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CULTURAL ASSETS AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION: A PERSON-BASED

EXPLORATION OF CULTURALLY RELEVANT COPING WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN

MALE ADOLESCENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

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ABSTRACT

African-American youth from economically-disadvantaged, urban families and
communities are disproportionately exposed to stressful life conditions, including racial
discrimination, placing them at increased risk for mental health problems (Gonzales & Kim,
1997; Grant et al., 2000). Though exposure to racial discrimination can span a lifetime,
examining youths' encounters with discrimination during adolescence allows us to better
understand how they affect development during a critical period in which they are developing
racial/ethnic identity and increasing their use of reasoning. Coping research with African
American youth has found evidence for racial discrimination predicting use of culturally-relevant
coping strategies (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2009) and suggests that low-income African
American youths may draw upon other unique and culturally-relevant coping strategies that are
not captured on existing measures of universal coping strategies. Some of these coping
strategies are reflected in a 52-item measure called the Youth Africultural Coping System
Inventory (Y-ACSI; Gaylord-Harden & Utsey, 2007) including four afrocentrically-derived
factors: Emotional Debriefing, Spiritually-Centered Coping, Maintaining Harmony, and
Communalistic/Collectivistic Coping.

Given the unique coping patterns of African-American boys, the current study attempted
to validate the Y-ACSI in a sample of African American adolescent males using confirmatory
factor analysis, determined whether racial discrimination predicts the use of culturally relevant
coping strategies beyond that of mainstream coping, identified groups of youth based on their

coping patterns and racial discrimination experiences and examined patterns of psychosocial functioning among latent coping groups.

The current study was comprised of 660 African American male adolescents between the ages of 14-18 (M_{age} = 15.39 SD = 1.70, 47.7% 9th graders) recruited from three all-boys, public, charter schools in low-income Chicago neighborhoods as part of a larger, longitudinal study examining determinants of academic and socio-emotional outcomes. A first-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) testing the four-factor structure of the Y-ACSI yielded inadequate fit for the sample; therefore, four second-order CFAs were run for each of the four factors, all achieving adequate fit. Additionally, multiple regression analyses revealed that racial discrimination only predicted levels of emotional debriefing coping (β = -0.93, p = .026). Latent Class Analysis identified a four-class solution based on culturally-relevant coping strategy use and exposure to racial discrimination, yielding the following groups: mixed coping, low discrimination group (n = 45); moderate coping, high discrimination group (n = 196); high coping, low discrimination group (n = 117); and high coping, high discrimination group (n = 244). Finally, comparisons among the four LCA groups in regard to psychosocial variables revealed the influence of racial discrimination on school belonging and of culturally relevant coping strategy use on social skills.

Overall, the study findings demonstrate that African American male adolescents indeed culturally-relevant coping strategies at varying levels and presents much-needed insight into the complex relationship between culturally-relevant coping and racial discrimination within this population.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

African-American youth from economically disadvantaged, urban families and communities are disproportionately exposed to stressful life conditions, placing them at increased risk for mental health problems (Gonzales & Kim, 1997; Grant et al., 2000). For some of these youth, however, both individual and cultural-level factors appear to protect them from the negative conditions. In the United States, racial discrimination is an especially salient stressor for the black community. Young African American males are uniquely affected at the intersection of race, gender, and age.

Throughout the history of the United States, issues of race and of racial discrimination have been at the forefront of societal discourse. Colonization, slavery, Jim Crow laws, lynching, and red-lining are some of the overt ways in which African Americans have been discriminated against in this country, these blatant actions fostering the current zeitgeist of more systemic, subtle, and culturally normative racism. Contemporary issues such as policy brutality and bias, continued systemic oppression in judicial and education structures, and interpersonal racial discrimination still continue to heavily affect African American males. Reports of racial discrimination among African American adolescents vary; with studies indicating that between 20-87% report these experiences (Gee & Walsemann, 2009; Seaton, Caldwell, Sellers, & Jackson, 2008). The literature is unclear about if African American males or females report

higher rates overall, but these is substantial evidence that in school settings, African American males are significantly disadvantaged by teachers and other authority figures (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008). During adolescence, youth are exploring their self-identities and developing their self-regulatory abilities. Exposure to racial discrimination can affect both processes, and in fact is linked to numerous negative psychosocial outcomes including self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and school engagement (Benner & Graham, 2013; Smith & Fincham, 2015; Smalls, White, Chavous, & Sellers, 2007).

In literature examining the racial discrimination as a stressor, culturally-relevant coping strategies have been suggested as a specific asset that protects African American youth from discrimination's deleterious effects. African Americans may be more likely to use culturally-relevant strategies when faced with these particular stressors, and the use of these strategies may be tied to more positive outcomes (García Coll, Ackerman, & Cicchetti, 2000; Noh & Kaspar, 2003; Utsey et al., 2000). The current research body is limited by its focus on deficits associated with racial discrimination, rather than considering which specific cultural factors are indicative of healthy adjustment to stressors (Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012). Additionally, there is a lack of understand about the unique coping behaviors of African American males, especially using a person-based approach. The variable-focused literature has been useful in identifying potential moderators for the effects of racial discrimination but fails to provide a clear picture of within-group variability of exposure, coping use patterns, and associated outcomes for African American boys.

Given the limitations of the literature to date on culturally relevant coping and its utility for African American male adolescents, the purpose of the current study is a focused examination of African American boys' use of culturally relevant coping and experiences with

racial discrimination. More specifically, the study will investigate the factor structure of a culturally relevant coping inventory within this population, determine the relationship between racial discrimination and culturally relevant coping use, and create groups of participants based on their experiences with racial discrimination and use of coping strategies and examine each group's unique profile on a variety of psychosocial indicators. The following sections of the current study will review the relevant literature pertinent to this study: a) racism related stress and racial discrimination, b) cultural assets framework for culturally relevant coping, c) issues with use of mainstream coping strategies, d) the need for culturally relevant coping strategies, and e) gender, racial discrimination, and coping.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Racism Related Stress and Racial Discrimination

Conceptualization of racism-related stress. Despite recent assertions of a post-racial

society, racism continues to pervade the customs, laws, and traditions of American society, with

racial oppression having a significant impact on African Americans (Carter, 2007). Though the

constructs of racism and discrimination are sometimes used interchangeably, there is a clear

distinction between the two. Racism is conceptualized as a deeply rooted historical system of

dominance, power, and privilege based on racial group membership; it is rooted in the

oppression of a marginalized racial group that has been identified as inferior by the dominant

group (Harrell, 2000). Racial discrimination is defined as negative or unfair acts or behaviors

directed toward a particular group on the basis of their race (Harrell, 2000; Scott & House,

2005). Thus, the historical system of oppression and injustice inherent in racism creates the

context for and maintains the manifestation of discrimination. Racism-related stress is defined

as, "the race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that

emerge from the dynamics of racism, and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual

and collective resources or threaten well-being," (Harrell, 2000, pp. 44). According to a recent

conceptualization of racism-related stress, there are six ways in which this stress may be

experienced that include experiences of discrimination: racism-related life events, vicarious

racism experiences, daily racism microstressors, chronic-contextual stress, collective experiences, and transgenerational transmission (Harrell, 2000).

Racism-related life events refer to direct, and time-limited life experiences that may have lasting effects. Examples of this type of stressor include housing, workplace, or classroom discrimination and harassment by police. Vicarious racism experiences may happen due to hearing about the above stressors happening to friends and family members, and even strangers when the event is particularly salient (e.g., the 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin). These experiences, which may be recollected to or observed by individuals, can have a profound effect on psychological well-being, similar to events experienced first-hand. Next, daily racism microstressors, also known as microaggressions, consist of very frequently occurring instances during interracial encounters that are subtle and unconsciously communicate negative attitudes or beliefs to people of color about their racial identity or heritage (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). Being followed in a store is an example of a microaggression that conveys that a [black] person is inherently dangerous or will engage in criminal activity. Likewise, highlighting how surprisingly "articulate" or "polite" one is seems to imply that such behavior is contrary to that which is expected of Blacks/African Americans. These behaviors, beliefs, and actions may be unintentional, but can be distressing given the energy that must be expended to determine their ambiguous nature, as well as the cumulative effect of these everyday stressors on well-being (Harrell, 2000; Sue et al., 2008). Additionally, others' attempts to minimize, justify, or re-interpret these microaggressions invalidate the person's lived experience and further compounds the emotional toll.

The three remaining racism-related stressors, as categorized by Harrell, better help to illuminate the chronic nature and historical contribution of the former three. Chronic-contextual

stressors are macro-level stressors such as socio-economic factors, societal norms, and political norms that may be assumed to be unrelated to race, but upon deeper analysis are actually intricately connected. These stressors may be manifested in daily life through community and neighborhood issues affecting black communities such as the presence of food deserts, poor funding for health institutions in urban settings, or dated learning materials in the classroom. Collective experiences of racism consist of observing and feeling sociopolitical, economic, and cultural iterations of racism that affect one's racial or ethnic group. These experiences do not have to be personal, and so differ from vicarious and chronic-contextual stress in that they occur by observing racism manifest in the experience of others who share one's racial identity. Examples could be seeing a lack of representation of people of color in politics, leadership roles, and media and continued misrepresentation of one's group to the general public (e.g. racist/stereotypical caricatures or tropes such as "angry black women" or minstrel characters). Finally, transgenerational transmission is somewhat of a summation of the previously mentioned stressors, passed down through generations. Experiences of historical oppression are passed down through generations through stories, writings, etc., and are a part of the socialization of the next generation (Harrell, 2000). Not only are these experiences passed down through discussion in families and communities, but the long-term traumatic effects of these experiences are also passed along on an epigenetic level, further compounding the effects of these stressors (Yehuda et al., 2015).

The first three racism-related stressors (racism-related life events, microaggressions, and vicarious experiences) are generally regarded as interpersonal in nature, whereas the latter three racism-related stressors (transgenerational transmission, chronic-contextual stress, and collective experiences) are system-level stressors. Interpersonal racism-related stressors are perpetuated by

individuals and may be subtle (e.g. assuming a black person is a store clerk or domestic worker) or blatant (e.g. refusing service to a person based on his/her race; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Beach, 2001), whereas systemic racism exists on a structural level within social and political institutions and societal norms (e.g. Eurocentric norms and values). For African Americans, acts of discrimination can be experienced at both the interpersonal level or at the systemic level.

For African American adults, both interpersonal and systemic acts of discrimination have been documented to affect negatively psychological well-being and adjustment. Indeed, connections have been made between racial discrimination and depressive symptoms, conduct problems, and feelings of distress with adults and adolescents alike (Brody et al., 2006; Brondolo, Brady van Helen, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009). However, most research on racial discrimination during adolescence focuses on discrimination at the interpersonal level, as these acts are more readily identifiable stressors for youths (Brondolo et al., 2009). Though adolescents may be able to recognize some of the systemic level stressors, these are often not obvious/salient for youth or they are not able to name them for themselves, making them difficult to measure. In addition, because systemic racism-related stressors do not usually manifest at the individual-level, they may be better assessed using methods other than self-report. For example, youths' perceptions of systemic level stressors are affected by their social context, namely neighborhood diversity (Seaton & Yip, 2008), which is may not be accurately measured using self-report data. Given these findings, the current study will assess racial discrimination experiences that occur on an interpersonal personal level, namely racism-related life events, vicarious racism experiences, and daily microaggressions.

Racial discrimination and African American youth. Exposure to racial discrimination can happen for African Americans at any age from childhood to adulthood. Indeed, literature

demonstrates that children as young as ten years of age report interpersonal experiences of

discrimination (Simons, Murry, McLoyd, & Lin, 2002). Though it is certain that these

experiences span a lifetime, examining youths' encounters with discrimination during

adolescence allows us to better understand how they affect development during a critical period.

In adolescence, youth both increase and refine their use of reasoning skills and begin

development of racial/ethnic identity. The combination of both processes occurring in this time

period could make racist experiences more salient at this time, which has implications for health

outcomes (Seaton et al., 2008).

Various studies investigating racial discrimination cross-sectionally and longitudinally

have reported frequency in racism-related experiences for youth. Data collected with youth ages

16-21 indicated that approximately one-fifth of Black adolescents reported experiencing racial

discrimination, specifically when related to seeking employment (Gee & Walsemann, 2009).

Other reports indicate that 87% of African American adolescents reported at least one racist

encounter in the last year (Seaton et al, 2008), with adolescents experiencing an average of 6.4

racist encounters over a lifetime (Seaton & Yip, 2008).

African American male experiences with racial discrimination. When discussing

racial discrimination in the African American community, one must be acutely mindful of the

intersection between race and gender. Reports vary on if African American boys report greater

discrimination than girls. However, some reports indicate that boys perceive more racial

discrimination overall (Seaton et al., 2008; Seaton et al., 2010), more discrimination by peers

(Benner & Graham, 2013; Chavous et al., 2008), and within the classroom (Chavous et al.,

2008). Indeed, the historical treatment and current perception of African American males

renders them uniquely prone to certain iterations of racial discrimination. Black men have been

assigned a social narrative designed to justify and perpetuate their oppression in the United States. Characteristics such as deviance, impulsivity, and violent are misattributed to African American males (Gaylord-Harden, Pierre, Clark, Tolan & Barbarin, in press). These characterizations derived from European pseudo-scientific notions that asserted the inferiority of blacks and were used to continue the practice of slavery, justify segregation, support lynching of black men, and convince the public of their threat. This ideology has strongly influenced not only laws and policies within the United States, but also social norms, and therefore the stereotype of African American boys and men as "deviant others" (Brown & Johnson, 2014). These negative social constructions form the basis of implicit, and often times explicit, biases.

For African American boys, this can manifest as being treated often as adults and/or expected to behave as such by authority figures, being viewed as less innocent when compared to other racial-gender groups, automatically being perceived as suspicious, and being disadvantaged academically or punished more harshly by teachers, often as a result of these biases (Brown & Johnson, 2014; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000; Wallace Jr., Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). For example, one study demonstrated that when making comparisons within age groups, black children were consistently perceived as less innocent than white children and children with their race unspecified (Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014).   Further, Black children were viewed as more culpable for crimes than Latino and white children, were estimated to be older, and were more readily associated with dehumanizing stimuli (i.e. likened to animals such as apes and great cats) using an implicit association task (IAT). A similar pattern emerged when the study was replicated using a sample of police officers and was visible in a real-life context where officers' dehumanizing IAT scores were directly related to their use of force with Black children (Goff et al., 2014). Stereotypes and treatment of African American

males are likely to affect their perceptions of racial discrimination directed toward them. African American adolescents cited that they are perceived as dangerous or unintelligent and that these perceptions were related to discrimination experience in school disciplinary action, with store personnel, and with law enforcement (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000).

Cultural assets framework for racial discrimination. The experience of racial discrimination during adolescence has been linked to numerous psychosocial difficulties. Episodic experiences of racial discrimination with peers and school personnel are significantly linked to later psychological maladjustment (i.e., social anxiety, loneliness, symptoms of depression, and self-worth) and poor academic performance, respectively (Benner & Graham, 2013). In fact, racial discrimination is positively associated with both anxiety and depression, even after accounting for the influence of general stressors (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2009).

Enduring racial discrimination from peers or school personnel can also have a negative impact on academic outcomes, including students' sense of belonging at the school, and African American males appear to be more likely to have these experiences (Smith & Fincham, 2015). Racial discrimination was found to be inversely related to academic engagement outcomes, and positively predicted an oppositional academic identity (e.g. crafting an "anti-school" or "anti-academic" identity around peers; Smalls, White, Chavous, & Sellers, 2007). A longitudinal study examining racial discrimination and psychosocial outcomes from late childhood through adolescence found that increases in discrimination were related to increases in conduct problems. Notably, this association was stronger for boys than for girls (Brody et al., 2006). Another longitudinal study using African American boys supported the findings between racial discrimination and aggressive behavior, establishing that it was mediated by anger and a hostile

view of relationships (Simons et al., 2006). It is evident that there is strong support for the deleterious effects of racial discrimination on African American youth in the existing literature.

Though the disproportionate amount of racial discrimination experienced by African American boys heightens their risk for negative psychosocial outcomes, certain cultural factors may contribute to their ability to maintain positive trajectories. Historically, deficit-based models have informed understanding of psychosocial development in African American youth (García Coll et al., 1996; McLoyd & Randolph, 1985; Tucker & Herman, 2002). Deficit-based models emphasize the problems of African American youth, rather than focusing on normative development and cultural strengths (García Coll, Ackerman, & Cicchetti, 2000; McLoyd, 1990; Molock, Puri, Matlin & Barksdale, 2006). In addition, these models highlight an increased likelihood for maladaptive functioning as a result of exposure to stressors. In contrast, cultural assets models posit that adaptive functioning in response to stress is more common than previously thought for African American youth, and that a range of factors that promote and maintain well-being are embedded in the families and communities that socialize these youth. Cultural assets frameworks propose that culturally-relevant coping is one particular strength that supports positive youth development in the face of racism-related stressors (Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012). Thus, the current study focuses on the role of coping as a cultural asset for African American male adolescents exposed to racial discrimination.

Coping as a Cultural Asset for African American Male Adolescents

As coping strategies are characterized as cognitive or behavioral efforts to deal with stress, it follows that the coping literature often examines the association between coping and stressors. The literature further examines this relationship by adding mental health outcomes and determining how use of coping strategies may change the relationship between stress and

outcomes. The following sections provide an overview of coping strategies by defining coping strategies, conceptualizing coping in childhood and adolescence, and reviewing the current literature on both mainstream and culturally relevant coping strategies.

Defining coping strategies. The concept of coping has undergone numerous changes in definition and conceptualization over the past thirty years as the research body has grown (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen & Wadsworth, 2001). Originally derived from Sigmund Freud's ego psychology, coping is now studied empirically and grouped by common cognitive and behavioral strategies (Compas, 1987; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific internal and/or external demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person" (pg. 141). Early mainstream coping models delineated two categories of coping strategies: problem-focused and emotion-focused coping (Compas, 1987; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping includes active, goal-directed, and external methods of addressing a stressor, while emotion-focused coping generally employs internal methods of emotion regulation, aimed at diminishing the stress response.

Coping in childhood and adolescence. While Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) definition and model of coping is one of the most widely-accepted conceptualizations of coping and is effective for measuring coping in adults, the model neglects a developmental perspective of the stress and coping process (Compas, 1987; Compas et al., 2001). In fact, research has shown that the problem-focused/emotion-focused model does not adequately capture the coping strategies used by children and adolescents (Ayers et al., 1991). When examined against competing models in a group of early adolescents, results indicated that the two-factor problem vs. emotion-focused model was a poor fit. Instead, a hypothesized four-factor model provided a better fit to

the data and was invariant across age and gender (Ayers et al., 1996). This finding, along with others, suggests that narrowband dimensions of coping may be more inclusive of the range of thoughts and behaviors that youths draw upon to cope than broadband domains of coping derived from research on adult coping (Ayers et al., 1996; Compas et al., 2001). One example of narrowband domains of coping is the four-factor model of coping identified by Ayers and colleagues (1996). Distraction strategies include efforts to avoid stressful stimuli by using other activities or moderate physical exertion. Support seeking strategies encompass both problem-focused and emotion-focused actions that involve seeking assistance, advice, or information from others. Direct problem-solving action, cognitive decision-making, cognitive restructuring, and seeking understanding characterize the active coping factor. The fourth factor, avoidant coping, includes efforts that attempt to stay away from stressful stimuli (behavioral) or prevent thinking about the stressor (Ayers et al., 1996; Compas et al., 2001).

To ameliorate problems with applying adult models of coping to youth coping, Compas et al. (2001) created a developmentally appropriate definition of coping that could apply to children and adolescents: "conscious, volitional efforts to regulate emotion, cognition, behavior, physiology, and the environment in response to stressful events or circumstances" (p. 89). Within Compas et al.'s new definition of coping, children's coping strategies are better regarded as malleable and able to develop and change over time, rather than a permanent disposition or trait. More generally, child and adolescent coping is the development of competence in addressing adverse situations, or of dysfunction (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011).

For adolescents especially, studying the use and outcomes of coping strategies is important. Adolescence is a period during which many physical, cognitive, and environmental changes take place, often simultaneously (Ebata & Moos, 1991). Many of these changes, events

such as puberty, parental divorce, and school transitions, can be stressful for youth to experience. Adolescents of color, in particular, are disproportionately exposed to both acute and chronic life stressors (Ebata & Moos, 1991; Latkin & Curry, 2003; Umberson, Williams, Thomas, Liu, & Thomeer, 2014). Black males, in particular, report greater levels of childhood adversity than other racial and gender groups (Umberson et al., 2014). Given that African American boys will encounter general adolescent stressors, as well as those uniquely stemming from the intersection of race and gender, it is of importance to identify which coping strategies they employ when faced with discrimination.

In taking on a developmental perspective with coping research with youth, research demonstrates that strategies on which adolescents draw upon and how frequently they use these strategies change as a function of their cognitive abilities and social development (Compas et al., 2001; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011). Furthermore, the coping strategies used may also vary according to the type of stressor youths face across age group (Fields & Prinz, 1997; Griffith, Dubow, & Ippolito, 2000). While active strategies seemed to increase as children aged, the results concerning distraction strategies were mixed. Younger adolescents tended to use distraction strategies that were behavioral in nature and began using more cognitive strategies as they aged (Fields & Prinz, 1997).

In other studies, examining coping strategy use across grade levels, results indicated that eighth graders (aged 12-13 years) used less avoidance strategies and a smaller variety of strategies than did sixth graders (aged 10-11 years; Brodzinsky, et al., 1992). Similarly, when comparing seventh, ninth, and twelfth graders on their coping responses to peer-related stressors, the older adolescents (e.g. ninth and twelfth graders) reported using more active or approach coping strategies than did the younger adolescents. Similar patterns were observed when

examining responses to family and school stressors among the three grade levels. When dealing with family stress, the older cohort (aged 17-18 years) reported no difference between use of avoidance coping and active/approach strategies. However, for the younger cohort (seventh and ninth graders), more avoidance strategies were used (Griffith, Dubow, & Ippolito, 2000). Furthermore, as grade level increased, so did the reported use of active/approach coping strategies, while employment of avoidance strategies remained the same (Griffith et al., 2000). When youth faced school-related stressors, it was the older adolescents who used more approach strategies than avoidance. Unlike for peer and family stressors where use of avoidance seemed to decrease as cohort age increased, ninth graders, the middle cohort, reported the highest use of avoidance with school stressors (Griffith et al., 2000). Also, during adolescence, youth begin to expand their social networks from only family members as peer relationships become more salient thus creating more avenues for social support (del Valle, Bravo, & López, 2010; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007).

Altogether, findings on the development of coping strategies reveal several patterns of change as youth move into and throughout adolescence. As youth age, their use of active/approach coping strategies, as well as cognitive (compared to behavioral) strategies increases while frequency of emotion-focused strategies decreases (Fields & Prinz, 1997). Although they generally decrease in terms of frequency, emotion-focused and avoidance strategies do not completely disappear. Rather, adolescents coping strategies evolve to become more refined and complex (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011). Furthermore, during adolescence, youth select which coping strategies to employ to best address specific stressors, as the ability to match coping strategies to stressors improves as a function of their cognitive abilities (Compas et al., 2001; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011).

Issues with mainstream coping strategies. In the child and adolescent coping literature, various coping strategies, including those discussed above, have been researched, generally without reference to cultural differences in coping. These coping strategies, referred to hereafter as mainstream coping strategies, are the most commonly utilized domains in research detailing volitional efforts to regulate stressors. Emotion-based versus problem-solving coping and approach versus avoidant coping are two frequently used broadband models of mainstream coping strategies. The domains of coping assessed in the four-factor model of coping discussed above (Ayers et al., 1996) are also examples of mainstream coping. While mainstream models are generally considered to be salient and useful for all populations, the suitability of these models for African American youth has shown mixed results. For African American youth in particular, use of the four-factor model has yielded varied results. In a study investigating coping strategies used by low-income, urban African American adolescents, researchers used the Children's Coping Strategies Checklist (CCSC) in a confirmatory factor analysis of the Ayer's four-factor model. Results found that the model was not replicated in the sample, and rather the data were better represented using a three-factor model. The revised three factor model omitted the physical release component of distraction coping and loaded the remaining distraction coping strategies under avoidant coping, thus producing three factors: avoidant, support-seeking, and active coping strategies (Gaylord-Harden, Gipson, Manace, & Grant, 2008). In other research attempting to replicate the four-factor model in low-income, African American youth, the same problem with the model was evident. Rather than active and avoidant coping strategies forming distinct factors, they shared some features (Gaylord-Harden, Cunningham, Holmbeck, & Grant, 2010).

These findings are consistent with other research attempting to use a mainstream model of coping with youth of color. Using these coping strategies was not effective in increasing perceived feelings of safety or reducing violence exposure for African American youth (Rasmussen, Aber, & Bhana, 2004). With another mainstream coping model, which was originally found to have twelve factors, a factor analysis in a sample of African American adolescents produced a seven-factor fit. The study further revealed that these youth are more likely than their Latino and white counterparts to be "complex copers," and utilize a wider variety of strategies, (Tolan, Gorman-Smith, Henry, Chung, & Hunt, 2002). Given the difficulty in replicating the factor structure of mainstream coping models with youth of color, it may be important to consider that these youths draw upon other unique and culturally-relevant coping strategies that are not captured on existing measures of mainstream coping strategies.

Indeed, the majority of coping research and the development of coping measures has been conducted primarily with white, middle-class samples with low representation of racial and ethnic minority children (Utsey, Brown, & Bolden, 2004; Compas et al., 2001). As noted above, when the factor structures of existing coping measures have been tested within samples of youth of color, researchers have frequently been unable to replicate the same structure (e.g., Gaylord-Harden et al., 2008; Tolan et al., 2002). This discrepancy could be due to the lack of representation in the original measure development and could indicate that some ethnic minority groups utilize coping strategies that are not represented within those measures. Both contextual and cultural factors such as community social norms and collectivist worldview, could account for these differences, and their inclusion may provide better insight into the understanding of coping strategies used by diverse youth (Noh & Kaspar, 2003; Beru, 2002). Additional research

on the utility and function of culturally-relevant strategies may help researchers to understand the breadth of strategies used by ethnic minority youth coping with stressors.

  Culturally-relevant coping strategies. Culturally-relevant coping strategies attempt to take into account cultural and contextual factors that may affect the manifestation and utilization of coping strategies. Culturally-relevant coping strategies are derived from a particular cultural worldview or orientation (Noh & Kaspar, 2003). For example, for those of African descent, culturally-relevant coping is based in Afrocentric cultural values (Utsey, Adams, & Bolden, 2000). These values are derived from a worldview that is rooted in African philosophies and cultural traditions (Chambers, Kambon, Birdsong, Brown, Dixon & Robbins-Brinson, 1998). Communal interaction or collectivism, spirituality, harmony and balance, and emotional debriefing (affect) comprise the principal features of the Afrocentric orientation (Jagers & Mock, 2003; Ogbonnaya, 1994). Collectivism or communalism is characterized by a belief in connectedness among people, and an emphasis on group interdependence. The adage "I am because we are," is often used to demonstrate the derivation of one's identity from a social, rather than individual, context, thus capturing the principle of collectivism (Jagers & Mock, 2003; Ogbonnaya, 1994). Spirituality, often manifested in religious practices, refers to a belief in an omnipotent being, or presence of a life force or spirit within all living things. While religion may be a way of expressing spirituality, it need not be present for spirituality to be observed (Jagers & Mock, 2003; Ogbonnaya, 1994). Emotional expressiveness through creative means, and sensitivity toward the attitudes and emotions of others defines emotional debriefing or affect. Finally, harmony and balance are represented by a commitment to justice and equality, as well as an appreciation of a natural "balance" of the world (Chambers et al., 1998; Ogbonnaya, 1994).

The relative lack of items assessing culturally-relevant coping on existing coping measures has spurred the creation of culturally-relevant coping inventories that attempt to capture the scope of these strategies. One of these measures is the Africultural Coping Systems Inventory (ACSI), developed to assess the various coping strategies utilized by people of African descent (Utsey et al., 2004). Along the same lines, the development of the Youth Africultural Coping Systems Inventory (Y-ACSI), which will be examined in the current study, was guided by the ACSI and created to capture the unique coping strategies used by African American adolescents based on the four Afrocentric cultural values described above: collectivism, spirituality, harmony and balance, and emotional debriefing (affect) (Gaylord-Harden & Utsey, 2007, 2008).

Africultural coping strategies as cultural assets. There is a substantial support in the extant literature for the characterization of Africultural coping strategies as cultural assets. Spirituality/religiosity is arguably the most studied Africultural coping strategy and is typically investigated as a protective or moderating factor. For adolescents in general, spirituality/religion, both proximal (spiritual functioning) and distal (religious behavior) aspects, are helpful for adolescents in coping with stressors and avoiding risk behavior (Cotton, Zebracki, Rosenthal, Tsevat, & Drotar, 2006). For African American adolescents using spiritual or religious coping strategies to deal with stressful situations is correlated with greater collective self-esteem, or positive regard for their racial/ethnic group (Constantine, Donnelly, & Myers, 2002). In a study investigating the effects of religious attendance on risk behavior of African American high schoolers over time, specifically, for African American males, religious activity emerged as a protective behavior. African American boys who engaged more in religious

activity were less involved with risk behaviors such as alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette use (Steinman & Zimmerman, 2004).

Generally, communalistic or collectivist coping is ascribed a positive connotation, which research with African American adolescents and adults supports (Kuo, 2013). Communalistic coping is also positively predicted by collective self-esteem for African American adolescents (Constantine et al., 2002). In fact, a study using African American adults found that both spirituality and collectivist (communal) coping were positive predictors of psychological, physical, and environmental quality of life outcomes (Utsey, Bolden, Lanier, & Williams, 2007). Additionally, feeling supported within one's neighborhood and from family (both immediate and extended) members is associated with lower depression symptoms (Stevenson, 1998). Maintaining harmony and emotional debriefing are less studied than the other two Africultural coping strategies in both child and adult literature. However, they are described as positive aspects of an Africultural worldview and self-reported by African American adults and adolescents as strengths drawn upon in daily life or in stressful situations (Utsey et al., 2000; Constantine, Gainor, Ahluwalia, & Berkel, 2003). Researchers suggest that maintaining harmony is closely related to collectivism as it may manifest in attempting to foster a sense of balance (e.g. interdependence) and bears similarities to spirituality through a connection to others and to nature (Constantine et al., 2003).

Culturally-relevant coping, racial discrimination, and African American males.
When endorsing culturally-relevant coping strategies, it has been documented that female African American youth report greater use of spiritual coping (Molock, Puri, Matlin, & Barksdale, 2006) and communalistic coping (Pierre, 2013). In comparison to research on girls, the research body on coping literature is less robust when focusing on African American boys,

and the field continues to lack a clear understanding of frequently used coping strategies and patterns of coping unique to African American males. Further, there is even less knowledge about patterns of culturally-relevant coping behaviors among African American boys despite assertions that culturally-relevant coping is a significant asset for this population. Given assertions about the adaptiveness of culturally-relevant coping, there is a need to examine the suitability of the Y-ACSI for a sample of African American male adolescents. The four-factor model of the Y-ACSI has been examined in a mixed-gender African American sample of early adolescents (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2008), but additional research is warranted to determine the utility of the measure for older adolescents.

In addition to patterns of use, it is important to understand the adaptiveness of culturally-relevant coping. One study demonstrated that particular domains of culturally relevant coping strategies have unique effects on depression reports for African American boys (Gaylord-Harden, Pierre, & Bart-Plange, 2014). Maintaining harmony was negatively related to depression, whereas emotional debriefing had a positive association. The effect of spiritually-centered coping was more complex, and actually depended on boys' level of racial identity. At high levels of racial identity, higher spiritually-centered coping use predicted higher levels of depression; however, the opposite was true for anxiety (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2014).

Often, coping strategies are examined as moderators in a stressor-outcome relationship (Brady et al., 2008). For African American youth in general, culturally-relevant coping strategies appear to be preferred when dealing with racial discrimination. Specifically, in early adolescence, higher levels of racial discrimination predicted use of spiritually-centered coping, emotional debriefing, and communalistic coping over mainstream coping strategies (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2009). Likewise, when African American adults experience

discrimination, they may be more likely to use culturally-relevant coping strategies, such as seeking support within their communities, in comparison to mainstream coping strategies (Utsey et al., 2000; Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006). Together, the complex and unique experience with racial discrimination for African American male adolescents and the potentially restorative role of cultural assets, suggest that we need a wider understanding of the role of culturally relevant coping for this group.

Using person-centered analysis may help us to better understand the variability among boys' use of culturally relevant coping and exposure to racial discrimination. Person-based statistical approaches can provide insight into natural patterns of behavior (Masten, 1999), as well as support evidence of variable-based approaches (Mandara, 2003). In person-based analysis, the relevant aspect of the analysis is the profile of scores, and not the impact of an individual variable (Bergman & Magnusson, 1997). Latent Class Analysis (LCA) is a person-centered analytical approach that detects unobserved heterogeneous subpopulations, which are latent classes, in the given sample. LCA differs from cluster analysis as classes are based on response probabilities as opposed to distances from the group mean. In essence, this probability model accommodates unequal degrees of variance for each individual cluster. The LCA will reveal individual differences in racial discrimination exposure and coping strategy use within a homogenous sample and the resulting groups may differ on various indicators of psychosocial functioning. Variable-based, linear models suggest that for some youth, use of culturally relevant coping strategies may be activated by racial discrimination (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2009).

The Current Study

The aims of the current project were to (1) validate the factor structure of the Youth Africultural Coping Systems Inventory in a sample of high school-aged African American males, (2) determine whether racial discrimination predicts the use of culturally relevant coping strategies, (3) identify groups of youth based on their coping patterns and racial discrimination experiences, and (4) examine patterns of psychosocial functioning among latent coping groups. Evidence suggests that African American youth encounter racial discrimination during the critical period of adolescence. African American males are uniquely exposed to racial discrimination experiences as a result of the historical social narrative misattributing violence and deviance to this group (Brown & Johnson, 2014; Gaylord-Harden et al., in press). This discrimination may manifest interpersonally with peers, teachers, or authority figures (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000; Goff et al., 2014) and is related to negative psychological outcomes (Benner & Graham, 2013). The cultural assets framework emphasizes a focus on positive, adaptive characteristics that African American youth may possess that help to buffer the negative impact of racial discrimination. The framework suggests that culturally relevant coping strategies should be considered an asset for these boys, and a better understanding of the patterns of use and adaptiveness of these strategies is needed in this population. Therefore, the first aim sought to validate a measure of culturally relevant coping strategies within a sample of African American males. Determining if the proposed four-factor structure is upheld expanded the existing research base by providing a theoretically-informed framework for organizing the culturally-specific coping responses of African American male adolescents. Subsequently, the second aim reflected the cultural assets framework and examines the coping strategies as a deliberate response to racial discrimination, and thus provided

knowledge of the types of coping strategies African American males draw upon when exposed to racial discrimination.

The current study's third and fourth aims used LCA to classify the current sample of African American male adolescents based on their exposure to racial discrimination and culturally relevant coping use, and then created profiles of scores for these distinct classifications. This profile-based approach is consistent with research examining other stressors and protective factors in African American youth (Copeland-Linder, Lambert, & Ialongo, 2010). It is important to understand how racial discrimination patterns and coping strategies jointly affect mental health, thus measures of depression, anxiety, and aggression were included. However, our understanding of psychosocial development in African American boys is lacking if it utilizes a solely deficit-based model (García Coll et al., 1996; Tucker & Herman, 2002). Therefore, consistent with the positive youth development focus of the cultural assets framework we included measures of social skills and school belongingness, in addition to depression, anxiety, and aggression to provide a reflection of culturally relevant coping's ties to both positive and negative psychosocial outcomes.

Based on the existing literature, the hypotheses and research questions for the current study were as follows:

Hypothesis 1: The four-factor structure of the Youth Africultural Coping Systems Inventory would be supported in a sample of African American male adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Racial discrimination would predict levels of culturally relevant coping strategies (e.g. emotional debriefing, maintaining harmony, communalistic, and spiritual-centered) beyond that of mainstream coping strategies.

Research Question 1: Will distinct groups of culturally relevant copers and racial discrimination exposure emerge within the current sample?

Research Question 2: Will the coping use and racial discrimination groups determined by the latent class analysis differ on the following psychosocial outcomes: depression, anxiety, aggression, school belongingness, and social skills?

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Participants

Participants in the current study were part of a larger study designed to identify the

individual, school, peer, family, and community factors that predict academic functioning and

social-emotional behavior in male high school students of color. There was a total of 660

participants. The participation rate for the study was approximately 59%. Participants were from

3 all-male charter schools in an inner-city community of a large Midwestern city. Students were

classified as low-income based on eligibility for free/reduced school lunch programs. The

percentage of low-income students within the school was 85%. The sample included in the factor

analysis were made up of African American males between the ages of 14-18 years (9th-12th

grade) who completed the Y-ACSI for at least one time point. All participants with complete

coping and racial discrimination data were used in analyses examining predictors of coping use.

Participants were recruited from an all-boys urban public high school where the average

percentage of African American students was 99.5%.

Measures

Culturally-relevant coping. The participants completed the *Africultural Coping Systems*

Inventory – Youth Version (*Y-ACSI*; Gaylord-Harden and Utsey, 2007, 2008) as a measure of

culturally related coping strategies for African Americans. The Y-ACSI was developed through

focus group discussions with African American adolescents (6th-8th grade) to capture unique cultural coping styles of youth from African descent. The Y-ACSI has 52 items rated on a Likert Scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (used a lot) and is divided into four factors: Emotional Debriefing, Spiritual Centered, Maintaining Harmony, and Communalistic Coping. The Emotional Debriefing factor is characterized by creative expression or emotion-based management of stress and is comprised of three subscales: musical expression (attempts to manage stress by expressing oneself via music, e.g. "When I have a problem I sing"); physical activity/ kinesthetic (attempts to manage stress by expressing oneself through physical activity and movement, e.g. "I dance with a group of friends"); and creative expression (attempts to manage stress by engaging in creative activities, e.g. "When I have a problem, I write in a notebook, diary or journal"). The Spiritual Centered coping factor attempts to use spiritually-based strategies in trying to manage stress either and is further comprised of two sub-scales: having a direct relationship with God (e.g. "I ask God for strength") and engaging in spiritual activities (e.g. "I read my Bible or Qur'an"). Similarly, attempts in Maintaining Harmony cope by trying to reestablish peace or bring about harmonious balance among others in the presence of a stressor and are broken down into either through acceptance (e.g. "when things don't go my way, I just accept the way things are"), and agency (e.g. "I try to make things better by being nice to others") attempts. The final factor, Communalistic Coping, represents interdependence with others (friends, family, etc.) to cope with situations and is comprised of two subscales: expressive means of rallying social support to help deal with stress (e.g. "I call someone to talk about my problem"), and receptive attempts at receiving social support to address stress (e.g. "I think about a story that someone in my family told me") (Utsey at al., 2000; Gaylord-Harden and Utsey, 2007,2008).

To complete the Y-ACSI, participants reported a stressor that occurred within the past 3 months. Participants then reported the degree to which the problem was stressful for 46 them (1 =not at all stressful, 2 = a little stressful, 3 = somewhat stressful, 4 = very stressful), and reported the amount of control they believed they had over the stressor (1 = none at all, 2 = a little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = very). Then, they reported the culturally relevant strategies they used to cope with this particular stressor with higher scores representing higher levels of coping.

Racial Discrimination. Participants' experiences of discrimination were assessed using the discrimination stress items from the Multicultural Events Schedule for Adolescents (MESA; Gonzales et al. 1996). The MESA is an 82-item self-report measure of stress for adolescents living in an urban environment. The items are grouped into eight stress categories, and the perceived discrimination (''you were unfairly accused of doing something bad because of your race or ethnicity'') was used to determine racial discrimination. The MESA items were generated by ethnically-diverse youth from urban communities (Gonzales et al., 1996). Test-retest reliability of the MESA was .71 (N. A. Gonzales et al., 1996). The Cronbach's alpha for the racial discrimination subscale was good, α = .82.

Depression. Depression symptoms were examined using the depression subscale of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales, short version (DASS21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Participants reported on the extent to which they experienced symptoms of depression over the past week (e.g., "I felt that I had nothing to look forward to"). Items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = Did not apply to me at all, 1 = Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time, 2 = Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time, 3 = Applied to me very much, or most of the time) and a mean score of these items was calculated.   Cronbach's alpha within the current sample was good, α = .89.

Anxiety. Anxiety symptoms were examined using the anxiety subscale of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales, short version (DASS21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Items in the anxiety subscale measure how often participants experienced related symptoms in the past week (e.g., "I found myself getting agitated"), using a 4-point Likert scale (0 = Did not apply to me at all, 1 = Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time, 2 = Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time, 3 = Applied to me very much, or most of the time). A mean score of these items was calculated. The internal consistency of the anxiety scale in this study was acceptable, α =.85.

Aggressive behaviors. Aggressive behaviors were examined using *The Aggression Scale* (*TAS*; Orpinas & Frankowski, 2001). The TAS is an 11-item scale that measures the frequency of occurrence of anger, verbal aggression, and physical aggression toward other students (e.g., "I pushed or shoved other students" and "I threatened to hurt or to hit someone"). Participants are asked to answer about their behaviors over the past 7 days, occurring between 0 and 6 or more times. Responses to the 9 items assessing aggressive behaviors were summed, with higher scores indicating higher levels of aggressive behavior. Internal consistency in the current sample was good, α = .88.

School Belongingness. School belongingness was examined using the Psychological Sense of School Membership scale (PSSM; Goodenow, 1993). The PSSM consists of 18 items asking participants to report how they feel about their teachers and school environment (e.g. "I feel like I am a part of this school."). The extent to which each item is true for the rater is indicated on a 5-oint Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (completely true). Internal consistency of the school belongingness was α = .86 using the current sample.

Social skills. Participants' social skills were assessed using the social skills subscale of the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). This subscale contains items measuring both the frequency and perceived importance of various social skills, including communication, empathy, self-control, and cooperation (e.g., "I ask to join others when they are doing things I like"). Only the frequency ratings will be utilized to calculate a mean score of the items for the current study. Frequency items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always). Cronbach's alpha for the social skills subscale in this sample was excellent, $\alpha = .96$.

Demographics. Demographic information was collected, including ethnicity, age, people living at home with the participant, primary caretaker, employment status, parental college attendance, and whether the participant has any children.

Procedure

The lead researcher visited the informing faculty, staff, and students of the project and distributed parental recruitment letters and consent forms directly to all 9th -11th grade students. The lead researcher returned to the schools to collect signed parental consents and scheduled data collection with principals and necessary staff. Students who received written parental consent and provided written assent were asked to complete a packet of pencil-and- paper psychological surveys. Data collection with students was conducted by classroom and was administered during regular school hours. Consistent with usual procedures for classroom-based data collection, students completed the forms individually and remained at their seats for the task. Students were told not to share their responses with one another and not to look at other students' papers. Research assistants were present to administer the surveys, monitor progress, and answer questions in each group setting. Completion of the surveys for adolescents took approximately

1.5 hours. The confidentiality of all participants was strictly protected during this study and thereafter. Names of participants and other identifying information did not appear on the surveys. Each adolescent who participated was given a movie pass (good for one free movie) for completion of the survey packet.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

To test hypothesis 1, that a four-factor structure of the Y-ACSI would be supported within the current sample of African American male youth, the current study utilized Mplus Version 6.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010) to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the Y-ACSI's four proposed factors.

Using a maximum likelihood approach, the χ^2 index was consulted to determine whether residual differences between the observed sample and the hypothesized models converged to zero as the sample size approached infinity (Cudeck & Brown, 1983; Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988). If the χ^2 index is large relative to the degrees of freedom, it suggests that the model be rejected versus accepted. The χ^2 test, however, is greatly influenced by sample size and further limited by its assumption of multivariate normality (Hooper, Couglan, & Mullen, 2008; Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1988). Given these limitations, several other fit statistics were used when evaluating model fit. Two of these indices better account for sample size: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA). The CFI creates a null model, in which the latent variables are uncorrelated and compares it to the observed covariance matrix (Hooper, Couglan, & Mullen, 2008). The RMSEA is not influenced by sample size and was used to evaluate how well the model would fit the population covariance matrix by choosing optimal parameter estimates (Hooper, Couglan, & Mullen, 2008). The

standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) uses the square root of the difference between

the residuals of the observed and the hypothesized covariance matrices (Hooper, Couglan, &

Mullen, 2008). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) takes sample size into account, and it compares

the observed covariance matrix with the null model, in which all of the latent variables are

uncorrelated (Hooper, Couglan, & Mullen, 2008). The root mean squared error of approximation

(RMSEA) is not influenced by sample size and determines how well the model would fit the

population covariance matrix by using optimally chosen parameter estimates (Hooper, Couglan,

& Mullen, 2008). In the current study, the following cut-off scores were used: SRMR < 0.08,

CFI > 0.95, or RMSEA < 0.06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

A first order CFA was conducted to determine the fit of the four hypothesized domains of

the Y-ACSI and the observed data. To test these models, each of the 52 items was allowed to

load on only one of the four proposed factors (the theoretical factor they are expected to

represent and measure), and one variable loading in each factor was fixed to 1.0 (consistent with

default settings in Mplus)[1]. The remaining factor loadings, residual variances, and correlations

among latent factors were freely estimated and the four coping factors were allowed to correlate

with one another. The spiritually-centered factor was composed of 11 items, the maintaining

harmony factor included 11 items, the communalistic factor included 16 items, and the emotional

debriefing factor was composed of 14 items. The proposed model is presented in Figure 1.

Initial results indicated that the 52 items on the Y-ACSI did not fit within a four factor

structure, χ^2 (516) = 5264.69 p < .001; RMSEA = 0.078; CFI = 0.53; SRMR = 0.13. Based on

the nonsignificant standardized loading estimates and low or negative loadings, items 3, 23, 43,

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[1] A previous version of the Y-ACSI validated with both male and female African American youth in 6th – 8th grade found different item loadings. Rather than using this version, the current study recategorized all 52 items into the four proposed factors.

46, 49, and 50 were dropped from the CFA analyses. Fit was slightly improved, but acceptable fit was not obtained, χ^2 (516) = 3989.02, p < .001; RMSEA = 0.08; CFI = 0.58; SRMR = 0.11. Given the poor fit indices, a one factor model with all 52 items on the Y-ACSI was conducted; however, the fit remained poor χ^2 (516) = 1272.02, p < .001; RMSEA = 0.12; CFI = 0.49; SRMR = 0.13.

According to previous CFA literature, when factor loadings are low, the number of indicators per factor ratio (p/r; number of items per factor compared to number of factors) may adversely affect the accurate estimation of fit indices when the p/r is high (Ding, Velicer, & Harlow, 1995). The high p/r of this sample suggested improper model fit and suggested that no further models be tested. Rather than testing one model with four factors, individual CFAs were conducted for each of the four subscales of the Y-ACSI. This approach is consistent with the development of other youth coping measures (e.g., Ayers et al., 1996). The initial CFA for the spiritually-centered factor showed that the 11 theorized items did not fit the factor, χ^2 (55) = 1333.10, p < .001; RMSEA = 0.10; CFI = 0.81; SRMR = 0.11. Items 37, 39, 46, 47, 48, and 49 were subsequently dropped from the modified CFA analysis because of their low standardized loading estimates and/or poor conceptual cohesion to the remaining items. Good fit was obtained after the above items were dropped, χ^2 (5) = 14.57, p = .012; RMSEA = 0.062; CFI = 0.987; SRMR = 0.023.

Fit indices from the initial CFA for maintaining harmony indicated that the 11 theorized items did not fit well on the maintaining harmony factor, χ^2 (90) = 790.71, p < .001; RMSEA = 0.123; CFI = 0.63; SRMR = 0.105. Modification indices from the initial output indicated that items 2 and 3 be allowed to correlate. An additional CFA was conducted to drop items 42 and 51 due to low standardized loading estimates and poor conceptual fit. After these items were

dropped and modification indices added, fit greatly improved for the maintaining harmony

factor, χ^2 (26) = 44.297, $p < .014$; RMSEA = 0.037; CFI = 0.983; SRMR = 0.027.

For the communalistic coping factor, the initial CFA indicated that the 14 theorized items

did not fit the proposed factor, χ^2 (14) = 139.71, $p < .001$; RMSEA = 0.17; CFI = 0.64 SRMR =

0.093. Modification indices from the first CFA were included to allow several items to correlate

with one another. Next, items 50, 52, 23, and 45 were dropped from the modified CFA analysis

based on their low standardized loadings and poor theoretical fit. The model fit improved,

however, the fit statistics did not indicate a good fit χ^2 (35) = 235.01, $p < .001$; RMSEA = 0.105;

CFI = 0.84; SRMR = 0.065. The items with the next lowest loadings were dropped from the

analyses, items 28, 29, 30, and 31, and acceptable fit was obtained for the communalistic coping

factor. χ^2 (9) = 37.20, $p < .001$; RMSEA = 0.080; CFI = 0.96; SRMR = 0.033.

Fit indices from the initial CFA for the emotional debriefing factor indicated poor fit, χ^2

(77) = 983.88., $p < .001$; RMSEA = 0.151; CFI = 0.46 SRMR = 0.119. Next, it was decided to

drop items 1, 9, 11, 12, 26 due to poor conceptual fit and strengthened by the low factor loadings

for those items. Fit improved, χ^2 (27) = 413.045, $p < .001$; RMSEA = 0.167; CFI = 0.64 SRMR

= 0.105, but still remained inadequate. Items 13 and 14 were removed for conceptual reasons

and items 15 and 22, the next lowest factor loadings, were then dropped from the CFA resulting

in good fit for the emotional debriefing factor, χ^2 (5) = 11.44, $p < .001$; RMSEA = 0.05; CFI =

0.98; SRMR = 0.02. Items from the final models for the four factors assessing culturally relevant

coping strategies were used in all remaining analyses. See Table 1 for fit indices of each single-

factor model and Table 2 for a list of the final models from the individual CFAs.

Table 1. Items on each of the Modified Subscales on the Youth Africultural Coping Systems Inventory

Item #	Youth Africultural Coping Systems Inventory Subscale/Item	Item Loadings
	Emotional Debriefing	
10	I listen to my favorite song over and over *[music]*	0.193
21	When I have a problem, I sing *[music]*	0.487
18	When I have a problem, I write *[creative expression]*	0.835
19	When I have a problem, I write in a notebook, diary, or journal *[creative expression]*	0.799
20	When I have a problem, I do something artistic *[creative expression]*	0.688
	Communalistic	
17	I remember what someone else (like mom, dad, grandmother, friend) told me to do about the problem *[community-seeking]*	0.654
24	I spend time around my friends *[community-seeking]*	0.740
25	I spend time around my friends *[community-seeking]*	0.762
27	I talk about the problem to someone in my family *[dialoguing]*	0.774
30	I talk about the problem with someone I can trust *[dialoguing]*	0.698
33	I listen to other people's point of view *[dialoguing]*	0.689
	Maintaining Harmony	
2	When things don't go my way, I just accept the way things are *[acceptance]*	0.411
3	I just accept that I cannot change what has happened *[acceptance]*	0.311
4	I tell myself that I've got to be patient and believe in myself *[acceptance]*	0.548
44	I try to focus on the present (here-and-now) rather than what might happen in the future *[acceptance]*	0.215
5	I try to make things better by being nice to others *[agency]*	0.685
6	I try to make things better by trying to see things from someone else's point of view *[agency]*	0.710
7	I try to make things better by being respectful to other people *[agency]*	0.732
8	When I have a problem with someone, I try to talk to them about it and work it out *[agency]*	0.580
	Spiritually-Centered	
34	I pray or talk to God *[relationship with God]*	0.874
38	I put it in God's hands *[relationship with God]*	0.628
40	I ask God for strength *[relationship with God]*	0.819
35	I go to church or mosque to feel better *[spiritual activities]*	0.546
36	I ask someone to pray for me *[spiritual activities]*	0.721

Table 2. Alpha Reliabilities and Fit Indices of the Single-Factor Models for the Y-ACSI

Coping subscale (# of items)	α	n for α	χ² (df), p level	RMSEA (90% C.I.)	CFI	SRMR
Emotional debriefing (5)	.71	590	11.44(5), p < 0.001	0.050 (0.060, 0.13)	0.99	0.022
Communalistic (6)	.76	592	37.20 (9), p <0 .001	0.080 (0.084, 0.15)	0.96	0.033
Maintaining harmony (8)	.82	592	139.71 (26), p < 0.01	0.037 (0.000, 0.15)	0.98	0.027
Spiritually-centered (5)	.89	590	14.57 (5), p < 0.01	0.062 (0.000, 0.12)	0.99	0.023

Note: RMSEA = Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual.

Descriptive and Correlation Analyses

Correlations, means, and standard deviations were conducted for all study variables and are presented in Table 3. Among the outcome measures, several variables were correlated; depression, anxiety, and aggression were all significantly correlated with one another. Additionally, outcomes measuring internalizing (i.e., depression and anxiety) and externalizing symptoms (i.e., aggression) were significantly negatively correlated with school belonging and aggression was negatively correlated with social skills. All four culturally relevant coping strategies were significantly, positively correlated with one another; however, only emotional debriefing was significantly negatively correlated with racial discrimination.

Hypothesis 2

To address hypothesis 2, that racial discrimination would predict levels of culturally relevant coping strategies (e.g. emotional debriefing, maintaining harmony, communalistic, and spiritual-centered) beyond that of mainstream coping strategies (e.g., active, avoidant, distraction, and support-seeking coping), a multiple regression was performed. Results indicated that racial discrimination predicted only levels of emotional debriefing coping (β = -0.93, p = .026), when controlling for mainstream coping; however, this was in the opposite direction than

hypothesized. Racial discrimination was not significantly related to use of the remaining culturally-relevant coping strategies. Racial discrimination did not significantly predict levels of mainstream coping use, ($\beta = -.047$, $p = .26$).

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson's Correlations Among the Main Study Variables for the Overall Sample

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Depression	5.27	5.47									
2. Anxiety	5.39	5.17	.79***								
3. Aggression	1.82	1.54	.29***	.26***							
4. School Belonging	65.55	12.31	-.28***	-.19***	-.21***						
5. Social Skills	2.95	0.58	-.08	-.05	-.17**	.35***					
6. Emotional Debriefing	10.34	3.61	.27***	.23***	.02	-.06	.20***				
7. Communalistic	16.94	4.30	-.14	.04	.00	.26***	.43***	.24***			
8. Maintaining Harmony	24.99	5.90	.90*	.10*	-.05	.21***	.47***	.32***	.57***		
9. Spiritually-Centered	12.43	4.66	.06	.06	.11**	.06	.24***	.24***	.42***	.36***	
10. Racial Discrimination	4.19	1.97	-.15***	-.10*	-.08*	.17***	-.03	-.10*	.03	.01	.05

Note: *** p < .001, ** p <.01, * p < .05

Research Question 1

To address research question 1, Latent Class Analysis (LCA) was used to identify homogenous groups of youth based on patterns of racial discrimination and each of the four culturally relevant coping strategy subscales (i.e., spiritually centered, maintaining harmony, communalistic, and emotional debriefing), utilizing Mplus Version 7.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2013). Fit statistics including the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC; Akaike, 1987), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC; Schwartz, 1978), Adjusted BIC (ABIC; Sclove, 1987), entropy (Ramaswamy, DeSarbo, Reibstein, Robinson, 1993), the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMR LR; Lo, Mendell, & Rubin, 2001), and the adjusted Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMRA; Lo, Mendell, & Rubin, 2001) were used to determine the number of

groups that provide the best fit for the data. Lower observed values for AIC, BIC, and ABIC

indicated a better model fit. Additionally, entropy is a measure of model fit with values closer to

1.00 suggesting better model fit. Finally, a non-significant p value for the LMR LR and LMRA

tests indicated that the model with the (K-1)-class model is preferred to the model with K classes.

See Table 4 for fit statistics for the tested LCA models.

Table 4. Information Criteria, Entropy, and LRT Values.

Fit Indices and Entropy of the Latent Class Models

Model	Loglikelihood	AIC	BIC	ABIC	Entropy	LMR LR	LMRA	BLRM LR
2 class	-4021.12	8074.239	8144.644	8093.949	0.656	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
3 class	-3935.348	7914.696	8011.502	7941.658	0.754	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
4 class	-3878.501	7813.002	7936.209	7847.316	0.779	0.0006	0.0007	<0.001
5 class	-3840.299	7748.599	7898.207	7790.266	0.769	0.1078	0.1125	<0.001

Based on linear models of culturally relevant coping strategies and racial discrimination,

four LCA models with different numbers of latent classes (2 – 5) were estimated sequentially

using Mplus Version 7.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2013). The 4-class model provided the best fit for

the data and was selected due to non-significant LMR LR and LMRA (.0006 and .0007

respectively). Additionally, the 4-class model had the highest entropy value (.78) and low AIC,

BIC, and ABIC when compared to the other latent class models, see Table 4 for results from

each class solution. Results revealed a mixed coping, low discrimination group (n = 45);

moderate coping, high discrimination group (n = 196); high coping, low discrimination group (n

= 117); and high coping, high discrimination group (n = 244; see Figure 1 for estimated

probabilities of the coping/discrimination classes).

Figure 1. Coping and Discrimination Groups Using Estimated Probabilities.
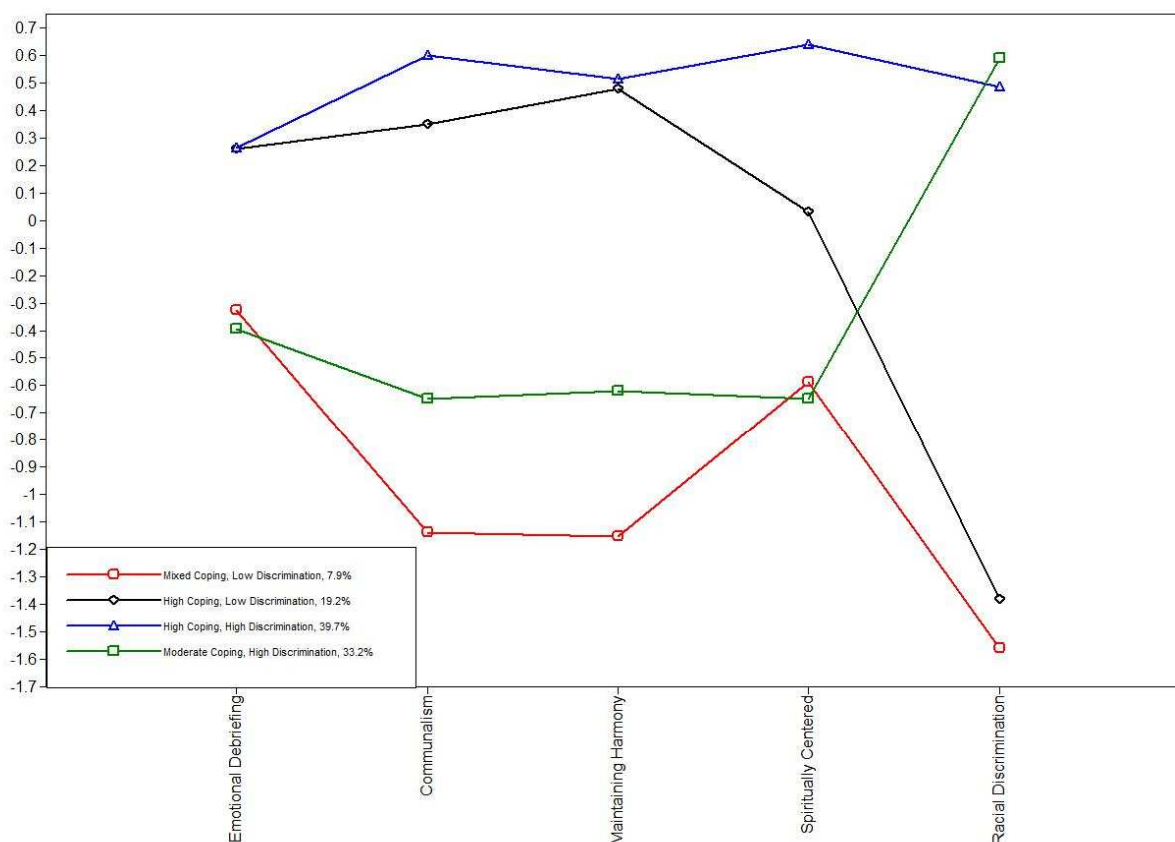
Note: The four culturally relevant coping factors and racial discrimination are on the x-axis and the estimated probability of endorsing each is on the y-axis.

The first class composed 7.9% of the sample, (m_{age}=15.79, *SD* = 2.67) and was

characterized by mixed low and moderate culturally relevant coping use and low racial

discrimination exposure. The second class was made up of 19.2% of participants and indicated

high culturally relevant coping use and low racial discrimination exposure (m_{age}=15.92, *SD* =

1.86). The third class was the largest group at 39.7% of the sample and reported high culturally

relevant coping use and high discrimination (m_{age}=15.16, *SD* = 1.73). Finally, the fourth class

was made up of the remaining 33.2% of the sample and reported moderate culturally relevant coping use as well as high racial discrimination exposure (m_{age} =15.28, SD = 1.12).

One-way ANOVAs were used to determine significant differences among the groups on racial discrimination and culturally relevant coping to understand the constellation of coping and discrimination for each LCA group. Results revealed significant differences in maintaining harmony coping between the mixed culturally relevant coping/low discrimination group and all other LCA groups and moderate coping/high discrimination and remaining groups. Specifically, the mixed culturally relevant/low discrimination group reported the lowest levels of maintaining harmony coping followed by the moderate coping/high discrimination group. However, there was no significant difference in reports of maintaining harmony coping between the high culturally relevant coping/high discrimination group and the high culturally relevant coping/low discrimination group. Regarding emotional debriefing, the mixed coping/low discrimination group reported significantly lower levels than did high coping/low discrimination and high coping/high discrimination group, but it did not differ significantly from the moderate coping/high discrimination group. Additionally, there was not a significant difference between high coping/high discrimination and mixed coping/low discrimination groups on emotional debriefing. All four classes were significantly different from one another on communalistic coping (*F(3,591) = 159.10, p < .001).* ANOVA results among the groups also revealed that on spiritually-centered coping, all groups differed significantly from one another except the mixed coping/low discrimination and moderate coping/ high discrimination groups. Finally, all groups differed from one another on reports of racial discrimination with the exception of the difference between the high coping/high discrimination and moderate coping/high discrimination groups.

Research Question 2

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used determine whether coping and discrimination groups differed on measures of depression, anxiety, aggression, school belongingness, and social skills. There was a significant difference among LCA groups on depressive symptoms (F (3,595) = 4.692, p =.003). Post hoc analyses revealed a significant difference between the high culturally relevant coping/low racial discrimination group (M = 6.75, SD = 5.74) and the moderate coping/high racial discrimination group (M = 4.38, SD = 4.73) on depressive symptoms. Both the high culturally relevant coping/high discrimination group (M = 5.20, SD = 5.77) and the mixed coping/low discrimination group (M = 5.60, SD = 5.37) did not differ significantly from any other groups.

Results indicated a significant difference among groups on anxiety symptoms (F (3,595) = 3.027, p =.029). The post hoc test revealed a significant difference between the moderate coping/high discrimination group and the high coping/low racial discrimination group such that the moderate coping/high discrimination group, reported less anxiety (M = 4.83, SD = 5.00) than did the high coping/low racial discrimination group (M = 6.45, SD = 5.13). Similar to the results for depression, the remaining high coping/high discrimination (M = 5.51, SD = 5.35) and mixed coping/low discrimination (M = 4.38, SD = 4.62) groups did not significantly differ from other groups. See Figure 3 for significant differences among groups for depression and anxiety.

Figure 2. Anxiety and Depression Means of High Culturally Relevant Coping/ Low Racial Discrimination and Moderate Culturally Relevant Coping/ High Racial Discrimination Groups.
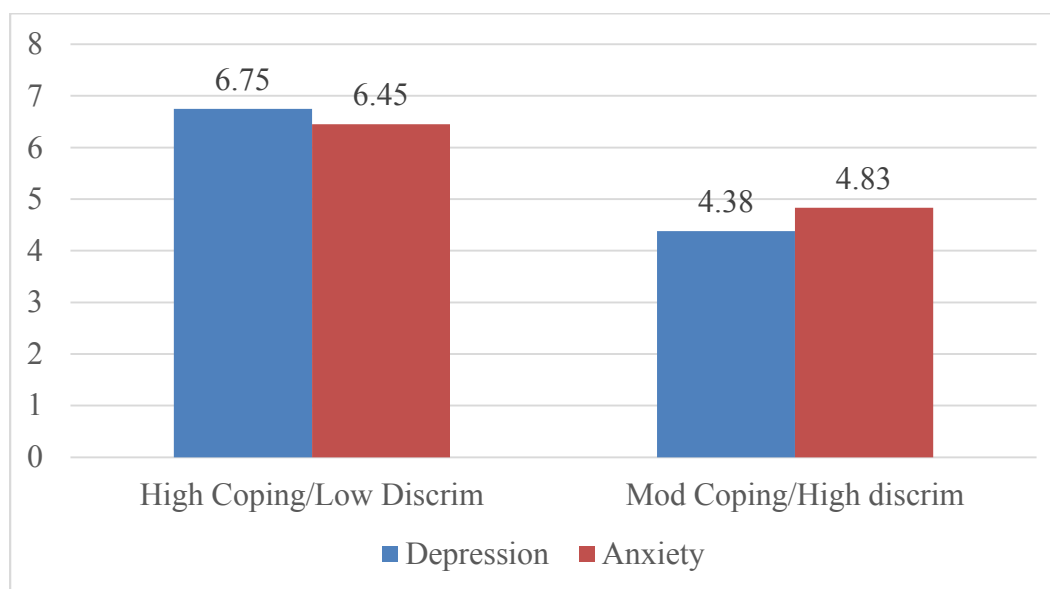
The LCA groups differed from one another significantly on school belongingness (F (3,601) = 8.686, p <.001). Post hoc analyses indicated differences among the mixed coping/low discrimination group, high coping/high discrimination group, and moderate coping/high discrimination group such that the mixed coping/low discrimination group reported significantly lower feelings of school belongingness (M = 58.96, SD = 10.87) than did the other two groups. Further, the moderate coping/high discrimination group (M = 64.99, SD =11.69) and the high coping/high discrimination groups (M = 68.01, SD = 12.50) differed significantly from one another, such that the moderate coping/high discrimination reported lower levels of school belongingness. There was no significant difference between the mixed coping/low discrimination group (M = 58.96, SD = 10.87) and the high coping/low racial discrimination group (M = 63.91, SD = 12.28). The high coping/low discrimination group reported significantly lower school belongingness (M = 63.91, SD = 12.28) than did the high coping/high

discrimination group ($M = 68.01$) but did not differ from those in the mixed coping/low discrimination LCA group.

There was a significant difference among the LCA groups on a measure of social skills ($F(3,590) = 36.160, p <.001$). Post hoc analyses indicated significant differences between the mixed coping/low racial discrimination group and remaining groups, except the moderate coping/high discrimination group, such that the mixed coping/low racial discrimination group reported the lowest level of social skills ($M = 2.56, SD = 0.57$). The moderate coping/high discrimination group reported significantly lower levels of social skills ($M = 2.70, SD = 0.53$) than did the high coping/high discrimination ($M = 3.13, SD = 0.56$) and high coping/low discrimination ($M = 3.14, SD = 0.47$) groups. However, there was no significant difference between the reported social skills of the high coping/low discrimination and high coping/high discrimination groups.

Finally, a one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences among LCA groups on a measure of aggression ($F(3,596) = 1.809, p =.144$).

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

Given the lack of measures that capture culturally-relevant coping strategies for African American adolescents, the current study sought to validate a measure, the Youth Africultural Coping Systems inventory, within a sample of African American male adolescents in high school. Further, the purpose of the study was to examine groups of boys based on their culturally relevant coping and racial discrimination exposure to understand their patterns of functioning on various psychosocial measures. Overall, the study found good fit for a modified measure of culturally-relevant coping (Y-ACSI) and four distinct coping/discrimination groups.

Hypothesis 1

Contrary to the hypothesis, the 52 Y-ACSI items did not conform to the predicted four-factor structure. Although the fit slightly improved after dropping several low or negative factor loadings, there was still poor fit for the first-order using all items. Similarly, to previously developed youth coping measures (Ayers et al., 1996; So, 2016), the four proposed Y-ACSI factors appear to represent distinct factors of coping, which correlate with one another, but represent unique coping responses. A previous factor analysis conducted with the Y-ACSI with both African American girls and boys was also unable to obtain fit for a first-order factor analysis using all 52 items. Instead, individual factor analyses for each of the four factors were conducted and fit was obtained for each factor individually, similar to methods used in the current study. Although confirmatory factor analysis (compared to exploratory factor analysis)

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is the preferred procedure for developing coping instruments (Ayers et al., 1996), neither sample has achieved a fit using a first order model with four factors. This may be due to issues with the sample size and estimated parameters. When the number of parameters constraining the model is high, a large sample size is needed to achieve a proper fit (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Due to the number of items in the proposed model (i.e., 52), the number of parameters constraining the model is high, and therefore individual CFAs for each factor may have been more likely to achieve fit than one four-factor model due to fewer parameters.

For each factor, items were selected for removal using a mixture of item loading issues and lack of conceptual cohesion. The spiritual centered factor is characterized by using spiritual or religious attempts to cope with a stressor, which tie back to African American religious practices and beliefs. Four of the items removed from the final factor, item 46 "I kept something from someone close to me who died, and I use it when I have a problem," item 47 "I go to a quiet, special, or sacred place," item 48 "someone in my family has special powers and they tell me what to do about my problem," and item 49 "someone in my family has special powers and they make things better," are perhaps not representative of African American-specific spiritual/religious practices. These four items allude to a belief in the supernatural which may not align with the mainline beliefs from the two dominant religions (i.e., Christianity and Islam) within the African American population. These elements may be more associated with traditional African religions than African American. Item 29 "I write down my prayers or write a note to God" appeared to tap into a different aspect of prayer than the other two prayer-related items. This item may not truly have been about prayer itself but may be more associated with creativity and self-expression in that it is about *writing* a prayer not the act of praying [to a higher power]. Finally, item 37 "I read my Bible or Qur'an" initially seemed to be an anomaly

among the items removed, given that it is easily related to religious practice. However, the literature concerning gender differences between African American religiosity suggests that this specific behavior is more endorsed by African American women than men (Chatters, Taylor, & Lincoln, 1999). African American boys may follow the same pattern as adult males and endorse overall lower religious involvement than girls, especially when measured by study of religious literature. This item may not capture a religious/spiritual behavior that is used by African American boys and could be more relevant for their female counterparts.

Within the maintaining harmony factors, initially, the CFA indicated a low item loading for item 3 "I just accept that I cannot change what has happened." Because this item read similarly to item two "When things don't go my way, I just accept the way things are," and should be theoretically related, the CFA was rerun allowing them to correlate with one other, per the previous output recommendations, rather than removing the item. Items 42 "I repeat to myself over and over that everything is okay" and 51 "I helped my family with things around the house" also had low factor loadings and had poor conceptual fit with the remaining items. Item 42 appeared to better describe repetitive or ritualistic behavior and item 51 was very specific to family and chores without connecting to the greater theme of creating harmony or balance.

The communalism factor is defined by interdependence and connectedness among people and often evidenced by drawing upon social and community support. The items remaining on the final factor fell into two categories, dialoguing and community seeking. Item 23, "I make sure I am around other people and am not alone" was removed both due to its low factor loading and incongruence with other community-seeking items. Although this item does regard being around others, it is much more general than the remaining items referencing spending time with family and friends, specifically. Additionally, Items 31, 32, 41, and 50 used general terms as

well, using the word "someone" instead of specifying a person or type of relationship. The

diffuse wording of these items made them less similar to the others and appeared less

communalistic because they did not explicitly discuss using known community supports (e.g.,

family, friends, neighbors, etc.). Item 43 "I first try to deal with it myself, then if I can't deal

with it, I get help from someone else" in addition to using vague language, represented two

different types of coping responses. The initial response, trying to deal with it oneself, opposes

seeking community which makes the items a poor conceptual fit for the communalism factor.

Finally, though item 45, "I think about what a relative who has passed away would tell me to do"

seems communalistic upon first glance, it may be better considered spiritual because it is does

not refer to one's physical, tangible community, but instead one connected to an individual

through spiritual or religious beliefs.

The last factor of emotional debriefing includes efforts to cope with a stressor with affect

and affective expression. Previously, the factor was divided into music, creativity, and activity

items, however, within this study, all activity items were eliminated. Within this sample of boys,

it appears that the activity items that were concerned with movement (e.g., playing a contact

sport, working on athletic moves, dancing) were less salient than items related to art and music.

Though activity can be a means of emotional expression, this sample identified with more

overtly associated acts of affective expression (e.g., written, verbal, or artistic expression).

Similarly, items 13 "when I have a problem, I try to relax or do something relaxing" and 26 "I do

things to look my best" have little overt emotional content and were also dropped from the factor

due to low loadings.

While the modified confirmatory factor analyses confirmed a good fit with the data for

Maintaining Harmony, Emotional Debriefing, Communalistic, and Spiritually-Centered coping,

it should be noted that the items retained in the final factor structure differed somewhat from those that were included on the previous Y-ACSI version validated with middle school boys and girls. Additionally, the initial development of the Y-ACSI items and factors was conducted utilizing qualitative data from groups of middle school, African American boys *and* girls. African American boys and girls endorse differing levels of use of coping strategies, tending to select different strategies from one another (Molock et al., 2006; Pierre, 2013); further, older and younger adolescents report using different types of coping strategies (e.g., older adolescents employ more problem-solving, active strategies than the younger) in regard to mainstream coping (Fields & Prinz, 1997; Griffith, Dubow, & Ippolito, 2000).

The spiritually-centered and maintaining harmony factors remained largely the same, with the addition of a few items. Within the emotional debriefing factor, items related to [physical] activity were dropped, and the remaining items related to music and creative expression were retained. On the communalistic factor, items previously could be grouped into expressive and receptive subscales with the middle school, mixed gender, sample. Within the current sample, these two subscales were eliminated, and items instead grouped into community-seeking and dialoguing dimensions of communalistic coping. The current sample of African American high school boys endorsed types of communalistic coping that are characterized by a connection to the greater community and interdependence with others (i.e., spending time around others in the community) in addition to getting instrumental support by engaging in discussion with others.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2, which predicted that racial discrimination would predict levels of culturally relevant coping strategies beyond that of mainstream coping strategies, was only partially

supported by the data. Racial discrimination did not significantly predict the use of maintaining harmony, communalistic, or spiritually-centered coping; however, it did significantly predict levels of emotional debriefing coping when controlling for mainstream coping and when compared to it. Surprisingly, analyses revealed not a positive relationship between racial discrimination and emotional debriefing, but a negative one. These findings were contrary to previous findings using a sample of middle school African American boys and girls, which determined that racial discrimination predicted each of the culturally relevant coping strategies (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2008).

Consistent with hypotheses and with previous analyses, for African American boys within this sample, racial discrimination did not predict the overall use of mainstream coping strategies. Taken with the results of the culturally relevant coping, this suggests that these boys may draw upon a wider range of [culturally relevant] coping strategies to address racial discrimination than previously known. This could be so for a number of reasons at the intersection of age, gender, and race. African American boys have been documented to use less communalistic and spiritual-centered coping than do girls (Gaylord-Harden et al., 2008). Another study reported that African American boys utilized other culturally relevant coping strategies in dealing with racial discrimination, such as cultural pride reinforcement (Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997). Racial discrimination could also encourage one to draw upon other cultural assets such as racial identity and centrality rather than the four culturally relevant strategies of the Y-ACSI. Previous studies show that these variables moderate the relationship between racial discrimination and internalizing and externalizing outcomes (Chavous et al., 2008). Further, it is well established that as adolescents progress, they begin to develop coping strategies commiserate with their cognitive abilities (Compas et al., 2001; Zimmer-Gembeck &

Skinner, 2011). Due to their increased executive capacities older adolescents are better able (than younger adolescents) to utilize problem-focused coping strategies, rather than relying solely on emotion-focused ones. This improved cognitive ability means that as adolescents age, they continue to build coping skills and have a larger repertoire from which they can select coping strategies to use in response to stressors.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 was concerned with determining groups of youth based on racial discrimination and culturally relevant coping strategies using latent class analyses. Results indicated that there was significant variability among African American boys in their exposure to racial discrimination and use of culturally relevant coping strategies. A four-class solution was the best fit for the sample and yielded a mixed coping, low discrimination group; moderate coping, high discrimination group; high coping, low discrimination group; and a high coping, high discrimination group. The composition of the classes suggests that African American boys largely use culturally relevant coping strategies and experience racial discrimination at different levels. Notably, within this sample, no group was characterized by overall low use of culturally relevant coping strategies. Rather, levels of particular strategies varied among groups. Interpreted in conjunction with the findings for Hypothesis 2, the profiles suggest that the high school-aged African American boys in the current sample are indeed using some culturally relevant coping strategies and experiencing some racial discrimination; however, they may not be using spiritually-centered, maintaining harmony, and communalistic coping in direct response to racial discrimination.

Research Question 2

The results of research question 2 determined whether there were differences among discrimination and coping groups on psychosocial measures including depression, anxiety, aggression, school belongingness, and social skills. Regarding depression, there was a significant difference between the high culturally relevant coping/low racial discrimination group and the moderate coping/high discrimination group such that the former reported more depression. Similarly, there was a significant difference between the two groups on a measure of anxiety, indicating that the moderate coping/high discrimination group reported less anxiety than the high coping/low discrimination group. These results are surprising given the conceptualization of culturally relevant coping as a cultural asset and of racial discrimination's contribution to internalizing symptoms. Previous research with African American youth ties racial discrimination experiences to increased internalizing symptoms (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2009; Brady et al., 2009; Brondolo et al., 2009). Within this sample, it is possible that the moderate coping/high discrimination and high coping/low discrimination groups utilize their coping strategies differently. Though culturally relevant coping strategies are generally regarded to be helpful, youths demonstrate better outcomes when they are more able to appropriately match a coping strategy to a stress response (Sandler et al., 1997). According to the specificity framework of examining stress and coping, stressor characteristics (e.g. controllable vs. uncontrollable, acute vs. chronic) and coping responses interact to produce varying outcomes (McMahon, Grant, Compas, Thurm, & Ey, 2003; Pierre, 2013). Those in the high culturally relevant coping/low discrimination group may be using high overall coping strategies in response to any stressor, rather than selecting a specific strategy. The moderate coping/high discrimination group may experience more racial discrimination, but their moderate

use of coping strategies may be a reflection of their ability to draw from multiple strategies overall and use them in a targeted manner. A study examining dispositional and situation-specific coping strategies among male African American young adults demonstrated that coping strategy use varied by stressor exposure (Brown, Phillips, Abdullah, Vinson, & Robertson, 2011). Additionally, the high level of coping strategy use endorsed by the high culturally relevant coping/low discrimination groups suggests that they may be responding to other stressors that may predict higher levels of anxiety symptoms. This group may be encountering high levels of non-discrimination stressors in their daily lives and attempting to cope with them using culturally relevant coping strategies.

Another explanation for these results considers the relationship between anxiety and coping responses. Those with high anxiety levels may misinterpret neutral stimuli as dangerous or threatening, therefore responding to the stimuli using their coping strategies. There could be a reciprocal relationship between anxiety and the high coping/low discrimination group such that the high coping/low discrimination group uses coping strategies more *because* they already report more anxiety. Given these findings, future research should investigate how effectively each group uses the culturally relevant coping strategies in response to various stressors, including racial discrimination. In addition, longitudinal research may help to delineate the complex associations between racial discrimination, coping, and anxiety symptoms.

On a measure of school belongingness, the mixed coping/low discrimination group reported significantly lower levels of school belongingness than both high discrimination groups but did not differ from the high coping/low discrimination group. Further, the high coping/low discrimination group reported lower school belongingness than did the high coping/high discrimination group. However, the former group did not differ significantly from the moderate

coping/high discrimination group. Analyses also revealed an effect of high coping skills use on

social skills. Those in the mixed coping/low racial discrimination moderate coping/high

discrimination groups reported the lowest levels of social skills among all coping and

discrimination groups, while the high coping/low discrimination and high coping/high

discrimination groups did not differ significantly from one another. Regarding the social skills

outcomes, use of culturally relevant coping strategies appear to be a stronger influence than

racial discrimination, as no pattern between high/low racial discrimination emerged. For school

belonging, culturally relevant coping and racial discrimination appear to have a blended

influence. The results within this sample regarding social skills and school belonging may be

explained by the relationship between culturally relevant coping use and ethnic identity.

Culturally relevant coping and ethnic identity are related to one another as they are both cultural

assets and moreover because they are fostered by parents' attempts at racial socialization

(Gaylord-Harden, Burrow, & Cunningham, 2012). The extant literature on culturally relevant

coping suggests that those with strong ethnic identity are more likely that those without to use

these coping strategies. Within this sample, the use of culturally relevant coping strategies may

be an indicator of the adolescents' ethnic identity. Affect, communalism, and spirituality are

conceptualized as domains of cultural orientation or values within Black culture (Scott, 2003).

Therefore, high endorsement of the culturally relevant coping strategies mapping on to these

domains suggest high identification with Black culture. Exposure to discrimination may act as

an [negative] indicator of ethnic identity as well. Youth may connect with one another over

having endured discrimination due to their shared ethnicity or race. Thus, within the influence of

exposure to discrimination, those who use more culturally relevant coping strategies may feel

even more belonging with their same-race peers who identify similarly. This sample's particular

academic setting may also contribute to high feelings of belongingness. Participants attend an

all-boys charter school with a majority African American student population. The school also

separates each grade into several homeroom groups called "pride groups" aimed at building

cohesion and fostering connection to the school and one another. Thus, the school's

demographics and school structures both appear to be conducive to building strong group

identification. A previous study with African American high school youth yielded similar

outcomes, suggesting that ethnic identity is positively related to school belonging (Dotterer,

McHale, & Crouter, 2009). In turn, these groups who use more culturally relevant coping

strategies demonstrate better social skills, as they are less isolated from their peers. Not only do

social skills lead to more belonging, but those who feel more belonging can strengthen and then

report more skills.

Finally, there were no differences in levels of aggression among the LCA groups.

Supplemental analyses separated the measure of aggression into verbal and physical subscales.

ANOVAs performed for the two subscales indicated no significant differences among LCA

groups for verbal aggression (F[3,596] = 1.708, $p >$ .05) and a marginally difference for physical

aggression (F[3,595] = 2.307, $p =$.076). Post hoc analyses revealed a marginally significant

difference between moderate coping/high discrimination group ($M =$ 1.53, $SD =$ 1.59) and the

high coping/low discrimination group ($M =$ 1.93, $SD =$ 1.70). Previous research on racial

discrimination suggested a link with aggression for African American boys (Brody et al., 2006),

which may be mediated by anger and hostile perceptions of relationships (Simons et al., 2006).

However, within the current sample the effect of Afrocentric coping strategies, which are a

cultural asset, was considered. Though the groups differed in the levels that they endorsed each

culturally relevant coping strategy, no group indicated low levels across all strategies. It may be

that the mere use of some of the culturally relevant coping strategies affects the underlying

processes (e.g., anger and hostile views) that typically mediate the relationship between racial

discrimination and aggression. Thus, there was no difference between the groups that endorsed

high or low racial discrimination. Additionally, the overall sample endorsed fairly low levels of

aggression, which may account for some the lack of variability in aggression scores among the

LCA groups.

Taken together, the psychosocial functioning profiles of the four latent class groups

presents a more in-depth understanding of African American adolescent males' coping patterns

and discrimination exposure. No one group reported consistently low or high scores across

domains. On the measure of aggression, the four groups evidenced no significant differences in

contrast to school belongingness where they appeared to have the greatest discrepancies.

Clinical Implications and Future Directions

Given the lack of research on African American male adolescents and their cultural

assets, this study contributes insights about these youth that have both research and clinical

relevance. Our findings supported the idea of culturally relevant coping as a cultural asset and

suggest that moderate, targeted use of culturally relevant coping strategies in response to

stressors may be beneficial for these boys. Intervention or prevention programs may capitalize

upon these strategies, helping youth to understand when and how to draw from a variety of

coping strategies which they already employ in order to be most effective. Furthermore, current

research on youth development programs encourages the incorporation of race, ethnicity, and

culture in the empirical evaluation and implementation of these programs at several ecological

levels (Williams & Deutsch, 2016). The current study is in line with this conceptualization by

attempting a nuanced understanding of culturally relevant coping strategies and their potential as

an asset. Race and ethnocultural variables do not necessarily put youth at risk for poor

development and should be evaluated on a more individual and within-group level. As such,

programs should aim to be more culturally relevant and may event benefit from using cultural

values (e.g. Afrocentrism, collectivism, etc.) as foundational within their program development

(Williams & Deutsch, 2016). Results from the current study suggest that even when youth

experience high racial discrimination, those who also use more culturally relevant coping

strategies endorse high school belongingness and social skills. Future research, including

program evaluation of programs promoting or incorporating culturally relevant values, should

evaluate these effects longitudinally to better understanding how individual differences in racial

discrimination and culturally relevant coping affect youths' psychosocial profiles across time.

Additionally, given that the proposed four-factor model for the Y-ACSI did not fit with the data,

future studies addressing culturally relevant coping measures may consider using other factor

analysis methods such as item parceling and parallel analysis as a means of understanding

culturally relevant coping.

Limitations and Strengths

Although this study contributes the research body on culturally relevant coping patterns

of African American boys, it is not without its limitations. The study was conducted using self-

report data, therefore, concerns of shared method variance and inflated associations among

variables cannot be completely ruled out. However, the associations between variables differed

from one another, suggesting that shared method variance likely did not pose a problem for this

sample. Additionally, the data in this sample are cross-sectional, meaning that a causal

relationship among variables cannot be inferred. As a result, it is not known how culturally

relevant coping strategies and racial discrimination affect one another longitudinally, or how the latent class coping/discrimination groups fare psychosocially over time.

Another limitation of the current study is that systemic level racism-related stressors were not measured. This study's scope was limited to racial discrimination happening on an interpersonal level, rather than those affecting African Americans on a macro level (e.g. (transgenerational transmission, chronic-contextual stress, and collective experiences) and also focused on the participants' own life events rather than including vicarious experiences. Although these interpersonal and first-hand events are more easily (Brondolo et al., 2009) and accurately (Seaton & Yip, 2008) identified by adolescents than other types, it still behooves us to understand the effect which these macro-level racism-related experiences affect African American boys as a whole. Future research including some or all of these experiences would provide rich data allowing us to differentiate among stressor types and their relationship to culturally-relevant coping and would minimize shared method variance. Further, their inclusion would be in line with Africultural values of communalism and would additionally provide historical and current social context through which the results may be interpreted.

Though there were limitations to the current study, it also had several strengths. Given the lack of research specifically conducted with African American male adolescents and their coping behaviors, this study contributed much-needed knowledge toward the research body including a validated coping measure for this population, understanding about racial discrimination's relationship with culturally relevant coping strategies, and insight into the psychosocial profiles of different culturally relevant coping/racial discrimination groups. The current study also examines this group from a positive youth development framework and an Afrocentric lens in direct contrast to the traditional Eurocentric and deficit-based frameworks of

studying African American youth (García Coll et al., 1996; Tucker & Herman, 2002). By choosing not to include a white comparison group and centering the study on the understanding of culturally relevant coping strategies, this study frames culturally-related variables as assets and circumvents the notion that research on youth of color must be "normed" against a white sample.

Another strength of this study is the use of both variable-based analyses (i.e., structural equation modeling; SEM) person-centered analyses (i.e., latent class analysis; LCA). The use of SEM allows for the measurement of latent constructs, allowing us to better understand the construct of culturally relevant coping beyond simple use of a measure (Jeon, 2015). Using LCA to determine the culturally relevant coping/racial discrimination groups which occurred within the sample allowed us to understand this group of African American male adolescents through the group profile on a number of variables, and later, outcomes, rather than only determining the singular impact of a particular variable (Bergman & Magnusson, 1997).

Conclusions

The current study contributes to the literature on culturally relevant coping, racial discrimination, and African American boys, especially in using person-centered analysis methods. Although the initial four-factor structure did not fit the Y-ACSI items, the CFAs were able to demonstrate good fit for each of the four factors within the data. Results further revealed that additional study is needed on racial discrimination and its relationship with the use of culturally relevant coping strategies with African American male adolescents, as contrary to previous research, racial discrimination did not predict levels of culturally relevant coping use as hypothesized. Rather, there appears to be a more complicated relationship between the two, as the latent class analysis showed that individuals with varying levels of racial discrimination

exposure and culturally relevant coping strategy use did not display straightforward patterns of functioning on both positive and negative psychosocial indicators.

However, results did appear to support the conceptualization of culturally relevant coping strategies as cultural assets for African American adolescent males, especially as they relate to their levels of school belonging and social skills. When exposed to high levels of racial discrimination, boys who endorsed a moderate use of culturally relevant coping strategies reported lower anxiety and depression scores than other groups. Additional research should be conducted to better understand when and how these different culturally relevant coping/discrimination groups use these strategies and for which stressors they cope with using these strategies. Those working with urban, African American male adolescents should consider how culturally relevant coping strategies can be a strength and should continue attempting to understand how individual differences in racial discrimination, coping strategy use, and other culturally-relevant variables affect youths' psychosocial wellbeing.

APPENDIX A

ADDITIONAL TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 5. Original Y-ACSI Factors and Associated Items

Factor 1 – Emotional Debriefing

Music

9	I listen to music or the radio.
10	I listen to my favorite song over and over.
17	When I have a problem, I sing.
18	I sing my favorite song over and over again.

Activity

11	When I have a problem, I try to relax or do something relaxing.
12	I dance or make up dance routines to take my mind off the problems.
13	I dance with a group of friends.

Creative

14	When I have a problem, I write.
15	When I have a problem, I write in a notebook, diary or journal.
16	When I have a problem, I do something artistic.

Factor 2 – Communalistic

Expressive

19	I talk about the problem to someone in my family.
20	I talk about the problem to someone my age outside of my family.
21	I talk about the problem with someone I can trust.
22	I talk about the problem with someone who understands what I am going through.
23	I call someone to talk about my problem.

Receptive

24	I listen to other people's point of view.
32	I think about somebody I respect and how he/she might handle the problem.
34	I first try to deal with it myself, then if I can't deal with it, I get help from someone else.
33	I think about a story that someone in my family told me.

Factor 3 – Maintaining Harmony

Acceptance

1	When things don't go my way, I just accept the way things are.
2	I just accept that I cannot change what has happened.
3	I tell myself that I've got to be patient and believe in myself.

Agency

4	I try to make things better by being nice to others.
5	I try to make things better by trying to see things from someone else's point of view.
6	I try to make things better by being respectful to other people.
7	When I have a problem with someone, I try to talk to them about it and work it out.
8	I try to make things better by doing right by people.

Factor 4 – Spiritually-centered Coping

Relationship with God

25	I pray or talk to God.
29	I put it in God's hands.
30	I write down my prayers or write a note to God.
31	I ask God for strength.

Spiritual Activities

26	I go to church or mosque to feel better.
27	I ask someone to pray for me.
28	I read my Bible or Qur'an.

Figure 3. Hypothesized Factors and Item Loadings for the Y-ACSI
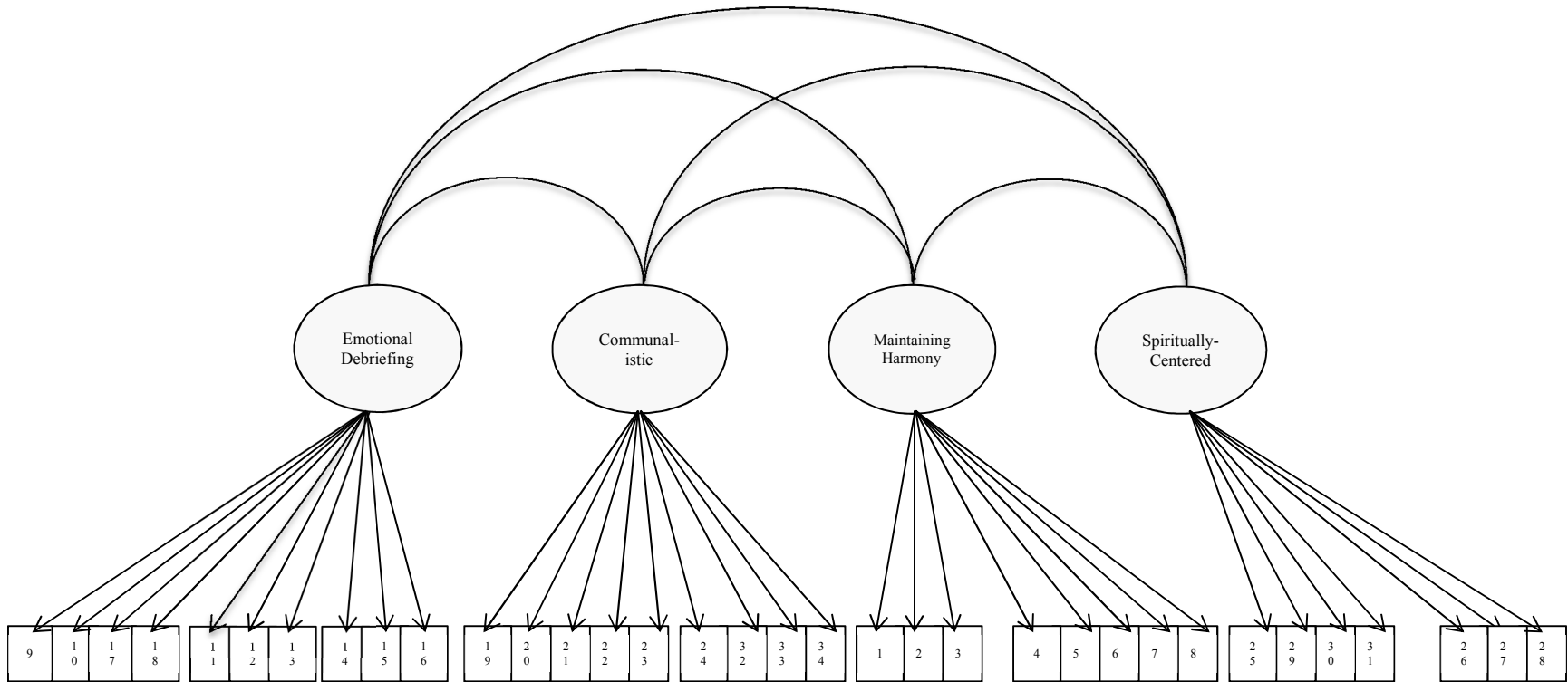
APPENDIX B

YOUTH MEASURES

Y-ACSI

Instructions

The statements below represent some ways people cope with problems or stressful situations in their daily lives. Before you respond to the statements below, you will need to think of something stressful related to your or your family's culture that happened to you within the past three months. A "stressful situation" is any problem or situation that you find troubling or causes you to worry. These problems may be related to your language, cultural identity, or cultural practices and could happen with your family, friends, school, relationships, or other things you consider important in your life. To help us understand the stressful situation you are thinking of when responding to the statements in this survey, please write one or two sentences that describes what happened in the situation you are thinking of.

Use this space to describe your stressful situation:

DID YOU REMEMBER TO DESCRIBE YOUR STRESSFUL SITUATION?

A. Circle the number that shows how stressful this problem was for you or how much you worried about it.

1	2	3	4
Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very

B. Circle the number that shows how much control you think you have over this problem.

1	2	3	4
Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very

Think of the stressful situation that has been a problem for you. For each item on the list below, circle **one** number from 1 (not at all) to 4 (a lot) that shows **how much** you do these things when you have problems like these. Please let us know about everything you do, think, and feel, even if it doesn't make things better.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Not at all	**A little**	**Some**	**A Lot**

1. I try to make other people laugh so that I feel better about my problems.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2. When things don't go my way, I just accept the way things are.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
3. I just accept that I cannot change what has happened.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
4. I tell myself that I've got to be patient and believe in myself.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
5. I try to make things better by being nice to others.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
6. I try to make things better by trying to see things from someone else's point of view.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
7. I try to make things better by being respectful to other people.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
8. When I have a problem with someone, I try to talk to them about it and work it out.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
9. I listen to music or the radio.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
10. I listen to my favorite song over and over.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
11. I play a contact sport (like basketball or football) to let my feelings out.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
12. I work on my athletic moves to take my mind off my problems.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

13. When I have a problem, I try to relax or do something relaxing. **1   2   3   4**
    Check all that you do:
    □ Lying down and putting something over my head.
    □ Going to sleep
    □ Soaking in the bathtub
    □ Taking deep breaths
    □ Other _____

14. I dance or make up dance routines to take my mind off the problems.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
15. I dance with a group of friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
16. I try to make things better by doing right by people.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
17. I remember what someone else (like mom, dad, grandmother, friend) told me to do about the problem.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

18. When I have a problem, I write. **1   2   3   4**
    Check all that you do:
    □ Poetry
    □ Songs
    □ Raps/rhymes
    □ Short stories
    □ Other _____

19. When I have a problem, I write in a notebook, diary or journal.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

20. When I have a problem, I do something artistic. **1   2   3   4**
    Check all that you do:
    □ Drawing, painting, sketching
    □ Singing

□ Playing an instrument (drum, piano)
□ Other _____

21. When I have a problem, I sing.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
22. I sing my favorite song over and over again.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
23. I make sure I am around other people and am not alone.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
24. I spend time around my friends.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
25. I spend time around my family.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

26. I do things to look my best.   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**
    Check all that you do:
        □ Get my nails done
        □ Get my hair done or hair cut
        □ Put on my favorite clothes
        □ Put on my favorite jewelry
        □ Other _____

27. I talk about the problem to someone in my family.   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**
    Check all that you talk to:
        □ My Mother/Father
        □ My Grandmother/Grandfather
        □ My Brother/Sister
        □ My Auntie/Uncle
        □ My Cousin(s)
        □ My Godmother/Godfather
        □ My Godbrother/Godsister
        □ Other _____

28. I talk about the problem to someone my age outside of my family.   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**
    Check all that you talk to:
        □ My Friend
        □ My Girlfriend/Boyfriend
        □ My "play" cousin, brother, or sister
        □ Other _____

29. I talk about the problem to an adult outside of my family.   **1**   **2**   **3**   **4**
    Check all that you talk to:
        □ My pastor
        □ A teacher
        □ A doctor
        □ My friend's mother or father
        □ Other _____

30. I talk about the problem with someone I can trust.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
31. I talk about the problem with someone who understands what I am going through.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
32. I call someone to talk about my problem.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
33. I listen to other people's point of view.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
34. I pray or talk to God.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

35. I go to church or mosque to feel better.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
36. I ask someone to pray for me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
37. I read my Bible or Qur'an.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
38. I put it in God's hands.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
39. I write down my prayers or write a note to God.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
40. I ask God for strength.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
41. I think about somebody I respect and how he/she might handle the problem.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
42. I repeat to myself over and over that everything is okay.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
43. I first try to deal with it myself, then if I can't deal with it, I get help from someone else.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
44. I try to focus on the present (here-and-now) rather than what might happen in the future.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
45. I think about what a relative who has passed away would tell me to do.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
46. I kept something from someone close to me who died, and I use it when I have a problem.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
47. I go to a quiet, special, or sacred place.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
48. Someone in my family has special powers, and they tell me what to do about my problem.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
49. Someone in my family has special powers, and they make things better.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
50. I tried to get as many people as I could to help me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
51. I helped my family with things around the house.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
52. I think about a story that someone in my family told me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

MESA-Racial Discrimination

Here are some events that sometimes happen to teenagers. Please indicate whether each of the following events have happened to you in the past 3 months.

Circle: 1 = 'HAPPENED'
         2 = 'DID NOT HAPPEN'

	Happened	Did Not Happen
24. You were unfairly accused of doing something bad because of your race or ethnicity.	1	2
31. People put you down for practicing the customs or traditions of your own race or ethnicity or country of origin.	1	2
38. You were excluded from a group because of your culture or race.	1	2
50. You heard people say bad things or make jokes about your culture or race.	1	2
61. You were called a racial name that was a put down.	1	2
72. You saw another student treated badly or discriminated against because of his/her race/ethnicity.	1	2

DAS S 21

Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 that indicates how much the statement applied to you *over the past week*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

The rating scale is as follows:

0 Did not apply to me at all
1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time
3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time

1	I found it hard to wind down	0	1	2	3
2	I was aware of dryness of my mouth	0	1	2	3
3	I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all	0	1	2	3
4	I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g., excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)	0	1	2	3
5	I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things	0	1	2	3
6	I tended to over-react to situations	0	1	2	3
7	I experienced trembling (e.g., in the hands)	0	1	2	3
8	I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy	0	1	2	3
9	I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself	0	1	2	3
10	I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	0	1	2	3
11	I found myself getting agitated	0	1	2	3
12	I found it difficult to relax	0	1	2	3
13	I felt down-hearted and blue	0	1	2	3
14	I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing	0	1	2	3
15	I felt I was close to panic	0	1	2	3
16	I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything	0	1	2	3
17	I felt I wasn't worth much as a person	0	1	2	3

18	I felt that I was rather touchy	0	1	2	3
19	I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (e.g., sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)	0	1	2	3
20	I felt scared without any good reason	0	1	2	3
21	I felt that life was meaningless	0	1	2	3

TAS

Please answer the following questions thinking of what you actually did during the last 7 days. For each question, mark with a circle how many times you did that behavior during the last 7 days.

During the last 7 days	0 times	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 times	6 or more times
1. I teased students to make them angry.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
2. I got angry very easily with someone.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
3. I fought back when someone hit me first.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
4. I said things about other kids to make other students laugh.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
5. I encouraged other students to fight.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
6. I pushed or shoved other students.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
7. I was angry most of the day.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
8. I got into a physical fight because I was angry.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
9. I slapped or kicked someone.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
10. I called other students bad names.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
11. I threatened to hurt or to hit someone.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+

Section Two
PSSMS

Directions: *We are interested in learning more about how students feel about their teachers and their school. Please answer the following questions by circling one number for each question*

	Not at all True				Completely True
1. I feel like I am a part of this school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. People here notice when I am good at something.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It is hard for people like me to be accepted here.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Other students in this school take my opinions seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Most teachers at school are interested in me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong here.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There's at least one teacher in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
8. People at this school are friendly to me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Teachers here are not interested in people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am included in lots of activities at school.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am treated with as much respected as other students.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel very different from most of the other students here.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I can really be myself at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Teachers here respect me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. People here know I can do good work.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I wish I were in a different school.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel proud of belonging to this school.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Other students here like me the way I am.	1	2	3	4	5

75

SSiS Rating Scales
Student
(Ages 13–18)
™ Hand-Scoring Form

Remember: How True: **N** - Not True **L** - Little True **A** - A Lot True **V** - Very True

1. I ask for information when I need it. N L A V
2. I pay attention when others present their ideas. N L A V
3. I try to forgive others when they say "sorry." N L A V
4. I'm careful when I use things that aren't mine. N L A V
5. I stand up for others when they are not treated well. N L A V
6. I say "please" when I ask for things. N L A V
7. I feel bad when others are sad. N L A V
8. I get along with other children/adolescents. N L A V
9. I ignore others who act up in class. N L A V
10. I take turns when I talk with others. N L A V
11. I show others how I feel. N L A V
12. I do what the teacher asks me to do. N L A V
13. I try to make others feel better. N L A V
14. I do my part in a group. N L A V
15. I let people know when there's a problem. N L A V
16. I look at people when I talk to them. N L A V
17. I help my friends when they are having a problem. N L A V
18. I make friends easily. N L A V
19. I do my work without bothering others. N L A V
20. I am polite when I speak to others. N L A V

21. I stay calm when I am teased. N L A V
22. I follow school rules. N L A V
23. I ask others to do things with me. N L A V
24. I am well-behaved. N L A V
25. I say nice things about myself without bragging. N L A V
26. I stay calm when people point out my mistakes. N L A V
27. I try to think about how others feel. N L A V
28. I meet and greet new people on my own. N L A V
29. I do the right thing without being told. N L A V
30. I smile or wave at people when I see them. N L A V
31. I try to find a good way to end a disagreement. N L A V
32. I pay attention when the teacher talks to the class. N L A V
33. I play games with others. N L A V
34. I do my homework on time. N L A V
35. I tell others when I'm not treated well. N L A V
36. I stay calm when dealing with problems. N L A V
37. I am nice to others when they are feeling bad. N L A V
38. I ask to join others when they are doing things I like. N L A V
39. I keep my promises. N L A V
40. I say "thank you" when someone helps me. N L A V

Remember: How True: **N** - Not True **L** - Little True **A** - A Lot True **V** - Very True

41. I stay calm when others bother me. N L A V

42. I work well with my classmates. N L A V

43. I try to make new friends. N L A V

44. I tell people when I have made a mistake. N L A V

45. I ask for help when I need it. N L A V

46. I stay calm when I disagree with others. N L A V

47. I'm afraid of a lot of things. N L A V

48. I make people do what I want them to do. N L A V

49. I often do things without thinking. N L A V

50. I often feel sick. N L A V

51. I swear or use bad words. N L A V

52. I find it's hard to focus on what I am doing. N L A V

53. I get embarrassed easily. N L A V

54. I hurt people when I am angry. N L A V

55. I have temper tantrums. N L A V

56. I think bad things will happen to me. N L A V

57. I lie to others. N L A V

58. I often get distracted. N L A V

59. I can't sleep well at night. N L A V

60. I do not let others join my group of friends. N L A V

61. I find it hard to sit still. N L A V

62. I feel lonely. N L A V

63. I cheat when playing games. N L A V

64. I make careless mistakes in schoolwork. N L A V

65. I think no one cares about me. N L A V

66. I try to make others afraid of me. N L A V

67. I break things when I'm angry. N L A V

68. I often get tired. N L A V

69. I talk back to adults. N L A V

70. I waste a lot of time. N L A V

71. I feel nervous with my classmates. N L A V

72. I say things to hurt people's feelings. N L A V

73. I fight with others. N L A V

74. I feel sad. N L A V

75. I break the rules. N L A V

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VITA

Emma-Lorraine Baaba Bart-Plange began her study in psychology at Saint Louis University, where she majored in the subject and minored in French and African American Studies. Dr. Bart-Plange's volunteer experience with children and refugees fueled her interest in social justice and she sought to continue the Jesuit tradition at Loyola University Chicago in pursuing her doctorate in Clinical Psychology. Throughout her time at Loyola, Dr. Bart-Plange worked as a research assistant in the lab of Dr. Noni Gaylord-Harden where her research focused on understanding stress and promoting effective coping strategies of African American and African immigrant youth and families. In addition to research, Dr. Bart-Plange dedicated her time to serving and empowering immigrants and refugees in Chicago through her volunteer work at Pan African Association.

Upon completing her doctorate, Dr. Bart-Plange plans to pursue a career in which she can address mental health concerns of underserved populations at individual and community levels through both clinical and consulting work. She also hopes to use her training to effect policy change and advocate for the needs of marginalized communities.