunities, leading to toxic effects on individuals' health and security. This is a prime example of how racism becomes institutionalized.

Race and racism are not interchangeable (Garcia & Sharif, 2015). They are often seen as one variable in statistical analysis in relation to outcomes such as anxiety and depression symptoms, stressors, and coping mechanisms. However, the terms *race* and *racism* are seldom used interchangeably in discussions of mental health issues, especially in African American men (Garcia & Sharif, 2015).

Racism does not focus on an individual's age or SES. SES is the public standing or class of an individual or group. It is commonly established based on multiple variables, including education, income, and occupation (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018). SES is sometimes used to identify disproportions or inequalities in availability of resources, especially when it comes to matters related to privilege, power, and control. There is no specific SES that increases or decreases a person of color's chance of experiencing racism. SES, however, may determine whether an individual can seek and select the appropriate resources, such as education, medical care, and mental health assistance, or must go without them (Cohen, Doyle, & Baum, 2006). Given its importance, SES was evaluated in this study because it helps to assess an individual's quality-of-life attributes as well as the opportunities and privileges that an individual has received (APA, 2018). An individual's stress level may be correlated to his or her SES (Damaske, Zawadzki, & Smyth, 2016).



Likewise, there is no specific age at which an individual is destined to experience or be immune from racism. However, researchers have found that when people age, they begin to view life events from a different perspective and may also have learned to handle micro- and macroaggressions differently (Mellor, Connaughton, McCabe, & Tatangelo, 2017). Racism can happen to anyone at any stage of life.

It is essential that the construct of racism be included in the discussion on African American men's mental health. African American men experience excessive levels of psychosocial stressors due to racial discrimination (Bryant, Haynes, Greer-Williams, & Hartwig, 2014). An understanding that these experiences may lead others to have a skewed overall perception of African American men formed the foundation for this study.

### **Problem Statement**

People define racism differently. Harrell's (2000) definition is one of the most commonly and easily interpreted:

A system of dominance, power, and privilege based on racial group's designations ... where members of the dominant group create or accept their societal privilege by maintaining structures, ideology, values, and behavior that have the intent or effect of leaving non-dominant group members relatively excluded from power, esteem, status, and/or equal access to societal resources. (p. 43)

In other words, the dominant group creates rules that are meant to apply only to its own members. The rules are not meant to benefit nondominant groups, which leaves these groups powerless and without access to resources.

Racism is a taboo topic in American culture and is generally not discussed, but when it is, it is seldom addressed among diverse groups or in a public setting (Tatum, 1992). This means that racism is not generally discussed between individuals who do not hold or share the same or similar experiences. Many individuals believe that the existence of racism is only a perspective or an opinion (Bobo & Fox, 2003). However, various researchers have shown that racism exists and is currently prevalent in various formats and platforms, including politics, sports, and the education system (Franklin, Boyd-Franklin, & Kelly, 2008; Lukerson, 2015; Tatum, 1992). Racism has a direct effect on individuals and is often sensationalized in the media (Page, Duffy, Frisby, & Perreault, 2016).

Racism occurs at three levels: institutional, cultural, and individual (Franklin et al., 2008). *Institutional* racism focuses on an individual's racist beliefs cultivated by persuasions of dominance that are changed to accommodate basic policies and practices of an institution and the individual (Franklin et al., 2008). This means that there is a system put in place in which some races are treated as inferior, are unable to get ahead or benefit in ways that the dominant race would benefit. Racial beliefs are the perception that one's character, ability, and intelligence are defined by race alone (Morris & Kahlor, 2014). These changed practices and policies bring out the dominant group's feelings and prejudices toward nondominant groups (Morris & Kahlor, 2014). *Cultural* racism allows

for an environment in which practices of prejudices and discrimination are created that become acceptable and a part of everyday practices (Franklin et al., 2008). *Individual* racism has been defined as thoughts, emotions, and actions that demonstrate an individual's discriminatory preconceptions about other groups (Franklin et al., 2008).

Wang (2013) explained that more research is needed on the intense impact of continued exposure to racism as well as other forms of systematic disadvantages with regard to specific populations. African American men can be categorized into multiple populations. For example, they can be considered members of the male population and the African American population. With regard to membership in the African American population, it is important to consider the increased frequency with which African Americans' civil rights are violated (Moore, Robinson, & Adedoyin, 2016). The rate at which African American men experience stressors is extremely high when compared to rates for European, Asian, and Hispanic men (Bryant et al., 2014). In the African American culture, there is a history of continuous exposure to racism, which constitutes a race-related stressor. French et al., (2013) described four categories of race-related stressors: (a) experiences with prejudice and discrimination, (b) awareness of devalued quality of an individual, (c) stereotype threats and the fear of conforming and becoming said stereotype, and (d) attributional ambiguity due to a lack of clarity in a situation in which individuals believe that their treatment is based on racial prejudice. Perceived race-related stressors are stressors that an individual perceives to be race-related, including but not limited to the four aforementioned categories. For example, there have been multiple

high-profile cases in which race-related stress has occurred, including those of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Freddie Gray, and Tamir Rice (Cullors, Tometi, & Garza, 2015).

Trayvon Martin, an unarmed 17-year-old African American male, was shot and killed by George Zimmermann, a member of the community and self-appointed neighborhood watch (Cullors et al., 2015), while coming home from the 7-11 store in his own housing complex (McCann, 2014). This case brought forth the debate about the “Stand Your Ground Statute” in Florida (Cullors et al., 2015). Trayvon Martin was a victim of racism. Zimmerman believed that Martin did not belong in his community based on the color of his skin, even though Martin lived there with his family. Zimmerman had never seen or interacted with Trayvon Martin before the night he killed him in February 2015. This was their first and only encounter, and it was determined by Zimmerman’s perception that Martin looked suspicious in his neighborhood. At the time of the altercation, Trayvon Martin pleaded for help, and his cries and screams were heard by both neighbors and Zimmermann but went unanswered. This case raised many conversations regarding race, racism, biases, and racial profiling (Onwauchi-Willig, 2017). This case also prompted conversation from millennials about fitting in, oppression, and being racially subordinate (Onwauchi-Willig, 2017). For many, it brought forth a fear of the United States going back to a time when African Americans could be murdered for doing little to nothing, a time in which race-based forces and racist tropes were in control (Onwauchi-Willig, 2017). For many, this event has been a stressor; an injustice occurred, and now many are hoping that they will not be the next injustice or next hashtag.

The case of Michael Brown is another example of a race-related stressor. Many young African American men have been fearful that they could be the next Michael Brown. Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old African American male, was killed by former police officer Darren Wilson. Wilson gunned down Brown, and his body was left uncovered for several hours on Canfield Drive in Ferguson, Missouri (Cullors et al., 2015). Cullor et al. (2015) indicated that leaving Brown's body uncovered for hours signified a lack of respect for the young adult. Brown was put on trial via the media after being killed by Officer Wilson. To some commentators, it seemed more important to discuss how horrible Brown's past had been when he was a juvenile than to discuss how he had changed his life and the positive future he was stepping into, or the concept that he was unarmed and shot. Brown was a victim of racism. An officer of the law used unnecessary force that resulted in the death of an 18-year-old African American male (Cullors et al., 2015). It was through Brown's case that the Black Lives Matter movement emerged (Ray, Brown, Fraistat, & Summers, 2017). Chaney and Davis (2015) emphasized that the fatal shooting of Brown was a painful reminder for African Americans and members of other minority groups of their own mortality and the disregard that police have for Black lives.

In another important case, Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old African American male, was arrested on suspicion of carrying an illegal switchblade in Baltimore County, Maryland (Sanburn, 2016). Gray saw the police upon their arrival and decided to run in another direction. The police began a foot chase, and Gray was arrested once apprehended. It was not until after he was arrested that police officers found an illegal

switchblade in Gray's possession (Sanburn, 2016). While in police custody, Gray sustained a fatal spinal cord injury that caused lack of oxygen, which put him in a coma and caused his death (Sanburn, 2016). Gray's injuries were believed to be due to unnecessary force during his arrest and improper restraint during transport to the police station (Sanburn, 2016). Gray had been loaded into a police van on his stomach, head first (Sanburn, 2016). The police treated Gray poorly because he was an African American man and had a history with the Baltimore County Police Department (Cullors et al., 2015).

Police officers have treated others poorly based on the color of their skin, such as Tamir Rice. Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old African American male, was killed by former officer Timothy Loehmann near a recreation center in Cleveland, Ohio. A person passing by called the police to report that there was a juvenile waving and pointing a handgun, which the observer believed to be fake, at people (Holloway, 2015). The 911 operator omitted the information that the individual in question was believed to be a juvenile with a fake gun to police officers responding to the call (Holloway, 2015). The police arrived on the scene, and upon arrival, shouted out their windows for Rice to "freeze" and "put his hands up" (Holloway, 2015). As Rice moved to do so, police stated that they saw a gun and that they knew Rice was going to reach for it. Officer Loehmann fired two shots, with the first shot missing Rice's body and the second one hitting his torso. Rice was a minor with a replica gun. Ohio is an open-carry state (Driehaus, 2010). This means that with a permit, an individual can carry a firearm (Driehaus, 2010). These officers initially saw Rice and treated him like a man instead of a child; he was not given the opportunity

to freeze or put his hands up before he was gunned down. Officer Loehmann is no longer an officer on the Cleveland Police Department. However, his removal from duty was not due to the altercation with Rice. It was due to him omitting on his department application that he was seen as unfit to work due to an emotional breakdown, which became known through a background investigation (Holloway, 2015).

Cases such as the those mentioned in the preceding pages have taken place in the United States over and over again for years and will continue. These cases happened within one year of each other, highlighting the repetitive, continuous nature of incidents of racism and mistreatment affecting African Americans. These cases have been compared to the death of Emmett Till (Onwauchi-Willig, 2017). Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African American male from Chicago visiting family in Mississippi, was beaten, shot, and killed for allegedly whistling and grabbing at a White woman, Carolyn Bryant. Till was beaten and shot, after which his body was weighed down with cotton gin fans and thrown in a river (Spratt et al., 2007). During this time, it was not uncommon for Whites to kill African Americans. However, this case was different, due to how severely Till was beaten, to the point that his face was unrecognizable (Spratt et al., 2007). During the time of Till's murder, slavery had ended. However, Jim Crow was in full effect. It was not until 2017 that Bryant confessed that the events that she reported to the FBI regarding her altercation with Till were not as she had previously stated. Bryant did not face any charges for her false accusations and the part she played in Till's murder.

Constant exposure to such cases (and many similar ones that are not explored here) can only take a toll on an individual. For African American men, there is still

constant fear and the perception that any African American man walking down the street could be the next victim of injustice based solely on the color of his skin and the disregard that so many have for African American lives.

African American men are constantly attacked due to others' perceptions. For example, someone may feel that an African American does not belong in a certain neighborhood, even after he has unnecessarily explained where he lives. Furthermore, African American men may be being judged entirely on the basis of their past and not who they are in the present, with this past seen as justifying being left dead with no respect. These are all signs of racism. There is a need to better understand the perceived race-related stress that African American men experience and how they cope with this perceived stress.

Perceived race-related stress involves race-associated transactions between individuals or groups in an environment that emerges from the dynamics of racism; these transactions are perceived as taxing or exceeding existing individual and collective resources or threatening well-being (Harrell, 2000). African Americans have a higher level of exposure to race-related stress than other races (Nazroo, 2003). Members of the African American community are less likely to worry about mental health issues than those of other races and report mental health symptoms, especially those stemming from stress (Bryant et al., 2014).

In order to address the impact that racism and race-related stressors continue to have on society, research must go beyond surveys and polls that describe African American men as aggressive (Steptau-Watson, 2014) and focus on why they are



perceived to be aggressive. Race-related stress is common among individuals in today's society. Different race-related experiences can be stressful for the individuals who are involved in them, as well as those who do not experience them personally but are aware of their existence. Different individuals experience stress differently, with these differences potentially based on their ethnic background (Berry & Ataca, 2000).

Individuals handle stress differently; there is no single correct way to cope with stress. Discrimination causes a type of stress—race-related stress, to be specific. Franklin et al. (2008) defined *discrimination* as “undesirable behaviors concerning a person based on adverse attitudes one holds towards the group to which that person belongs, or, optimistic behavior toward a person based on positive attributes one holds toward the group to which that person belongs” (p. 11).

There are different forms of coping responses and mechanisms that can be associated with race-related stressors (Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly (2002). Boyraz, Waits, et al., (2016) defined coping as an attempt to avert or stop a threat or something presented as harmful to decrease distress. Individuals who cope with stress use their cognitive and behavioral forces to deal with a situation that they believe to be a threat (Hoggard, Byrd, & Sellers, 2012).

Coping mechanisms include avoidance, approach, problem-focused, and emotion-focused coping. *Avoidance coping* focuses on the individual trying to escape the perceived threat and avoid the feeling of distress (Boyraz et al., 2016). This type of coping requires the individual to divert attention from the threat and negative feelings associated with the distress. *Approach coping*, in contrast, requires individuals to attempt

to deal with their feelings regarding the distress as well as to focus on the threat (Boyras et al., 2016). *Problem-focused coping* occurs when the problem is defined and there is an attempt to change the stressor (Pourmohamadreza-Tajrishi, Azadfallah, Garakani, & Bakhsi, 2015). *Emotion-focused coping* focuses on changing the emotional response to the stressor (Pourmohamadreza-Tajrishi et al., 2015).

Plummer and Slane (1996) explained that when coping with race-related stress, individuals use fewer coping strategies than when dealing with general stress. Race-related stress makes individuals less likely to seek help via mental health professionals (Ward, Wiltshire, Detry, & Brown, 2013). Research suggests that racism may be a contributing factor in the development of physical illness and psychological distress in individuals (Forsyth & Carter, 2012). In this study, I concentrated on problem- and emotion-focused coping.

Racism and discrimination are associated with higher psychological and physiological stress responses (Driscoll, Reynolds, & Todman, 2015). There has been previous research that shows that race-related stressors such as racism are associated with lower life satisfaction and well-being and increased distress (Forsyth & Carter, 2012). *Distress* is defined as a range of negative psychosocial outcomes affecting quality of life (Hulbert-Williams, Neal, Morrison, Hood, & Wilkinson, 2012). There is a need to examine race-related stress in individuals outside the African American race and community (Carter et al., 2013). Greer, Brondolo, and Brown (2014) indicated that individuals who perceive race-related stress are more likely to develop mental health problems such as severe symptoms of anxiety, depression, and distress.

*Anxiety* is a very common term. There are multiple forms of anxiety, many of which are considered mental disorders. Anxiety disorders involve symptoms of worrying, irritability, sleep disturbances, and fatigue (Yonkers, Bruce, Dyck, & Keller, 2003).

Depression is also a mental disorder. This disorder focuses on symptoms such as depressed mood, low interest in usual activities, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and feelings of worthlessness (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Racism results in increased mental health problems in not only African Americans, but also Asian Americans (Liu & Suyemoto, 2016) and Latino Americans (Arellano-Morales, Liang, Ruiz, & Rios-Oropeza, 2016). Perceived race-related stress may cause mental health problems as well as mistrust in health care providers (Greer et al., 2014).

This study may be used to gain a better understanding of African American men, their relationship with race-related stressors, and the coping strategies that they use to manage these stressors. There has been limited research conducted on the experiences of African American men who have been victims of racism and its effects. West, Donovan, and Roemer (2010) explained that there is a need for research examining the experiences of African American men as distinct from those of African American women. This study was an attempt to fill a gap in the literature regarding African American men and the effects that racism has on their lives, what call to action they have taken in regard to stressors they perceive to be related to racism, as well as the relationship between these stressors and individuals' depression and anxiety symptoms. The question of how African American males cope with racism has been underexplored (West et al., 2010).

This study may assist psychologists in serving African American patients, as African Americans do not seek mental health assistance at the same rates as their counterparts in other racial groups (Bryant et al., 2014). A reluctance to pursue treatment may be due to healthy paranoia that is a manifestation of stress. According to Sims (2010), healthy paranoia stems from hypervigilance, which is also seen as a form of paranoia. The term *healthy paranoia* was coined during the Civil Rights era, when African Americans used paranoia as a protective measure when dealing with healthcare in the United States, given high levels of suspicion and mistrust.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the impact that racism has on the African American male population ages 18 and older, and how African American men cope with this perceived stressor. The independent variable in this study was the perceived race-related stressor. Perceived race-related stress was identified using the IRRS-B. The dependent variable identified how African American men coped with the perceived stress as well as how they identified the stressor as chronic or acute, and whether it affected their levels of depression and anxiety. The Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief COPE) was used to measure how individuals coped with the stress to which they were exposed. The Schedule of Racist Events was used to measure the frequency of racial discrimination events that African American men encountered. Racial identity was measured by using the People of Color Racial Identity Attitude Scale (PRIAS). This study was designed to gain understanding of the methods used to cope with perceived race-related stress in African American men, as well as to

identify how or whether race-related stress affected African American men's mental health status.

### **Research Question**

The research question was the following: What is the relationship between age, socioeconomic status (SES), and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies in African American men?

The independent variable (IV) of race-related stress was measured by the IRRS-B. Additional IVs were age and SES. The dependent variable (DV) was coping mechanism and racial identity. Coping mechanism was measured by the Brief COPE. Racial identity was measured by the PRIAS. The analysis for this study was multiple regression.

### **Framework**

*Racial identity development theory* involves the formation of a collective identity by a group of people who have been socialized to see themselves as a distinctive racial group (Helms & Cook, 1999). It is also understood to be a mechanism for coping with racial discrimination and race-related stress. The word *Black* is used to identify a population of individuals with origins in Africa (Jackson, 2001). Shell (2011) suggested that within the African American community, the concept of being Black is intricate and diverse, and there is no one factor that formulates Black identity. . According to this theory, people pass through five *ego statuses* that are used to gain a better understanding of racial stressors. These statuses are pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (Helms, 2003).

The *pre-encounter* status focuses on an identity that is affected by negative stereotypes, inadequate knowledge about a culture, and self-hatred (Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001). This is a phase when individuals focus on traits that set them apart from their race and on elements of themselves that they do not like. Individual(s) with this ego status display symptoms of depression as they focus on negativity and deal with self-hatred.

After pre-encounter status is *encounter status*. The encounter status begins with an analysis of the individual's association to his or her group of origin (Worrell et al., 2001). At this stage, symptoms of anxiety are present in the individual as the individual analyzes where and whether he or she fits in.

*Immersion-emersion status* is a pro-Black stage in which the individual is extremely involved with Black issues and the Black community and has a sense of being anti-White (Helms & Cook, 1999). At this stage, individuals begin to cope with who they are as people and what it means to be them.

*Internalization* and *internalization-commitment*, the final statuses, emphasize the empowerment of the Black community as well as the realization that other races exist and coexist with the Black community (Worrell et al., 2001).

For many people, trying to learn who they are can be a stressful task. The *diathesis-stress model* focuses on stress and multiple other concepts. These concepts include individual influences, particularly as they relate to personality traits, familial environments, and social support (Benight, 2012). The theory also focuses on genetic and biological factors and reaction patterns to psychological stress, which, when mixed with a

traumatic event, can produce susceptibility to the development of a psychological break (Benight, 2012); these help to minimize the negative stress that the individual is experiencing. This theory focuses on both external and internal elements with regard to individual risk factors and resilience factors related to stress exposure.

The diathesis-stress model may be applied to depressive disorders, depressive symptoms, anxiety disorders, and anxiety symptoms. Intellectual vulnerabilities are not adequate to prompt the start of depressive symptoms. The diathesis in an individual must be triggered while the individual is experiencing a stressful event to activate depressive symptoms (Benight, 2012). A dysfunctional cognitive style and stressful life events are believed to be the triggers of anxiety symptoms (Kasper, Boer, & Sitsen, 2003). This theory was developed to provide an explanation of why individuals who constantly experience the same stressors due to their environment may react differently to the stressors, based on their genetic predisposition (Eberhart & Hammen, 2010). Individuals encounter different forms of stress. With the different forms of stress come various ways to process stress.

Another approach to the study of stress, *Lazarus stress theory*, is based on the cognitive stress theory created by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). This theory focuses on the concept that there is a need for an understanding of one's environment and an environment that regulates stress through the use of primary and secondary appraisal, coping, and perceived social support (Mitchell, 2014). A stress response is created when the acknowledgment of stress is more prominent than the perceived stress and the perceived stress surpasses the coping response (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping with

perceived stress happens in two stages: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal.

*Primary appraisal* focuses on assessing the perceived stressor as a probable threat that could lead to harm and how challenging the stressor will be to manage (Sudhir & Taksal, 2013). During primary appraisal, a stressor such as racism is confirmed. The second phase, *secondary appraisal*, focuses on assessment to deal with the stressor (Sudhir & Taksal, 2013).

As they attempt to cope, individuals may exhibit the following types of coping: (a) problem-focused coping, (b) emotion-focused coping, and (c) dysfunctional coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). *Problem-focused coping* requires the individual to take action to lessen the stressor by putting a plan into action that will engage the stressor and suppress the activities that may distract or take away from the stressor (Carter, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). *Emotion-focused coping* involves the use of social support, acceptance, and positive reinterpretation of growth (Carter et al., 1989). During this process, individuals seek social support from others to discuss emotions and experiences as a means of coping with the stressors they are facing. *Dysfunctional coping* involves venting of negative emotions brought by the perceived stressor, as well as behavioral and mental disengagement (Carter et al., 1989). Behavioral disengagement and mental disengagement play off one another; behavioral disengagement focuses on negative emotions and feelings of hopelessness regarding the stressor, while mental disengagement focuses on finding activities to distract from thinking about the stressor.

The three frameworks mentioned relate to the current study. They all focus on individuals' efforts to find purpose in stressful situations. It is not until individuals go



through the process of finding themselves and figuring out what their stress levels are that they are capable of coping with the various stress-related factors that come their way.

### **Nature of Study**

This study was quantitative correlational in nature. Researchers use quantitative methodology to find relationships between variables. In this study, the relationship examined was between race-related stress (racism) and the coping mechanism of African American men. This study maintained a focus on the impact that racism has on male members of the African American community and their perceptions of race-related stressors. Power analysis was run to determine the sample size needed. The participants in this study were recruited using flyers posted at community centers, churches, and libraries; notices on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; and Walden's Participant Pool. All participants were anonymous. Participants provided written consent before completing the questionnaires. There **was** a prescreening for participants to ensure that they met the criteria for the study.

### **Definitions of Theoretical Constructs and Terms**

The major constructs of this study related to African American men and their ability to cope with perceived race-related stress. The key variables of this study were race-related stress, racism, coping, and racial identity.

*Race-related stress:* Unfavorable actions regarding an individual that are founded on oppositional attitudes toward the group to which the individual belongs, or favorable conduct toward a person based on positive attitudes toward the group to which that individual belongs (Franklin et al., 2008).

*Racism:* Racism has been defined in multiple ways. Keum and Miller (2017) defined racism as an everyday occurrence for some that includes a created system of dominance and power that is founded upon White societal privileges and provides advantages to the White race while discriminating against racial and ethnic minority groups. Carter and Murphy (2015) defined racism as a system in which individuals or institutions purposefully exhibit power against a racial group defined as inferior.

*Coping:* Coping is defined as a cognitive behavior that is used to solve problems and minimize the risk of stress (Baumstarck et al., 2017).

*Racial identity:* Racial identity is suggested to be how individuals identify themselves based on their sense of membership in a group within a shared racial heritage based on self-perceptions of themselves through the use of an appraisal system (Helms, 2003).

### **Assumptions**

It was assumed that the selected participants in this study would represent the general population in terms of various demographics, including age, SES, education, and employment status. It was also assumed that even though the participants identified as male, the findings from this study might be generalized to other segments of the population to include the female gender. It was also assumed that within the African American community, SES means a variety of things; for instance, the more money a person makes, the less connected he or she may be with the community and everyday issues that individuals of low SES face. It was also assumed that participants would

answer the questionnaires honestly and as accurately as possible. This assumption was necessary to ensure external and internal validity.

### **Limitations**

There are some issues that may exist within this study. The People of Color Identity Attitudes Scale was used on people of color. This limited the opportunity for a comparison of how other races perceive race-related stress. The participants remained anonymous. Age and gender were limitations of this study, as there were set age and gender parameters. One of the biggest limitations was the attention span of the participants as this study used three instruments; the survey consisted of 113 questions. The sample size of this study was also an issue because it only identified a small selection of the population (i.e., African American men).

### **Delimitations**

The research problem was selected to fill the gap in literature regarding African American men and how they cope with perceived race-related stress. Previous research has addressed coping in the Black community with African American women, but few researchers have explored and focused on how African American men cope. The study was delimited to a selection of African American men; the results of the study could be generalized to impact all races of men and women. Furthermore, it was important to examine the impact of the current study's variables with the African American population, as this study may encourage further research on African Americans.

### **Significance**

This research may assist the field of psychology and society by addressing multiple concerns related to African American men, which include, but are not limited to, how to create effective settings to gain a better understanding of African American men. It may start a conversation about racism and the effects it has on African American men, as well as promote further research on African American men. It may also educate readers about race-related stressors, social injustice, and managing the stressors and problems associated with racism.

African American men are described as a unique population, one that has undergone a severe reduction in numbers and faces the risk of extinction due to exposure to negative social and environmental circumstances (McCain, 2014). This study may assist in developing an understanding of the context associated with defining overt and covert racism. Further, it may provide a better understanding of how African American males develop the ability to cope with this stressor time and time again. Incidents such as the killings of unarmed African American men by police (Marquez, 2015; McCain, 2014; “Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. Calls for Intervention,” 2014) and the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church shootings (Ford, 2015) are often portrayed by the news media and on social media as racial conflicts.

Gaining an understanding of how African American men’s livelihoods are impacted by racism may contribute to much-needed dialogue toward addressing the issue of racism in America while assisting others with finding ways to cope with race-related stress. There is limited information regarding racism in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Information gleaned from this research may raise awareness around racial issues that are affecting African American men. Research regarding African American men's coping mechanisms may be helpful to mental health professionals. The African American population is not known for seeking mental health assistance (Bryant et al., 2014). This may provide some explanation as to why.

This study may promote positive social change by contributing to a better understanding of African American men's thoughts and feelings about racism, which may inform efforts toward racial equality and justice in America. A study such as this one can offer a framework for understanding the racial divide that society is currently facing. This study could potentially begin a conversation among all races as to why "Black lives matter" by providing an understanding of racism from African American perspectives.

### **Summary**

There has been limited research exploring the coping mechanisms of African American men. There has been a need to understand how these members of society cope as they are looked upon and viewed in a negative manner. It is important to understand the techniques and mechanisms that African American men use to assist them in comprehending and adjusting their behavior to circumstances that they perceive as race related.

Chapter 2 contains a synopsis of the literature relevant to perceived race-related stress and coping mechanisms in African American men. An overview of previous studies will be provided, along with a discussion of the effects of perceived race-related stress on mental health in the African American community.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

This study was conducted in an attempt to fill a gap in the literature regarding the impact that racism has on the African American male population and how African American men cope with perceived race-related stressors. This research offers an opportunity to understand the effects that racism has on African American men and the way they live. Terms that were used to search the literature included *African American men*, *Black men*, *racism*, *Lazarus stress theory*, *diathesis-stress model*, *racial identity development theory*, *coping*, and *race-related stress*. The databases that were used in the literature search were EBSCOhost, ProQuest, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and SAGE Premier.

### African Americans

The term *Black* is often meant to connote something negative or evil, or is thought of as such (Killian, 2015). Many people of African descent have experienced racism in their lives all around the world (Bobo & Fox, 2003). Thomas, Hammond, and Kohn-Wood (2015) defined *African American men* and *Black men* as individuals with familial lineages linked to Africa who reside in the United States.

Johnson (2016) contended that the majority of research on African American men has focused more on their negative attributes than their positive attributes. Negative attributes that African American men are purported to have include a negative attitude and aggressive behaviors. There has been limited research focusing on the notion that

African American men have been able to develop a sense of dignity and self-worth in the worst of situations.

Many members of the African American community believe that people in other American cultures do not value their lives or respect their daily reality (Johnson, 2016). In an attempt to change this, African Americans are choosing to educate people from other cultures in the United States regarding what it is like to live with subtle reminders that they are constantly disregarded. Due to the color of their skin, African American men may experience disrespect or may be overlooked altogether (Cullors et al., 2015).

African American men have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the United States (Hudson et al., 2016). The lives of African Americans do not currently hold the same apparent value as the lives of European Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans. There needs to be an effort to change the national climate so that more people recognize the value of the lives of African American men. African American men are more likely to encounter race-related stress than men of other backgrounds.

According to Greer and Spalding (2017), age is often regulated as a controlled factor when associated with race-related stressors. The importance of age in relation to race-related stressors is that there is no age difference in which younger individuals face more or less racism than individual older than them (Greer & Spalding, 2017). It is also important to understand the role that age and SES play in race-related stressors. SES includes income, education, and occupation. Sanchez, Liu, Leathers, Goins, and Vilain (2011) explained that race is often a contributing factor in SES. It is believed that individuals should be able to acquire upward mobility in their education, occupation, and

income (Sanchez et al., 2011). It is also believed that many African American men are not able to achieve upward mobility due to race and other social barriers. African American men are discriminated against more than men of any other race (Sanchez et al., 2011). Frequently, they have to choose whether they want to be looked at as educated men or as African American men, in that there is rarely a case where individuals believe the two can coincide (Sanchez et al., 2011).

African American men face inequality that other ethnic groups in the United States do not experience. *Ethnic inequality* is defined as imbalanced prosperity across ethnic lines that is associated with one's development (Robinson, 2001). This means that unfair treatment is centered around wealth, which is distributed based on ethnicity and not the development of the person. Ethnic inequality can affect an individual's psychological well-being.

African American men's psychological well-being is constantly being threatened. African American men are constantly reminded by other Americans that their lives do not matter or do not hold importance equal to European Americans' lives (Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos, & Moats, 2016). For instance, when unarmed African American men are shot by police officers, there is no justice for them. They are automatically to blame for such incidents occurring. Their personal history is exposed and evaluated. For instance, Terence Crutcher of Tulsa, Oklahoma, was an unarmed African American man waiting for car assistance on the side of the road (Barker, 2016). There is police body cam footage of Crutcher walking with his hands in the air from the police vehicle to his



vehicle and then immediately falling to the ground. He was fatally shot by Police Officer Betty Shelby (Barker, 2016). Crutcher was instantly put on trial by the media.

### **Criminal Justice**

Any member of a marginalized group can be exposed to individual and institutional racism. However, African American men are significantly more likely to be identified by the police as a threat to safety, making them more likely to be victims of police violence (Chaney, 2015). Moreover, African American men are exposed to a justice system that penalizes them due to their race (Chaney, 2015).

Race played a large role in the sentencing and retrying of the Buck case in 1995 and 2017. Duane Buck, an African American man, was convicted of the capital murder of his ex-girlfriend and her friend, both of whom he shot (in addition to wounding his own sister) in 1996. Buck's jury consisted entirely of European Americans. The jury was given the option of sentencing him to the death penalty or life in prison. The sentencing decision was based upon his perceived potential for future criminal behavior.

Dr. Walter Quijano, a psychologist, testified on behalf of Buck. Quijano stated his professional opinion after meeting Buck and completing his psychological assessment that Buck would probably not engage in further violent conduct. However, he stipulated that Buck's race was a contributing factor and that as an African American, he was born with an inclination toward violence (Chammah, 2017). Quijano stated under oath that the fact that Buck was African American meant that he was statistically more likely to be violent (Chammah, 2017). Buck was initially sentenced to death then his sentence was changed to life.

## Racism

People in the United States consider racism a sensitive topic (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008). Racism, however, has been a key element shaping American culture. Racism made its way to America in 1619 when the first slaves were brought to Jamestown, Virginia. Racism can be either covert or overt. Harrell (2000) defined *racism* as

a system of dominance, power, and privilege based on racial group designations ... where members of the dominant group create or accept their societal privilege by maintaining structures, ideology, values, and behavior that have the intent or effect of leaving non-dominant group members relatively excluded from power, esteem, status, and/or equal access to societal resources. (p. 43)

Many members of U.S. society, especially in the African American community, believe that racism contributes to determining the ways in which individuals observe and act toward African Americans (Brooms & Perry, 2016). Many associate Black skin with “poverty, danger, and distrust” (Brooms & Perry, 2016, p. 168); however, this is a stereotype and does not fit the reality of African American men or Black skin. The association of Black skin with danger and distrust is a form of racism. Racism is a social construct (Leon-Guerrero, 2016). The focus of this construct is discrimination based on skin color, ethnicity, and/or geographical location with the help of a system put in place to maintain inequality (Leon-Guerrero, 2016).

One of the more powerful systems that upholds racism in the contemporary world is the criminal justice system. The criminal justice system is made up of police departments and courts of law. This system is responsible for a number of tasks, which

include but are not limited to pursuing criminals, prosecuting crimes, defending those accused of crimes, and sentencing those who are convicted (Rakoff, 2017). The criminal justice system is believed by many to work in the favor of those who are not African American (Steven-Watkins & Graves, 2011). The criminal justice system is the most common and known form of institutional racism. This system was not made to protect the rights of African Americans, so African Americans often do not receive the benefits that others associate with the criminal justice system. Racial biases exist within the criminal justice system, in which African American men are treated as second-class citizens.

Within the framework of racism as a social construct that I have presented in this chapter, African American men cannot be seen as racist. African American men cannot show racism or racist beliefs or thoughts toward someone who does not share the same skin color, ethnicity, and geographical location (Leon-Guerrero, 2016). Racism exists at various levels, including institutional, cultural, and individual. Institutional racism is expressed through guidelines and practices of an institution, which affect particular groups and result in unequal treatment (Chaney, 2015). Chaney (2015) explained that skill, locality, revenue, and education may be contributing factors in institutional racism.

### **Institutional Racism**

The enslavement of Africans began in the 1600s. The enslavement of Africans grew to become the enslavement of African Americans over time. Slavery was a legal and economic system that allowed one race (European Americans) to treat another race (Africans and African Americans) as property (Austin, 2014). Slavery was abolished with the passing of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment (Austin, 2014). The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, while

abolishing slavery, created leased labor of African American men, who were placed into involuntary servitude (Blackmon, 2009). Wilkins, Whiting, Watson, Russon, and Moncrief (2013) explained that it was the viciousness and the racist repercussions of slavery that created the foundation for the institutional racism and unrelenting dehumanization that African Americans men suffer today.

During slavery, Africans were viewed as less than human and were constantly disrespected in society. Slaves were not able to own property or participate in any aspects of free society, including politics (Wilkins et al., 2013). Black male slaves were emasculated (Boxill, 2010). Enslaved Black males were thought of not only as unhuman, but also as cruel, ruthless, and stupid.

Institutional racism can be subtle and therefore difficult for individuals to recognize or acknowledge (Chaney, 2015). This means that many times, institutional racism goes unnoticed because many do not believe in its existence and are unaware of how to recognize it. Jim Crow laws were enforced by southern state legislatures in the United States (Barry, 2006). Jim Crow was abolished in 1964. However, it is believed by many in the African American community and around the world that Jim Crow still exists today through voter suppression efforts, drug laws, and welfare policies (Lindsay, 2013).

### **Cultural Racism**

Cultural racism is another form of racism. Cultural racism is a longstanding framework in the United States that forms a key part of the country's foundation (Oliver, 2001). Oliver (2001) defined *cultural racism* as an efficient method of racism whereby a White majority praises European physical attributes, character, and accomplishments

while disparaging the physical characteristics, character, and achievement of people of color. Within this environment of cultural racism, African American people are portrayed as ignorant, childish, and violent by the media, especially on the news. The history of America often excludes slavery and the contributions that African Americans men have made throughout U.S. history.

Cultural racism has created a cultural crisis within the African American community. The cultural crisis has three key elements. The first consists of African Americans' historical memories. The second is the absence of appreciation for African Americans' physical characteristics and unique traditions (Oliver, 2001). African Americans are made to believe that their physical characteristics are not attractive and that the practices that have been passed down within their culture are strange and unnecessary (Akintunde, 1997). The physical characteristics that may be found unattractive within this framework include African Americans' complexion, large lips, and large noses. Akintunde (1997) suggested that African Americans with lighter complexions are found to be more desirable than darker skinned African Americans. The third element is a deficiency of cultural competence (Oliver, 2001). A deficiency of cultural competence can lead African American men to have little or no understanding of their culture. Maciel and Wallendorf (2017) described cultural competence as mastery of three elements: (a) knowledge and understanding of what one is saying and what one is doing, (b) unambiguous recommendations and directives, and (c) engaging in a manner that is accepted and the emotional concern is met.

The “N-word” emerged as a slur or insult toward enslaved Africans in the mid-1800s, when it served to identify them as a part of a lower social class (Allan, 2015; Harper, 2009). Among the race-related stressors that African American men have to cope with are racist comments made on national television. Bill Maher, a popular White talk show host, used the N-word casually one night while speaking with a Senator of the United States during a live taping of his show. The Senator stated that he would like to have Maher working in the fields for him (politically speaking, regarding campaigning). Maher’s response to the Senator was “he is a house-nigger” (Itzkoff, 2017). The negative connotations associated with the use of the N-word by a White person were felt immediately throughout the African American community. The incident brought forth feelings of hatred, emotional hurt, pain, and suffering, as indicated by those who spoke out about it immediately.

Rapper and actor Ice Cube, an African American who has used the N-word numerous times in his music career, and Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, a professor at Georgetown University, author, and radio host, were invited to express their opinions about Maher’s use of the N-word on his show. Cube stated that it was inappropriate for Maher to use the N-word because the N-word is not a word that White people are allowed to use anymore; his exact words were “it is our word now, you can’t have it back” (Phillips, 2017). Dyson stated that although Maher had, in the past, “bravely and relentlessly pilloried racism, white privilege and white indifference to the black plight” (Michael Eric Dyson Replacing Franken, 2017), his use of the N-word was evidence of his unconscious White privilege. He echoed the notion that this word is not a word that a

White person should use or feel entitled to use (Michael Eric Dyson Replacing Franken, 2017). Systemic racism was explored between Dyson and Maher. *Systemic racism* refers to a method used by White people who have generated racial oppression through social structures, material conditions, knowledge, and daily routines to their advantage and to the disadvantage of individuals who are not White (Jacobson, 2015).

### **Individual Racism**

Individual racism is different from cultural racism. Unzueta and Lowery (2008) defined individual racism as a form of discrimination rooted in negative feelings, positions, or thoughts towards individuals of a group. In order to understand individual racism, one must have an understanding of the term *discrimination*. Discrimination is considered a form of stress. Franklin et al. (2008) defined discrimination as unwarranted actions toward an individual that emerge from an unfavorable mindset toward the group to which that individual belongs. Individual racism involves how an individual personally, consciously, and subconsciously feels about other groups.

Racism and discrimination are associated with higher stress responses. Perceived racism is the opinion that one is receiving unjust treatment based on ethnicity or racial background (Arellano-Morales, Liang, Ruiz, & Rios-Oropeza, 2016). Perceived racism is said to have an impact on both the state of negative affect and the trait of negative affect. The state of negative affect involves brief or temporary emotions that may oscillate as an outcome of everyday activities or situations (Brondolo et al., 2008). The trait of negative affect is an extensive and constant emotional temperament that makes an individual more likely to experience negative sentiments (Brondolo et al., 2008). The

state of negative affect can leave a lasting impression on the individual affected, causing him or her to remember the experience every time a similar situation occurs. The state of negative affect can bring forth negative interpersonal interactions (Brondolo et al., 2008).

### **Historical Racism**

Racism is something that can be observed from the past (i.e. Slavery, the Civil Rights Movement (1954), the March on Selma (1965), and the Voters Rights Act (1965)) and present settings of today. Slavery gave European Americans the legal right to treat African Americans men as though they were only property until slavery was abolished (Austin, 2014). However, there are lasting consequences of slavery that affect African American men today. African American men are not always treated like they are a part of American society, they are often told that their issues are not important and that they were not a contributing factor to the America of the past or today. Slavery holds great weight in the morals and values that many African American men hold, their mentality and the African American culture (Graff, 2016). Civil rights are the rights that lead to equal treatment (Bond, 2014).

**Civil Rights.** The Civil Rights Movement focused on a social crusade to end discrimination and racial segregation towards African Americans (Morris, 2011) and to eliminate segregation and gaining equal rights for all people as it related to housing, employment, and education (Greene, 2015). The civil rights movement began with *Brown vs. The Board of Education*. *Brown vs. The Board of Education* (1954) overturned the 1896 *Plessy vs. Ferguson* ruling, which stated, “separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” (Dixson, Clayton, Peoples, & Reynolds, 2016). Homer Adolph



Plessy was one-third Caucasian and decided to sit in the “Whites Only” car of the train in Louisiana. Then he refused to move when told he should be sitting in the back car of the train. Plessy’s refusal to move resulted in his arrest. The Supreme Court challenged the ruling and ruled against Plessy putting in place Separate but Equal, which ensured that both races, African Americans and European Americans were entitled to the same things but the quality was assuredly different (Hutchison, 2015). The Plessy ruling brought forth cases such as Brown vs. The Board of Education.

After the ruling on Brown versus The Board of Education school districts were required to have a desegregation plan. The Brown v The Board of Education consisted of multiple cases from different states based on segregation in public schools based on race which all fell under Brown v The Board of Education (Sky Lark, 2012). These cases included instances of minors being declined their right to attend public school. At this time, public schools had the right to be segregated based on race (Sky Lark, 2012).

**Montgomery Bus boycott.** December 1, 1955 Rosa Parks, an African American, refused to give up her seat to a White man on the city bus as the law dictated. Her actions initiated the Montgomery Bus Boycott. On December 1<sup>st</sup> Parks entered the front of the Cleveland Avenue bus to pay her fare and then she exited the front of the bus and entered the back of the bus to take her seat. Parks sat in the front row of the colored only section of the bus. The bus driver demanded that Parks and three others give up their seats because there were no vacant seats in the “Whites Only” section and White passengers needed seats. Parks refused to give up her seat and the bus driver threatened to have her arrested. She was arrested. Although, Parks was not the first African American to refuse

to give up her bus seat; however, she was the only one who was employed as the secretary for the NAACP. The Montgomery Bus Boycott took place on December 5, 1955. This boycott was originally slated to last for one day but it lasted for more than one year. June 5, 1956, the segregation of the busing system in Montgomery, Alabama was ruled unconstitutional based on the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. However, the city did not desegregate the buses until December 21, 1956, this is when the boycott ended (McGhee, 2015).

**March on Selma.** The Parks situation was followed by a young pastor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. King led the Civil Rights Act movement (Lucks, 2015). The March on Selma (1965) was the impactful movement that encouraged President Johnson to move forward with the Voters Rights Act (1965) (Berg-Cross & Hill, 2014). The March on Selma was led by King in an attempt to change the rights that were in place for African Americans as they related to voting. There were three attempts to this march/protest from Selma to Montgomery and across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The day of the first attempt, known as Bloody Sunday, Alabama police directed men to meet protestors with violence; on the second attempt police met protestors but did not allow them to pass. In the third and final attempt to march from Selma to Montgomery was successful as the protestors were protected.

**Voters Right Act.** The Voters Rights Act (1965) was put in place to make certain that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment would not have any leeway, room for error, or gray areas with regards to discrimination to African Americans and minorities voting (Berg-Cross & Hill, 2014). President Johnson signed the Voters Right Act into law on August 6, 1965,

after the Bloody Sunday (Chun, 2013). This act brought forth the revision of the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment. The 15<sup>th</sup> amendment grants citizens the right to vote and not be discriminated against based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude (Chun, 2013). Many states in preparation for the 2016 election developed voting restrictions (Bagenstos, 2017). These restrictions reminded Americans especially African Americans of the struggles that came before the Voters Rights Act. The response to the voting restrictions was met with lawsuits from the Civil Rights Division a part of the Department of Justice (Bagenstos, 2017).

### **Present-Day Racism**

Young men unarmed African American men, like Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and Freddy Gray were victims of racial discrimination in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which cost them their lives. Martin, an unarmed 17-year old African American male, was shot and killed by George Zimmermann, 28-year-old male, on February 26, 2012 in his neighborhood on his way home from 7-11 (McCann, 2014). Zimmerman followed Martin through his housing complex after being instructed by the police to stand down. A confrontation between the two began and ended with the death of Trayvon Martin (Hodges, 2015). Zimmerman was not charged with the crime and no justice was sought for Trayvon. Hodges (2015) explained that this very case is an example of institutional racism, in which biases based on race help to distinguish who receives the benefit of the doubt in certain settings. The African American male, Trayvon Martin was put on trial and not given the benefit of the doubt even though he was unable to plead his case.

Michael Brown, an 18-year old African American male, was killed by former police officer Darren Wilson on August 9, 2014. Brown's body was left uncovered for several hours on Canfield Drive in Ferguson, Missouri. Brown was racially profiled and he like Martin was not given the benefit of doubt nor was he given the opportunity to defend himself or plead his case (Cullors et al., 2015).

Freddy Gray, a 25-year-old, African American male, who was in police custody, sustained a fatal spinal cord injury and suffered from a lack of oxygen which ultimately caused his untimely death on April 12, 2015. It is also stated, but not proven, that while Baltimore City Police were transporting Gray to the Baltimore City Jail, they failed to securely fasten him into the transport vehicle (Marquez, Hanna, & Fantz, 2015; Marquez, 2015). This is also an example of institutional racism. As Gray, an African American male was arrested because he ran away from the police. However, when he was apprehended it was for possession of an illegal knife, his mistreatment by the Baltimore City Police was due to the fact he was African American man.

The Black Lives Matter movement was created in 2014 as a response to the mistreatment of young unarmed African American men. This movement focuses on constructing associations between African Americans, their counterparts, and associates, in creating a voice that stands up against those who promote an anti-African American lifestyle, while initiating a conversation that embarks on the positive social action (Cullors et al., 2015). The Black Lives Matter movement is viewed by many as a movement that promotes violence towards others that are not African American and especially those who are a part of the law enforcement community. This is not the case,

the Black Lives Matter movement attempts to ask a very specific question, “Do Black lives matter” (Cullors et al., 2015)?

### **Race-Related Stress**

Race-related stress is believed to be caused by stressful life events (Johnny, 2013). Stress, whether race-related or just regular stress is something that everyone will encounter. Not everyone will experience race-related stress. Race-related stress is also referred to as racism-related stress. The race-related stress models hypothesize that one’s opinion and exposure to racism can affect an individual’s psychological resources and the outcome is stress that has an unfavorable cost on the individual’s physical and psychological well-being (Kukulin, 2014).

Race-related stress can include day-to-day stressors that occur based on the color of one’s skin, discrimination and or racism in general. Race-related stress has the ability to affect multiple areas of an individual’s life, including physical, emotional, financial and social aspects of life (Franklin-Jackson & Carter, 2007). Chronic stress may cause severe health issues, while acute stress can prompt changes in the body (Harvard Health Publications, 2011). The response to stress starts in the brain. This can be through the senses, hearing and seeing. An individual can see that they are in danger or they can hear that they are in a dangerous situation. Anger, anxiety, depression, helplessness, and hopelessness are signs associated with race-related stress (Franklin-Jackson & Carter, 2007).

Race-related stress can happen anywhere at any time and it can be in the form of institutional or cultural racism (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). Institutional race-related

stress focuses on perceived stress associated with experiences of racism that surround practices and policies of an institutions (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). For example, minorities may feel as though the legal system is an example of institutional racism. Cultural race-related racism pinpoints the exposure and perceived stress related to individual experiences of racism in which defamation of their culture or cultural group occurs (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). An individual who dresses up in blackface is an example of cultural race-related racism.

### **Mental Health**

Racism is a stressor that can lead to issues with the law as well as health issues (Synder, 2016). Mental health is defined as a state of being that affects the biological, psychological, and or social factors which play a part in an individual's mental state and their ability to function within the environment (Manwell, Barbic, Roberts, Durisko, Lee, Ware, & McKenzie, 2015). Racism has added disparities to how African Americans especially African American men look at mental health and decide whether or not to seek assistance from those in the mental health profession (Rosenberg, 2015). Racism has a negative effect on mental health in the African American community (Kwate & Goodman, 2015). Watson and Hunter (2015) suggested that African American men do not seek mental health professionals because of economic barriers, lack of insurance, and cultural beliefs.

For the African American community, there is also a stigma associated with seeking mental health assistance. This stigma itself can be considered a stressor due to the new negative perception of the individual seeking mental health assistance (Watson &

Hunter, 2015). African American men tend to hold negative attitudes about seeking mental health assistance whether it is for themselves or for their family members. The stigma in the African American community is high but highest among African American men. African American men would rather rely on their primary health care provider or their leaders in their faith-based religions to provide them with the care they require (Plowden, Adams, & Wiley, 2016). Many think that when it comes to mental health and African American men they should practice positive psychology. Gooden and McMahon (2016), believe positive psychology included six important characteristics (motivation and identification, positive emotionality, openness, hopeful purpose, moral and prosocial orientation, and spiritual development).

African Americans make up 13.3 percent of the United States population; African American men make up 6.2 percent (US Census Bureau, 2016). They are forced to assimilate into European American culture in which they may or may not be comfortable, which may create a strain on mental health statuses for African American men (Eshun & Packer, 2016). This can cause an increase in psychological disorders amongst African American men. Eshun and Packer (2016), believed that it is more than likely that African American men will continue to show mistrust due to the racism and discrimination that they face on a daily basis. This continued racism and discrimination could bring forth feelings of low self-worth, learned helplessness, and poor mental health.

**Anxiety.** Anxiety is defined as an expectation of a future threat (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Individuals who are exposed to perceived race-related stress are susceptible to anxiety or symptoms of anxiety. According to Carter and Walker

(2014), anxiety disorders in African American men are more chronic. The major symptoms of anxiety associated with race-related stress include excessive worrying, and lack of control (Carter, Walker, Cutrona, Simons & Beach, 2016). Most African American men identify symptoms of tension, shaking and nausea with regards to anxiety (Lancaster, Melka, Klein & Rodriguez, 2015). There is limited research on the effects of anxiety on members of African American men (Gordon, Steiner & Teachman, 2015).

According to Gaylord-Harden, Elmore, Campbell, and Wethington (2011), hyper-arousal and hypertension are specific to anxiety. Hyper-arousal focuses on nervousness, tension and irritability, increased arousal inability to sleep and panic (van Wyk, Thomas, Solms, & Lipinska, 2016). Hypertension is also known as a form of high blood pressure. There is a 40 percent higher rate of hypertension in African American men than in European men (Hicken, Lee, Morenoff, House, & Williams, 2014). Soto, Roberts, Pole, Levenson, Burleson, King, and Breland-Noble (2012) believed that African American men are at a higher risk of experiencing anxiety especially in specific settings. Gordon, Steiner and Teachman, (2015), stated that anxiety in African American men can be triggered by a number of different events or occurrences but the most common seems to be racism, the stigmatism placed on mental illness and physical illness.

**Depression.** Depression is defined as a mood disturbance, loss of interests or pleasure, extreme feelings of hopelessness and sadness (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Depression is one of the highest and costlier mental health illnesses in the world (Plowden, et al., 2016). The most common assumption associated with depression is that it is only the negative emotions that are important (Dunn, 2012). It is



important to focus on the impairment of positivity that is not apparent in depression.

Plowden, et al., (2016) suggested that depression in African American men is higher than what is reported.

Most African American men do not get diagnosed with depression until they are in need of public assistance, living in homeless shelters or are incarcerated (Plowden, et al., 2016). It is not until they are in these situations or locations that their vague symptoms such as irritability, fatigue, and insomnia are looked at with a fine-toothed comb. There is a lot on the plate and shoulders of African American men that goes unnoticed unless you are a member of the African American community. The men are required to conform to masculine roles, such as being dominate, supportive, and independent while responding to discrimination and racism (Plowden, et al., 2016).

**Stress.** The American Psychological Association (2010), defined stress as a “reaction to a short-lived situation.” Stress differs from individual to individual and is dealt with differently as well. Essentially, with stress, the body reacts and adjusts to any situational factors brought on or that may arise. Ramos (2011) inferred that if not addressed properly, stress can interfere with an individual’s life on many different levels, inability to complete a full day’s worth of work, raising a family, classroom workload, maintaining grades, and an individual’s ability to live comfortably, which can become unsafe. Stress can hit at any age to any person.

There are different forms of stress, most commonly mentioned are chronic and acute stress. Hickens, et al., (2014) defined chronic stress as a repeated exposure to a stressor that has the ability to affect one’s mind and even their body in due time. Acute stress is defined

as a stressor that comes from a particular event (Anshel, Sutarso, & Jubenville, 2009). Stress is a contributing factor in the poor health rate in African American men as well as their shorter life expectancy. DeGruy (2005) stated that African American men life expectancy is 5-7 years lower than that of European American men. Stress is higher in African American men than those of other races and those of African American women (Ellis, Griffith, Allen, Thorpe, & Bruce, 2015).

**Coping.** The reaction to stress depends greatly on the individual and their reaction can be positive or negative. Semenova and Stadtlander (2016) defined coping as both a behavioral and a cognitive work that an individual utilizes to minimize the encountered stress. The negative reaction is usually generated when an individual is constantly faced with challenges back to back and is not given adequate time to recuperate from the previous challenge. A positive reaction can be considered the body's way of keeping one alert from danger and giving the fight or flight instinct. Watson and Hunter (2015) believed that the African American culture uses resources such as their fortitude, self-sufficiency, and silence to cope with stressors they encounter. However, it is also believed that coping in a manner such as this can leave this culture subject to depression and anxiety.

There are many different forms of coping such as avoidance-behavioral coping, (Anshel, et al., 2009), active coping (Stevens-Watkins, Sharma, Knighton, Oser, & Leukefeld, 2014), and Africultural coping (Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006). Avoidance-behavioral coping focuses on the mindful choice to remove self away from the environment in which the threat exists (Anshel, et al., 2009). In the instant that

African American men use avoidance-behavioral coping they are trying to physically remove themselves from the presented stressor. Active coping is in alignment with John Henryism, Active Coping (JHAC). In this form of coping, the individual perceives himself as in control of the stressor based on their ability to use hard work to overcome the stressor (Stevens-Watkins, et al., 2014).

Africultural coping is a coping mechanism that is specific to the African American culture. This type of coping mechanism centers around four major concepts, cognitive-emotional debriefing, spiritual-centered coping, collective coping, and ritual centered coping (Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006). Cognitive-emotional debriefing focuses on African American men adaptive reaction to their stressor Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006). The spiritual-centered coping focuses around the individual belief in a higher power (Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006). This can be considered the individual's belief in God or lack thereof. The collective coping focuses around the individual's involvement with others to help them get through the presented stressor. The ritual centered coping focuses on specific activities or practices that the individual does to elevate the stress that is present (Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Racial Identity Theory**

Szymanski and Lewis (2016) described racial identity as a mental development for adopting a strong and positive self-concept in a race-based society. The Racial Identity Development Theory is considered a coping mechanism for those who have to deal with the everyday stressors of racism (Helms & Cook, 1999). There are different

statuses that African Americans and European Americans go through. There are four statuses of the Racial Identity Development Theory, for African Americans. These statuses include, Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, Internalization, and Internalization-Commitment.

The first status for the Racial Identity Development Theory is the Pre-Encounter status. During the pre-encounter status African American men are seeing the world through a “white” lens (Ford, Harris, & Schuerger, 1993). This means that his actions refute his black identity. The stereotypes about his culture are at the forefront of his mind (Worrell et al., 2001). However, Carter, Johnson, Roberson, Mazzula, Kirkinis, and Sant-Barket (2017) viewed racial identity as a status more than a phase. There are two types of statuses mentioned internal and external. These statuses focus on the individual’s awareness of the role that race plays in everyday life. For those with an internal racial group identification they are more invested and more aware of how they identify themselves (Cater, et.al, 2017). This can be due to a person’s experiences.

The Encounter status is the second status of the racial identity development theory. Throughout this status he no longer holds value in his pro-white ideals have no value. He is not focusing on what community he belongs to. He prefers to be identified as “human” no direct association with any particular racial group (Ford, et al.,1993). Within this status symptoms of anxiety are apparent due to the constant need to separate oneself from both communities. He is trying to analyze where he fits in within society (Worrell et al., 2001). The third status is Immersion-Emersion at this time he no longer wants to be seen as just human. He wants to be seen as an individual member of the African

American community and want his “black” attributes to shine (Worrell et al., 2001).

Throughout this status, he has reestablished his pro-black ideals and becomes an advocate of anti-white ideals; he is also more involved in the African American community (Helms & Cook, 1999).

Internalization and Internalization-Commitment is the fourth status at this time he is secure in whom he is and is well aware of the value he holds as an individual and as a member of the African American community (Helms & Cook, 1999). He is less defensive about his pro-black views and has a newfound sense of blackness (Johnson, 2004). He is also learning himself as well as what it means to be a member of the African American community. Towards the end of this status, he uses his newfound black identity to serve as a platform for political and social injustices within his communities (Johnson, 2004).

### **Lazarus Cognitive Model of Stress**

Folkman and Lazarus (1985) developed an attempt to manage or reduce stress through the use of coping, as a cognitive and behavioral strategy (Thomas et al., 2015). The Lazarus Cognitive Model of Stress focuses on four phases. These phases include, primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, coping, and perceived social support (Sudhir & Taksal, 2013). Primary appraisal focuses on the African American man’s concern whether it is a threat, a challenge or a loss of some sort (Mitchell, 2015). Mitchell (2015) defined these concerns in past, future and present time concerns. The threat is a concern of the future and has yet to happen, a challenge is a concern of present terms and the loss is something that has happened in the past. Racism, discrimination, stereotyping and

race-related stress can be considered types of primary appraisal, as these can be added stressors. Initially the primary appraisal has to be first recognized. After recognition of the concern the secondary appraisal comes into play. The secondary appraisal focuses on the concept of what can be done to overcome the concern or prevent it (Mitchell, 2015). During this stage, the African American man tries to figure out what he can do to either get himself out of the situation or way to prevent himself from experiencing the primary appraisal again.

The coping aspect of the Lazarus Cognitive Model of Stress focuses on the African American man using his resources to cope with his perceived stress, the primary appraisal (Mitchell, 2015). The coping resources that he holds can come into play at different times, this depends solely on the type of primary appraisal. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) believed that the coping aspect of the model is continuously fluctuating between cognitive and behavioral sources. The ability for an individual to cope with their perceived stressor takes a toll on the individual. In order for an individual to cope there is a three-strain process that must first happen.

This process includes problem focus, emotion focus and dysfunctional coping styles (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The problem focus strain involves him making an effort to decrease the stressor by creating a plan of action (Carter et al., 1989). This plan should include a method to employ the stressor and decrease or eliminate activities that may disturb the stressor. The emotion focus strain concentrates on emotional coping (Carter et al., 1989); which is supported by his social support. The dysfunctional coping styles strain focuses on venting, and behavioral and mental disengagement (Carter et al.,

1989). The social support aspect of the model may be seen as a form of coping. This is his concern (primary appraisal) it is essentially eliminated or lessened due to the social support he receives based on his primary appraisal. The social support that he requires in this stage may come in the form of a simple evaluation of the primary appraisal by a peer (Gräbel, & Adabbo, 2011).

### **Diathesis-Stress Model**

Diathesis-Stress Model recognizes that he is different and there will be variances in his susceptibility and exposure to the stressful events in his life (Slavik & Croake, 2006). Slavik and Croake (2006) mentioned two types of Diathesis-Stress Models that both include the use of Vulnerability hypothesis, Cognitive and Interactive Diathesis-Stress Models. The Vulnerability hypothesis focuses on the concept that there is a possibility that stress may activate the beginning of an illness, but this is only if he is already vulnerable to the illness (Slavik & Croake, 2006). The Cognitive Diathesis-Stress Model focuses on his cognitive processes, the way he thinks about himself and others around them based on his life experiences (Slavik & Croake, 2006). Within this stress model, it is important to understand that no two African American men will necessarily handle their primary appraisal the same way.

Interactive Diathesis-Stress Model is different from the Cognitive Diathesis-Stress Model where the Cognitive model focuses on his thinking. The Interactive model focuses on him taking responsibility for his actions (Salvik & Croake, 2006). This theory intends to offer clarification and reasoning behind why African American men are constantly exposed to the same occurrences or stressors based on their environment may

react differently to stressors based on genetic predisposition (Eberhart & Hammen, 2010). Chapter three will present an overview of the methodology that will be the foundation of the present study. This includes the sample population, research methods, instruments, data collection and ethical considerations.



### Chapter 3: Research Method

In Chapter 3, I discuss the methodology used for this research study, including the research design and approach, setting and sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, and measurements and instruments used. The purpose of this study was to understand the impact that racism and race-related stress have on African American men and how they cope with these perceived stressors. In this study, race-related stressors, the effect that they have on African American men, and African American men's ability to cope with perceived stressors were examined.

Racism and race-related stress continues to be problems in the United States (Yoo & Pituc, 2013). Leech, Adams, Weather, Staten, and Filippelli (2016) stated that there is an increase in social injustices with African American men, claiming that racism and race-related stressors are at an all-time high for this group. The literature is limited on the effects that race-related stress has on African Americans and other minority groups. In particular, there appears to be very little literature that pinpoints the effects of race-related stress on African American men and how it affects their coping mechanisms (West et al., 2010).

This chapter addresses the methods that were used to complete research on how racism and race-related stress impact the coping mechanisms of African American men. Explanations of the research design and how the study was approached are provided. The instruments and materials that were used for this study are identified and presented. Measures to protect participants' rights and confidentiality are discussed.

## **Research Methods**

### **Research Approach and Design**

A quantitative, correlational research approach was used to clarify and categorize variables. The use of objective data analyzed statistically was helpful in addressing the research question as well as providing more information through survey instruments centered on the attitudes and opinions of African American men (Creswell, 2009). Quantitative research is generally used when researchers are attempting to gather self-reported data using surveys. The correlational approach is set up to identify relationships between variables that have not been manipulated (Fitzgerald, Rumrill, & Schenker, 2004). Using the correlational approach helped in identifying whether there was a relationship between race-related stressors, age, SES, and the coping skills of African American men. The survey design's purpose was used to sample the population so that implications might be inferred concerning the characteristics, attitudes, or behavior of the population (Creswell, 2009). A correlational analysis was used to examine any relationships between variables being measured by the surveys implemented. A correlational approach can be used to make predictions about new relationships or relationships in general (Sica, 2017). This research may establish the foundation for forthcoming research that may contribute to the field of clinical psychology.

The quantitative approach allows researchers to use a sample size large enough to obtain an accurate representation of a population that is too large to view directly (Sica, 2017). Participants in this study were not exposed to any forms of deception or manipulation. In support of the data collection process, three different survey instruments

were used. The data gathered from the sample population were used to explore the relationship between perceived race-related stressors, age, SES, and coping mechanisms in African American men.

Quantitative correlational research can pinpoint relationships between variables and identify trends that may start or that already exist (Creswell, 2009). In this study, a correlational design with ordinal regression was used to determine if there were relationships between African American men, perceived race-related stress, age, SES, and coping mechanisms. This method was chosen because the focus of this study was predicting the relationship, if any, of coping skills of African American men and perceived race-related stress, age, and SES. The dependent variable was how African American males coped. The independent variables were race-related stressors, age, and SES. Multiple regression, an analysis used to test potential moderating effects and predict factors, was used to understand the coping skills used by African American men when perceiving race-related stress. Multiple regression was used to examine the relationship if any, when African American men perceive race-related stress.

A survey method with the use of the Internet appeared appropriate for this research. Trochim (2006) described survey measurement as a broad form of asking participants questions, which can be done with one of two avenues of approach: interviews or questionnaires. Surveys also allow for the numerical representation of the data collected, which is essential in quantitative analysis (Creswell, 2009). Completing a survey or questionnaire via the Internet may assist with data collection while ensuring that all participants are provided the same information in the exact same order. In this

study, I ensured that the survey being used was the best fit for the population being surveyed (Trochim, 2006).

The use of an Internet-based instrument to conduct a survey was beneficial to the study. Pew Research Center (2017) suggested that Internet surveys may offer participants a level of comfort and may provoke far less social anxiety than face-to-face interviews would. Internet surveys can also be used to ensure that an adequate number of participants is reached. Additionally, Internet delivery assists researchers in receiving surveys back from participants more quickly than with nonelectronic methods. The survey method may be considered more reliable because all participants are given the same structured survey with the same questions and the same number of questions. In this study, survey administration did not begin until after I had received approval from the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB).

### **Research Question**

The research question was the following: What is the relationship between age, socioeconomic status (SES), and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies in African American men?

*Independent variable (IV):* The IV was race-related stress, which was measured by the Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version (IRRS-B). Additional independent variable predictors were age and SES.

*Dependent variable (DV):* The DV was coping mechanism, which was measured by the Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief COPE). Multiple regression will possibly be the analysis used in this study.

As a man begins to age, he may become more knowledgeable, he may have more responsibilities, and he may be held more accountable for his actions by others (Mellor, Connaughton, McCabe, & Tatangelo, 2017). Many times, new responsibilities, in addition to those that are already being carried, may cause an individual to become stressed (Woolston, 2016). Increasing in age may thus be seen as a proxy for an increase in the number of responsibilities or stressors (Mellor et al., 2017).

Further, Cohen et al. (2006) posited that an individual's SES can cause stress. SES incorporates occupation, income, and education. The lower a man's SES, the more stress he may encounter because he may lack the resources that those with higher SES hold (Cohen et al., 2006). Damaske, Zawadzki, and Smyth (2016) also suggested that SES level can affect a man's level of stress.

## **Setting and Sampling**

### **Participants**

All participants in this research were residents of the United States. Participants varied in their socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. All participants were 18 years of age or older. An age requirement was put in place to ensure that the participants were not a part of a vulnerable population. All participants were identified as male. The participants were limited to African Americans.

Participants were recruited through flyers posted in psychological service settings, on bulletin boards, at churches, and at community centers. Additionally, I sought to recruit participants by using the social networking sites Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat, as well as through word of mouth. A screening questionnaire requested

the participant's name, email address, age, race, gender, occupation, SES, and geographical location. The questionnaire also addressed the confidentiality of participation.

### **Participant Protection**

The informed consent form presented the title of the study, my name and contact information, the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits of participating, information on confidentiality, and limitations of the study. By signing the informed consent form, a participant indicated his agreement to take part in the study. Participants remained anonymous, as each participant was provided a unique number as an identifier.

I obtained permission to conduct research from Walden University's IRB. Permission was also obtained from the instrument holders to use these instruments in the study. Anonymous survey solicitation and completing the survey online allowed for protection of the individuals participating in the study. The purpose of the research was to explain the coping mechanisms used by African American men when race-related stress is present and/or perceived. No personally identifying information was obtained; all questionnaires were observed and reviewed only by me, and all data were reported. I explained that all information collected would remain confidential.

The Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version (IRRS-B), Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief COPE), and People of Color Racial Identity Attitude Scale (PRIAS) were the survey instruments used to conduct this research study. The instruments provided an accurate measure of any relationship that may have existed between African American men, how they perceived race-related

stress, and their coping mechanisms. The results of this study were analyzed and are explained in Chapter 4. A conclusion is provided in Chapter 5.

### **Recruitment**

Participants were recruited through flyers posted on university recruitment boards, on work recruitment boards, and at community centers and churches in my local area. Postings were also made on the following social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram. The social media posts were updated multiple times per day to maximize the potential for the post to be shared by other social media users. These recruitment measures assisted me in gaining an adequate sample size. Participants were provided a screening questionnaire ensuring that they met the requirements for the study. If a participant met the requirements, he was provided a consent form, which allowed for the use of an electronic signature. The participants' rights were described and adhered to as stated in the American Psychological Association's principles and guidelines.

### **Method and Procedure**

After submitting the proposal and receiving approval from the Walden University IRB, I began the research for the study. I distributed flyers at the above-mentioned locations and posted on social media sites. Potential participants were informed of the nature of the research being conducted and were asked to electronically sign informed consent forms. Individuals were then directed to a website to complete the survey. Detailed instructions were provided on how to access the online survey, and a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) was provided on the flyers and social media postings to direct potential participants to the actual survey instruments. The screening questionnaire and

informed consent form were provided electronically via the Survey Monkey website before a participant was allowed access to the survey instruments. There were no participants that needed to be contacted after submission of the survey. There was a statement regarding this at the beginning of the survey process and on the debriefing form, which was forwarded to all participants via email. The debriefing form included a statement thanking the participant for taking part in the study, along with explanations of the purpose of the study, the goal of the research, confidentiality procedures, and the possibility of follow-up contact if necessary. Additionally, I presented my contact information, along with contact information for my dissertation committee chair.

**Sampling method.** Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) described a *sample* as any subsection of sampling elements from a population. The sampling strategy that was the best fit for this research was convenience sampling. Probability and nonprobability are two sampling designs. With nonprobability sampling, there is no particular way of identifying the probability of each element's inclusion in the sample; however, not every element will be included. Probability sampling focuses on simple random, systematic, stratified, and cluster sampling. Nonprobability sampling was not used for this study. It would not have guaranteed that all of the participant population was represented.

Simple random sampling, systematic sampling, and cluster sampling were not used. Simple random sampling and systematic sampling would not have guaranteed a representative sample of the population being studied. Stratified sampling divides a population into groups. Cluster sampling was not used because it is similar in concept to



simple random sampling; however, the groups to which participants belong are randomly determined.

Convenience sampling was the sampling method used for the this study. This sampling method was used because it allowed the selection of participants who were easy to reach. This sampling method also allowed for quicker results in regard to obtaining participants. With convenience sampling, the participants were easily accessible if needed.

**Sample size.** To determine the appropriate sample size, the statistical power, alpha, and effect size were needed. *Statistical power* is the probability that a given statistical test will detect a real relationship (Burkholder, n.d.). GPower 3.1, a power analysis program, was used to calculate sample size. To calculate the sample size, the alpha, power level, and effect size were needed. The sample size must be large enough to detect a difference or relationship within the population. The desired power for the analysis was set to the conventional level of .80, and the significance (alpha) level was set to the conventional .05. The alpha can have two values:  $\alpha = .05$  or  $\alpha = .01$ . An alpha of .05 indicated that there was a 5% chance that I would infer the wrong conclusion but a 95% chance that I would surmise the right conclusion (Burkholder, n.d.). The effect size indicates the strength of the variables (Burkholder, n.d.); the effect size value for this study was .35. The analysis was conducted in advance of the actual study; the type of analysis was set to a priori. Using these parameters and analysis settings, the estimated minimum sample size for the study was 54.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

### **Data Collection**

Before conducting the research, I submitted a proposal to the Walden University IRB for approval. In Chapter 4, I present the results of the research conducted through the synthesis of the analyzed data with the use of figures and tables. A quantitative technique of cross-sectional survey research with multiple regression was used to determine whether a relationship existed between African American men, how they perceived race-related stress, and their coping mechanism. This research design and approach required that an immense amount of data be collected via the Internet.

Three survey instruments were used to collect data from the participants. SurveyMonkey was the Internet tool used to collect the data. SurveyMonkey's survey procedures aligned with Walden University IRB procedures. According to Zhang, Kuchinke, Woud, Velten, and Margraf (2017), traditional paper surveys have been replaced with the use of computerized surveys. There are multiple advantages to the use of online/computerized surveys. Computerized surveys offer more rapid data collection and processing, are lower in cost, and are more convenient for participants (Zhang et al., 2017). Computerized surveys were used in this study.

A computerized survey allowed me to reach participants who were in distant locations. It also abates the uncertainty or doubtfulness more than the validity of the data and the sampling population (Zhang et al., 2017). A cross-sectional survey research design was the best fit for this research study, given limitations of time and financial resources for gathering data. The methodology included collecting demographic

information and observations; obtaining informed consent from participants; and ensuring that all applicable ethical standards were met.

Participants self-elected to participate by signing and submitting the informed consent form. Participants were provided direction that they could discontinue the survey at any time. Participants who agreed to participate in the study were 18 years of age or older. Participants were provided with privacy statements, which included a comprehensive privacy statement that explained the data collection process, participant protections, and the use of the data they provided (Frankfort-Nachmias, 2008).

### **Data Analysis**

Surveys were used to collect data from participants. The surveys consisted of three instruments, 90 items rated on a five-point Likert type scale. The questions in the survey were necessary to determine if a relationship existed between perceived race-related stress and coping mechanisms of African American men. After data was collected it was analyzed using the 25<sup>th</sup> version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was analyzed through the use of a quantitative analysis; data was processed in a numerical format (Creswell, 2009). All collected data was inputted into numerical values and entered into SPSS for analysis. The researcher used SPSS, multiple regression analyses to analyze data (Field 2009). The researcher examined the data to decrease or remove outlier of variables. Outliers in variables were scored in the variables that were extreme in value, (extremely high or extremely low) (Morrow, 2011).

### **Statistical Analysis**

Multiple regression analysis was used to understand if a relationship existed between African American men and how they coped with perceived race-related stress. With the use of multiple regression analysis, the independent variable may influence the dependent variables and could show a significant relationship between coping mechanism and African American men when it comes to perceived race-related stressors. SPSS helped to examine what happened when the dependent variable was regressed on the independent variable. There were three SPSS outputs utilized, the parameter estimates, the goodness of fit, and test of parallel lines. The regression coefficient table focused on the use of a t-test being used to test the hypothesis and determine the influence of the independent variable while controlling other variables. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) table focused on F-test to determine if there is a relationship that exist with at least one of the independent variables. The regression coefficient table focused on the use of a t test being used to test the hypothesis and determine the influence of the independent variable while controlling other variables. Multiple regression was used to measure the strength of the connection between variables and how they influence the dependent variable. (Aczel & Sounderpandian, 2009).

There are four assumptions that should be considered in conducting an ordinal regression analysis. The dependent variable must be of ordinal value. The Brief COPE uses a Likert Scale and will be used to measure the coping mechanism of African American men. The independent variable must be of ordinal or categorical value. The IRRS-B uses a Likert scale, while age and SES use categorical values. There must be no multicollinearity, which will be tested in SPSS. The last assumption is that there must be

proportional odds, which suggest that one of the ordinal variables is used as a reference category that all ordinal variables are compared to.

### **Measures and Instruments**

Three assessments tools will be used. Each of the assessment tools are described below.

#### **Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version**

Race-related stress was evaluated using the IRRS-B. The IRRS-B measures stress indicated by African Americans (Utsey, 1999). The IRRS-B comes from the Index of Race-Related Stress (IRRS), which is a 46-item instrument developed by Utsey and Ponterotto (1996). The IRRS-B was created to simplify the Index Race-Related Brief as while building on its theoretical and psychometric foundation (Utsey, 1999). The IRRS-B is a 22-item multidimensional instrument that focuses on race-related stress experienced by African Americans (Utsey, 1999). The IRRS-B consists of three subscales, which are components of the original IRRS measure. The three subscales include, institutional racism (six items), cultural racism, (ten items), and individual racism (six item) (Utsey, 1999). A combination of all three scores on the three subscales may be calculated to identify a global racism measure (Utsey, 1999).

The institutional racism subscale consists of six items. This subscale focuses on the policies and practice of institutions that operate with a purpose to restrict the rights and access and privilege of members of a given race (Utsey, 1999). The cultural racism subscale consists of 10 items. The cultural racism subscale focuses on the idea or belief that individuals and institutional perspectives believe there is a superior race or culture.

The individual racism subscale consists of 6 items. This subscale focuses on the belief that an individual's racial group is superior to others (Utsey, 1999). The IRRS-B uses a 4-point Likert scale, 0 to 4. The ratings of the scale are as follows, 0= this has never happened to me; 1= event happened but did not bother me; 2= event happened and I was slightly upset; 3= event happened and I was upset; 4=event happened and I was extremely upset. The scores on the IRRS-B range from 0 to 22. The higher scores indicate that there is more race-related stress.

According to Utsey (1999) the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for the subscales are institutional racism .85, cultural racism .87 and individual racism .84. The concurrent validity focuses on the validity of the study. The concurrent validity of the IRRS-B subscales and total scale are sustained by a confident and significant statistical correlation (Creswell, 2009). According to Utsey (1999) the IRRS-B is the most forthright theoretical instrument to assess race-related stress in African Americans. The reliability and the validity of the IRRS-B were chosen based on the original IRRS's psychometric and logical considerations (Utsey, 1999).

### **Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory**

Coping is defined as a cognitive behavior that is utilized to solve problems and minimize the risk of stress (Baumstarck et al., 2017). The Brief COPE is a shorter version of the original Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced (COPE) assessment. The Brief COPE was conducted to make the administration easier and the time restraint shorter (Baumstarck et al., 2017). This measure has oftentimes been used for health

relevant situations, depressions, addiction problems, aging, etc. This inventory is based on the Lazarus' transactional model of stress (Baumstarck et al., 2017).

The Lazarus' transactional model of stress is an appraisal-based model of stress. This model defines a particular method concerning cognitive appraisals and coping responses (Hulbert-Williams, Morrison, Wilkinson, & Neal, 2013). This model works off the concept that stress is a process. This process includes two appraisals, an emotional response and a behavioral response (Cudré-Mauroux, 2010). This process works in different steps to achieve one goal for the individual. The first appraisal evaluates the stressor, the second appraisal composed by understandings regarding the development of goals and objectives to influence, assessment of the essential resources (Cudré-Mauroux, 2010). The emotional response is connected to the first and second appraisal. This is initially the individual's response to the stressor, positive or negative depending on how the individual views the stressor (Cudré-Mauroux, 2010). The behavioral response focuses on the individual's coping strategy used to respond to the stressor.

The Brief COPE is a 28-item measure that focuses around 14 elements of coping. The coping strategies incorporated within this instrument are self-distraction, active coping, denial, substance use, use of emotional support, use of instrumental support, behavioral disengagement, venting, positive reframing, planning, humor, acceptance, religion, and self-blame (Baumstarck et al., 2017). The reliability and validity of the Brief COPE was assessed through the use of the original COPE instrument. This instrument has been used in psychological evaluations to determine stress level and coping skills

The Brief COPE is used to assess how an individual has been coping with presented stress in their life. There are different avenues of coping with stress. Some individuals may have a more avoidant behavioral coping mechanism. This may include the individual avoiding the stressor in general (Boyras et al., 2016). Individuals who have an avoidant behavioral coping mechanism usually avert their attention and are in denial when the stressor is present. Active coping is another form of coping. Active coping seems to be the opposite of avoidant coping. The individual is aware of the stressor they are facing (Boyras et al., 2016). The individual is aware of the stressor and actively trying to reduce this stressor for happening again. Higher scores on the Brief COPE indicate that the individual is using coping mechanisms when they are faced with stressors.

### **People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale**

Helms, Jernigan, and Mascher (2005) describe racial identity as the way an individual identifies with their racial group in regard to social groups racial order and repression. Racial identity focuses on members of racial minority groups and how they adapt and adjust to a world that limits their resources and opportunities (Helms, 1999). The PRIAS is based on Helms 1990 and 1995 People of Color Racial Identity Theory. This theory suggests the methods that individuals suppress the consequences associated with being a part of a racially oppressed environment, defines their personal qualities.

The PRIAS consists of four subscales. These subscales include conformity, dissonance, immersion-emersion, and internalization. The conformity subscale consists of 11 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. The items on this subscale focus on the individual's denial or lack of awareness of their personal relevance in the racial hierarchy



(Miller, Alvarez, Li, Chen, & Iwamoto, 2016). The dissonance subscale consists of 15 items, rated on a five-point Likert scale. The items on this subscale focus on individual confusion and disorientation that exist when racial dynamics are brought to the forefront (Miller et al., 2016). The immersion-emersion subscale consists of 14 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. The items on this subscale focus on physical and psychological withdrawal related to one's own racial group (Miller et al., 2016). The internalization subscale consists of 10 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. The items on this subscale focus on the integration of a positive outlook of one's own group with regards to racial identification as well as the capacity to accurately value the positive aspects of White individuals (Miller et al., 2016). The reliability of this scale was measured using the Cronbach alpha as a measure of internal consistency (Juni, Brensnan, & Vescio, 2006). The results were consistent with previous finding and a coefficient of .67 to .77. Higher scores on this scale indicate racial stimuli in one's internal and external environment, which takes a dominant position (Juni, et al., 2006). Lower scores on this scale indicate a weaker racial identity status (Juni, et al., 2006).

None of the instruments required permission and they have all been obtained from the Walden University Library. Each instrument stated, "test content may be reproduced and used for non-commercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission" (Carver, 1997).

### **Threats to Validity**

Quantitative researchers must warrant both internal and external validity.

Establishing external validity for an instrument comes from sampling. An instrument that

is externally validated can assist in gaining population generalizability, or the quantity of the sample that signifies the population. To ensure external validity, the researcher should use variables that are similar to those factors present in the population being studied (Waldman, Poore, van Hulle, Rathouz, & Lahey, 2016). The sample included in this study came from the population of individuals who were identified by Survey Monkey, males, from the ages of 18 to 65, who volunteered to participate. One threat to external validity will be the participant demographics. The researcher will attempt to depict demographic characteristics that are representative of men, on a broad scale. This scale will include age, gender, socio-economic status and education level, to ensure that the study's results can be comprehensive and recreated.

Internal validity is the biased selection of the research population. The biases can be resolved through generalizability (Shono, Ames, & Stacey, 2016). The possibility for biased samples should be decreased, if not eradicated, by having a sample that will represent the population from bias. To address sampling bias a convenience sample was used. The validity of the survey should also be ensured for an accurate measure of what was intended to be studied. This would be comparative to the features of the population that the Survey Monkey targets.

The researcher assumed that the participants would be honest and accurate in their responses to the surveys. The present study did not experience difficulty with selection bias, as a convenience sampling was used. Construct validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is expected to measure (Goldberg, Wielgosz, Dahl, Schuyler, MacCoon, Rosenkranz, & Davidson, 2016). The definition of variables was used to ensure construct

validity. The structure of the survey questions would ensure that data collected did not deviate from the theoretical concepts. The study was delimited to participants that choose to participate via Survey Monkey, males, from the age 18 and older. The research focused on race-related stress and how African American males cope with it.

### **Ethical Considerations**

In psychology, individuals are taught to abide by the American Psychological Association's code of ethics. This code of ethics ensures that professionals follow five principles. The ethics code covers, research being conducted, teaching and supervising all trainees, any public services being administered and counseling (Association American Psychological, 2017). The five general principles consist of Principle A, Beneficence and Nonmaleficence, Principle B, Fidelity and Responsibility, Principle C, Integrity, Principle D, Justice, and Principle E, Respect for People's Rights and Dignity.

The ethical concerns are to ensure that the research proposal meets the Institutional Review Board (IRB) criteria. The researcher took the required training to complete the IRB process, such as Human Research Protections. During the recruitment process, each participant was provided with an electronic Informed Consent form. The consent form explained the conditions of anonymity, voluntary participation, and the ability to withdraw from the study at any time without any questions. Thyer (2006), stated that receiving the informed consent form before the study begins lowers the possibility of ethical issues as they pertain to the participant. The researcher ensured that the appropriate procedures were instituted to maintain confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of all participant responses. All data, electronic and paper, will be stored in a

locked cabinet for a total of 5 years after the completion of this study. At the beginning of the fifth year all data will be appropriately deleted or shredded. The researcher was aware of any personal bias that may have existed that pertained to racism and racial stress and ensured that they were not reflected in this study. No one from the researcher's workplace was asked to participate in this study ensuring that it did not create a conflict of interest. Monette, Sullivan, and DeJong (2013) have stated that time and finances may become an issue in a research study if the researcher does not plan appropriately for both; the researcher ensured that time nor money was in issue in this study. There will be no financial incentives provided for participation.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the impact that racism has on the African American male population and how African American men cope with the perceived stressor. A quantitative methodology was used with a correlational design to examine the research question and test the hypothesis with the use of the IRR-B, Brief COPE, and the PRIAS as survey instruments. The chosen population was African American men between the ages of 18 and 65 who resided in America. A convenience sample was used as it focused on the population being examined (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

The researcher ensured that the significance and the purpose of the study were explained to the participants while focusing on confidentiality and anonymity of the survey responses and data information. The screening questionnaire captured demographic information while the informed consent form ensured that the participants

understood that participation was strictly voluntarily and that they could withdraw at any time for any reason. The data was collected via Survey Monkey and delivered electronically through an Excel spreadsheet. This information was imported into SPSS to be analyzed using ordinal regression. Chapter 4 will identify the findings and interpret the statistical analysis.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this correlational quantitative study design was to identify the type of coping mechanism that African American men use when they perceive race-related stressors. There was one research question: What is the relationship between age, socioeconomic status, and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies in African American males? There were three instruments employed to determine the answer: the IRRS-B, Brief COPE, and PRIAS. IRRS-B score, age, and SES were the independent variables, and the dependent variable was the Brief COPE. The PRIAS was used to identify where the participants were in relationship to racial identity.

In this chapter, I discuss the characteristics of the sample, data collection, descriptive statistics, primary analysis and hypothesis testing, and the results of the study. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection was achieved through social media recruitment. Recruitment was initiated through several strategies once IRB approval had been obtained, with approval number 07-11-18-0465113. The first recruitment strategy was using Walden University's Participant Pool. The second strategy included the use of an IRB-approved flyer. This flyer was posted on several social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The third form of recruitment allowed interested participants to see a social media blurb through social media site shares. Several participants shared the study information on their personal social media pages.

The sample size of this study was determined using the GPower 3.1., with a 95% confidence level and a .5 standard deviation. There were no difficulties with collecting data. All participants in the study remained anonymous. Participants did provide general demographic data (i.e., age, SES, and family statistics). There were 85 African American male participants who consented to take part in this study.

### **Characteristics of the Sample**

Data collection occurred through three social media sites: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Data were collected over 5 days. The data collection process began on Wednesday, July 11, 2018, and ended on Monday, July 16, 2018. Posts were made on all three social media sites containing the title of the research, the purpose of the study, and a link to access the online survey. All data collected were reviewed four times to ensure accurate reporting. The data was exported from the online survey to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The Microsoft Excel document and SPSS information have been stored on a password-protected laptop that remains secured at all times.

A summary of demographic information for the sample ( $N = 85$ ) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	N	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
18-21	01	01.2
22-25	04	04.7
26-30	13	15.3
31-40	32	37.6
41-50	14	16.5
51-65	21	24.7
66 and up	0	0
<b>Salary</b>		
\$0-\$10,000	06	07.1
\$10,001-\$40,000	16	18.8
\$40,001-\$60,000	20	23.5
\$60,001-\$80,000	13	15.3
\$80,001-\$100,000	08	09.4
\$100,001 or more	22	25.9
<b>Employed</b>		
Yes	74	87.1
No	11	12.9
<b>Education</b>		
High school	31	36.5
Bachelor's degree	42	49.4
Master's degree	08	09.4
Doctoral degree	04	04.7
<b>Sought mental health professional</b>		
Yes	25	29.4
No	57	67.1
Missing	03	03.5
<b>Seen mental health professional</b>		
Never	09	10.6
1-3 times	19	22.4
4-6 times	07	08.2
7 or more times	07	08.2
Missing	43	50.6
<b>Children</b>		
0 children	27	31.8
1 child	17	20.0
2 children	15	17.6
3 children	11	12.9
4 children	10	11.8
5 or more children	05	05.9
<b>Region</b>		
New England	01	01.2
Middle Atlantic	01	01.2
E.N Central	04	04.7
E.S Atlantic	52	61.2
E.S Central	02	02.4
W.S Central	16	18.8
Mountain	01	01.2
Pacific	08	09.4



All participants were African American and male. Participants were required to be 18 years of age or older. There were 128 participants who responded, surpassing the 54 needed to provide a representative sample of the African American male population. Of the 128 individuals who responded, 126 consented to participate in the research. Two individuals did not provide consent and discontinued the survey process. Eight participants were female; their participation was discontinued after they indicated their gender. There was one Caucasian candidate and one Asian candidate, both of whose participation was discontinued after they indicated that they were not African American. Thirty-one participants did not complete the survey, and their surveys were not used.

There were 85 participants who met the research requirements and completed the entire survey. The average age range of the participants was 31-40 years (see Table 1). None of the participants indicated that they were 66 years of age or older. The largest age group for the participants who completed this study was 31-40 years of age ( $n = 32$ , 37.6%). The majority of the participants were employed ( $n = 74$ , 87.1%). Twenty-five percent of the participants indicated that their annual salary was \$100,001 or more ( $n = 22$ , 25.9%). The majority of participants held a bachelor's degree ( $n = 42$ , 49.4%; see Table 1).

There were only a few participants who indicated that they had five or more children, while the majority of the participants had no children. Less than 5% of the participants had completed a doctoral degree, 9.4% had completed a master's degree, 49.4% had completed a bachelor's degree, and 36.5% were high school graduates. Of the participants, 29.4% had sought services from a mental health professional, with 22.4%

receiving such services one to three times, 8.2% receiving services four to six times, and 8.2% receiving services seven or more times. In terms of geographic location, the fewest participants were located in the New England, Middle Atlantic, and Mountain regions. The highest number of participants were located in the South Atlantic region.

Data on age, salary, employment, education, number of children, whether participants sought mental health services and how many times, and the region in which participants resided are reflected in Table 1. The question “Have you sought out a mental health professional” and, if yes, “how many times” may have been confusing for some participants. There were 25 participants who answered “yes” to indicate that they had sought out a mental health professional, but there were 33 responses to the question of “how many times.”

### **Primary Analysis and Hypothesis Testing**

The research question was the following: What is the relationship between age, SES, and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies in African American men? The IV was race-related stress, which was measured by the IRRS-B. Additional independent variable predictors were age and SES. The DVs were coping mechanism and racial identity. Coping mechanism was measured with the Brief COPE. Racial identity was measured with the PRIAS. Multiple regression was the analysis used in this study.

The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was the following: There will be no relationship between age, SES, and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies and that the African American man will be in an earlier stage of the racial identity theory (conformity and pre-encounter phase). The alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was as follows: There will be a

relationship between age, SES, and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies and that the African American man will be in a later phase of the racial identity theory (immersion-emersion, and internalization phase).

### **Analysis Assumption**

Prior to performing the analysis, an ANOVA assessment of assumption had to be performed. There are five ANOVA assumptions that must be met when performing an ANOVA. The first assumption was to ensure that the dependent variable was measured at the interval or ratio level. The dependent variable was measured in interval levels. The second assumption ensured that the independent variable consisted of two or more categorical independent groups. The independent groups were ethnicity criteria, salary, and age. The third assumption focused on the independence of observations. Participants were each assigned to one group; no single participant was in multiple groups. The fourth assumption focused on ensuring that there were no significant outliers. The fifth assumption ensured that the dependent variables were normally distributed for each category of independent variables.

**Test for normality.** To test for normality, value sets were created that represented a ratio of predicted values to actual values, and then the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted. Levene's test was used to assess the assumption of normality of variances. The test for normality was completed by creating a set of values that represented a ratio of predicted values to actual values, or what are called *standardized residuals*, and then conducting normality of variances. The P-plot for the model suggested that the assumption of

normality of the residual is valid for all variables except coping strategy venting (Appendix F).

**Test for linearity.** Scatterplots were created to observe the fit lines across the data points. The results indicated that there was a linear relationship between cultural racism, active coping, planning, and religion. The same test was performed for individual racism, institutional racism and active coping, planning, positive reframing, acceptance, humor, religion, using emotional support, using instrumental support, self-distraction, denial, venting, substance use, self-blame, and behavioral disengagement (Appendix F).

**Homogeneity of variance.** Testing for homogeneity of variance for race-related stress and coping strategies ensured that the data represented a good fit with the statistical analysis. A test of homogeneity of variance was completed. The test demonstrated that the variance of residual was equal for the various levels of independent variables. The homogeneity of variance was broken into three categories: cultural, institutional, and individual racism. A  $p$  value of less than .05 indicated a violation and that there was no significant variance between the two variables (racism and coping strategies).

Levene's test of homogeneity of variance for cultural racism indicated the following: active coping ( $p = .001$ ), planning ( $p = .003$ ), positive reframing ( $p = .013$ ), acceptance ( $p = .037$ ), humor ( $p = .282$ ), religion ( $p = .083$ ), using emotional support ( $p = .245$ ), using instrumental support ( $p = .023$ ), self-distraction ( $p = .045$ ), denial ( $p = .000$ ), venting ( $p = .306$ ), substance use ( $p = .000$ ), self-blame ( $p = .004$ ), and behavioral disengagement ( $p = .000$ ). With regard to cultural racism and active coping, planning, positive reframing, acceptance, using instrumental support, self-distraction, and self-

blame, there was no significant variance because the  $p$  values were less than .05. This means that homogeneity of variance for cultural racism and these coping strategies was not reached. However, homogeneity of variance was reached for cultural racism and humor, using emotional support, and venting, as their  $p$  values were greater than .05.

Levene's test of homogeneity of variance for institutional racism indicated the following: active coping ( $p = .001$ ), planning ( $p = .022$ ), positive reframing ( $p = .000$ ), acceptance ( $p = .678$ ), humor ( $p = .005$ ), religion ( $p = .000$ ), using emotional support ( $p = .006$ ), using instrumental support ( $p = .000$ ), self-distraction ( $p = .007$ ), denial ( $p = .000$ ), venting ( $p = .000$ ), substance use ( $p = .000$ ), self-blame ( $p = .063$ ), and behavioral disengagement ( $p = .000$ ). With regard to institutional racism and active coping, planning, positive reframing, humor, religion, using emotional support, using instrumental support, self-distraction, denial, substance use, and behavioral disengagement, there was no significant variance because the  $p$  values were less than .05. This means that homogeneity of variance for institutional racism and these coping strategies was not reached. However, homogeneity of variance was reached for institutional racism and acceptance and self-blame, as their  $p$  values were greater than .05.

Levene's test of homogeneity of variance for individual racism indicated the following: active coping ( $p = .005$ ), planning ( $p = .063$ ), positive reframing ( $p = .203$ ), acceptance ( $p = .001$ ), humor ( $p = .012$ ), religion ( $p = .085$ ), using emotional support ( $p = .042$ ), using instrumental support ( $p = .000$ ), self-distraction ( $p = .032$ ), denial ( $p = .030$ ), venting ( $p = .016$ ), substance use ( $p = .000$ ), self-blame ( $p = .000$ ), and behavioral disengagement ( $p = .003$ ). With regard to individual racism and active coping, acceptance,

humor, using emotional support, using instrumental support, self-distraction, denial, venting, substance use, self-blame, and behavioral disengagement, there was no significant variance because the  $p$  values were less than .05. This means that homogeneity of variance for individual racism and these coping strategies was not reached. However, homogeneity of variance was reached for individual racism and planning, positive reframing, and religion, as their  $p$  values were greater than .05.

Levene's test of homogeneity of variance for global racism indicated the following: active coping ( $p = .003$ ), planning ( $p = .001$ ), positive reframing ( $p = .000$ ), acceptance ( $p = .000$ ), humor ( $p = .001$ ), religion ( $p = .000$ ), using emotional support ( $p = .002$ ), using instrumental support ( $p = .000$ ), self-distraction ( $p = .003$ ), denial ( $p = .000$ ), venting ( $p = .001$ ), substance use ( $p = .000$ ), self-blame ( $p = .000$ ), and behavioral disengagement ( $p = .000$ ). With regard to global racism and all of the coping strategies used in the Brief COPE, there was no significant variance because the  $p$  values were less than .05. This means that homogeneity of variance for global racism and these coping strategies was not reached.

### **Summary**

Prior to conducting statistical analyses, descriptive statistics were computed for the study's variables: IRRS-B score (Cultural Racism, Institutional Racism, Individual Racism, and Global Racism), Brief COPE score (active coping, planning, positive reframing, acceptance, humor, religion, using emotional support, using instrumental support, self-distraction, denial, venting, substance use, self-blame, and behavioral disengagement), and PRIAS score (conformity/pre-encounter, dissonance, resistance,

immersion-emersion, and internalization). The interitem reliability of the study scales was determined by Cronbach's alpha (Table 2). The consensus among statisticians is that scale items demonstrate good internal consistency when the Cronbach's alpha is .70 or higher (Vaske, Beaman, & Sponarski, 2017). The Cronbach's alpha was high for cultural racism (.718) in regard to coping strategies on the Brief COPE. The Cronbach's alpha was low for institutional racism (.654) in regard to coping strategies on the Brief COPE. The Cronbach's alpha was high for individual racism (.702) in regard to coping strategies on the Brief COPE. The Cronbach's alpha was low for global racism (.503) in regard to coping strategies on the Brief COPE (Baumstarck et al., 2017).

Table 2

*Reliability Statistics*

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
Cultural racism	.718
Institutional racism	.654
Individual racism	.702
Global racism	.503

**Responses to Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version**

The IRRS-B is a 22-item instrument in which respondents rate their answers on a 4-point Likert scale, where 0 = *this has never happened to me*; 1 = *event happened but did not bother me*; 2 = *event happened and I was slightly upset*; 3 = *event happened and I was upset*; and 4 = *event happened and I was extremely upset*. Scores on the IRRS-B range from 0 to 88. Higher scores indicate more race-related stress.

The IRRS-B has three subscales: Cultural Racism, Institutional Racism, and Individual Racism. Scores for the Cultural Racism subscale range from 0 to 40. The mean score for the Cultural Racism subscale was 26.78 ( $SD = 5.75$ ; Appendix G). The range of scores reported by participants for the Cultural Racism subscale was 13 to 36. A score closer to 40 indicated higher perceived race-related stress with regard to experiencing cultural racism.

The Institutional Racism subscale ranges from zero to 24. The mean score for the Institutional Racism subscale was 8.28 ( $SD=6.48$ ) (Appendix G). The range scores reported by participants for the Institutional Racism subscale was zero to 24. A score closer to 24 indicated a higher perceived race-related stress with regard to experiencing Institutional Racism.

The Individual Racism subscale ranged from zero to 24. The mean score for the Individual Racism subscale was 13.96 ( $SD=5.2$ ) (Appendix G). The range scores reported by participants for the Individual Racism subscale were three to 24. A score closer to 24 indicated a higher perceived race-related stress with regard to experiencing Individual Racism. African American men between the age of 51 to 65 and participants with a salary of \$100,001 or more scored higher on the scale for cultural racism. Ten percent of the participants scored on the lower end of the scale for experiencing cultural racism as a race-related stressor. Participants between the age of 18 to 21 and participants with a salary of \$0 to \$10,000 scored lower on the cultural racism subscale. The scores for global racism consisted of the sum of the three subscales. The global racism scores ranged from 19 to 82. The mean score for global racism scores was 49.02 ( $SD=15.17$ )



(Appendix G). A score closer to 82 indicated a higher perceived race-related stress with regard to all three subscales Cultural Racism, Institutional Racism and Individual Racism.

### **Responses to Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory**

The COPE 28-item measure focuses on coping on a four-point likert scale including 1= *I haven't been doing this at all*; 2= *I've been doing this a little bit*; 3= *I've been doing this a medium amount*; 4= *I've been doing this a lot*. The COPE Brief consists of 14 subscales. These scales include, active coping, planning, positive reframing, acceptance, humor, religion, using emotional support, using instrumental support, self-distraction, denial, venting, substance use, self-blame, and behavioral disengagement. All subscales ranged from two to eight. The range scores reported by participants for all subscales ranged between two to eight. Scores of one, two, and three indicated a lower usage of the coping strategy. Scores of a four and five indicated an average use of the coping strategy. Scores of a six, seven and eight indicated a high usage of the coping strategy.

Active coping indicated that the individual was actively seeking ways to handle the stressor at hand (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the active coping subscale was 6.44. (Table 3) The results of the active coping subscale indicated that 76% of the participants reported to use a higher occurrence of active coping. Out of 85 participants, 5% reported lower rates of active coping, and 23% reported a range of average on the active coping scale.

Planning as a coping strategy focused on the individual trying to come up with a plan to handle the stressor they are facing (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean for the planning subscale was 6.12 (Table 3). The results of the planning subscale indicated that 63% of the participants reported using a higher occurrence of planning as a coping strategy. Only 9% of the 85 participants reported lower rates of planning as a coping strategy while 27% reported an average usage of planning as a coping strategy.

Positive reframing indicated that the individual was trying to look at his situation in a positive light or place a positive spin on the stressor at hand (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the positive reframing subscale was 4.87 (Table 3). The results of the positive reframing subscale indicated that 42% of the participants reported to use a higher occurrence of positive reframing. Of the remaining 54% of the participants, 30% reported lower rates of positive reframing as a coping strategy and 25% reported an average usage of positive reframing as a coping strategy.

Table 3

*Coping Subscales (Active Coping, Planning, Positive Reframing)*

	Mean	Low	Average	High
Active Coping	6.44	5	20	65
Planning	6.12	8	23	54
Positive Reframing	4.87	26	22	36

Acceptance coping was centered on the individual attempting to handle the stressor (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the acceptance subscale was 5.07. (Table 4) The results of the acceptance coping subscale indicated that 38% of

the participants reported a higher occurrence of acceptance. Only 21% of the participants reported lower rates of acceptance as a coping strategy and 40% reported an average use of acceptance.

Humor as a coping strategy focused on the mindful choice to remove oneself from the stressor (Anshel, et al., 2009). The mean score for the humor subscale was 4.29 (Table 4). The results of the humor coping subscale indicated that 27% of the participants reported a high occurrence of the use of humor. Of the remaining 72% of the participants, 38% reported lower rates of the use of humor as a coping strategy and 34% reported an average usage of humor.

Religion in regard to coping indicated that the participant turns to some form of religion for assistance coping with the stressor he faced (Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006). The mean score for the religion subscale was 5.34 (Table 4). The results of the religion coping subscale indicated that 57% of the participants reported to use a higher occurrence of religion to assistance with coping. Only 24% of the participants reported lower use of religion as a coping strategy and 17% reported an average use of religion.

Emotional support indicated that the individual was seeking moral support and understanding from others with regard to the stressor he was encountering (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the emotional support subscale was 4.20 (Table 4). The results of the emotional support subscale indicated that 22% of the participants reported using a high occurrence of emotional support. Of the 77% remaining participants, 37% reported lower usage of emotional support, and 40% reported an average use of emotional support as a coping strategy.

Table 4

*Coping Subscales (Acceptance, Humor, Religion, Using Emotional Support)*

	Mean	Low	Average	High
Acceptance	5.07	18	34	33
Humor	4.29	33	29	23
Religion	5.34	21	15	49
Using Emotional Support	4.20	30	36	19

Instrumental support referred to the individual using resources and assistance to address the stressor he was facing (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the instrumental support subscale was 4.13 (Table 5). The results of the instrumental support subscale indicated that 23, 27% of the participants reported using a high occurrence of instrumental support as a coping strategy. Of the remaining participants, 43% reported lower usage of instrumental support, and 29% reported an average use of instrumental support as a coping strategy.

Self-distraction indicated that the individual focused on participating in activities that would act as a distraction from the stressor he was facing (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the self-distraction subscale was 4.65 (Table 5). The results of the self-distraction coping subscale indicated that 28% of the participants reported a high occurrence self-distraction. Of the remaining participants, 25% reported lower self-distraction as a coping strategy and 45% reported an average use of self-distraction as a coping strategy.

Denial indicated that the individual focused on the individual not believing that the stressor was real (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the denial

subscale was 3.13 (Table 5). The results of the denial coping subscale indicated that eight participants reported a high occurrence of denial. Of the remaining participants, 68% reported lower usage of denial as a coping strategy, and 22% reported to use denial on average as a coping strategy.

Table 5

*Coping Subscales (Using Instrumental Support, Self-Distraction, Denial)*

	Mean	Low	Average	High
Using Instrumental Support	4.13	37	25	23
Self-Distraction	4.65	22	39	24
Denial	3.13	58	19	8

Venting focused on using resources to help the individual get through the stressor (Carter et al., 1989). The mean score for the venting subscale was 4.31 (Table 6). The results of the venting coping subscale indicated that 27% of the participants reported a high occurrence of venting. Of the remaining 72% of the participants, 42% reported lower rates of venting, and 30% reported to using venting on average as a coping strategy.

Substance use focused on the individual using substances such as drugs and or alcohol to handle the stress he was facing (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). The mean score for the substance use subscale was 3.12 (Table 6). The results of the substance use coping subscale indicated that 14% of the participants reported a high occurrence of substance use. Of the remaining 85% of the participants, 72% reported lower substance use as a coping strategy and 13% reported an average usage of substance use.

Self-blame indicated that the individual was blaming himself for the cause of the stressor (Lord & Robertson, 2005). The mean score for the self-blame subscale was 3.88 (Table 6). The results of the self-blame coping subscale indicated that 15% of the participants reported a high frequency of self-blame. Only 44% of the participants reported lower rates of self-blame, and 41% reported an average use of self-blame as a coping strategy.

Behavioral disengagement referred to reflection of one's helplessness (Lord & Robertson, 2005). The mean score for the behavioral disengagement subscale was 2.72 (Table 6). The results of the behavioral disengagement coping subscale indicated that two participants reported a high occurrence of behavioral disengagement. Of the remaining 97% of the participants, 77% reported lower rates of behavioral disengagement, and 22% reported to use behavioral disengagement on average as a coping strategy.

Table 6

*Coping Subscales (Venting, Substance Use, Self-Blame, Behavioral Disengagement)*

	Mean	Low	Average	High
Venting	4.31	8	58	19
Substance Use	3.12	60	13	12
Self-Blame	3.88	38	35	12
Behavioral Disengagement	2.72	66	17	2

### **Responses to People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale**

The PRIAS is a 50-item instrument on a five-point Likert scale including 1= *strongly disagree*; 2= *disagree*; 3= *uncertain*; 4= *agree*; 5= *strongly agree*. The PRIAS consists of five subscales, conformity/ pre-encounter, dissonance, resistance, immersion-

emersion, and internalization. Individuals within the same SES fell within the same status in the racial identity scale. The range for the conformity/ pre-encounter subscale is from one to 50. The mean score for the conformity/ pre-encounter subscale was 15.61 (Appendix H). The range scores reported by participants for the Conformity/ Pre-encounter subscale were nine to 41. A score closer to 50 indicated a level of conformity. This means that the individual was viewing the world through a White lens.

The range for the dissonance subscale was one to 35. The range scores reported by participants for the Dissonance subscale were nine to 24. The mean score for the Dissonance subscale was 15.36 (Appendix H). A score closer to 35 indicated that the individual was trying to get along as an “American” but realized that his race might be held against him.

The range for the Resistance subscale was one to 35. The mean score for the Resistance subscale was 21.88 (Appendix H). The range scores reported by participants for the Resistance subscale were 11 to 31. A score closer to 35 indicated that the individual resists being just “American” while focusing on being “African American.”

The range for the Immersion-Emersion subscale was one to 25. The mean score for the Immersion-emersion subscale was 13.34 (Appendix H). The range scores reported by participants for the Immersion-Emersion subscale were seven to 22. Scores closer to 25 indicated that they were in a Pro-Black status; meaning individuals were extremely involved with Black issues and involved in the Black community and had a sense of being Anti-White.

The range for the internalization subscale was one to 50. The mean score for the internalization subscale was 43 (Appendix H). The range scores reported by participants for the Internalization subscale were 14 to 50. Scores closer to 50 indicated the empowerment of the Black community but the realization that other races exist and co-exist within the Black community.

### **Data Analysis Results**

To determine whether a relationship existed between the independent variable (age, socio-economic status (SES) and Race-Related Stress, (IRRS-B)) and the dependent variable (Brief COPE and PRIAS), a multiple regression was run to determine any possible significance. Pearson's  $r$  coefficient of correlation measures linear correlations between two variables. The value closer to positive 1 indicates a strong significant relationship. The Pearson's  $r$  coefficient was calculated to establish a relationship between race-related stress (Index Race-Related Stress: Cultural Racism, Institutional Racism, Individual Racism, and Global Racism) and coping strategy (Brief COPE). The correlations are based on the  $R$  values.  $R$  values of -0.5 to -0.3 or 0.5 to 0.3 are considered to be moderate correlations (Wilson, 2009). Race-related stress was moderately related to coping strategies. This means that there was a significance between race-related stress and coping strategies; however, it was moderate. This means that it was not a strong association between the two. In regard to Cultural Racism and active coping there was a moderate correlation,  $r = .445, p < .001$ . Cultural racism and planning were moderately correlated,  $r = .421, p < .003$ . Cultural Racism and venting were also moderately correlated,  $r = .394, p < .306$ . In regard to Institutional Racism and active



coping there was a moderate correlation,  $r=.370, p < .001$ . Individual Racism and active coping were moderately correlated,  $r=.392, p < .001$ . Individual Racism and venting were moderately correlated,  $r=.332, p < .016$  (Table 7). Global Racism and active coping were moderately correlated,  $r=.461, p < .003$ . Global racism and planning were also moderately correlated,  $r=.365, p < .001$ .

Table 7

*Correlation for Cultural Racism, Institutional Racism, Individual Racism, and Brief COPE*

	Cultural Racism	Institutional Racism	Individual Racism	Global Racism
Racism	1	1	1	1
Active Coping	.445*	.370*	.392*	.461*
Planning	.421*	.290*	.237	.365*
Positive Reframing	.166*	.017*	.126	.114*
Acceptance	.233*	-.004	.120*	.052*
Humor	-.027	-.017*	-.071*	-.042*
Religion	.187	.036*	.180	.148*
Using Emotional Support	.239	.024*	.133*	.147*
Using Instrumental Support	.256*	.059*	.155*	.175*
Self-Distraction	.208*	.165*	.183*	.212*
Denial	.096*	.198*	.188*	.185*
Venting	.394	.295	.332*	.214*
Substance Use	.074*	.035*	.058*	.164*
Self-Blame	.024*	-.083	-.072*	-.051*
Behavioral Disengagement	.069*	.094*	.144*	.116*

\* $p < .05$ .

A multiple regression was run to predict if there was a significant relationship between race-related stress and coping strategies, salary and coping strategies and age

and coping strategies in African American men. These variables statistically significantly predicted that race-related stress specifically Cultural Racism as a race-related stress  $F(19, 65) = 2.460, p < 0.5, R^2 = .597$ . All variables added statistically significant to the prediction  $p < 0.5$ . The multiple correlation coefficient was .77, indicating that approximately 59% of the variance of cultural racism can be accounted for by a combination of coping strategies and racial identity (Table 8). These variables statistically significantly predicted that race-related stress specifically institutional Racism as a race-related stress  $F(19, 65) = 2.460, p < 0.5, R^2 = .418$ . All variables added statistically significant to the prediction  $p < 0.5$ . The multiple correlation coefficient was .64, indicating that approximately 41% of the variance of institutional racism can be accounted for by a combination of coping strategies and racial identity (Table 9). These variables statistically significantly predicted that race-related stress specifically Individual Racism as a race-related stress  $F(19, 65) = 3.348, p < 0.5, R^2 = .495$ . All variables added statistically significant to the prediction  $p < 0.5$ . The multiple correlation coefficient was .70, indicating that approximately 49% of the variance of individual racism can be accounted for by a combination of coping strategies and racial identity. (Table 10) Global racism is the overall summed score of all three subscales of the IRRS-B (cultural racism, institutional racism and individual racism). These variables statistically significantly predicted that race-related stress specifically Global Racism as a race-related stress  $F(19, 65) = 4.750, p < 0.5, R^2 = .581$ . All variables added statistically significant to the prediction  $p < 0.5$ . The multiple correlation coefficient was .76, indicating that approximately 58% of the variance of global racism can be accounted for

by a combination of coping strategies and racial identity. (Table 11) Higher scores indicated a higher rate of racism with regard to all three subscales.

Table 8

*Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief (Cultural Racism)*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate	<i>R</i> square change	<i>F</i> change	df 1	df 2	Sig. <i>F</i> change	Durbin-Watson
	.773	.597	.479	4.150	.597	5.070	19	65	.000	1.793

Note. Predictors: Brief COPE, PRIAS. Dependent variable: Cultural Racism.

Table 9

*Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief (Institutional Racism)*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate	<i>R</i> square change	<i>F</i> change	df 1	df 2	Sig. <i>F</i> change	Durbin-Watson
	.647	.418	.248	5.627	.418	2.460	19	65	.004	1.767

Note. Predictors: Brief COPE, PRIAS. Dependent variable: Institutional Racism.

Table 10

*Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief (Individual Racism)*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate	<i>R</i> square change	<i>F</i> change	df 1	df 2	Sig. <i>F</i> change	Durbin-Watson
	.703	.495	.347	4.211	.495	3.348	19	65	.000	1.975

Note. Predictors: Brief COPE, PRIAS. Dependent variable: Individual Racism.

Table 11

*Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief (Global Racism)*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate	<i>R</i> square change	<i>F</i> change	df 1	df 2	Sig. <i>F</i> change	Durbin-Watson
	.762	.581	.459	4.211	.581	4.750	19	65	.000	1.604

Note. Predictors: Brief COPE, PRIAS. Dependent variable: Global Racism.

There was also a relationship between age and socio-economic status and African American men and how they cope with race-related stressors. Salary and coping strategies, racial identity and race-related stress, variables statistically significantly predicted that salary  $F(22, 62) = 2.041, p < 0.5 R^2 .420$ . All variables added statistically significant to the prediction  $p < 0.5$ . The multiple correlation coefficient was .64, indicating that approximately 42% of the variance of salary can be accounted for by a combination of coping strategies, racial identity and race-related stress (Table 12). Age and coping strategies, racial identity and race-related stress, variables statistically significantly predicted that age  $F(22, 62) = 1.840, p < 0.5 R^2 .395$ . All variables added statistically significance to the prediction  $p < 0.5$ . The multiple correlation coefficient was .63, indicating that approximately 40% of the variance of age can be accounted for by a combination of coping strategies, racial identity and race-related stress (Table 13).

Table 12

*Salary*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate	<i>R</i> square change	<i>F</i> change	df 1	df 2	Sig. <i>F</i> change	Durbin-Watson
	.648	.420	.214	1.467	.420	2.041	22	62	.015	2.051

Note. Predictors: Brief COPE, PRIAS, and Race-Related Stress. Dependent variable: Salary.

Table 13

*Age*

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the estimate	<i>R</i> square change	<i>F</i> change	df 1	df 2	Sig. <i>F</i> change	Durbin-Watson
	.629	.395	.180	1.100	.395	1.840	22	62	.032	2.383

Note. Predictors: Brief COPE, PRIAS, and Race-Related Stress. Dependent variable: Age range.

## Summary

Correlations in this study were based on the R values. The findings for this study, a multiple regression, indicated that there was a moderate correlation between race-related stress and coping strategies of African American men. R values of -0.5 to -0.3 or 0.5 to 0.3 were considered to be moderate correlations (Wilson, 2009). R values of -1 to -0.5 or 1 to 0.5 were considered strong correlations (Wilson, 2009). There was a strong correlation between active coping and venting as coping strategies with regard to race-related stress. There was a moderate correlation between Cultural Racism and planning. R values of -0.3 to -0.1 or 0.3 to 0.1 were considered to be weak correlations (Wilson, 2009). There was a weak correlation between positive reframing, acceptance, humor, religion, using emotional support, using instrumental support, self-distraction, denial, substance use, self-blame, behavioral disengagement, and cultural, institutional, and individual racism. The findings, conclusions, limitations and recommendations for the future are discussed in chapter 5.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this correlational quantitative study was to identify a coping mechanism that African American men use when they perceive race-related stressors. I explored how African American men coped when they perceived race-related stress. Previous research has been conducted in this area, but it has been limited in its focus on the coping strategies of African American men. This study was designed to expand the understanding of race-related stress and how African American men perceive it and cope. With regard to all of the scales used in this study (i.e., the IRRS-B, Brief COPE, and PRIAS), the questions were very general, and some questions required more information than the answer choices allowed.

### **Overview of the Study**

The literature review addressed many stressors that African Americans handle on a consistent basis (Robinson, 2001). African Americans, especially African American men, face ethnic and racial inequality. There are many instances in which African American men are reminded that their lives are not of equal value to those of men of other races (Gaylord-Harden, Barbarin, Tolan, & Murry, 2018). African American men have been left dead and uncovered in the locations where they were killed for hours without any regard to their humanity (Cullors et al., 2015). They may be seen as threats before they are seen as human (Holloway, 2015).

African American men seem to be faced with multiple forms of racism, such as institutional, cultural, and individual. During slavery, African men were not considered men; they were considered property. African American men are not yet treated as

completely equal to other races. The president of the United States has called the National Football League (NFL) players who have knelt during the National Anthem “sons of bitches” for bringing attention to the state of police brutality in relationship to African Americans (Rascoe, 2018).

When African American men are victims of crime, they are often viewed as aggressors or as in the wrong (Hoffman, Granger, Vallejos, & Moats, 2016). In today’s society, African American men are judged based upon the perceived atrocities of the entire African American race, whereas their European American counterparts are viewed individually (Najdowski, Bottoms, & Goff, 2015). If it is believed that one African American man is unfit or unintelligent, then all African American men may be generalized as fitting that specific description (Moskowitz, Stone, & Childs, 2012). It is the generalization of African American men that leads to discrimination against them. Najdowski et al. (2015) indicated that African Americans were more likely than Whites to be perceived as guilty based solely on stereotypes and the effect that stereotypes have on African Americans, as well as the discrimination that accompanies this belief. The result can be perceived as race-related stress. Despite the race-related stress that African American men face, they have to find a way to cope.

### **Overall Results**

The first hypothesis predicted that there would be no relationship between age, SES, and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies and that where there was no relationship, participants would be in the earlier stages posited by racial identity theory. The second hypothesis predicted that there would be a relationship between age, SES,

and race-related stress in predicting coping strategies and that participants would be in the later stages of racial identity theory. The findings from this study indicated that there was a moderate relationship between race-related stress and African American men's coping strategies.

The results of this study indicated that African American men who participated in this study experienced more cultural racism than institutional and individual racism. The participants who experienced higher rates of cultural racism were older in age (51 years of age and older) and had acquired a similar salary of \$100,000 or more. The participants who experienced cultural racism were in either the immersion-emersion or the internalization statuses suggested in racial identity theory; these participants were also older in age and had higher SES. The immersion-emersion status focuses on more positive interpersonal behavior toward individuals who identify as Black (Axt, 2017). Individuals with this status were extremely involved with Black issues and the Black community (Helms & Cook, 1999; Miller et al., 2016). The internalization status focuses on empowerment of the Black community as well as the realization that other races exist and can coexist with the Black community (Miller et al., 2016; Worrell et al., 2001). Participants who did not report experiencing any form of race-related stress scored closer to the pre-encounter status of racial identity theory. Participants between the ages of 51 and 65 years and participants with a salary of \$100,000 or more experienced higher levels of cultural racism as a race-related stressor. The most common coping strategies among African American men who participated in this study were active coping. The men who



chose active coping as a coping strategy were between the ages of 31 to 40 and their salary was \$100,000 or more.

Participants between the ages of 31 to 40 years and participants with a salary of \$40,001 to \$60,000 scored higher on the planning subscale. Participants between the ages of 31 to 40 years and participants with a salary of \$100,000 or more scored higher on the religion subscale. Meanwhile, participants between the ages of 18 and 21 and participants with a salary of \$80,001 to \$100,000 scored lower on the denial subscale. Participants between the ages of 22 and 25 and participants with a salary of \$0 to \$10,000 scored lower on the substance use subscale. Participants between ages of 18 and 21 and participants with a salary of \$0 to \$10,000 scored lower on the behavioral disengagement subscale.

The denial, substance use, and behavioral disengagement subscales represented uncommon coping strategies for African American men. The majority of the participants in this study identified themselves as corresponding to internalization status. Individuals with this status are well aware of who they are, where they stand in the Black community, and who they are as people. Participants between the ages of 31 and 40 years and with a salary between \$10,001 and \$40,000 scored highest on the internalization subscale.

This research topic was a unique one. Although there have been similar studies through which researchers have sought to understand, for instance, race-related stress in Asians (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010) or race-related stress in African Americans as a whole (Odafe, Salami, & Walker, 2017), very few have addressed race-related stress, coping mechanisms, and racial identity for African American men. Iwamoto and Liu (2010)

focused on race-related stress and racial identity for Asians. Their research determined that the greater the exposure to race-related stressors, the higher an individual's identification with regard to racial identity theory. The same was determined within the current study. Odafe, et al., (2017) focused on identifying individuals who had experienced race-related stress and how this experience affected hopelessness, not specifically which type of racism had a larger effect on individuals. Utsey, Giesbrecht, Hook, and Standard (2008) discussed race-related stress and how exposure to this type of stress can affect an individual's life. However, they did not cover the coping mechanisms that an individual who faces race-related stress would be likely to use. Forsyth, Hall, and Carter (2015) explored the racial identity of African American and Black West Indian Americans and the coping strategies among them. However, this research did not incorporate the experience of race-related stress. The similarities of Utsey et al., (2008) research and the research that was conducted both explain that more African Americans identify being in the internalization status of racial identity.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The findings for this study were attained through the use of three instruments: the IRRS-B, Brief COPE, and the PRIAS. The findings indicated that there was a moderate correlation between race-related stress and coping strategy, as well as similarity in the coping strategies used by African American men.

There was high similarity between the stages in which African American men identified themselves with regard to the PRIAS. The majority of African American men between the ages of 31 and 40 years identified themselves with internalization status. The

younger participants (ages 18-30) were closer to the beginning stages of racial identity theory. The older that participants were, the closer they were to the later statuses of racial identity.

There was also a high similarity between the salary ranges of participants. Individuals who made approximately the same salary tended to be within the same status of racial identity. There was a moderate correlation with how African American men coped with race-related stress.

### **Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Scores**

The IRRS-B measured the participants' experiences of race-related stress in relation to Cultural, Institutional and Individual racism. Kukulín (2014) identified race-related stress as one's opinion or exposure to racism that affects the individual's psychological resources. There were 85 participants who completed the IRRS-B. The IRRS-B indicated that participants experienced cultural racism at higher rates than they did institutional racism and individual racism. However, individuals experienced lower levels of individual racism in comparison to both cultural and institutional racism.

There were 85 participants in this study; 33% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, indicating that they experienced high rates of cultural racism as a race-related stressor. In accordance with the Lazarus cognitive model of stress, African American men identified cultural racism as more of a threat than institutional racism and individual racism (Thomas et al., 2015). However, institutional and individual racism were still considered threats.

An important factor to consider is that African American men between the ages of 51 and 65 who made \$100,001 or more experienced more cultural racism. This may be due to the eras of life they had gone through. According to Driscoll, Reynolds, and Todman (2015), a high level of experience with cultural racism can be considered a direct reflection of identification with regard to the stage of life an individual is in. The stage of life that an individual has placed himself in aligns with the status that the individual fits into within the racial identity scale.

Institutional race-related stress involves stress in relation to experiences of racism that are centered on institutional practices (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015). The interactive diathesis stress model aligns with institutional racism. This model focuses on constant exposure to and occurrences of racism based on environmental stressors (Eberhart & Hammen, 2010). With regard to institutional racism, 11% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, indicating that they experienced high rates of institutional racism as a race-related stressor. Participants between the ages of 51 to 65 years and participants with a salary of \$100,001 or more scored higher on the scale for institutional racism. This finding may be attributed to work history and experience with institutional systems (Chung et al., 2014). Among participants, 61% scored on the low end of the scale, indicating that they experienced lower rates of institutional racism as a race-related stressor. Individuals who scored lower on the institutional subscale had neither a great deal of work history nor many experiences with economic difficulties. However, they had experienced higher educational opportunities. These individuals may have just graduated and been entering the workforce for the first time (Chung et al., 2014).

Unzueta and Lowery (2008) identified individual racism as a deeply rooted form of discrimination brought on by negative feelings and thoughts. The cognitive diathesis stress model seems to align the most with individual racism; as it relates to the individual's cognitive processes from their life experiences (Slavik & Croake, 2006). Twenty-three percent of the participants scored on the high end of the Individual Racism scale, indicating that they experienced high rates of individual racism as a race-related stressor. Participants between the ages of 51 and 65 with a salary of \$100,001 or more scored higher on the scale for individual racism. Eighteen percent of the participants scored on the low end of the scale, indicating that they had experienced lower rates of individual racism as a race-related stressor. Participants between the ages of 18 and 21 and participants with a salary of \$0 to \$10,000 scored lower on the scale for individual racism. The lower an individual's income, the less likely an individual is to report experiencing race-related stress (Bamishigbin et al., 2017).

Global Racism involves the combination of three subscales (Cultural Racism, Institutional Racism, and Individual Racism). Global Racism aligns with Lazarus's cognitive model of stress, the interactive diathesis stress model, and the cognitive diathesis stress model. Higher scores on the Global Racism scale indicate that individuals are more likely to have experienced a combination of cultural racism, institutional racism, and individual racism. Lower scores may indicate that participants did not experience a high combination rate of racism based on the three scales. Twenty percent of the participants scored on the high end of the Global Racism scale, whereas 41% scored on

the low end of the scale. Participants between the ages of 51 and 65 with a salary of \$100,001 or more scored higher on the Global Racism scale.

Using the IRRS-B is very helpful in this type of study. There are other instruments that could have been used in this study. However, the IRRS-B was the best fit for a study of this magnitude, due to its ability to examine multiple areas of race-related stress. For instance, the Race-Related Scale only focuses on two areas of race-related stress (discrimination and everyday discrimination). The racism that the African American men in this study experienced was part of the primary appraisal stage of the Lazarus cognitive model of stress (Thomas et al., 2015). Participants scored lower on subscales for Institutional Racism and Individual Racism; however, this does not mean that these racial stressors were not faced on a daily basis (Szymanski & Lewis, 2015).

### **Brief COPE Scores**

The Brief COPE indicated coping strategies that individuals use when handling stress. Individuals handle stress to the best of their ability, using what is known as a *coping strategy*. There were 85 participants who completed the Brief COPE. There are 14 subscales in the Brief COPE, which indicate different coping strategies: Active Coping, Planning, Positive Reframing, Acceptance, Humor, Religion, Using Emotional Support, Using Instrumental Support, Self-Distraction, Denial, Venting, Substance Use, Self-Blame, and Behavioral Disengagement. This measure indicated that of the 14 coping strategies, active coping, planning, and religion were the coping strategies that more participants indicated that they used.

There are multiple forms of coping. These forms include active coping, Africultural coping, and avoidance-behavioral coping (dysfunctional coping). Denial, substance use, and behavioral disengagement were coping strategies that more participants indicated that they did not use.

### **Active Coping**

Active coping, planning, positive reframing and acceptance were forms of active coping, indicating that the individual was in control of the stressor he was facing (Stevens-Watkins, Sharma, Knighton, Oser, & Leukefeld, 2014). Active coping focused on instinctively trying to decrease the stressor (Carver, 1997; Carver et al., 1989). Seventy percent of participants scored on the high end of the scale, indicating their use of active coping as a coping strategy, and five participants scored on the lower end of the scale, indicating that active coping was not a coping strategy that was used often.

For planning, 63% of participants scored on the high end of the scale, indicating their use of planning as a coping strategy, and eight participants scored on the lower end of the Planning subscale, indicating that planning was not a coping strategy that was used often.

For positive reframing, 41% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, indicating their use of positive reframing as a coping strategy, and 30% of the participants scored on the lower end of the scale, indicating that positive reframing was not a coping strategy that they used.

For acceptance, 38% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, indicating their use of acceptance as a coping strategy, and 21% of the participants scored

on the lower end of the scale, indicating that acceptance was not a coping strategy used often.

All participants who indicated a higher level of active coping as a strategy of coping were between the ages of 31 and 40. Salary ranged from \$40,001 to \$60,000 for the Planning, Positive Reframing, and Acceptance subscales and \$100,001 or more for the Active Coping subscale.

### **Africultural Coping**

Religion, using instrumental support and using emotional support are forms of Africultural coping, as the coping mechanism focuses around spiritual-centered coping and collective coping (Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006). On the religion subscale fifty-seven percent of the participants scored on the high end of the scale indicating their use of religion as a coping strategy. There were twenty-four percent of the participants that scored on the lower end of the scale indicating that religion was not a coping strategy that they used often.

For using instrumental support 27% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, and 43% of the participants who scored on the lower end of the scale indicating that using instrumental support was not a coping strategy used often.

For emotional support 22% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, and 35% of the participants that scored on the lower end of the scale indicating the use of emotional support was a coping strategy. Participants ranged in age from 31-40 years of age for the religion and using instrumental support subscales. Participants ranged in the



age of 51-60 years of age for the emotional support subscale. All participants' salary for Africultural coping was between \$100,001 or more.

### **Avoidance-Behavioral Coping**

Humor, self-distraction, self-blame, and denial are forms of avoidance-behavioral coping. This type of coping focuses on the mindful choice to remove himself from the stressor (Anshel, Sutarso, & Jubenville, 2009). On the humor subscale 27% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale indicating the use of humor as a coping strategy. Thirty-eight percent of the participants who scored on the lower end of the scale indicating that humor was not a coping strategy used often.

For self-distraction 28% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale and 25% percent of the participants who scored on the lower end of the scale indicating that self-distraction was not a coping strategy often used.

For self-blame 14% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, and 44% percent of the participants that scored on the lower end of the scale indicating that self-blame was not a coping strategy used.

For denial 10% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale, and .2% of the participants that scored on the lower end of the scale indicating that denial was not a coping strategy often used. The participants who identified on the higher end of the avoidant-behavioral subscales of coping strategy, were age 31 – 40. The individuals who scored higher on the humor subscale indicated a salary of \$100,001 or more, the individuals who scored higher on the self-distraction and self-blame subscales indicated a

salary of \$40,001 to \$60,000, and the individual who scored higher on the denial subscale indicated a salary of \$10,001 to \$40,000.

### **Dysfunctional Coping**

Venting, substance use and behavioral disengagement are forms of dysfunctional coping. This form of coping focused on using resources to help the individual to work through the stressor (Carter et al., 1989). On the venting subscale, 27% of the participants score on the high end of the scale indicating the use of venting as a coping strategy. 30% of the participants who scored on the lower end of the scale indicated that venting was not a coping strategy used.

For substance use 14% of the participants scored on the high end of the scale and 70% of the participants who scored on the lower end of the scale indicated that substance use was not a coping strategy used.

For behavioral disengagement, two participants scored on the high end of the scale and 77% of the participants scored on the lower end of the scale indicating that behavioral disengagement was not a coping strategy used. Participants who scored higher on the substance use subscale ranged from 26 to 30 years of age, participants who scored higher on the venting and behavioral disengagement subscales ranged from 31-40 years of age. The individuals who scored higher on the substance use subscale indicated a salary of \$40,001 to \$60,000, the individual who scored higher on the venting subscale indicated a salary of \$100,001 or more, and the individuals who scored higher on the behavioral disengagement subscale indicated a salary of \$10,001 to \$40,000.

Using the Brief COPE was the best measure for this study. Using the Brief COPE was beneficial to this study because it covered a range of different coping strategies that may be of use across the world. This detailed list of coping strategies did not just put coping strategies into a vague category of positive coping and negative coping. There were different styles of coping that various individuals gravitated towards when working through the stressors. It is important for each African American man to use his resources to help him in handling the stressors that was being experienced (Mitchell, 2015). There are other instruments that could have been used but would not have been appropriate for this study due to their vagueness.

### **People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale Scores**

The PRIAS is a 50-item instrument that focuses on an individual's denial or lack of awareness of their personal relevance in the racial hierarchy (Miller et al., 2016). Using the PRIAS was beneficial to this study. The PRIAS closely resembled the racial identity development theory. The racial identity development theory focuses on coping mechanisms used to cope with daily stress, like racism (Helms & Cook, 1999). There were 85 participants that completed the PRIAS. There are five subscales of the PRIAS. These subscales included conformity/ pre-encounter, dissonance, resistance, immersion and internalization.

The conformity/ pre-encounter subscale explained that participants in this status of their racial identity view the world through a White lens (Miller et al., 2016). There was one participant that identified being in the conformity/ pre-encounter status of life. Participants between the age of 26 to 30 and 51 to 65 and participants with a salary

between \$40,001 to \$60,000 scored higher on the conformity/ pre-encounter subscale. Participants in this status of the racial identity development theory primarily focused on what they did not like about themselves based on the African American culture and how it did not fit with White society (Ford, et al.,1993). Many times, during this status the simplest things about being African American are seen as a problem. This changes slightly in the dissonance status.

The dissonance status focuses on the individual attempting to make the best of life as being viewed as an American; however, he realizes that his own race may be against his decision. In this status the individual was no longer focused on what he does not like about his African American attribute (Worrell, et al., 2001). He is more focused on just being an individual and not a member of a particular racial group (Ford, et al.,1993). There was one participant that identified as being in the dissonance status of his racial identity theory. Participants between the age of 26 to 30 and participants with a salary from \$10,001 to \$40,000 scored higher on the dissonance subscale.

In the racial identity development theory, the statuses of resistance and immersion-emersion are combined. The resistance subscale indicated that men in this status were resisting being just Americans and were more focused on being African Americans (Miller et al., 2016). In this status the individual embraced his African American attributes and the underlying fact that he was a member of the African American community (Ford, et al., 1993). There were four participants that identified as being in the resistance status of their racial identity theory. Participants between the age of 31 to 40 and participants with a salary between \$40,001 to \$60,000 scored higher on

the resistance subscale. The immersion-emersion subscale focused on a sense of being pro-Black status. This status included individuals being involved with more “Black” issues and involved in the Black community (Helms & Cook, 1999). The men knew more about the African American community and were focused more on their “pro-blackness” and how it worked for them. Pro-blackness refers to an expression of positive interpersonal behaviors towards individuals who identify as African American (Axt, 2017). There were three participants that identified as being in the immersion-emersion status of their racial identity theory. Participants between the age of 31 to 40 and participants with a salary between \$40,001 to \$60,000 scored higher on the immersion-emersion subscale.

The internalization subscale focused on empowerment and being a member of the Black community but having the ability to co-exist with other races (Worrell, et al., 2001; Miller et al., 2016). This is the final status of the Racial Identity Development Theory. In this status, the term ‘blackness has a new meaning. It is not used in alignment with anti-white. It is used in direct connection with the individual learning themselves, who he is and what he brings to the community as an offer of assistance (Johnson, 2004). Eighty-nine percent of the participants identified being in the internalization status of the racial identity theory. Participants between the age of 31 to 40 and participants with a salary from \$10,001 to \$40,000 scored higher on the internalization subscale.

### **Limitations of Study**

There were some limitations of the study. The research relied heavily on self-report from the participants. Self-reporting requires the individual to recall past

experiences as they fit the items being asked. There is no accurate way to discern if participants were maximizing or minimizing their experiences to fit the criteria (Ferson, Montgomery, Moore, Miller, Legget, Coulter, & Moore, 2014). The participants of this study came from a number of different educational backgrounds, ranging from high school to doctoral level education. This may have affected the rate at which the participants experienced race-related stress. Another limitation of this study was that it was only limited to African American males, and not all member of the African American community. The last limitation of this study was the length of the study; this study consisted of 113 questions. The length of this study caused 31 participants not to complete the study as a whole.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Racism is a very sensitive topic. It is also a topic that does not seem to be declining as times progresses. For many, racism, whether it is cultural, institutional, or individual it is very real and present, as well as impactful. Individuals are still experiencing racism and while other individuals still deny its existence (Harwood, Hunt, Mendenhall, & Lewis, 2012). This study is one of the few studies that assessed how African American men cope with perceived race-related stress. Further research needs to be completed to compare how African American males cope with perceive race related stress versus how African American females cope with perceive race-related stress, using the same instruments from this study to compare their coping strategies, experiences to race-related stress, and where they identify themselves in relationship to their own racial identity.

Another recommendation for future research would be to conduct this study with other races while including African Americans. This would provide insight into how other races cope with perceived racism. This would allow the researcher to compare how members of the Caucasian, Asian, and Indian communities compare in relationship to race-related stress, coping strategies, and their own racial identity (Garriott, Love, & Tyler, 2008). Another recommendation for future research would be to conduct this study within two specific geographic regions. Some geographic locations are stereotyped as holding more racist values than others (Barry, 2006). A comparison of the geographic regions could indicate if one geographical region holds true to racial stereotypes. In the southern states there is a belief that much has changed for African Americans since the era of Jim Crow; however, the 2018-midterm elections would leave one to believe that some of the stereotypes remain exactly the same. There were three elections where racial division was a prominent issue, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi. In the states of Florida and Georgia it was the first time that both states had the opportunity to elect African American Governors (Bennet, 2018; Stein, 2018). The State of Mississippi's senatorial election was between a woman and an African American man. The woman's campaign appeared to be plagued with very old stereotypes of the states, such as lynching, voter suppression, and segregation (Lartey, 2018). For some of the people in Mississippi those things were not stereotypical, but memories of when America was great.

Finally, research similar to this study should be conducted with instruments that allow participants to leave written statements. It would be beneficial to do a mixed methods study to gain a better understanding of the participants perspective based upon

the way they chose to answer the questions. Participants indicated that the Likert scale answers did not convey what they were truly thinking or how they would have liked to respond. A qualitative research method employs an individual's experiences and perspectives (Levitt, Bamberg, Creswell, Frost, Josselson, & Suárez-Orozco, 2018). This would provide a better understanding of the coping strategies employed when faced with race-related stressors.

### **Social Change**

The potential social change that may come from this study is a better understanding of racism and how it affects African Americans men and other individuals in the world. Today, we are living in a world in which the police are being called on African Americans for things such as barbequing at a park (Guynn, 2018), not speaking to someone when they say hello (Andone, 2018), and trying to better themselves with self-employment (Hanna, Sgueglia, & Simon, 2018). Studies such as this one could impact the way others who are not African Americans see what African Americans view as race-related stress.

This study could also employ an understanding of why certain aspects of life are perceived as race-related stress. It is important not only to understand why certain aspects of life are perceived as race-related stress but also how they essentially affect the individual perceiving the stressor. This may help with the psychological well-being of African American males and females in the future. Many thoughts and feelings regarding racism may evoke changes toward racial equality and justice in America. A study such as this one could be the framework in understanding the racial divide that society is



currently facing. This study could potentially be the foundation that begins the conversation with all races included about racism today while also understanding the African American male's perspective.

### **Conclusion**

This study found a moderate correlation between race-related stress and coping strategy for African American men. There were key coping strategies that were common amongst African American men when experiencing race-related stress. These strategies included active coping, planning, and religion. There were three coping strategies (denial, substance use, and behavioral disengagement) that were commonly unused amongst African American men when experiencing race-related stress. Americans all over are faced with race-related stress. African Americans men are constantly faced with race-related stress.

In April a group of three African American women departing an AirBNB in Rialto, California. The women were met with seven police cars as they were checking out of their rental (Andone, 2018). The police were called on the women due to their failure to wave or acknowledge a female neighbor when she spoke to them. The women were racially profiled by the neighbor (Andone, 2018). Police officers detained the women because they did not believe their story about renting an AirBNB. The African American women were detained for a little over 30 minutes.

On Thursday, April 12, 2017 two African American men, Rashon Nelson and Donte Robinson were arrested in a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Starbucks. Nelson and Robinson were waiting on a third man to arrive to have a meeting. They were dressed

down and were not in business attire. There were patrons that recorded the incident between Nelson and Robinson, the Starbucks' manager, and Philadelphia Police Department. The recordings were on many social media outlets (Hanna, Sgueglia, & Simon, 2018). Nelson and Robinson were sitting in the Starbucks café and asked to use the restroom while they waited for their third party to arrive. The manager declined the men's request to use the restroom because they had not yet made a purchase and asked them to leave the establishment. The men refused to leave, and the store manager called the police. As the police arrived the third gentleman, Mr. Yaffe, arrived. Mr. Yaffe who is Caucasian asked the Philadelphia police officers why the two men were being arrested. The police explained the situation (Hanna, Sgueglia, & Simon, 2018). Other patrons screamed out that the men had done nothing inappropriate. The men were arrested for trespassing and creating a disturbance. They were held for a eight hours before being released.

These are few of the instances that have occurred within the last six months. These are all instances that can be considered race-related stress. These are things that can cause stress to an individual. These events could have occurred to anyone in a local park in any city, any AirBNB rental location, and any Starbucks locations. Racism has been a lasting part of American history and it seems as though it is here to stay. There is a strong need for more research of African American men. There is a need to also understand the coping strategies when race-related stress is occurring. There are hopes that this research will help to prompt future research studies in knowledge of race-related stress and coping.

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## Appendix A: Permission to Use the Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version

## IRRS-B Permission

0 2 ▾



Shawn O Utsey &lt;soutsey@vcu.edu&gt;

Today, 10:56 AM

Rynata Leach ▾



Reply all | ▾

irrsshort revised format...  
72 KB ▾SCORING FOR IRRS BRI...  
20 KB ▾

2 attachments (92 KB) Download all Save all to OneDrive - Laureate Education

Rynata,

Yes, you have permission to use the IRRS-B in your research. Please find attached the measure and scoring protocol.

Shawn Utsey

## Appendix B: Permission to Use the People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale

[Result List](#) [Refine Search](#) 1 of 1

### People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (PRIAS)

**Record Type:** Master Test Record

**Acronym:** PRIAS

**Test Year:** 1995

**Test Child:** [People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale \(PRIAS\) \[Test Review\]](#)

**Records:** Using the **People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale** among Asian American college students: An exploratory factor analysis. (AN: 2009-08124-015 from PsycINFO) Apr, 2009.

*Authors:* Perry, Justin C.; Vance, Kristen S.; Helms, Janet E.;

*Source:* American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 79(2), Educational Publishing Foundation, US.

*Age Group:* Adulthood (18 yrs & older)

*Population:* Human; Male; Female; Sample: Asian American College Students

*Keywords:* Factor Structure; **People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale**; Test Development; **Racial Identity**; Psychometric Properties;

*Subjects:* Asians; **Ethnic Identity**; Factor Structure; Minority Groups; Psychometrics;

**Authors:** Helms, J. E., Boston College, Department of Counseling, Developmental, and Education Psychology, Boston, Massachusetts, United States

**Source:** [PsycTESTS](#), 1995.

**Publisher:** Huentity Psychological Consulting LLC

**Language:** [English](#)

**Construct:** [Racial Identity](#)

**Purpose:** The **People of Color Racial Identity Attitude Scale** assesses self-conceptions of **People of Color** with respect to membership in their own **racial group** in contrast to how they react to **White people**

**Description:** The **People of Color Racial Identity Attitude Scale (PRIAS)**; Helms, 1995) is 50-item paper-and-pencil, self-report measure used to assess self-conceptions of **People of Color** with respect to membership in their own **racial group** in contrast to how they react to **White people**. The PRIAS measures four **People of Color racial identity** schemas (Conformity, Dissonance, Immersion/Resistance, and Internalization). 'Schemas' refers to different strategies for interpreting and responding to one's own understandings of race. Respondents use 5-point Likert scales (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) to indicate how well an item de-scribes their own attitudes. Schemas that receive the highest scores are referred to as dominant statuses and used most frequently for interpreting **racial** stimuli in one's internal and external environment. (PsycTESTS Database Record (c) 2017 APA, all rights reserved)

**Format:** Items are rated on 5-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

**Instrument** Rating Scale

**Type:**

**Administration** [Paper](#)

**Method:**

**PsycTESTS** Culture, Racial, and Ethnic Identity (5700)

**Classification:**

**Commercial** No

**Availability:**

**Permissions:** May use for Research/Teaching

**Fee:** No

**Release Date:** 20170313

**Digital Object Identifier:** <http://dx.doi.org.ezp.waldenlibrary.org/10.1037/747453-000>

**Websites:** [http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/tsoe\\_sites/spro/pdf/Huentity\\_Psychological\\_Consulting\\_Ca.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/tsoe_sites/spro/pdf/Huentity_Psychological_Consulting_Ca.pdf)

**Accession Number:** 9999-47453-000

## Appendix C: Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version

**Index of Race-Related Stress—Brief Version**

## Instructions

This survey questionnaire is intended to sample some of the experiences that Black people have in this country because of their "blackness." There are many experiences that a Black person can have in this country because of his/her race. Some events happen just once, some more often, while others may happen frequently. Below you will find listed some of these experiences, for which you are to indicate those that have happened to you or someone very close to you (i.e., a family member or loved one). It is important to note that a person can be affected by those events that happen to people close to them; this is why you are asked to consider such events as applying to your experiences when you complete this questionnaire. Please circle the number on the scale (0 to 4) that indicates the reaction you had to the event at the time it happened. Do not leave any items blank. If an event has happened more than once, refer to the first time it happened. If an event did not happen, circle 0 and go on to the next item.

0 = this never happened to me.

1 = this event happened, but did not bother me.

2 = this event happened & I was slightly upset.

3 = this event happened & I was upset.

4 = this event happened & I was extremely upset.

1. You notice that crimes committed by White people tend to be romanticized, whereas the same crime committed by a Black person is portrayed as savagery, and the Black person who committed it, as an animal.

2. Sales people/clerks did not say thank you or show other forms of courtesy and respect (e.g., put your things in a bag) when you shopped at some White/ non-Black owned businesses.

3. You notice that when Black people are killed by the police, the media informs the public of the victim's criminal record or negative information in their background, suggesting they got what they deserved.

4. You have been threatened with physical violence by an individual or group of White / non- Blacks.

5. You have observed that White kids who commit violent crimes are portrayed as "boys being boys," while Black kids who commit similar crimes are wild animals.

6. You seldom hear or read anything positive about Black people on radio, TV, in newspapers, or history books.

7. While shopping at a store the sales clerk assumed that you couldn't afford certain items (e.g., you were directed toward the items on sale).
8. You were the victim of a crime and the police treated you as if you should just accept it as part of being Black.
9. You were treated with less respect and courtesy than Whites and other non-Blacks while in a store, restaurant, or other business establishment.
10. You were passed over for an important project although you were more qualified and competent than the White/non-Black person given the task.
11. Whites/non Blacks have stared at you as if you didn't belong in the same place with them; whether it was a restaurant, theater, or other place of business.
12. You have observed the police treat White/non-Blacks with more respect and dignity than they do Blacks.
13. You have been subjected to racist jokes by Whites/non-Blacks in positions of authority and you did not protest for fear they might have held it against you.
14. While shopping at a store, or when attempting to make a purchase, you were ignored as if you were not a serious customer or didn't have any money.
15. You have observed situations where other Blacks were treated harshly or unfairly by Whites/non-Blacks due to their race.
16. You have heard reports of White people/non-Blacks who have committed crimes and in an effort to cover up their deeds falsely reported that a Black man was responsible for the crime.
17. You notice that the media plays up those stories that cast Blacks in negative ways (child abusers, rapists, muggers, etc.), usually accompanied by a large picture of a Black person looking angry or disturbed.
18. You have heard racist remarks or comments about Black people spoken with Impunity by White public officials or other influential White people.
19. You have been given more work, or the most undesirable jobs at your place of employment while the White/non-Black of equal or less seniority and credentials is given less work, and more desirable tasks.
20. You have heard or seen other Black people express a desire to be White or to have White physical characteristics because they disliked being Black or thought it was ugly.

21. White people or other non-Blacks have treated you as if you were unintelligent and needed things explained to you slowly or numerous times.

22. You were refused an apartment or other housing; you suspect it was because you're Black.



## Appendix D: Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory

### Brief COPE

These items deal with ways you've been coping with the stress in your life since you found out you were going to have to have this operation. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. These items ask what you've been doing to cope with this one. Obviously, different people deal with things in different ways, but I'm interested in how you've tried to deal with it. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. I want to know to what extent you've been doing what the item says. How much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can.

- 1 = I haven't been doing this at all
- 2 = I've been doing this a little bit
- 3 = I've been doing this a medium amount
- 4 = I've been doing this a lot

1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.
2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.
3. I've been saying to myself "this isn't real."
4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.
5. I've been getting emotional support from others.
6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it.
7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.
8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.
9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.
10. I've been getting help and advice from other people.
11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.
12. I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.
13. I've been criticizing myself.
14. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.
15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.
16. I've been giving up the attempt to cope.
17. I've been looking for something good in what is happening.
18. I've been making jokes about it.
19. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.
20. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.
21. I've been expressing my negative feelings.
22. I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.
23. I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.

24. I've been learning to live with it.
25. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.
26. I've been blaming myself for things that happened.
27. I've been praying or meditating.
28. I've been making fun of the situation.

### Appendix E: People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to measure people's social and political attitudes concerning race and ethnicity. Since different people have different opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. Use the scale below to respond to each statement according to the way you see things. Be as honest as you can. Beside each item number, circle the number that best describes how **you** feel.

(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Uncertain (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree

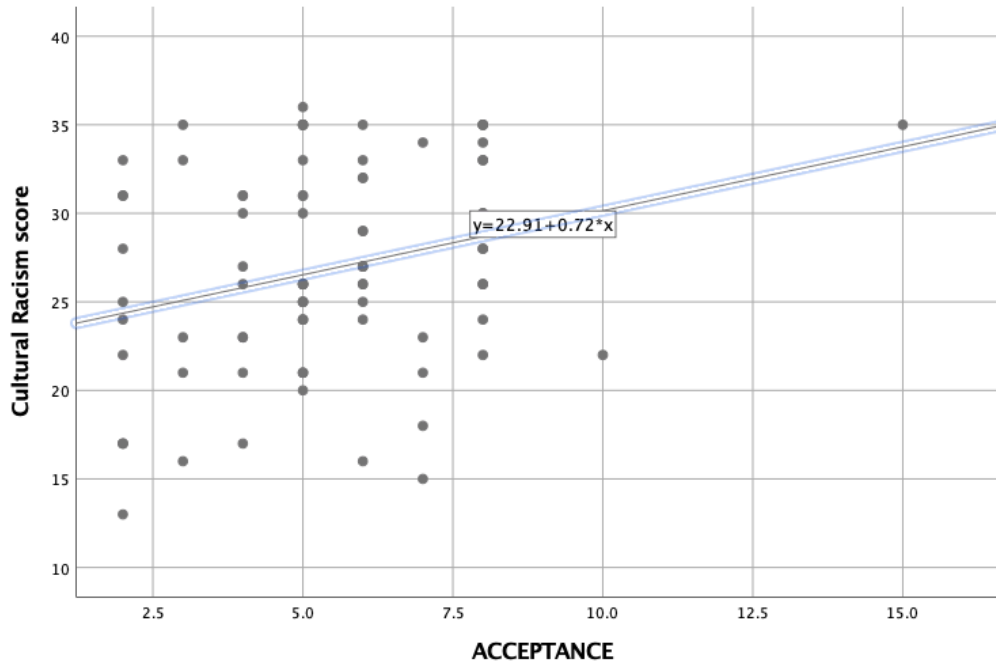
1. In general, I believe that Anglo-Americans (Whites) are superior to other racial groups.
2. I feel more comfortable being around Anglo-Americans (Whites) than I do being around people of my own race.
3. In general, people of my race have not contributed very much to American society.
4. Sometimes, I am embarrassed to be the race I am.
5. I would have accomplished more in life if I had been born an Anglo-American (White).
6. Anglo-Americans (Whites) are more attractive than people of my race.
7. People of my race should learn to think and act like Anglo- Americans (Whites).
8. I limit myself to White activities.
9. I think racial minorities blame Anglo-Americans (Whites) too much for their problems.
10. I feel unable to involve myself in Anglo-Americans' (Whites') experiences, and am increasing my involvement in experiences involving people of my race.
11. When I think about how Anglo-Americans (Whites) have treated people of my race, I feel an overwhelming anger.
12. I want to know more about my culture.
13. I limit myself to activities involving people of my own race.
14. Most Anglo-Americans (Whites) are untrustworthy.
15. American society would be better off if it were based on the cultural values of my people.
16. I am determined to find my cultural identity.
17. Most Anglo-Americans (Whites) are insensitive.
18. I reject all Anglo-Americans (Whites) values.
19. My most important goal in life is to fight the oppression of my people.
20. I believe that being from my cultural background has caused me to have many strengths.
21. I am comfortable where I am.
22. People, regardless of their race, have strengths and limitations.
23. I think people of my culture and the White culture differ from each other in some ways, but neither group is superior.

24. My cultural background is a source of pride to me.
25. People of my culture and White culture have much to learn from each other.
26. Anglo-Americans (Whites) have some customs that I enjoy.
27. I enjoy being around people regardless of their race.
28. Every racial group has some good people and some bad people.
29. Minorities should not blame Anglo-Americans (Whites) for all of their social problems.
30. I do not understand why Anglo-Americans (Whites) treat minorities as they do.
31. I am embarrassed about some of the things I feel about my people.
32. I'm not sure where I really belong.
33. I have begun to question my beliefs.
34. Maybe I can learn something from people of my race.
35. Anglo-American (White) people can teach me more about surviving in this world that people of my own race can, but people of my race can teach me more about being human.
36. I don't know whether being the race I am is an asset or a deficit.
37. Sometimes I think Anglo-Americans (Whites) are superior and sometimes I think they're inferior to people of my race.
38. Sometimes I am proud of the racial group to which I belong and sometimes I am ashamed of it.
39. Thinking about my values and beliefs takes up a lot of my time.
40. I'm not sure how I feel about myself.
41. White people are difficult to understand.
42. I find myself replacing old friends with new ones who are from my culture.
43. I feel anxious about some of the things I feel about people of my race.
44. When someone of my race does something embarrassing in public, I feel embarrassed.
45. When both White people and people of my race are present in a social situation, I prefer to be with my own racial group.
46. My values and beliefs match those of Anglo-Americans (Whites) more than they do people of my race.
  
47. The way Anglo-Americans (Whites) treat people of my race makes me angry.
48. I only follow the traditions and customs of people of my racial group.
49. When people of my race act like Anglo-Americans (Whites) I feel angry.
50. I am comfortable being the race I am.

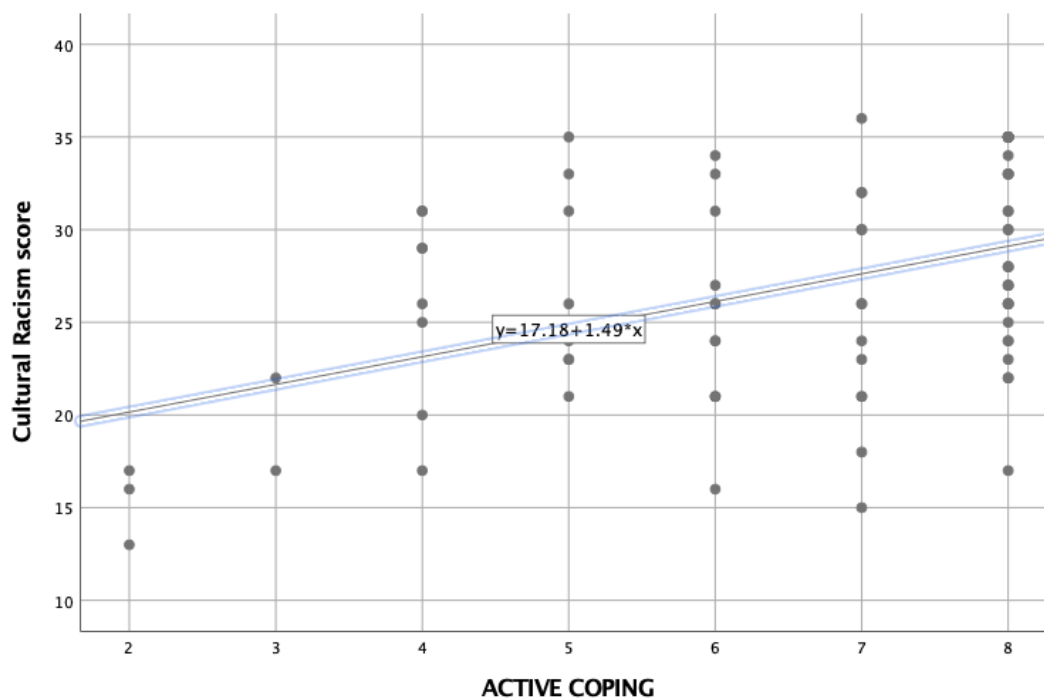
Appendix F: Scatterplots

Cultural Racism Scatterplots

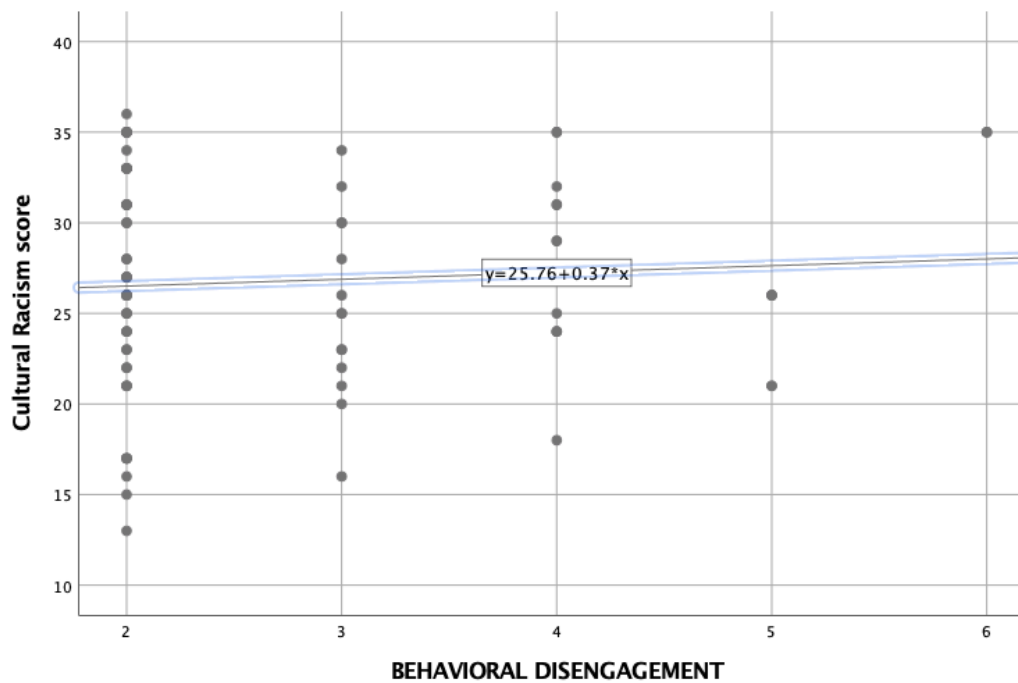
Acceptance



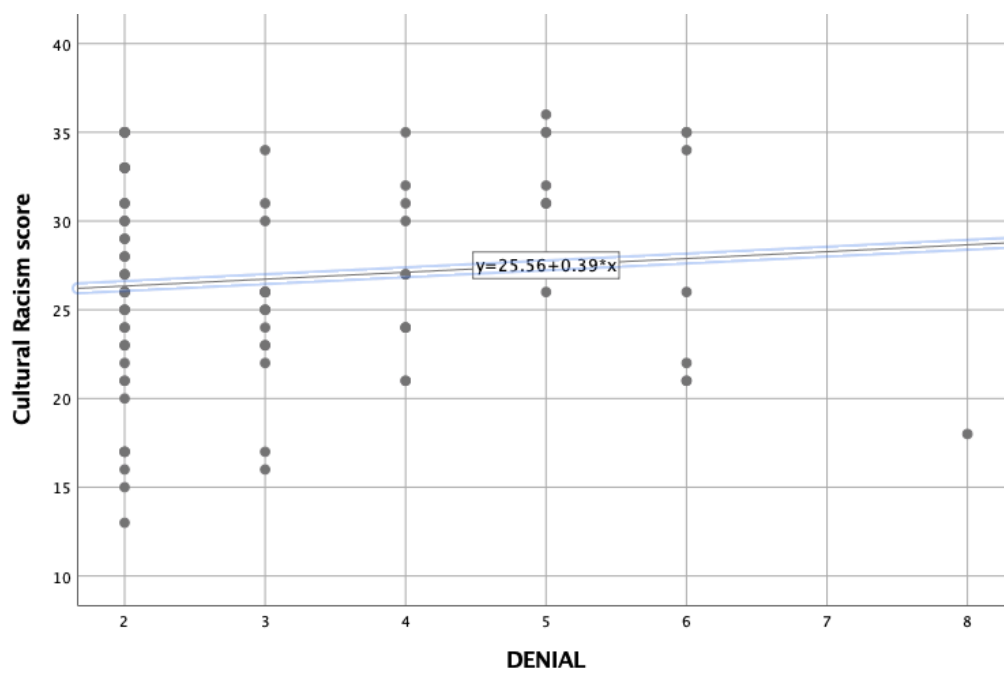
## Active Coping



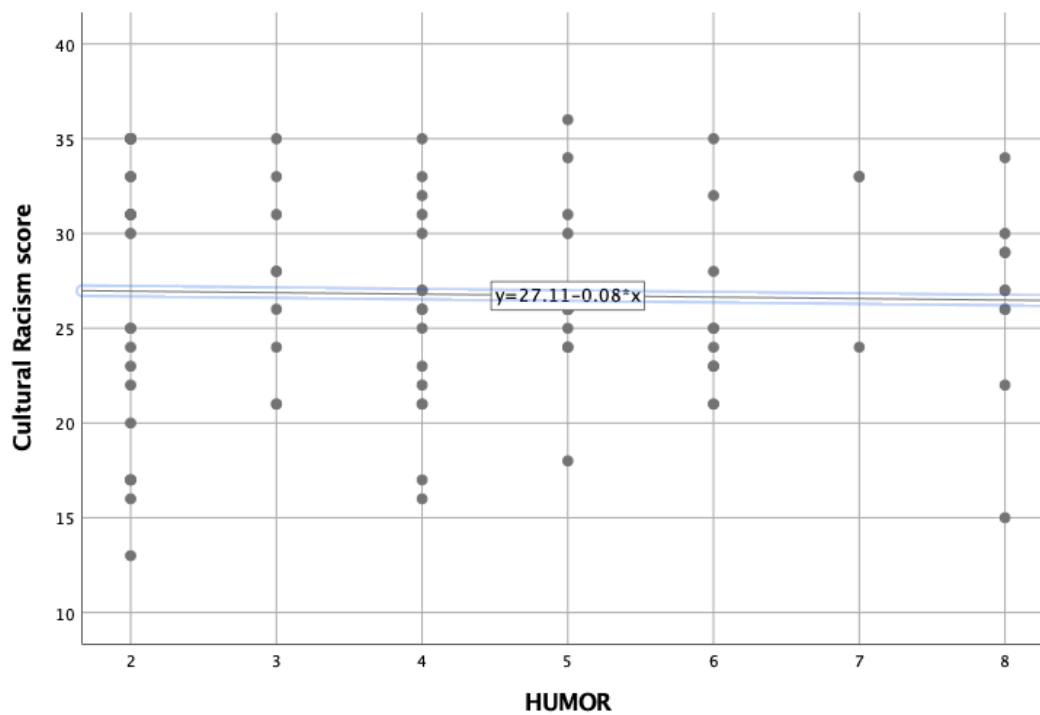
## Behavioral Disengagement



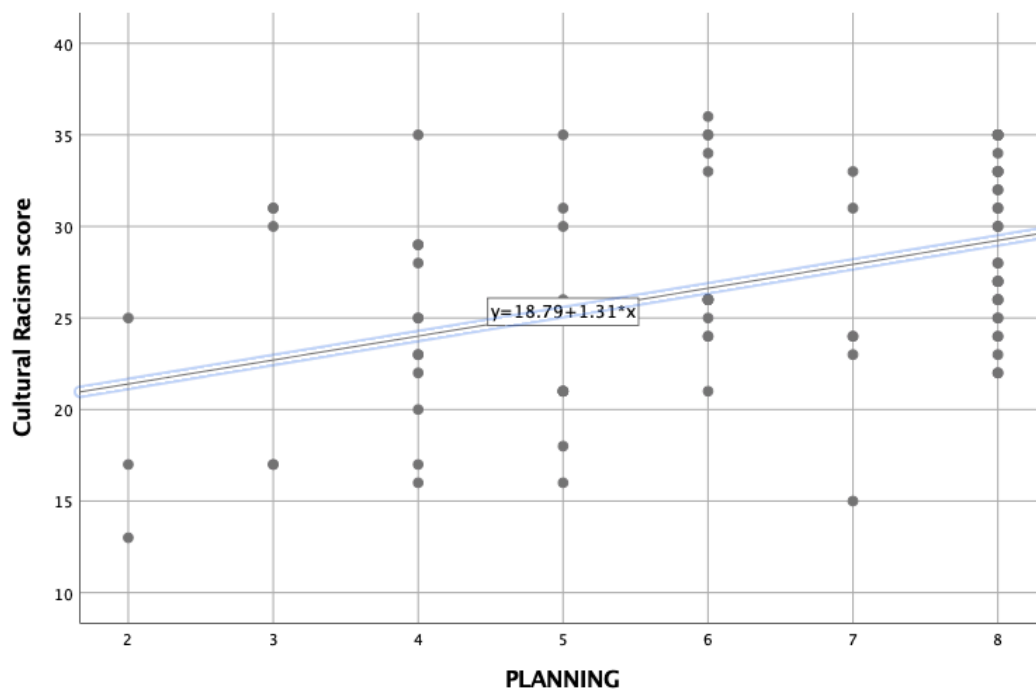
## Denial



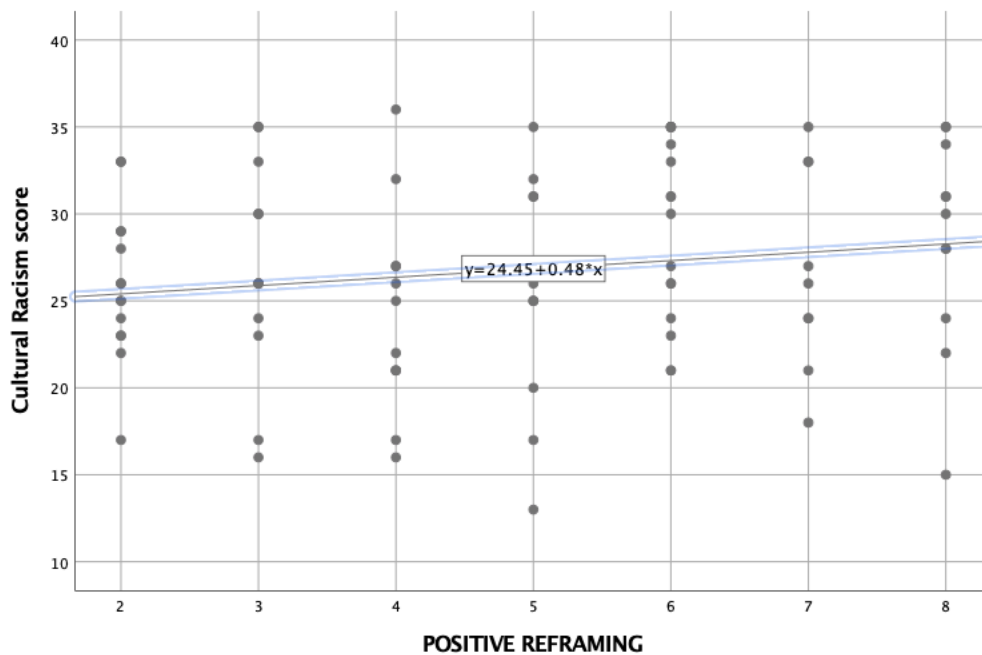
## Humor



## Planning

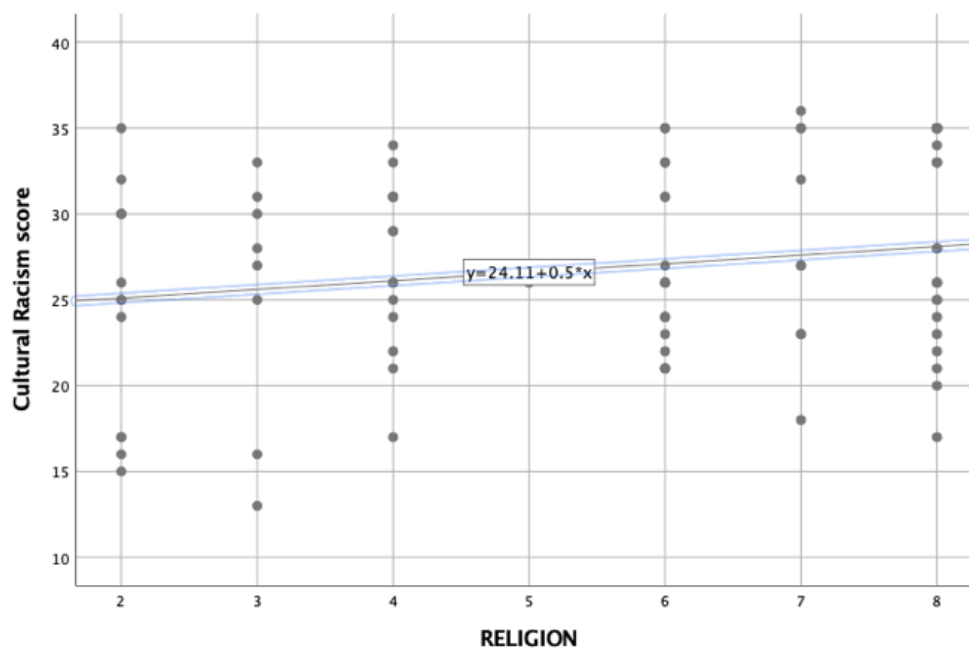


## Positive Reframing

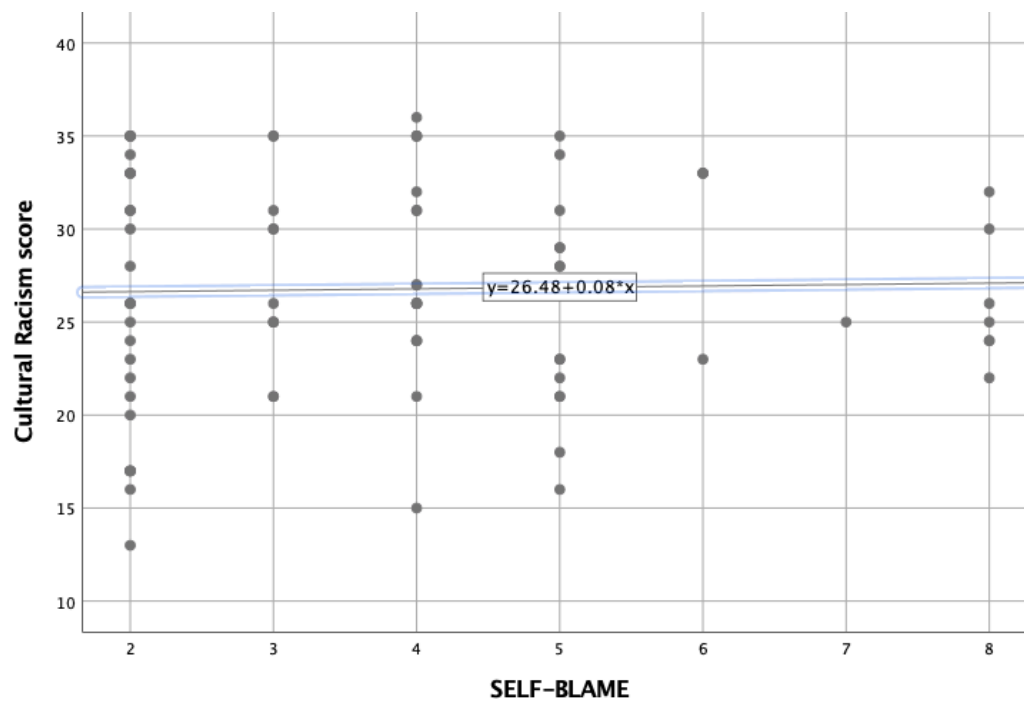




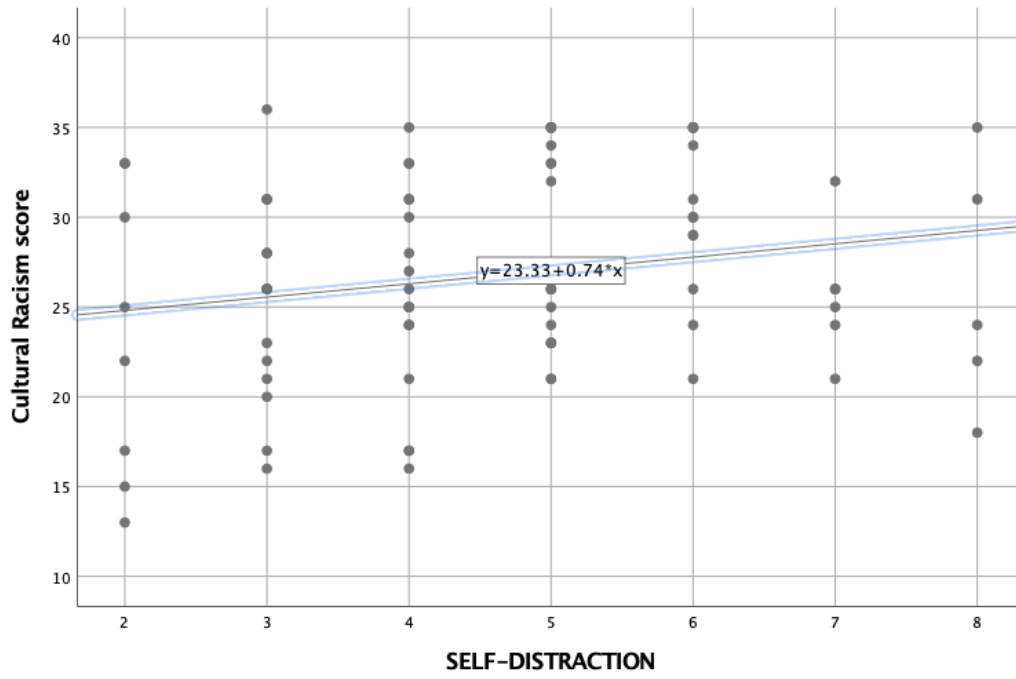
## Religion



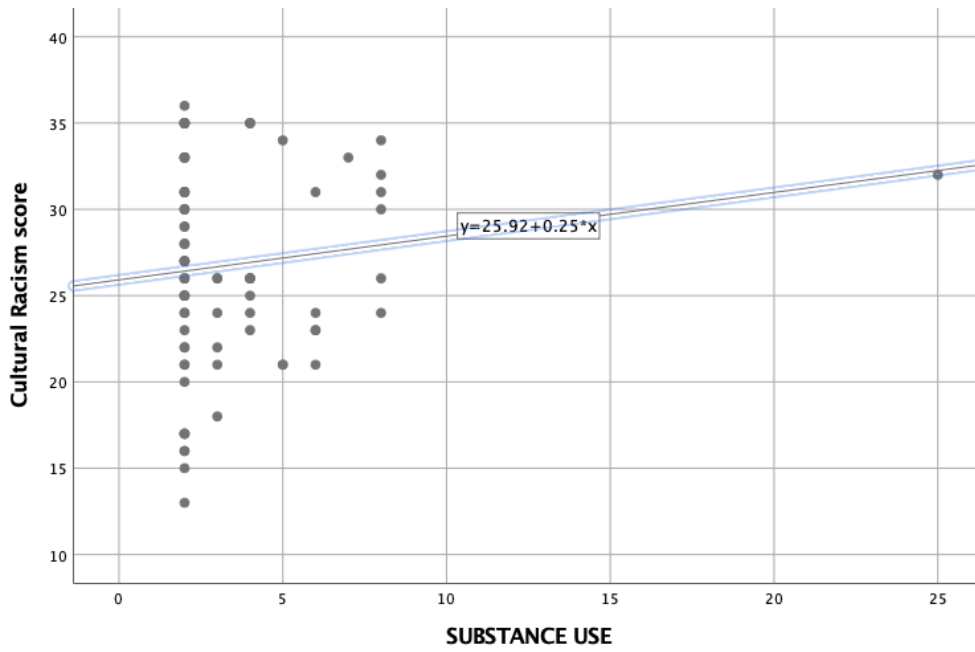
## Self-Blame



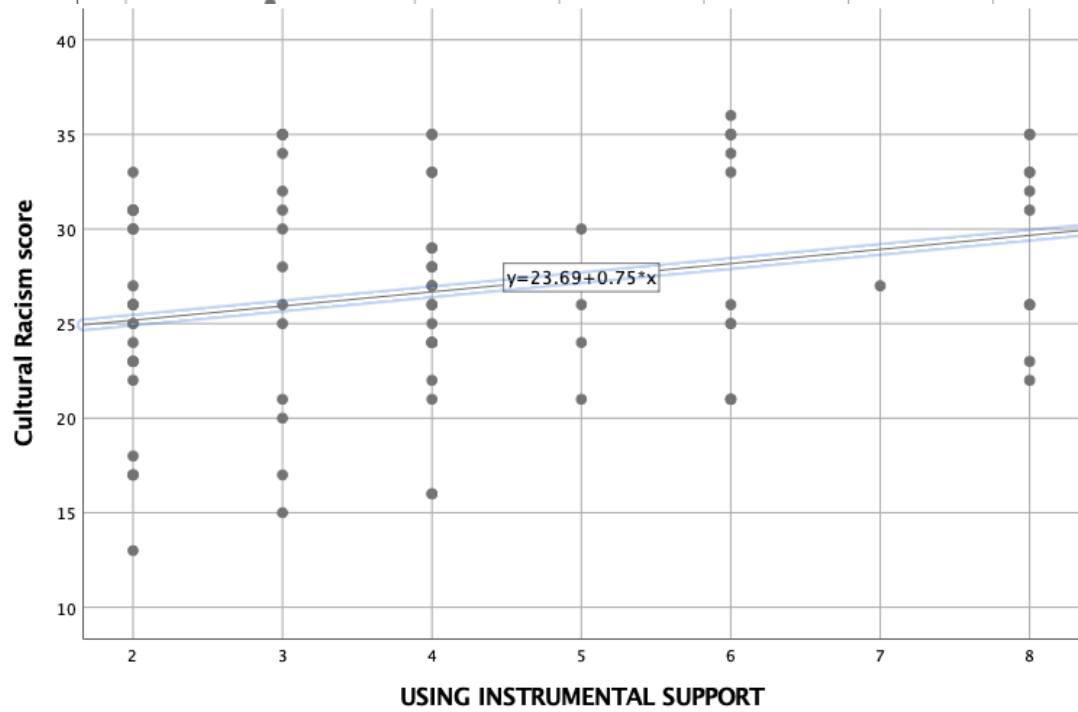
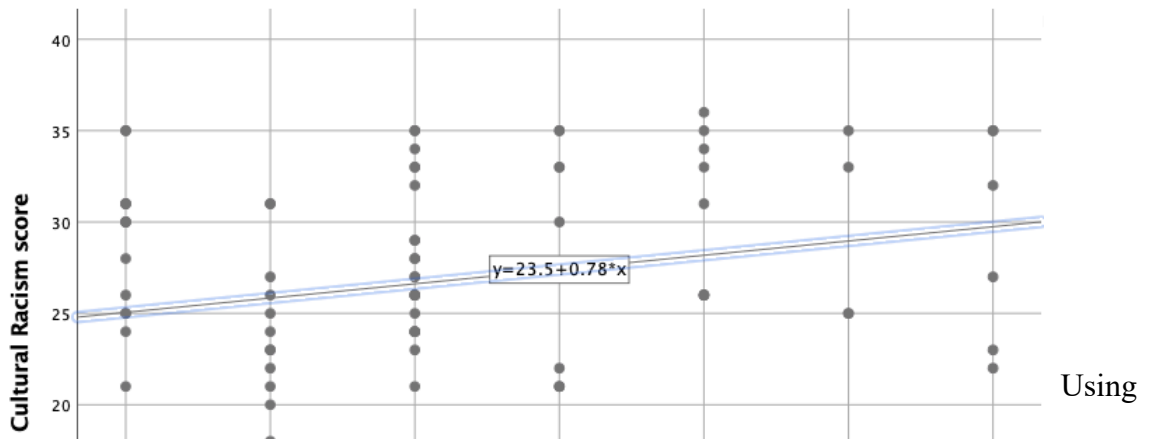
Self-Distraction



Substance Use

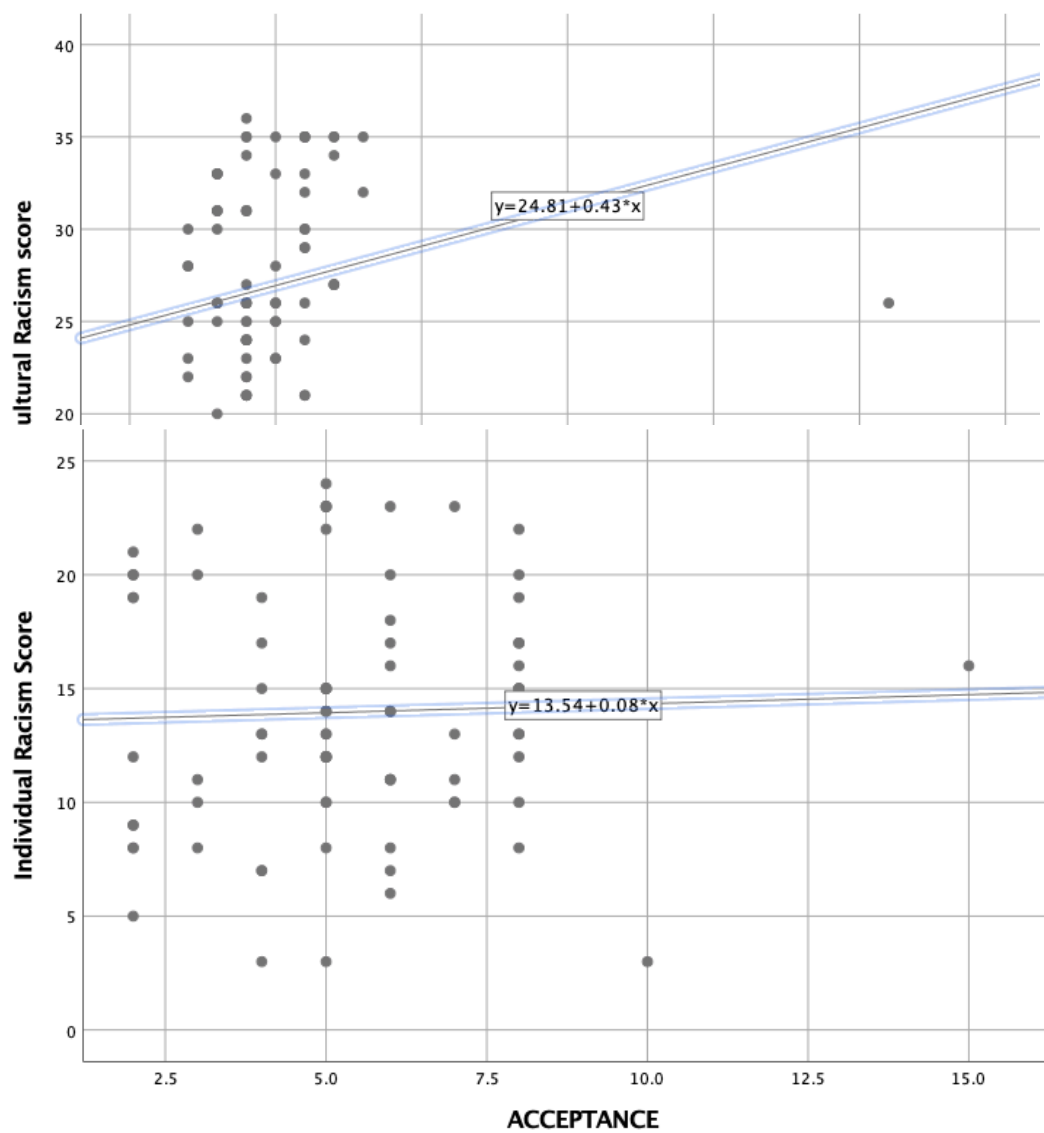


Using Emotional Support



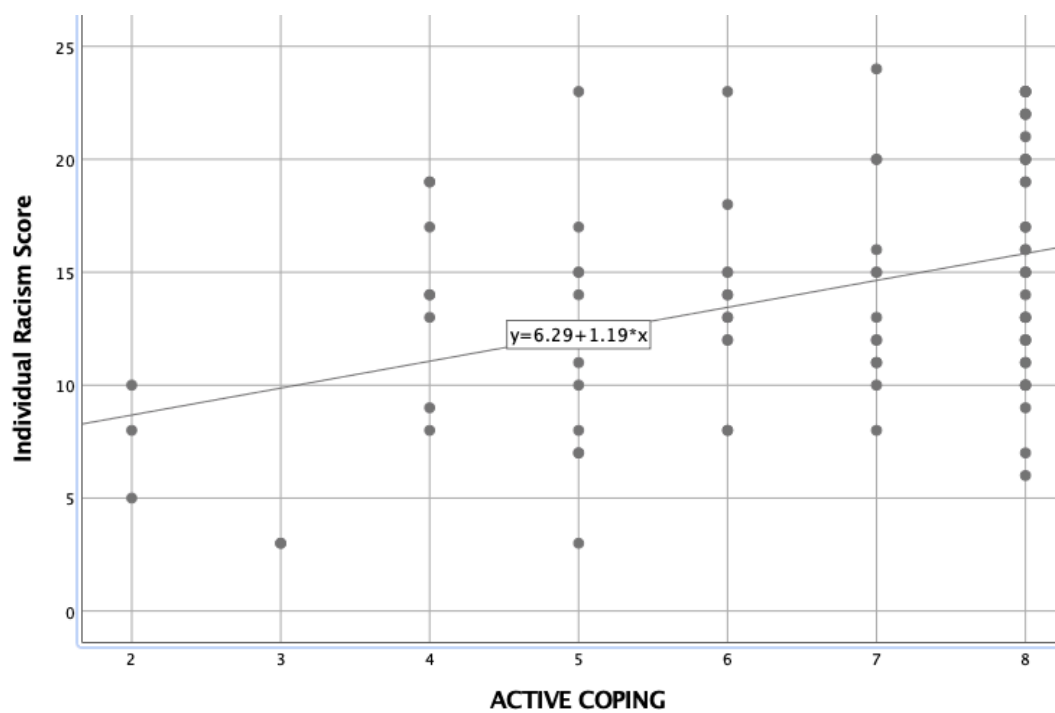
Instrumental Support

Venting

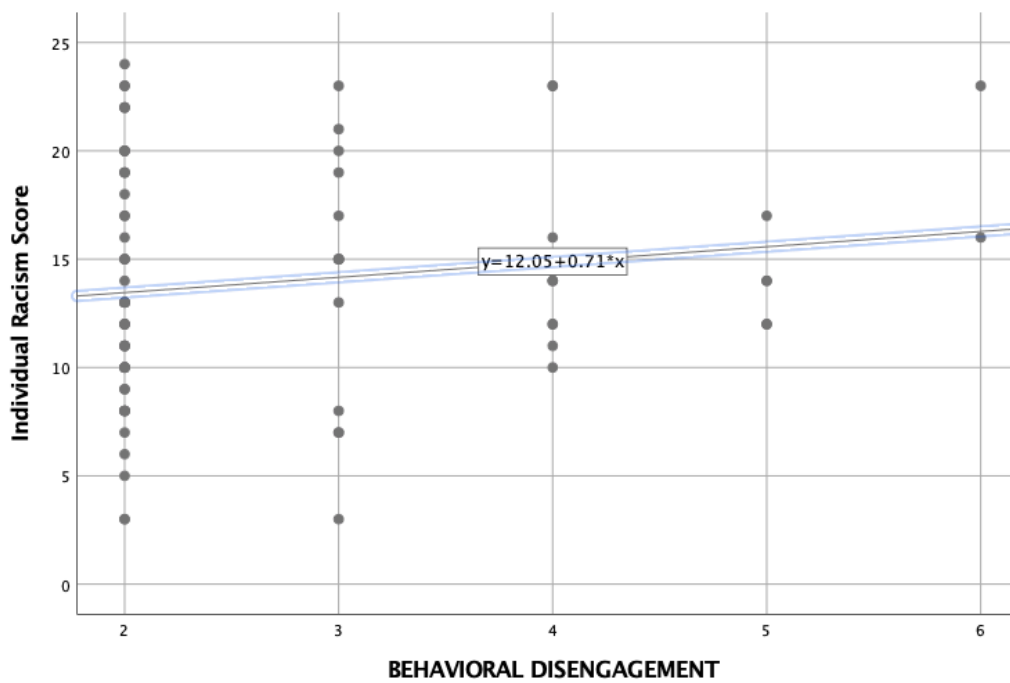


Individual Racism Scatterplots

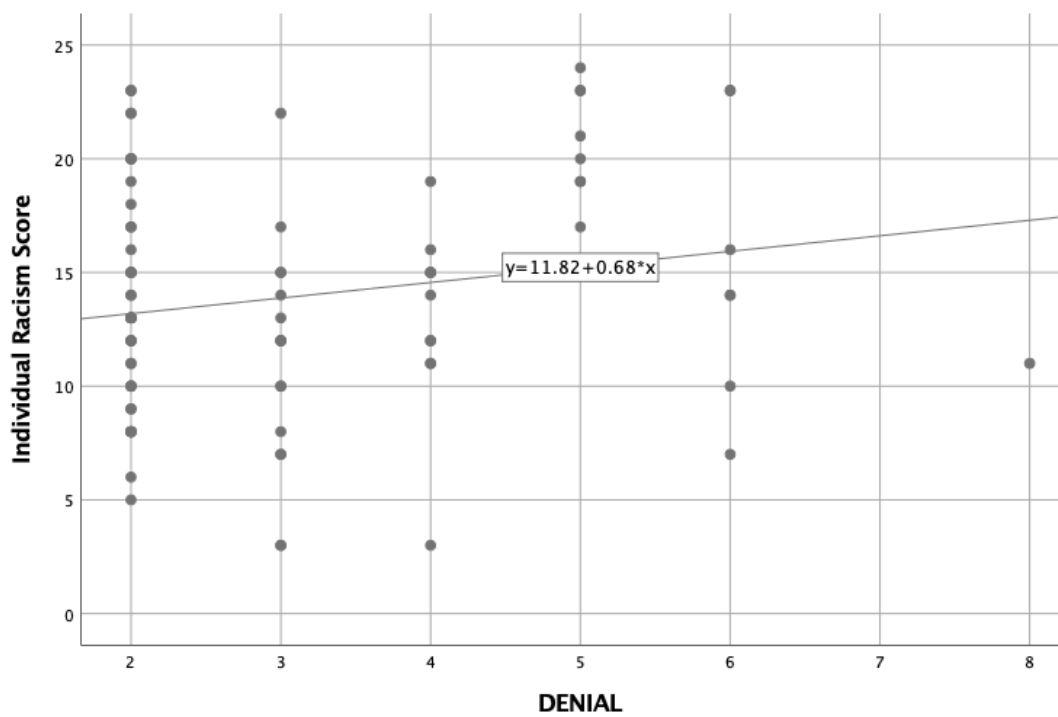
## Active Coping



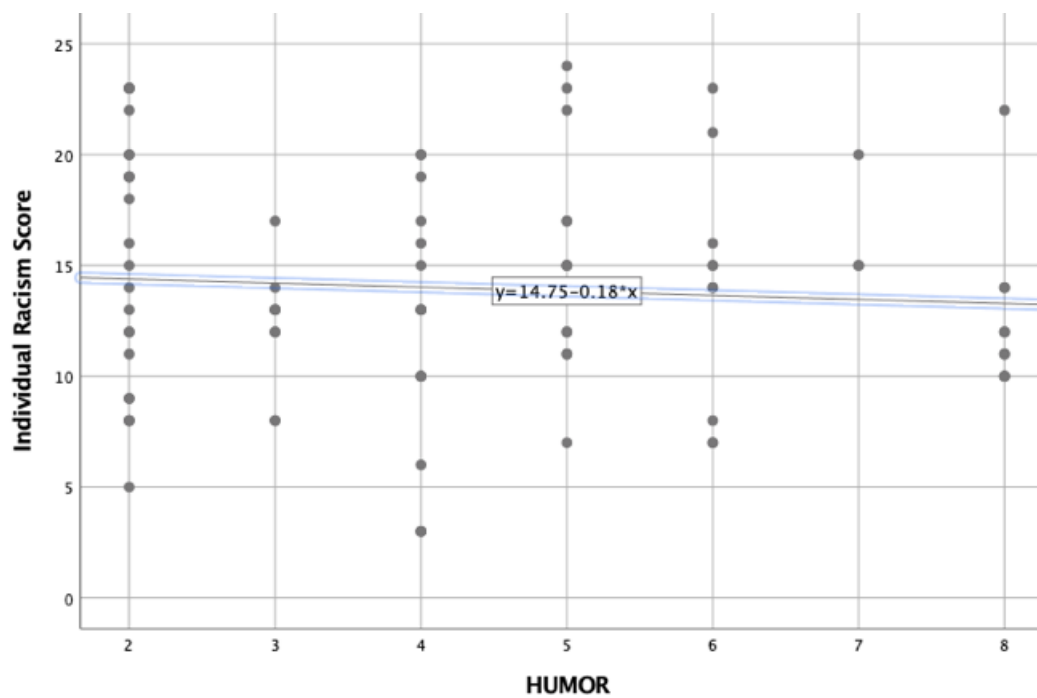
## Behavior Disengagement



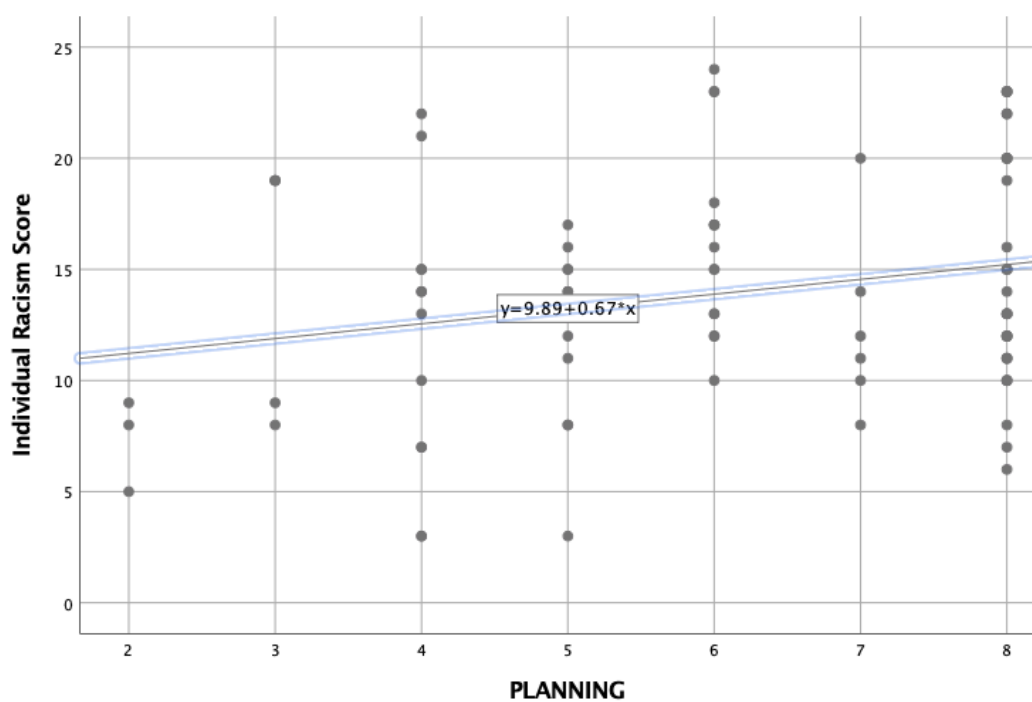
Denial



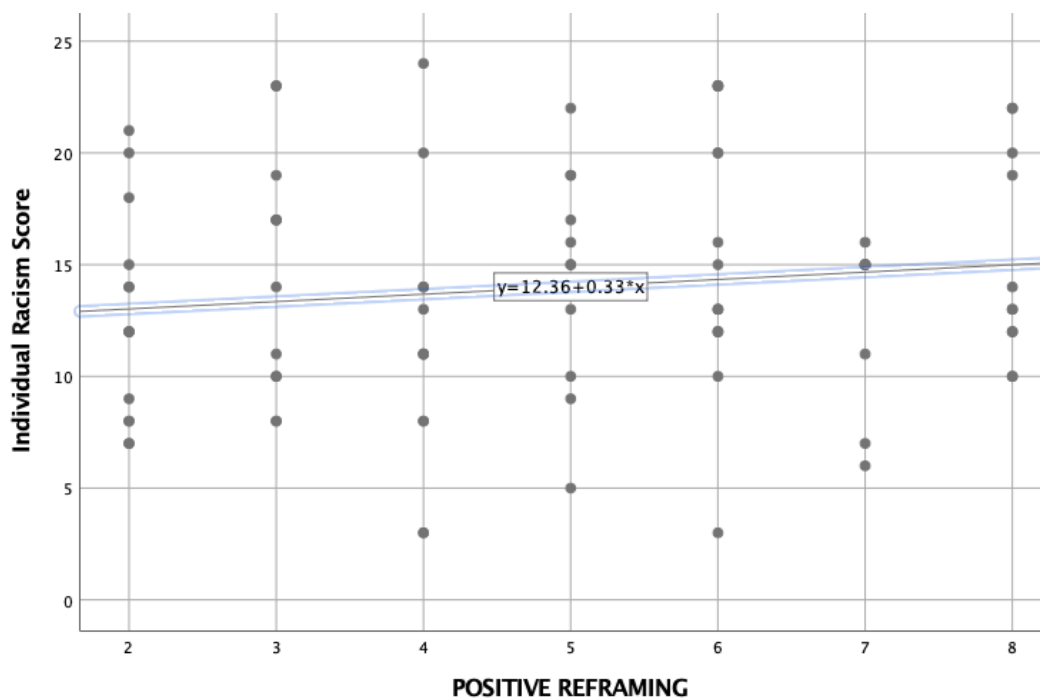
Humor



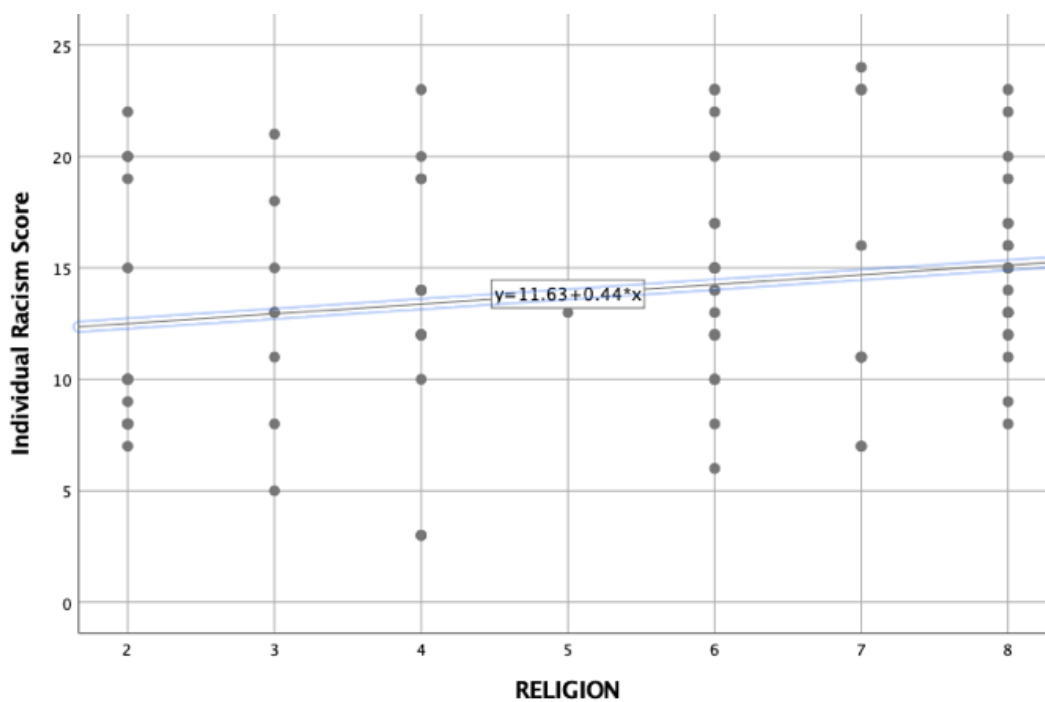
Planning



Positive reframing

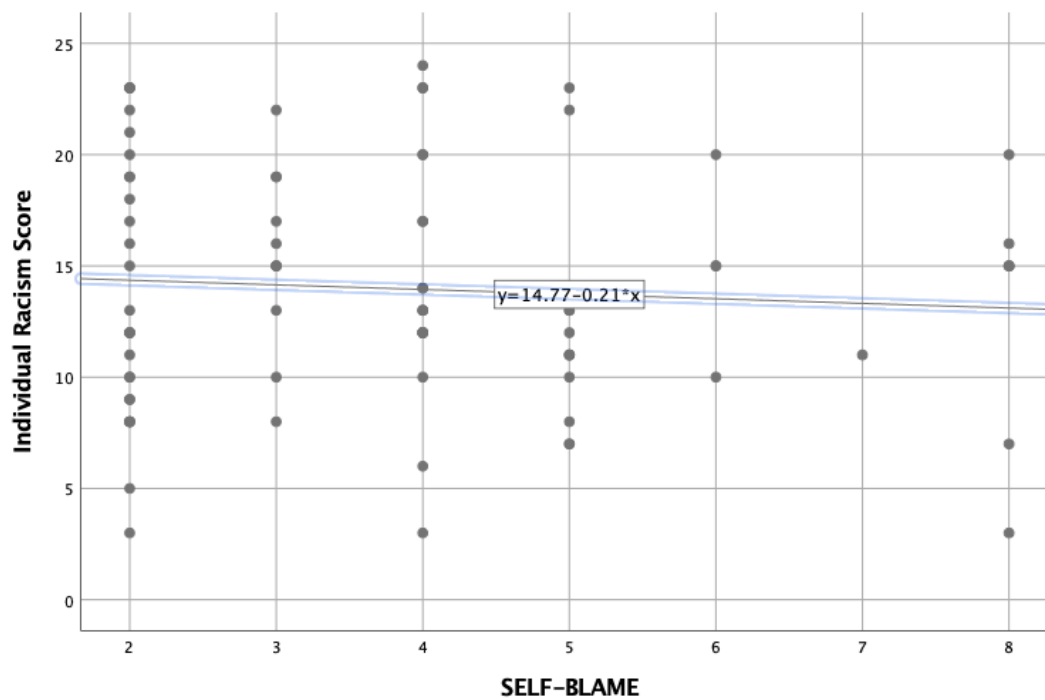


Religion

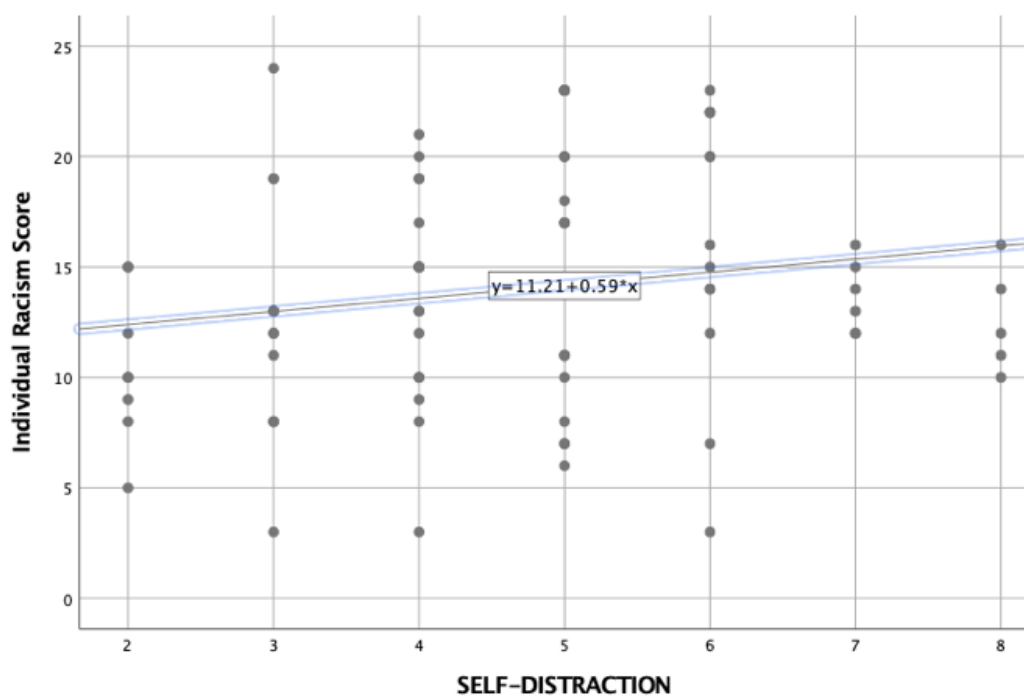


Self-Blame

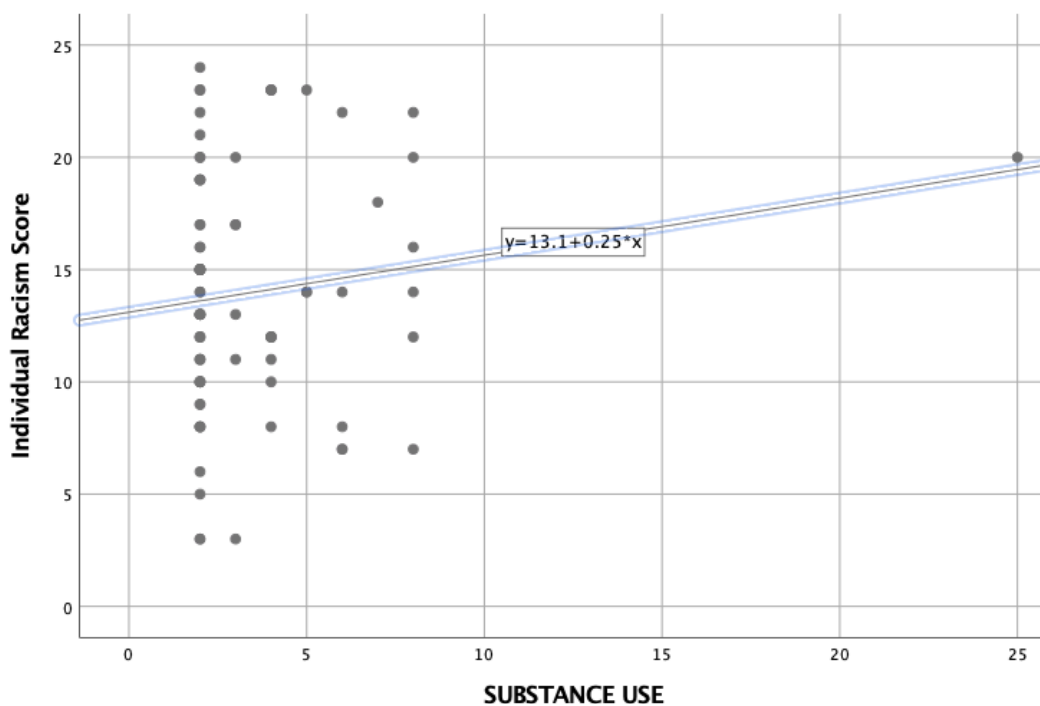




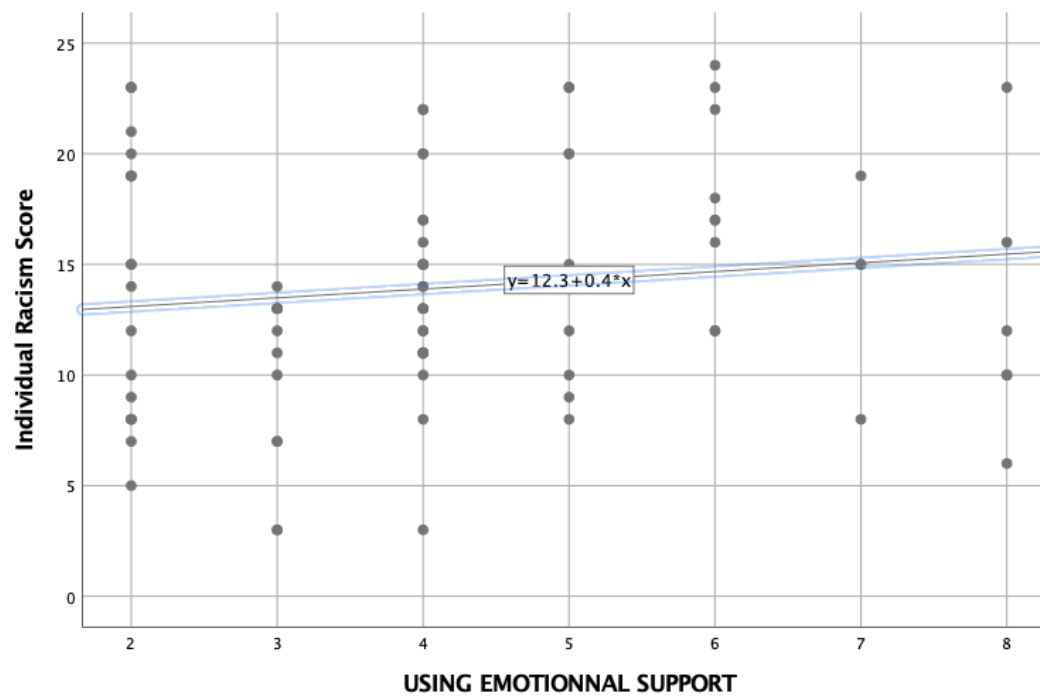
Self-Distraction



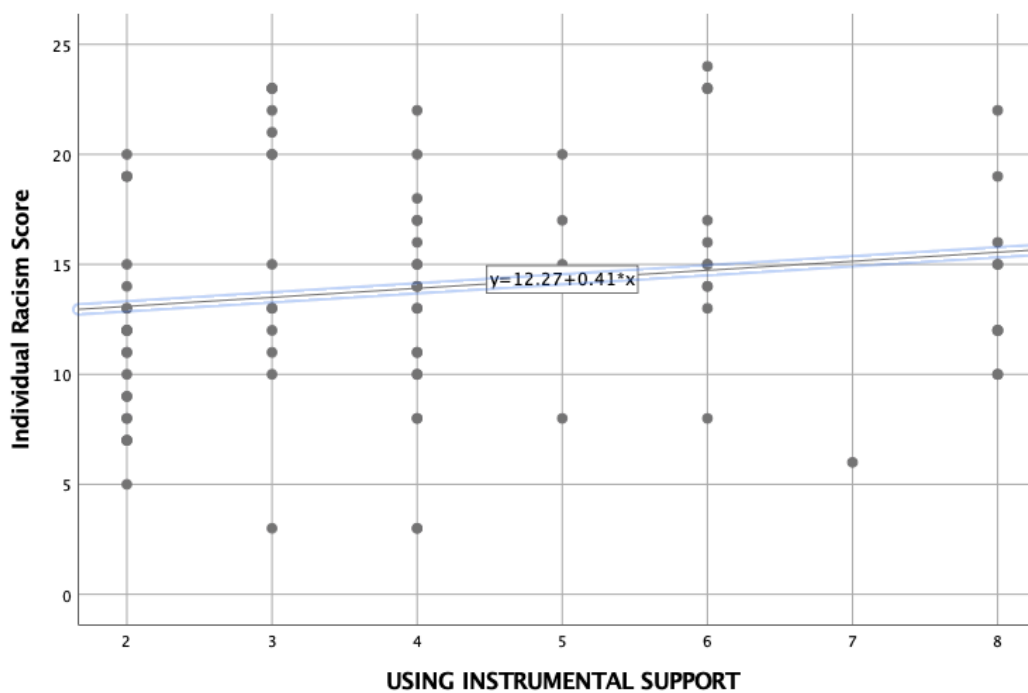
Substance Use



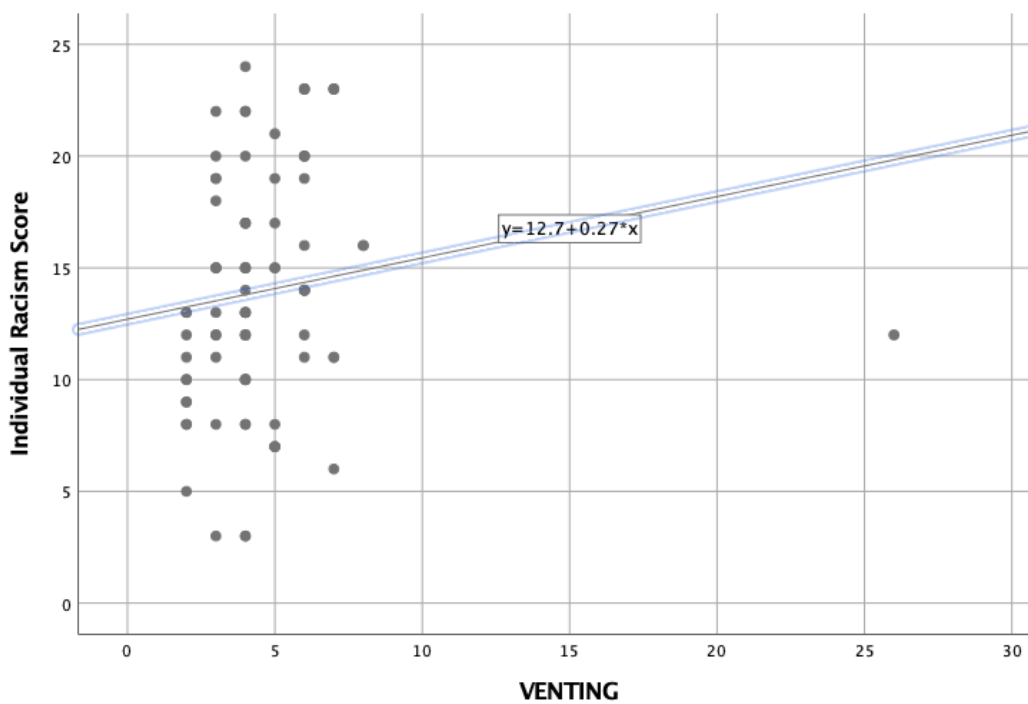
Using Emotional Support



## Using Instrumental Support

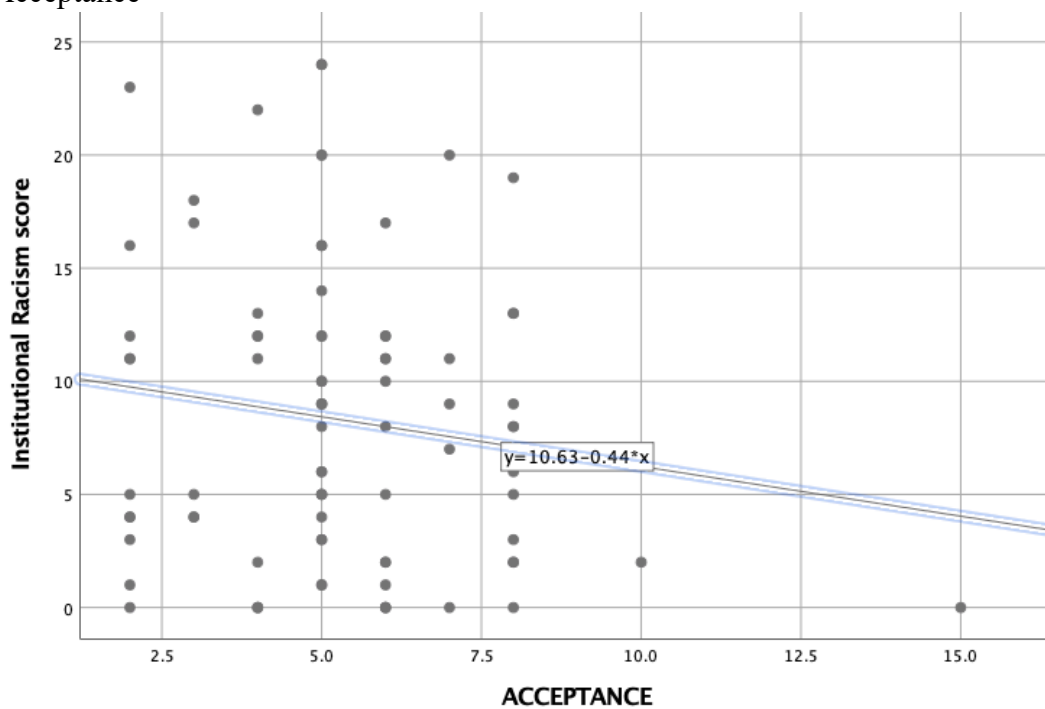


## Venting

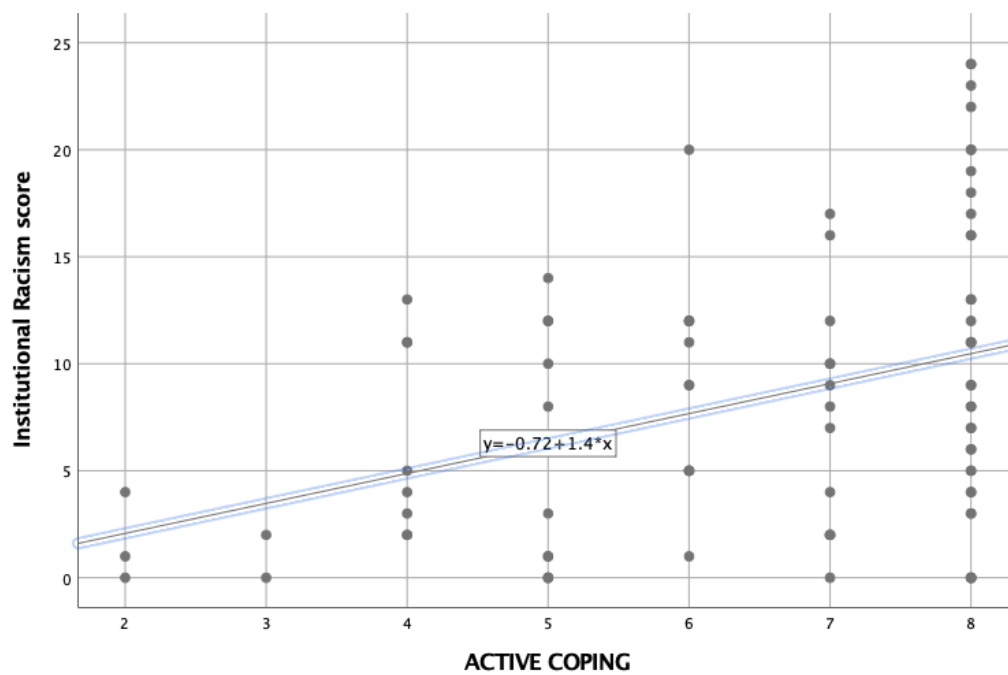


### Institutional Racism

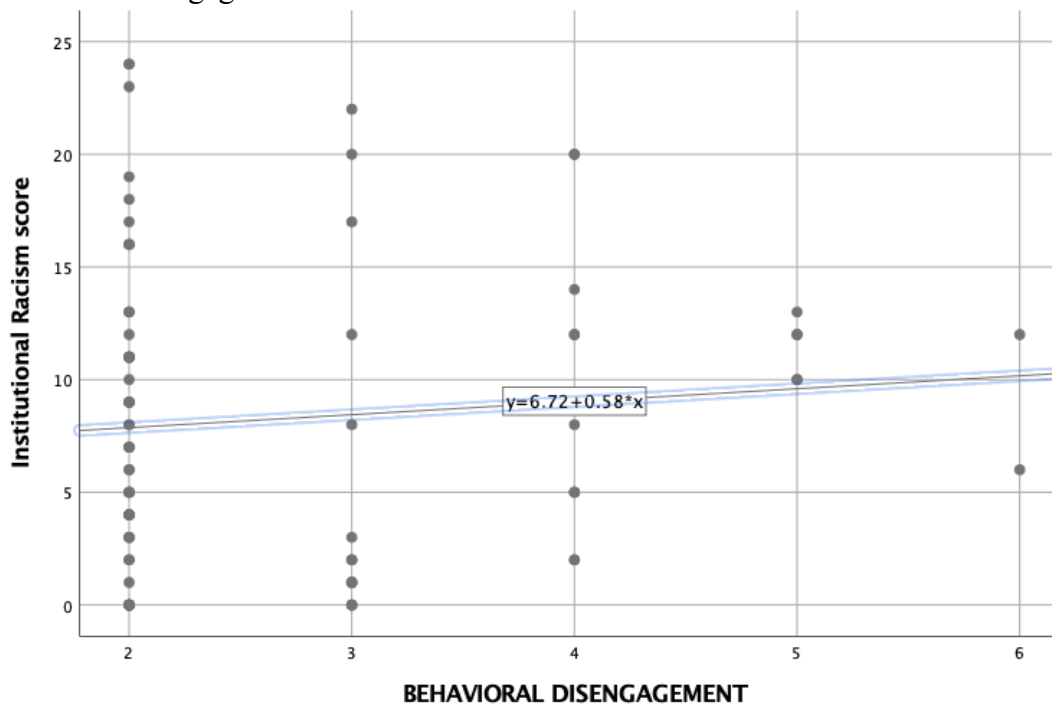
#### Acceptance



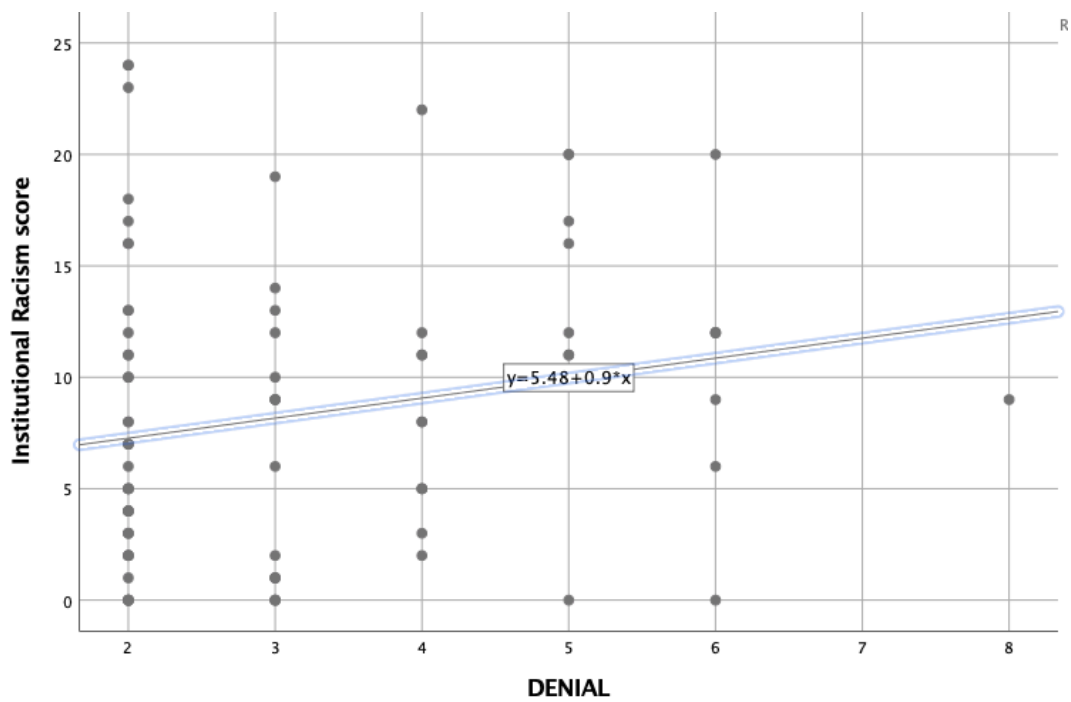
#### Active Coping



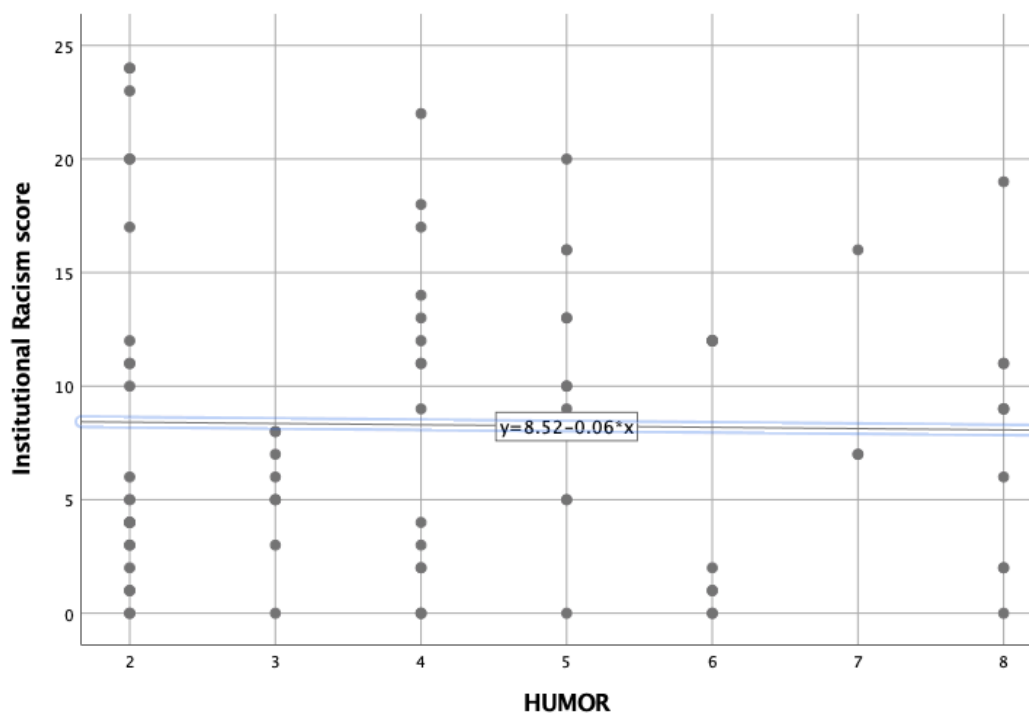
Behavior Disengagement



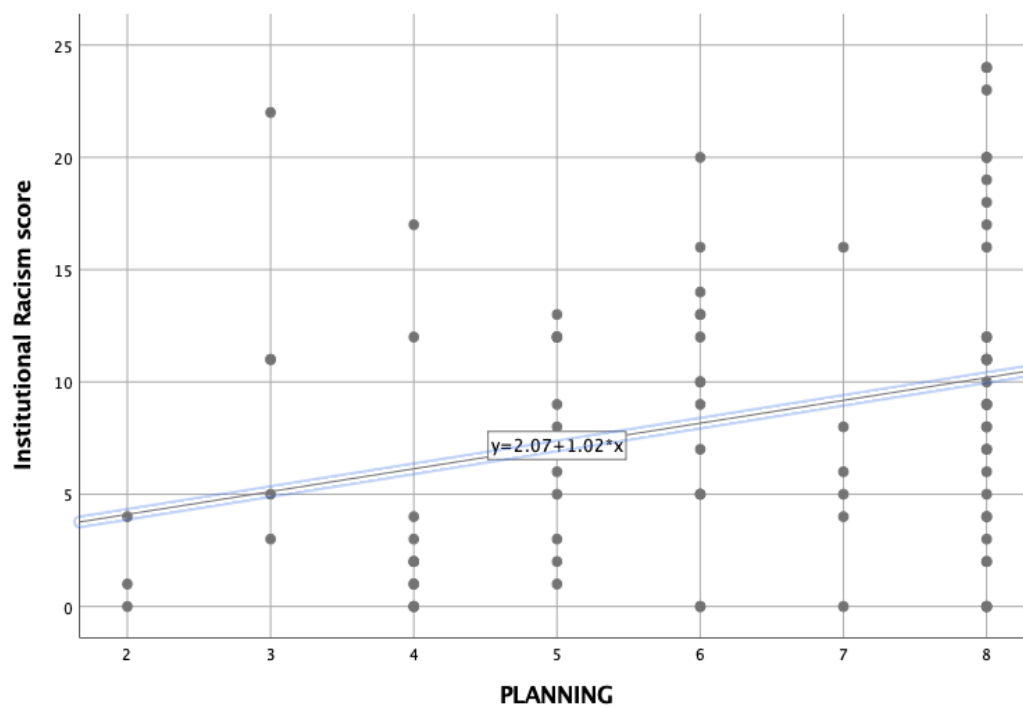
Denial



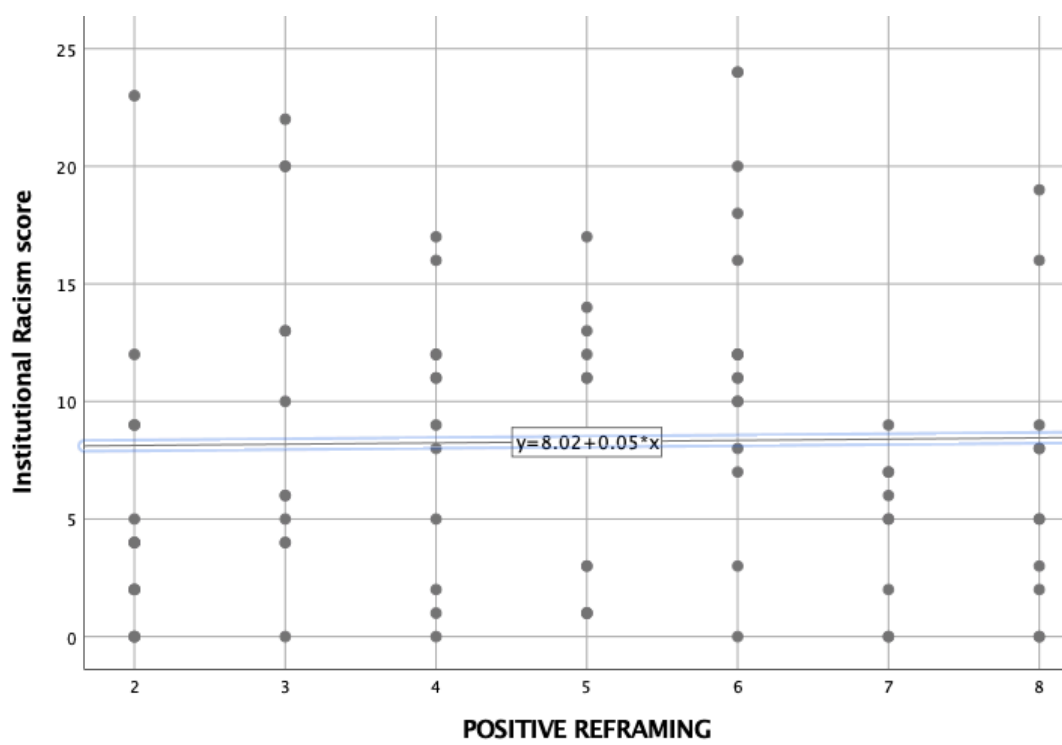
## Humor



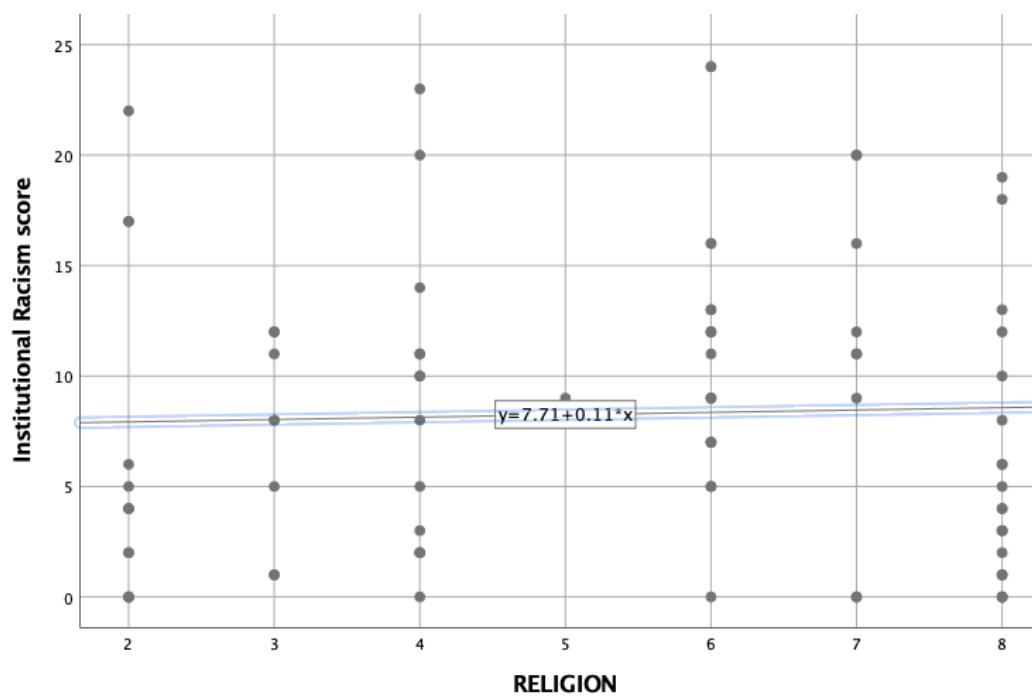
## Planning



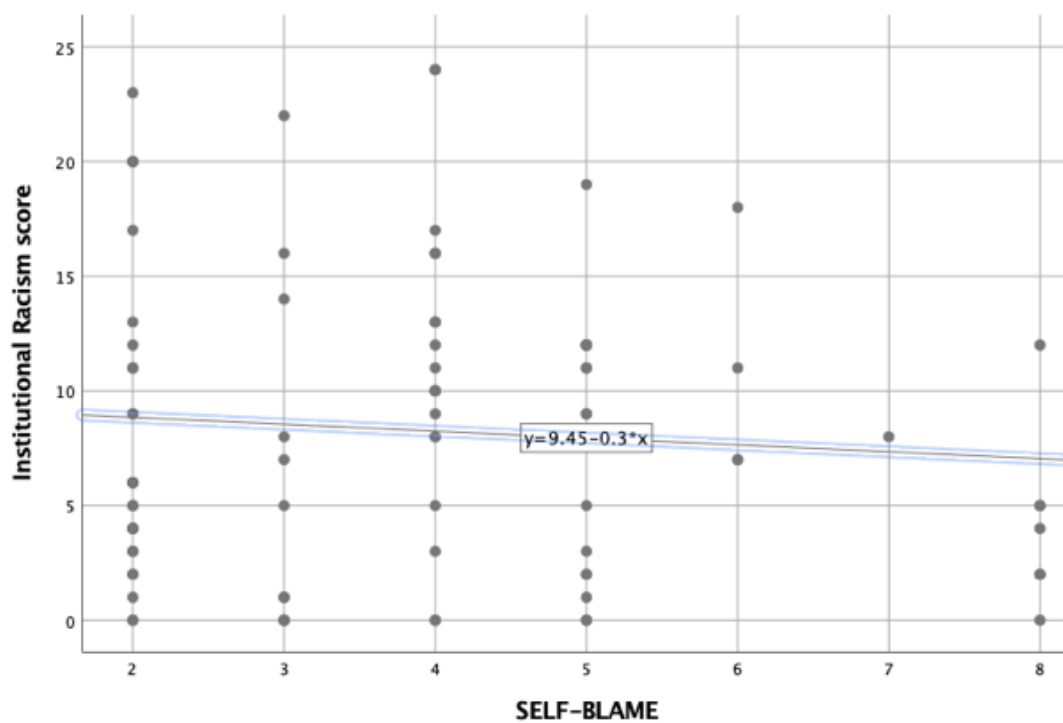
## Positive Reframing



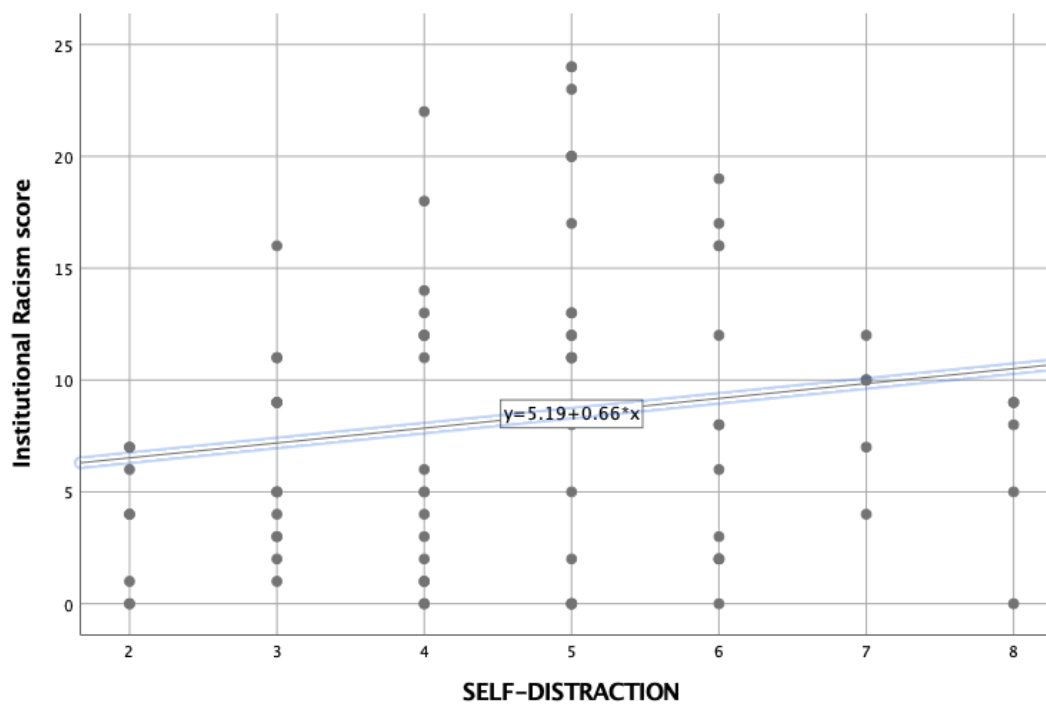
## Religion



## Self-Blame

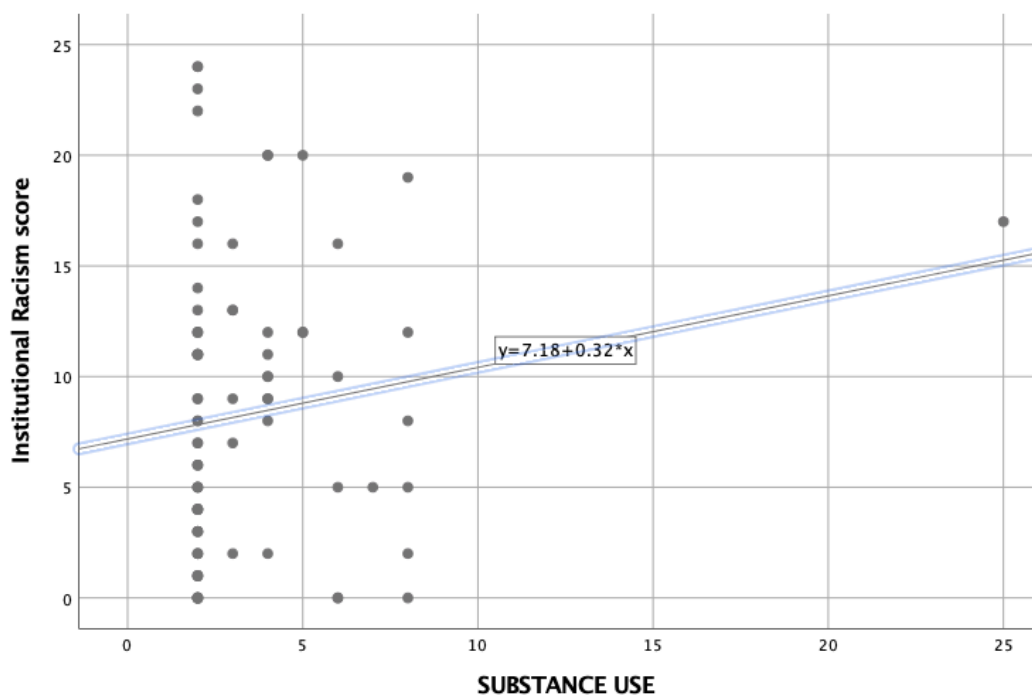


## Self-Distracton

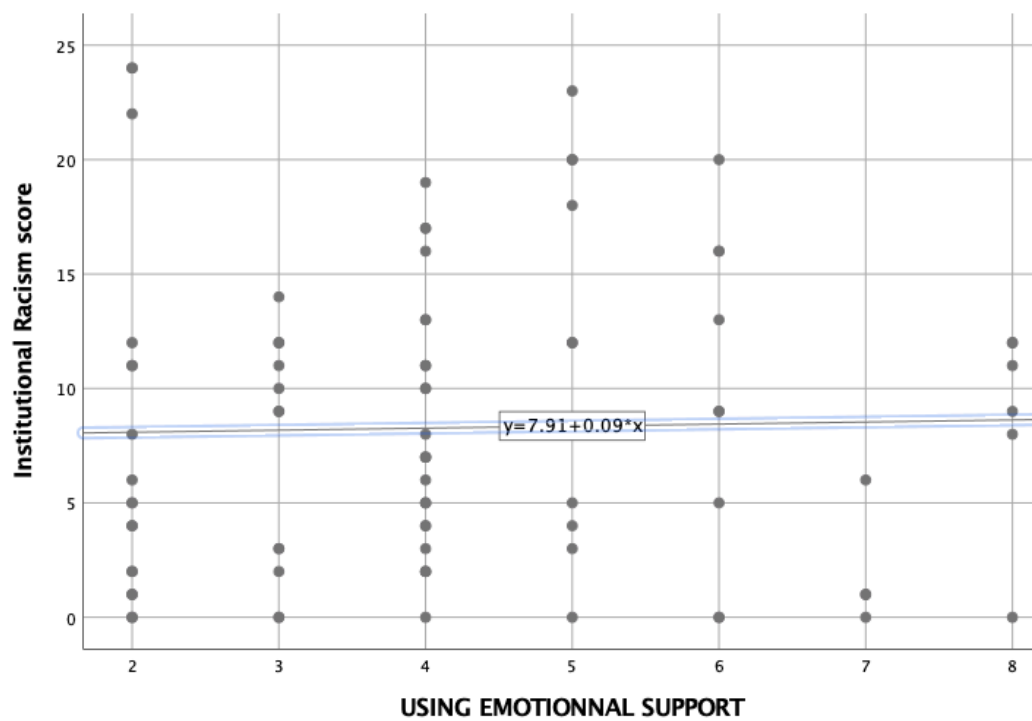




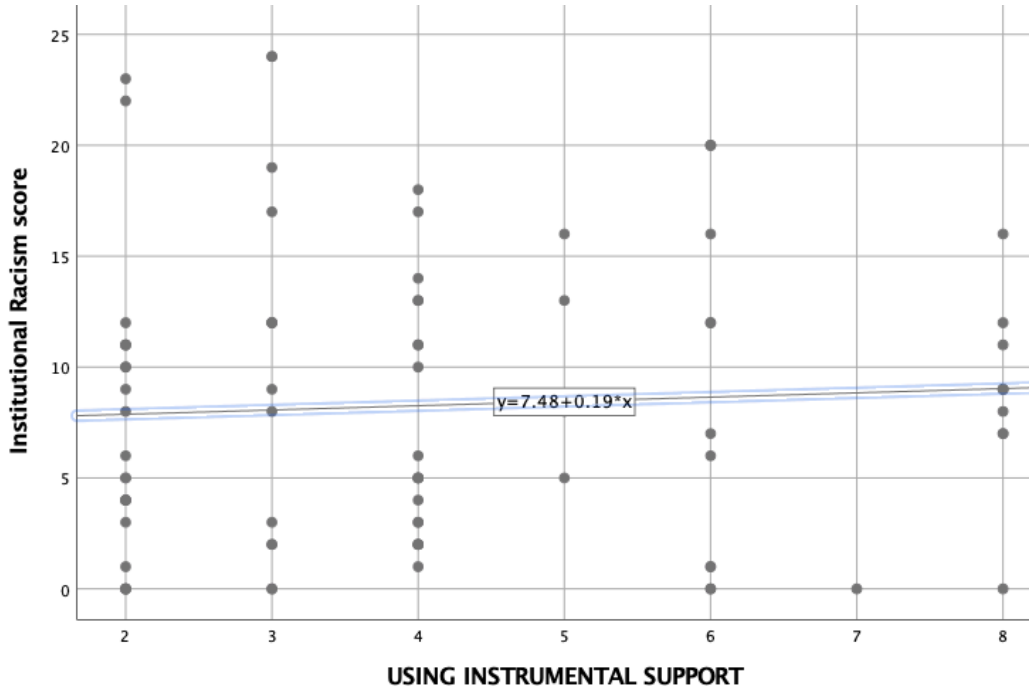
## Substance Use



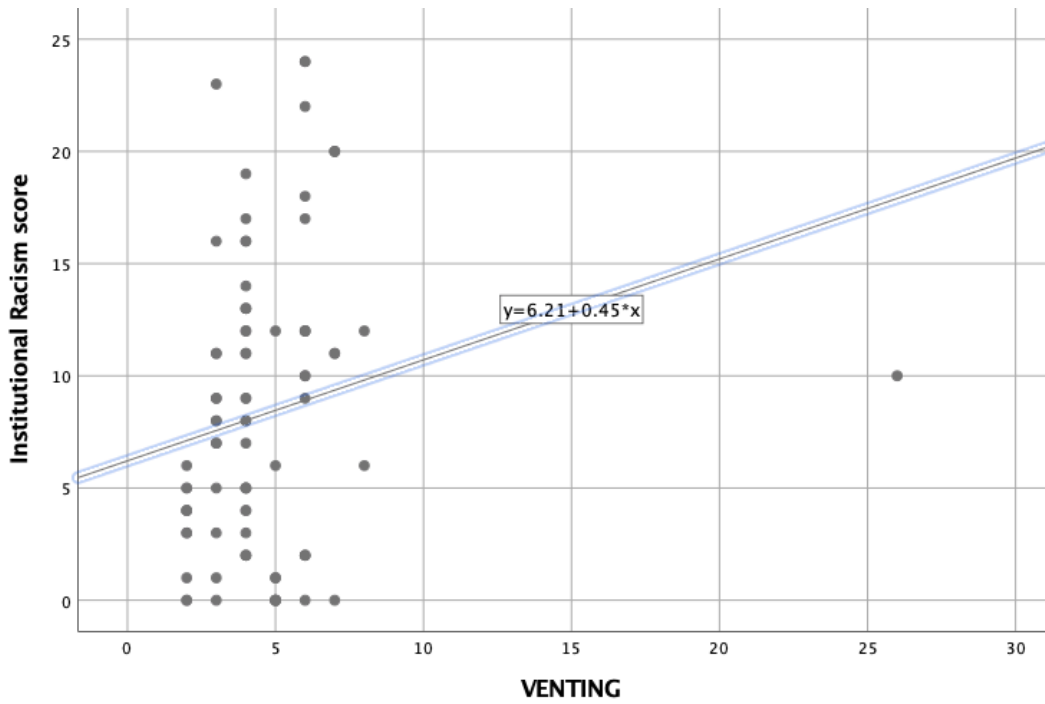
## Using Emotional Support



Using Instrumental Support



Venting



## Appendix G: Racism Scale Tables

Table G1

*Cultural Racism Subscale*

Scores	Frequency	Percent
13	1	1.2
15	1	1.2
16	2	2.4
17	4	4.7
18	1	1.2
20	1	1.2
21	6	7.1
22	3	3.5
23	4	4.7
24	6	7.1
25	6	7.1
26	10	11.8
27	4	4.7
28	3	3.5
29	2	2.4
30	4	4.7
31	6	7.1
32	2	2.4
33	6	7.1
34	2	2.4
35	10	11.8
36	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0

Table G2

*Institutional Racism Subscale*

Scores	Frequency	Percent
0	10	11.8
1	4	4.7
2	6	7.1
3	4	4.7
4	5	5.9
5	7	8.2
6	3	3.5
7	3	3.5
8	4	4.7
9	5	5.9
10	3	3.5
11	6	7.1
12	7	8.2
13	3	3.5
14	1	1.2
16	3	3.5
17	2	2.4
18	1	1.2
19	1	1.2
20	3	3.5
22	1	1.2
23	1	1.2
24	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0

Table G3

*Individual Racism Subscale*

Scores	Frequency	Percent
3	3	3.5
5	1	1.2
6	1	1.2
7	3	3.5
8	6	7.1
9	2	2.4
10	6	7.1
11	5	5.9
12	8	9.4
13	7	8.2
14	6	7.1
15	9	10.6
16	3	3.5
17	4	4.7
18	1	1.2
19	4	4.7
20	5	5.9
21	1	1.2
22	3	3.5
23	6	7.1
24	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0

Table G4

*Global Racism Scale*

Scores	Frequency	Percent
19	1	1.2
20	1	1.2
25	3	3.5
27	2	2.4
29	1	1.2
30	4	4.7
33	2	2.4
34	2	2.4
36	1	1.2
38	5	5.9
41	4	4.7
43	1	1.2
44	6	7.1
45	2	2.4
46	3	3.5
47	5	5.9
48	5	5.9
49	3	3.5
51	2	2.4
52	1	1.2
53	1	1.2
54	1	1.2
55	4	4.7
56	5	5.9
57	1	1.2
60	2	2.4
61	3	3.5
69	2	2.4
70	1	1.2
71	2	2.4
74	1	1.2
75	1	1.2
76	2	2.4
77	1	1.2
78	2	2.4
82	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0

## Appendix H: Additional Tables

Table H1

*Conformity/Pre-Encounter Subscale*

Score	Frequency	Percent
9	6	7.1
10	6	7.1
11	5	5.9
12	11	12.9
13	7	8.2
14	10	11.8
15	8	9.4
16	1	1.2
17	5	5.9
18	7	8.2
19	5	5.9
20	3	3.5
21	1	1.2
22	2	2.4
23	3	3.5
25	1	1.2
28	1	1.2
30	1	1.2
35	1	1.2
41	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0

Table H2

*Dissonance Subscale*

Score	Frequency	Percent
9	1	1.2
10	2	2.4
11	3	3.5
12	5	5.9
13	10	11.8
14	15	17.6
15	11	12.9
16	11	12.9
17	12	14.1
18	6	7.1
19	1	1.2
20	2	2.4
21	3	3.5
22	1	1.2
23	1	1.2
24	1	1.2
Total	85	100.0



Table H3

*Resistance Subscale*

	Frequency	Percent
11	2	2.4
14	2	2.4
15	1	1.2
16	2	2.4
17	2	2.4
18	6	7.1
19	9	10.6
20	7	8.2
21	7	8.2
22	5	5.9
23	11	12.9
24	10	11.8
25	8	9.4
26	6	7.1
27	2	2.4
28	1	1.2
30	2	2.4
31	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0

Table H4

*Immersion-Emersion Subscale*

	Frequency	Percent
7	1	1.2
8	1	1.2
9	6	7.1
10	6	7.1
11	9	10.6
12	12	14.1
13	11	12.9
14	17	20.0
15	3	3.5
16	7	8.2
17	5	5.0
18	2	2.4
19	2	2.4
21	1	1.2
22	2	2.4
Total	85	100.0

Table H5

*Internalization Subscale*

	Frequency	Percent
14	1	1.2
27	2	2.4
35	1	1.2
37	1	1.2
38	4	4.7
39	2	2.4
40	3	3.5
41	9	10.6
42	6	7.1
43	12	14.1
44	6	7.1
45	14	16.5
46	7	8.2
47	11	12.9
48	2	2.4
49	1	1.2
50	3	3.5
Total	85	100.0