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Coping styles of black female students attending predominantly white colleges.

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COPING STYLES OF BLACK FEMALE STUDENTS ATTENDING
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE COLLEGES

A Dissertation Presented

By

DEBORAH NUNNALLY LEWIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May, 1987

Psychology

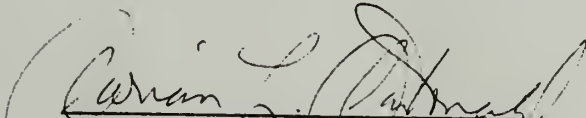
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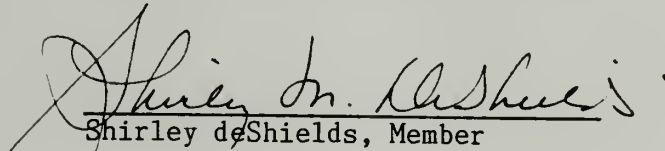
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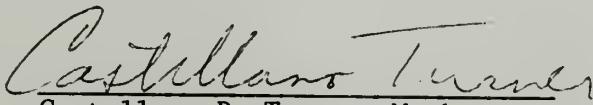
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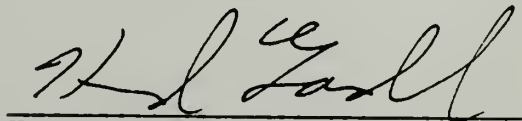
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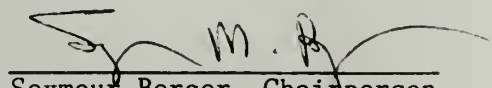
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A Historical Overview	1
Overview of the Educational Movement for Blacks	4
Self-Concept in Black Female students	6
Attrition, Retention and the College Environment	10
Attrition and the College Environment	12
Retention	13
Differences in Perceptions of Predominantly White Versus Predominantly Black Colleges by Black Students	15
Socioeconomic Influences	17
Coping and Achievement	19
Some Recommendations for Increasing Positive Coping	26
Purpose of the Study	28
II. METHODOLOGY	30
Data Analysis	32
III. RESULTS	33
Reliability	37
IV. DISCUSSION	66
.....	
APPENDIX	
A	72
B	75
C	82
REFERENCES	84

LIST OF TABLES

1. Descriptive and Demographic Characteristics of Sample	35
2. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Interracial Contact/Attitude" Scale	38
3. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Spirituality" Scale	39
4. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Personal Striving" Scale	40
5. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Seeking Help" Scale	41
6. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Relationship with Faculty" Scale	42
7. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Focusing on the Positive" Scale	43
8. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Seeking Social Support" Scale	44
9. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Detachment" Scale	45
10. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Problem-Focused Coping" Scale	46
11. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Wishful Thinking" Scale	47
12. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Self-Blame" Scale	48
13. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Tension Reduction" Scale	49
14. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Keep to Self" Scale	50
15. Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Perceived Success" Scale	51

16.	Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Activities" Scale	52
17.	Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Satisfaction with Current Status" Scale	53
18.	Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Peer Group (Race Only)" Scale	54
19.	Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for "Source of Support/Interpersonal" Scale	55
20.	Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha "Parental Influence" Scale	56
21.	Means, Standard Deviations and T-tests for Comparing Grade Point Average Groups on Ways of Coping and Life Report Scales	58
22.	Means, Standard Deviations and T-tests for Comparing Geography with Ways of Coping and Life Report Scales	59
23.	Means, Standard Deviations and T-tests for Comparing College on Ways of Coping and Life Report Scales	61
24.	Chi-Square Analysis and Percent Agreement: Socio- economic Status with Ways of Coping and Life Report Scale	62
25.	Interscale Correlations for All Scales Used in This Study	64

ABSTRACT

Coping Styles of Black Female Students Attending Predominantly White Colleges

May, 1987

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M.S., University of Massachusetts;

Ph.D., University of Massachusetts

Directed by: Professor Marian L. MacDonald

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship between the success level of Black women attending predominantly white colleges and preferred coping strategies for managing stress. Two major factors -- sex and race discrimination -- are often cited as obstacles Black women must confront in the process of attaining their goals. This investigator felt that most Black women in predominantly white colleges face equivalent or comparable pressures; thus, the question became, what individual differences made it possible for some Black women to succeed while others failed.

In addition, it was hypothesized that Black women from low socioeconomic backgrounds and large urban areas would have a wider range of coping strategies.

A contrasted group design was used and the data were collected from a set of self-report measures. A series of chi-square analyses and one-way analyses of variances were used to analyze the data.

The findings in this study did not provide support for the hypothesis. However, the results did provide some suggestive findings regarding coping styles and their relationship to success level, although the significance of these findings were relatively marginal. Limitations of the study included a somewhat narrow measure of success which rested on traditional methods of assessing mastery (e.g., grade point average).

C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

A Historical Overview

Historically, the role of education in the lives of Black women has been very important (Perkins, 1983; Sheftall-Guy, 1982; Thomas-Collier, 1982). During the antebellum and post Civil War periods, Black women combined educational pursuits with occupational necessities. In short, educational aspirations did not, and more importantly could not, preclude working. Today, education and occupation remain as an interwoven fabric of many Black women's lives (Thomas-Collier, 1982). For the Black woman, racial and sexual discrimination have always been harsh realities. The impact of these two realities on their economic situation has been evident from the periods spanning from slavery to the present and has influenced the coexistence of work outside the home and educational attainment.

Initially, education had a different connotation for Black women as compared to White women (Perkins, 1983). Prior to and following the Civil War the purpose of education among Blacks was "race uplift." "...Education was

for the entire race and its purpose was to assist in the economical, educational and social improvement of their enslaved and later emancipated race" (p.18). Perkins also commented that for the White woman, the emphasis on education was in molding the "ideal woman." Although the philosophy of education has changed tremendously for minorities and women since the antebellum and Civil War periods, the Black woman continues to view educational attainment in global terms that encompass her family and culture. Even as late as the 1970's, Black college students in general expressed life goals that embodied individual success with improvement and growth of the community (Hall and Allen, 1983).

Black women found themselves in roles that were devalued and, consequently, necessitated the development of coping patterns that would allow them to feel good about themselves. Throughout the many years of their existence in this society, Black women have had to develop strength through painful encounters (physical, mental and emotional), or run the risk of total psychological, if not physical destruction. As a result of their determination, Black women have managed to adapt and shield themselves from further negative impact. They did this by becoming more self-reliant, more assertive, more persistent, and possibly by recognizing (and accepting) the idiom that with pain came growth.

With these qualities embedded in her personality from years of experience and passed on through generations, do these qualities express themselves today? Specifically, are stresses that are experienced and the coping patterns shown by Black women historically carried over to the present time in their pursuit of educational attainment? Lazarus and Folkman (1984) address this in their concern with methodological issues when measuring stress and coping that:

A potential stressor at the structural level...will not create stress at the psychological level...unless it is mediated by psychological variables concerned with meaning and values...It would not be possible to understand the stress at the psychological level without reference to the social context in which it occurs; namely; the existence of social inequalities, passed down to the next generation, that may or may not be internalized psychologically (p.288).

It may be that Black women, because of their history, hold different meanings and different values for stressful situations than are experienced by other groups. Indeed, they may have come to internalize and externalize a different coping style based on their historical psychological experiences.

In the last few years, this investigator has become cognizant that a large body of research takes into account the educational experiences of Black people, although I have found that most of this research is negatively distorted and focuses on the weakness of Black people as victims. I have

also discovered that the literature on the strengths of Black women is quite limited and almost non-existent in regards to coping styles in their educational pursuits. Since it appears that the majority of Black students attend predominantly white colleges (Hall and Allen, 1982; Astin and Cross, 1981), the focus of this exploration will be on Black females at these institutions.

Overview of the Educational Movement for Blacks

In order to put the plight of the Black female college student in perspective, it is important at this point to give a brief history of the educational movement for Blacks within the past two decades.

During the 1960's and part of the 1970's, Blacks experienced tremendous gains in educational opportunities. After the Civil Rights Movement, white colleges and universities began opening up their doors to Black students. With this proliferation in enrollment came struggles for a more positive identity and a recognition of their capabilities (intellectual as well as physical). After the Black Power movement, some gains were made within predominantly white institutions in validating the experiences of Black students as legitimate and worthy, although subtle individual and (more importantly) institutional racism were hard to eliminate. Rutledge

(1982) points out in her analysis of students' perceptions of racism in higher education:

Institutional racism is by far the most devastating form of racism that exists. Often it is unintentional or disguised, which makes it difficult to detect (p. 106).

The gains made through the Civil Rights and Black Power movements were short lived. Within a decade, the gains were beginning to diminish. White backlash erupted and entailed accusations of reverse discrimination and unfair affirmative action rulings. Currently, the conservative mood of the country has brought some devastating blows to the gains made by Blacks in this country. Again, the observations by Rutledge and others (Suen, 1983; Astin, 1976) support these assumptions. Rutledge concurs that changes and opportunities have evolved in the 60' the gains have been limited:

...many of those opportunities were short lived. Judicial and legislative pressures and the civil rights movements led to some changes in racist policies and practices. But before the decade passed, pressures from white society, especially white males, were beginning to evolve in such a way as to threaten a return to the status quo; a state which seems to have arrived. Many of the gains made by Blacks seem to be in a state of decline...(p. 111).

This background provides the perspective which will be used to understand the coping patterns of Black female college students.

Self-Concept in Black Female Students

A person's view of her/himself may strongly influence the nature and the extent of that person's motivation. If an individual, for instance, has a negative self-concept, she/he may be unmotivated to achieve desired goals, or certainly the attainment of the goals may be perceived as emotionally and psychologically draining. Adversely, if an individual has a "positive" self-concept, she/he may be motivated to excel in his/her desired goal. Feelings of self-worth are important in the self-actualization of an individual. According to Rogers (1951):

Most of the ways of behavior which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of the self (p. 105).

A self-actualizing person strives towards independence, change and freedom of expression. A self-actualizing person strives toward need or tension reduction, "but emphasizes the pleasures and satisfactions that are derived from activities that enhance the organism" (Pervin, 1975, p. 225).

If it is the natural tendency for human beings to behave in accordance with their concept of themselves and to reduce needs and tensions, then it may follow logically that in order for Black women to positively grow and succeed, they must feel some sense of goodness. Furthermore, if

Black women perceive their experiences as positive and successful, their self-esteem may flourish -- thus, the psychological process is interactive.

Blacks in general have been accused of being intellectually inferior and emotionally infantile (Gould, 1981). Within the academic world, the Black student has been informed that she/he could never meet the intellectual standards of Caucasian students and that the history of her/his race was insignificant to society. These are the accusations made against the Black student and its negative impact can and has been potentially harmful to the self-esteem and self-initiative of many Black students.

The Black female student, in particular, has been exposed to the negative consequences of racism and in addition must grapple with the impact of sexism. She is caught in what is termed the "double jeopardy" syndrome (Epstein, 1973) and must struggle with the psychological conflicts and external constraints this syndrome may create within her.

As mentioned earlier in this text, with the advent of the Black Power movement in the 60's, many Black men and women experienced an uplift in their self-esteem. Blacks were beginning to sense their power and their talents -- this movement was positive for the race as a whole. Unfortunately, the majority of Black women had to play down their own aspirations in order to give encouragement and

support to Black men (Mays, 1979). Although their race was uplifted, as women, they experienced conflict over individual needs versus the needs of the Black race.

Black women have been blamed for the high unemployment among Black men because. Black women were accused of being "too strong," "matriarchs." These accusations further contributed to the confusion they may have been experiencing about themselves. Although the academic ability of many Black women was one of their most strongest attributes, they began experiencing feelings of ambivalence about whether to attain higher educational degrees. Black women were concerned that their educational pursuits might be further interpreted as being too "masculine" or too "aggressive" (Mays, 1979).

Interesting to note, Samuel and Laird (1979) state that there is a common assumption held by society, that Black women have a negative self-image. Their analysis tends to attenuate the negative self-image perspective and focuses on the strength of Black women. They point out that Black women have been able to maintain some positive self-concepts in spite of the deprecation of their worth.

On the campus, Black female students experienced identity-problems. According to Williams and Lyons (1972), Black female students experience more difficulty in adjusting to predominantly white campuses than do Black males, white males or white females. Williams and Lyons

attributed the Black female students' difficulties to an inadequate social life and identity conflicts. The diminished social life resulted from the limited number of Black males on white campuses and the increased competition for dating. Samuel and Laird (1975) found that Black female students at predominantly white colleges had a lower scoring on the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale for physical self-image than Black females at predominantly Black colleges. Wen (1975) found that Black female students were more concerned about their self-concepts than Black males. Obleton (1984) found in her review of the literature that Black female students as a group experienced more interpersonal problems than other groups. This is supported by other findings reporting the isolation experienced by Black female students (Obleton, 1984; Fleming, 1983; Williams, 1972; Jones, Harris and Hauck, 1975; Samuel and Laird, 1974; Suen, 1983; Astin, 1976; Peterson and Rodriguez, 1978; Bynum and Thompson, 1983).

It was also found that educational attainment was related to self-concept. DiCesare, Sedlacek and Brooks (1972) found that Black students who were successful tended to have high aspirations and feel that they had control over their lives:

Blacks who stay in school have a strong self-concept and take a more realistic look at the university and adapt to it to achieve their goals (p. 323).

Astin and Cross (1981) found that the Black women in their study, independent of the institution (Black and White), were motivated primarily by a strong interest in the learning process [this motivation seems to be an extension of her historical role in education] and in becoming better educated as compared to Black men who expressed a strong interest in financial opportunities.

Attrition, Retention and the College Environment

According to the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of the Census (1984), college enrollment increased from 9.2 million in the fall of 1972 to 12.4 million in the fall of 1982. Growth rates for Blacks went from 10.4 percent of total enrollment in 1972 to 14.3 percent in 1982. The proportion of college students who were women rose from 43.1 percent to 51.5 percent during the same ten-year period.

Although the enrollment rate presumably increased for Blacks, the attrition rate is proportionately greater for Blacks than whites (Astin, 1976). During the 1970's, more than 15 million freshmen enrolled in nearly 3,000 colleges and universities in the United States. Half of these students were unlikely to graduate on schedule and between five and six million would never earn degrees (Cope and Hannah, 1975).

Black women in particular, but women in general, were much more likely to drop out than other groups. Bynum and Thompson's (1983) findings supported the above predictions and coincided with Astin's findings of heavy dropout rates of Black students in American colleges and universities. In addition, they found that proportionally more Black students dropped out than did white students (nine versus twenty-two percent). Bynum and Thompson (1983) distinguished between dropouts, stopouts and persisters: dropouts were those college students who failed academically or withdrew from school for any reason with little chance or intention of completing his or her degree; stopouts were defined as students who temporarily interrupted their college education and returned in one or two years to obtain a degree; and persisters were those students who enrolled for four consecutive years at the same college or university and graduated on schedule. These investigators and others (Rugg, 1982) found that there were more minority persisters and dropouters as compared to white male stopouters.

Hall and Allen's (1982) review of various educational studies revealed that seventy-five percent of all Black students currently attend predominantly white schools; of these Black students, thirty to seventy (at some places) will leave before graduating. In the academic year 1978-79, Blacks represented only ten percent of all Bachelor of Arts degrees awarded.

Attrition and the College Environment

Astin (1975) suggests that Black students may be handicapped by the white college environment, which diminishes their chance of finishing. The isolation and alienation felt by many Black students (particularly female students) has been strongly implicated as a reason for high dropout rates (Astin, 1975; Rugg, 1983; Suen, 1983; Peterson and Rodriguez, 1979; Rutledge, 1983; Keller, Piotrowski and Sherry, 1982; Bynum and Thompson, 1983; Nelson, Scott and Bryan, 1984).

Suen (1983) found that the level of social estrangement was higher for Black students at predominantly white colleges than for their white counterparts. She also found that attrition was related significantly to the total alienation score and a sense of meaninglessness among Black students (meaninglessness was defined as "a sense of loss of direction as to one's purpose and meaning in a university").¹

Peterson and Rodriguez (1978) observed that minority students perceived college and community activities on predominantly white campuses as directed toward white students. Rutledge (1982) found that Black students perceived many more restrictions on their life choices than

¹The other scales measured were: Powerlessness, a feeling of lack of control over one's life in a university and Social Estrangement, the feeling of loneliness.

on the life choices of white students. Bynum and Thompson (1983) found that social interaction and integration of the student within the college environment were identified as major factors in determining a student's dropout potential: "the presence of such support systems increased the likelihood that the student will remain in college and refrain from dropping out" (p. 40).

Peterson and Rodriguez (1978) found that there was a high degree of stress experienced by minority students as a result of social isolation and that women experienced significantly more stress than men. Black students reported significantly greater feelings of isolation than did either Chicano or Native American students (ECSQ = Environmental College Student Questionnaire). Also, more minority men were involved with extracurricular activities than minority women. Another study showed that Blacks perceived limited warmth from white professors, experienced awkwardness and communication barriers with white instructors, and felt that white faculty were less interested in their needs or paid less attention to them than to white students (Keller, Piotrowski and Sherry, 1982).

Retention

Astin (1976) suggested that a student's chances of finishing college could be greatly influenced by

environmental circumstances (i.e., dormitory living has a positive effect in reducing dropout rates -- although more so for men than women). He also found that extracurricular activities were significantly related to persisting in college and that persistence is enhanced if the student attends an institution in which the social backgrounds of other students resemble her or his own social background. On the other hand, Astin demonstrated that contrary to popular belief, students did not persist better if they attended colleges with students of similar ability.

Burrell and Trombley (1983) found that minority students perceived academic advising by minority professionals as their most important support resource.

Nelson, Bryan and Scott (1984) found that persisters reported a greater frequency of encouraging talks with instructors outside the classroom than those who leave college. Social support systems were found to be significantly related to retention rates (Bynum and Thompson, 1983).

Hall and Allen (1982) found that Black graduate students' perceptions of opportunities for being mentored were "salient predictors of achievement." They found that Black women suffered more academically from "the double stigma of societal taboos on cross-race and cross-sex fraternization" and suggested that providing positive role models would be essential. This coincides with Olbelton

(1984) and Peterson and Rodriguez (1978) findings on the positive effects of mentor relationships for Black female students and other minority female students. As mentioned, Black students' success is enhanced if the students attend an institution in which there are other students with similar social backgrounds, if there is participation in extracurricular activities, and if students reside in campus dormitories rather than at home. (Other recommendations for enhancing retention rate will be discussed later.)

Differences in Perceptions of Predominantly White Versus Predominantly Black Colleges by Black Students

In general, Black students at predominantly Black colleges perceived their experiences as more positive and more fulfilling than did those at predominantly white colleges. Interestingly, though, Black female college students were found to be more socially passive at Black colleges than at white colleges (Fleming, 1983) and less academic achievement oriented.²

Fleming suggests that one possible explanation for the passivity of Black female students at Black colleges may be

²Fleming cautions interpreting data because students in Black schools had substantially lower scores on socioeconomic status and in aptitude tests than Black students in predominantly white schools. Student and college selectivity may be influencing the results of her findings.

the result of the presence of men interfering with "the achievement drives in Black women." Fleming based this assumption on Tidball's (1976) finding that among white females, the presence of male cohorts in the college milieu is negatively related to the level of college and post-college accomplishments. Thus, although Black female students in predominantly white colleges suffer a great deal in other areas, there may be more opportunities to direct her energies toward academic aspirations. Mays' (1979) assertion that Black female students' level of aspirations and educational attainment is related to feminist consciousness coincides with Fleming's findings. However, Fleming also found that, in general, the institutional climate in Black colleges fosters higher aspirations than the climate in predominantly white colleges. Conditions found in Black colleges were: informal contact with faculty, strong academic values, administration and faculty beliefs that every individual can and will succeed, diverse curricular and extracurricular choices, and attention to remedying poor high school preparation.

Although some of the above conditions may be found at predominantly white colleges, Black students in Fleming's study did not perceive these conditions. Fleming found that the climate in white colleges for Black students was different. Black students have a poor social life (which coincides with other findings), few dating opportunities,

and a limited range of people who shared similar ideologies and perspectives with whom they could interact. Again, Fleming found that social isolation fell the hardest on Black females, because the absolute number of Black males on white campuses was small, especially among seniors. Fleming concluded that the institutional climate supported (whether intentional or not) racial prejudices, which encouraged Black students to lead "restricted lives" and Black students preferring not to participate in the life of the campus. According to Fleming, all of the above negative conditions contribute to below average academic performances.

Socioeconomic Influences

Studies on socioeconomic variables affecting coping styles of Black females are scarce. Those students that do report socioeconomic influence focus primarily on the proportionally greater financial burdens Black college students encountered in comparison to white college students; this influence negatively impacts on the students' ability to remain in school. Peterson and Rodriguez (1978) found that some minority students reported financial problems as their greater difficulty. Sprey (1960) suggests that those students who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were more academically motivated. These students may also have a greater range of coping styles than

students from high socioeconomic standards. Lineberger (1984) asserts that higher socioeconomic status does not provide Black college students with better coping strategies. Her findings suggest that coming from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may be a handicap because college students may be protected from life stresses and are more likely to attend predominantly white colleges where there may be more stresses.

Astin and Cross (1981) found in their analysis of Blacks in predominantly Black and predominantly white colleges, that more Black female students came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and less educated parents than did black men.³ Overall, though, Blacks in Black colleges tended to have better educated parents than Blacks in white institutions.

³These investigators also found that Blacks at white colleges tended to have better grades in high school and to have applied to and been accepted by more post-secondary institutions. This finding seems to support Sprey's (1960) observations that Blacks from lower socioeconomic backgrounds aspired to levels greater than parental occupations. Sixty-five percent of Black men and Black women in both Black and white colleges indicated that the college they were attending was their first choice. Approximately 90 percent reported that they had enrolled in either their first or second choice college. These findings might also suggest reasons for the differences in the students at the two institutions, one reason being related to the selection process of the student and the institution.

Coping and Achievement

The concept of coping has been important in the psychology of human development for many years. There have been many variations in the definitions of coping and how it is manifested in the process of adaptation.

The general literature on coping patterns suggests that an individual's coping responses and societal resources can attenuate stressful life events (Billings and Moos, 1982; Wheaton, 1982). The authors distinguish between having a support network and the utilization of that network in an effective manner. Billings and Moos (1981) concluded in their study of adult coping styles that coping may influence social networks and that various patterns of coping may either enhance or diminish social resources. Wheaton (1982), in his study of personal coping resources, differentiates between environmental resources (social supports) and personal resources (also referred to as "low fatalism," i.e., personality traits which have a bearing on an individual's ability to cope effectively during stress).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) point out in their review of the literature on coping that there is a great deal of confusion about the coping concept. Traditional ego psychology defines coping as "realistic and flexible thoughts and acts that solve problems and thereby reduces stress" (p. 118). Coping in this model is viewed to have a

hierarchical arrangement, involving ego processes and neurotic defenses. Contrasting with the ego psychology model of coping is the animal model in which coping is often defined "as acts that control aversive environmental conditions, thereby lowering psycho-physiological disturbances" (p. 118). This model is based on Darwinian thought of survival being dependent on the discovery of "what is predictable and controllable in the environment in order to avoid, escape or overcome noxious agents" (p. 118).

Another definition of coping, which for the purposes of this study is more appropriate than the above, is also proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). In their definition, coping is viewed as process-oriented versus trait-oriented. A distinction is made between coping and adaptive behavior that is automatized; it involves "efforts to manage," whether the outcome is successful or unsuccessful and includes a person's thoughts and actions, (coping is not equated with mastery -- thus the use of the term "manage"). Lazarus and Folkman formally define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 141).

The term achievement means (for the purpose of this study) the successful attainment of academic goals the Black woman sets for herself.

The literature is very limited in the specific area of coping strategies of Black female college students on predominantly white campuses. In simplistic analysis, it may be that those Black female students who do achieve their academic goals use their personal resources to effectively impact on environmental resources. Extrapolating from Lazarus and Folkman's definition, it seems it might be possible that Black women may use changing cognition and behavior to deal with stress that exceeds their resources. It may also be true that many Black women can endure higher levels of psychological stress. This assumption is based on their historical record of having to deal with enormous amounts of individual and institutional racism and sexism. Black women may appraise stressful situations and their ability to handle the stress differently than other groups. Lazarus (1984) points out that for many people in general, as efficacy expectancies increase and the person evaluates his or her resources more adequately for satisfying task demands, the relationship is appraised as having the potential for more control and, therefore, as less threatening.

Some researchers, such as DiCesare and colleagues (1972), observe that those Black students who take a realistic view of the college and adapt to it are more likely to achieve their goals. This assumption coincides somewhat with Sprey's (1960) observation that, although

Black females were exposed to worse anomic conditions⁴ than whites or northern Blacks, they had higher aspirations and expectations. Sprey asserts that his findings suggest that Black females demonstrated a different way of adjusting to their minority situation than Black males. Fleming (1983) suggests that Black women become more self-reliant and assertive as a result of adverse conditions such as social isolation, racial prejudices, etc., at predominantly white colleges. This is supported by Gatz, Gease, Tyler and Moran's (1982) observation of the coping style of Black women:

...Indeed it makes sense that a group who are more negatively valued by the social structure might respond by becoming strong believers in self-reliance, be initiating, show persistent effort and learn from one's successes and failures without blaming oneself or by becoming too concerned about others' judgement (p.11).

Myers (1980) found in her research of coping strategies of Black women that the majority of these women indicated they used the support of other Black women who were in similar situations as their own. Myer suggests that Black women may select certain roles to measure their success in order to think well of themselves. She observes that for most Black women, the roles chosen are most often occupational and

⁴Anomic -- defined as "a situation in which there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the social structured capacities of members of the group to act in accord with them...This occurs only if the group members share the cultural goals of the majority and are prevented from attaining the latter.

family maintenance. I suspect that work and education are also closely linked; that many non-traditional Black females measure their success by how well they do educationally.

Myers comments:

...we [Black women] are also capable of finding the means or, rather, the alternatives for developing and maintaining our emotional stability for feeling good about ourselves, at least some of the time, while living in a society that is not in tune with being black and/or with being female -- and at the same time! (p.23).

It seems that it has been the experience of Black women historically to grow stronger and cope better through adversity.

Myers found that the Black women in her study relied on their social support systems (defined as "those helping agents or individuals who provide social support and feedback in solving problems during periods of crisis", p. 26). The most frequently used support networks were: family, friends and church clergymen. Some of these support networks are similar to those used by Black students, especially in predominantly white colleges. Lineberger (1984) found in her study of coping strategies of Black students on white campuses, that Black students indicated praying and talking to someone as frequently used coping strategies. Another frequently used coping strategy was listening to music. Lineberger also looked at life stressors encountered during the Black student's past year

and his/her perceived impact of these stressors, level of assertiveness, and various demographic factors in predominantly Black colleges and predominantly white colleges. She found that Black students in Black colleges were slightly less assertive, experienced less stressful life events, viewed interpersonal interactions as more positive, came from smaller home towns, had a lower socioeconomic status, and had varied family compositions (i.e., living with a relative(s) versus parents, or with a friend). Black students in white colleges were more assertive, experienced more stressful life events, perceived interpersonal interactions as more negative, and came from larger home towns, higher socioeconomic backgrounds and more traditional family compositions. Lineberger concluded that although Black college students at each college environment coped in similar manners, the number of stressful events experienced were quite different, with Black college students at the predominantly white college confronting more stressful events and encountering a "pronounced negative impact from these events" (p. 10).

Burrell and Trombley (1983) found in their study of academic advising with minority students on predominantly white campuses that minority students were more likely to approach family members when faced with personal and financial problems. They also found that when having academic difficulties, minority students were more likely to

turn to minority professionals. Black students felt that their most important support resource was academic advising.

Obleton (1984) found that Black female students who had "model mentors" to identify with experienced greater clarity regarding their careers and found the contacts invaluable. Hall and Allen (1982) found that Black graduate students' perceptions of changes for being mentored were salient predictors of achievement, although as their confidence in the ability of mentors increased, race consciousness decreased:

Apart from -- but related to -- the student's ability to adjust individually is the extent to which an effective interface with the system is achieved. Such interfacing, through the establishment of strong personal ties with faculty is infinitely more important for graduate/professional students than is true for undergraduate students (p. 60).

Obleton suggests, however, that Black female undergraduates would also benefit from the mentoring process, which she found was consistent with the literature that suggests females are more influenced by same sex models than were males.

Peterson and Rodriguez (1978) concur with the above observation that women experienced more stress than men in predominantly white colleges. They also found in their study that minority students coped by withdrawing and primarily associating with other minority students. Keller, Piotrowski and Sherry (1982) also suggest that Black females

cope by adapting to the college environment and accepting the reality of the college environment.

Some Recommendations for Increasing Positive Coping

Several recommendations have been made for improving the social and academic support for Black students at predominantly white colleges and universities. Looking at it from a psychological perspective, one could say these recommendations are an attempt to facilitate coping strategies with the ultimate goal of improving academic success. Fleming (1983), for instance, suggests programs that would increase coping skills such as stress management, problem solving techniques, establishing structured support groups, and providing a "non-threatening" milieu that would allow students to exchange daily problems and stress-reducing strategies. Lineberger (1984) concurs with the need for Black students to broaden coping skills.

Obleton (1984), Hall and Allen (1982) and Peterson and Rodriguez (1978) suggest providing mentors for Black female students to foster academic achievement and self-esteem, and to clarify career goals. This, of course, would require increasing the number of minority faculty, specifically female minority faculty. Keller et al. (1982) recommend that "majority" faculty participate in workshops that address race consciousness and assess their feelings and

perceptions toward Black students, and that administrators become more aware of the need for interactions with Black students. Keller and colleagues also suggest that one way of fostering a more positive attitude in Black students toward the university is to have a "dialogue between university personnel and Black students." These investigators also suggest peer support groups. Baum and Lamb (1983) recommend peer counseling and group activities for decreasing alienation and providing tutorial programs for diminishing attrition. In order to diminish Black students' feelings of meaninglessness, these investigators suggest intensive orientation and career guidance. Peterson and Rodriguez (1978) recommend, in addition to fostering mentor relationships, increasing the minority student population and staff in order to alleviate feelings of isolation.

Clearly, the above recommendations seem logical and ideally could be beneficial, but would take the concerted effort and commitment of administrators and faculty to implement these suggestions.

Not only must the programs be fully supported, but they should be regularly evaluated to determine if, in fact, they are effective. Francisco (1983) suggests that existing programs for minority students be reorganized if they are ineffective and are not achieving their stated goals for the students.

Purpose of the Study

It appears that based on a review of the available literature on coping styles of Black female students, personal background and institutional constraints influence the ability of the student to handle stress. The literature also suggests that the Black female student's self-perceptions and support networks are important in buffering the effects of stress associated with being at a college, particularly a predominantly white college. These variables are also important to her educational achievement.

Unfortunately, studies on the influence of demographic and psychosocial variables are too limited to draw any conclusions. In addition, institutional and individual racism remain as obstacles to successful academic achievement for many Blacks.

Further investigations into the coping styles of Black female students from a psychological, as well as instrumental, perspective are needed. It is the purpose of this study to do just this -- to begin to look at the psychological as well as behavioral variables that interplay in the Black woman's coping strategy and to be cautious of methodological problems that have been present in other studies.

It is my hypothesis that Black women from low socioeconomic backgrounds and larger urban areas, will have

a wider range of coping strategies than will Black women from high socioeconomic and smaller urban areas.

It was my intention to look at the coping variables used to achieve their goals, whether those goals were at the micro level (e.g., specific social interactions; satisfactorily completing a particular course) or on a macro level (e.g., college completion).

It was my hope that this study would provide some answers to the complexities of the coping strategies Black women have adopted in their educational pursuits so that a framework could be developed for setting up programs that would facilitate the coping strategies of other women.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This study attempted to answer one question: What variables, especially what coping strategies, can distinguish between those Black females students (BFS) who are succeeding in predominantly white institutions of higher education from those who are not?

To accomplish this goal, a contrasted group design was used. This design involved looking at Black females who are in one of two categories -- successful versus unsuccessful -- and searched for variables which distinguish between the two categorical groups.

The research data was collected from a set of self-report measures. One measure, the Life Report Questionnaire, elicited information regarding "predictor" variables (those variables that may be associated with a person's degree of successfulness or unsuccessfulness), coping variables, and potentially informed the researcher of those characteristics that may make it possible to identify BFS's who may be at some risk. This measure also elicited information about the criterion variable which was undergraduate grade point average. In addition, the measure also provided information pertaining to individual and

family demographic variables, as well as personality traits (see Appendices A, B, and C).

Another self-report measure of coping style was that developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). The Ways of Coping questionnaire consisted of 64 items. In order to assess the coping of each woman, using this measure, each subject was asked to reconstruct recent stressful encounters and describe what they thought, felt and did. The items on this checklist involved four basic modes of coping: direct action, inhibition of action, information search, and intra-psychic or cognitive coping. The problem focused variables consisted of cognitive and behavioral problem solving techniques such as trying to come up with several answers to the problem, gathering information, and making a plan of action and following it. Emotion focused variables included: seeking emotional social support, distancing, avoidance, emphasizing the positive aspects of the situation, and self-blame.

Sixty-one subjects, who consisted of Black female students only, were recruited from the following colleges: University of Massachusetts/Amherst (UM); Amherst College (AC); Smith College (SC); Hampshire College (HC); and Mt. Holyoke College (Mt.HC). These five New England colleges are located in a rural area of western Massachusetts. University of Massachusetts is a publicly funded, co-ed college; Amherst and Hampshire colleges are privately funded,

co-ed colleges; Smith and Mt. Holyoke colleges are privately funded female colleges. The subjects were selected from the undergraduate pool and were offered academic credit for participation in the study. Academic advisors at each college were contacted and their assistance was requested in recruiting subjects. Once recruited, the subjects were informed that their names would remain anonymous and only the other information obtained would be used in the study. They were informed of the purpose of the study and were invited to sign a consent and confidentiality form.

Data Analysis

Series of Chi square analyses and one-way analyses of variance were used after all information had been coded. Chi square analyses is a test to ascertain whether a systematic relationship exists between two variables. One-way analyses of variance is a test used to determine the effects of a single factor on the criterion variable.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The purpose and major question of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship between the success level of Black women attending predominantly white colleges and preferred coping strategies for managing stress. It has been documented that Black women have to confront two major obstacles in the process of attaining their goals: sex and race discrimination. Given discrimination, this study was designed to begin looking at those variables that make it possible for Black women to succeed in spite of environmental obstacles. It was felt that most Black women in predominantly white colleges face equivalent or comparable pressures; the question became then, what individual differences made it possible for some Black women to succeed while others failed. Inner strength had been postulated as having an influence, but what did this exactly mean?

In addition to exploring individual difference (i.e., coping style variables), this study also addressed the issues of whether socioeconomic status, geographical region, or type of college (state versus private) had any bearing on level of success. It also explored whether spirituality,

mentor relationships, or identification with other females influenced one's inner strength or level of motivation. Finally, this study raised questions for further investigation regarding the effects of attending a predominantly white college on the self-perception and attitudes of Black women.

The subjects used in this study were students at four private colleges and one state university (see Table 1 for demographics). Ninety-two percent of this population were under the age of 22. Their ages varied from eighteen to thirty, with a mean age of nineteen point seven (19.7). Eighty-five percent reported being single (never married). Seventy-four percent identified themselves as Black American with approximately one-third (thirty-three percent) representing the Protestant religion and twenty-nine percent representing the Catholic religion. Twenty-one percent of this population was classified as upper middle class, thirty-three percent as middle middle class, twenty-eight percent working class, and fifteen percent lower class.⁵ The findings in this study were analyzed by means of Chi-Square Analysis Program and One-Way Analysis of Variance.

⁵SES was derived using Coleman and Rainwaters 1978 Social Standing estimates of prestige. In this method, education and occupation were used to derive SES level.

Table 1
Descriptive and Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Variable	Number	Percent
<u>College</u>		
(1) Smith	11	18%*
(2) Hampshire	10	16%*
(3) Mt. Holyoke	12	20%*
(4) Amherst	12	20%*
(5) UMass	16	26%*
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Total:	61	100%

(Rounded off to nearest whole)

Age

18	13	21%
19	19	31%
20	7	12%
21	12	20%
22	5	8%
23	1	2%
27	1	2%
29	1	2%
30	1	2%

Year

Freshman	17	28%
Sophomore	12	20%
Junior	9	15%
Senior	13	21%

Hampshire College does not categorize students into above class year.

Ethnicity

African	2	3%
Black American	45	74%
West Indian	9	15%
Hispanic	1	2%
Other*	3	5%

*Other usually involved student who described self as mixed.

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Number	Percent
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Divorced	1	2%
Engaged	3	5%
Married	2	3%
Never Married	52	85%
5% selected "other" which may suggest living together without marriage or engagement.		
<u>Religion</u>		
Baptist	12	20%
Catholic	8	13%
Episcopalian	10	16%
Protestant	8	13%
Other	10	16%
None	12	20%
<u>Size of Sibship</u>		
Only Child	8	13%
One or Two	34	56%
More than Two	16	26%
<u>Mother's Ethnicity</u>		
African	4	7%
Black American	41	67%
West Indian	6	10%
Hispanic	1	2%
Other*	9	15%
<u>Father's Ethnicity</u>		
African	3	5%
Black American	43	71%
West Indian	6	10%
Hispanic	2	3%
Other*	6	10%
<u>Sociodemographic Status</u>		
Upper Middle Class	13	21%
Middle Middle Class	20	33%
Working Class	17	28%
Lower Class	9	15%

Reliability

The major scales used in this study were analyzed by Pearson Correlation for internal reliability. Tables 2 through 20 present the scale items and internal reliability in terms of Cronbach's (1951) alpha levels for each of the items as they correlate to other items in the scale and the overall scale reliability. The Ways of Coping Scales were developed by Lazarus, et al. and measured individual coping styles (cognitions as well as behavior). The scales are subdivided into: 1) Problem Focused Scale; 2) Wishful Thinking Scale; 3) Detachment Scale; 4) Seeking Social Support Scale; 5) Focusing on the Positive Scale; 6) Self-Blame Scale; 7) Tension Reduction Scale; and 8) Keeps to Self Scale. The Life Report Scale, developed by this investigator, is subdivided into: 1) Perceived Success Scale; 2) Activities Scale; 3) Satisfaction with Current Status Scale; 4) Peer Group Scale; 5) Source of Support/Interpersonal Scale; 6) Parental Influence Scale; 7) Interracial Contact Scale; 8) Spirituality Scale; 9) Personal Striving Scale; 10) Seeking Help Scale; and 11) Relationship with Faculty Scale. The Life Report Scales measured attitudes on a number of variables including self-perceptions, relationship with mentors, social and physical level of motivation, identification with parental or other significant figures.

Table 2
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Interracial Contact/Attitude" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ISC*
1. I have experienced racial conflict with my peers at school (068)	65		.53	.70	.48	.15	.36	.27	.54
2. I have experienced racial conflict with faculty at school (069)	66			.48	.63	.13	.24	.50	.55
3. I am experiencing racial conflict with my peers at school (070)	67				.75	.35	.39	.24	.67
4. I am experiencing racial conflict with faculty at school (071)	68					.31	.46	.38	.62
5. My beliefs and attitudes have been compromised because I am attending a predominantly white college (074)	71						.35	.07	.36
6. My attitude and beliefs about racial differences have not changed [Negative/Positively] (077)								.18	.52
7. I feel positive about Black male-white female dating (081)									.30

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .78

Table 3
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Spirituality" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	ISC*
1. My spiritual connectedness has been very important in my ability to cope better while attending this college (089)	(86)		.45	.44	.45	.52
2. Attending church has been important in my ability to cope while attending this college (090)	(87)			.61	.62	.65
3. Praying regularly is important to me (091)	(88)				.81	.78
4. Praying is important to me when I'm feeling stressed (092)	(89)					.76

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .78

Table 4
Corrected Item-Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha Scale
for "Personal Striving" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	ISC*
1) I believe doing well in school is very important	002		.29	.32	.15	.32	.27	.22	.15	.13	.26	.18	.29
2) I go after what I want (038)	36			.56	.12	.33	.36	.22	.21	.04	.12	.50	.36
3) I achieve the goals I set for myself (039)	37				.10	.42	.57	.24	.38	.32	.24	.62	.53
4) I always wanted to go to college (040)	38					.49	.39	.67	.42	.30	.28	.10	.36
5) I have high expectations for myself (041)	39						.60	.46	.42	.50	.32	.32	.63
6) I believe I am capable of meeting my expectations (042)	40							.36	.31	.47	.30	.43	.62
7) I am a good student (043)	41								.73	.48	.32	.09	.66
8) I have always been a good student in college (044)	42									.63	.27	.18	.62
9) I was a good student in high school (045)	43										.29	.29	.59
10) The major I chose reflects what I want to do with my career life (047)	45											.15	.28
11) When obstacles are placed in my path toward my goal(s) I can work around them (048)	46												.40

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .81

Table 5
Corrected-Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha
Scale for "Seeking Help" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	ICS*
1. I seek out help from other women when there is a need (049)	47		.70	.02	.19	.16	.23
2. I seek out help from other Black women when there is a need (050)	48			.25	.15	.29	.43
3. I seek out professional help when there is a need (053)	50				.45	.53	.32
4. I feel comfortable asking for help when there is a need (054)	51					.70	.46
5. I seek out help from faculty when there is a need (055)	52						.59

*ICS = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .64

Table 6
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach Alpha for
"Relationship with Faculty" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	ISC*
1) I have a good relationship with at least one professor	28	.74	.68	.52	.14	-.05	-.06	.02		.57
2) I have a good relationship with more than one professor	29		.70	.72	.09	-.04	-.04	.05		.60
3) I can strongly identify with at least one professor	30			.77	.26	.22	-.13	-.07		.66
4) I can identify with more than one professor	31				.20	.29	.01	.02		.62
5) The professor(s) I feel most comfortable with are of my race	32					.40	.08	.18		.36
6) The professor(s) I feel the most comfortable with are of a different race (035)	35a						.36	.41		.30
7) The professor(s) I feel the most comfortable with are of a different sex (036)	35b							.77		.27
8) The professor(s) I feel the most comfortable with are of a different race and sex (037)	35c									

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .76

Table 7
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Focusing on the Positive" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	ISC*
1) Look for the silver lining, so to speak; try to look on the bright side of things	115		.16	.23	.13	.25
2) I am inspired to do some- thing creative	120			.32	.26	.36
3) I'm changing or growing as a person in a good way	123				.38	.50
4) Rediscover what is impor- tant in life	138					.33

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .58

Table 8
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Seeking Social Support" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	ISC
1) Talk to someone to find out more about the situation	108		.20	.10	.31	.30	.42	-.007	.46
2) Accept sympathy and under- standing from someone	118			-.064	.28	.49	.33	.19	.41
3) I let my feelings out somehow	128				.08	.15	.34	.10	.29
4) Talk to someone who can do something concrete about the problem	131					.33	.39	.08	.46
5) Ask a relative or a friend I respect for advice	142						.62	-.03	.54
6) Talk to someone about how I am feeling	145							.15	.68
7) I pray	160								.17

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .71

Table 9
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Detachment" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	ISC*
1) I feel that time will make a difference - the only thing to do is wait	104		.47	.42	.36	.35	.05	.58
2) Go along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck	112			.20	.16	.25	.03	.39
3) Go on as if nothing is happening	113				.62	.30	.18	.60
4) Try to forget the whole thing	121					.17	.14	.48
5) I'm waiting to see what will happen before doing anything	124						-.24	.29
6) Accept it, since nothing can be done	153							.04

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .65

Table 10
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha for
"Problem-Focused Coping" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	ISC*
1) I try to analyze the problem in order to understand it better	102		.20	.28	.30	.34	.24	-.0007	.35	.17	.08	.35	.52
2) I'm making a plan of action and following it	126			.14	.37	.53	.23	.42	.19	.02	.23	-.14	.47
3) I try not to act too hastily or follow my first hunch	135				-.02	.18	.22	.007	.14	.15	.20	.30	.37
4) Change some things so things will turn out all right	139					.40	.13	.49	.58	.03	-.06	.17	.40
5) Stand my ground and fight for what I want	146						.33	.42	.45	.08	.15	-.07	.58
6) Draw on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before	148							.34	.29	.20	.20	.26	.45
7) I know what has to be done, so I am doubling my efforts to make things work	149								.26	-.005	.20	.18	.43
8) Come up with a couple of different solutions to the problem	152									.07	.09	-.07	.50
9) I try to keep my feelings from interfering with other things too much	154										.37	.23	.33
10) I go over in my mind what I will say or do	162											.22	.40
11) I try to see things from the other person's point of view													.20

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .77

Table 11
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Wishful Thinking" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	ISC*
1) Hope a miracle will happen	111		.27	.23	.26	.26	.37
2) Wish that I can change what is happening or what I feel	155			.54	.42	.19	.55
3) I daydream or imagine a better time or place than the one I am in	157				.52	.47	.64
4) Wish that the situation would go away or somehow be over with	158					.45	.61
5) Have fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out	159						.50

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .76

Table 12
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Self-Blame" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	ISC*
1) Criticize or lecture myself	109		.39	.39	.46
2) Realize I brought the problem on myself	129			.59	.61
3) Make a promise to myself that things will be different next time	151				.60

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .73

Table 13
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Tension Reduction" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	ISC*
1) Get away from it for a while; try to rest or take a vacation	132		.27	.23	.38
2) Try to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medications, etc.	133			.26	.35
3) I jog or exercise	166				.37

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .55

Table 14
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Keep to Self" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	ISC*
1) I try to keep my feelings to myself	114		.17	.62	.56
2) Avoid being with people in general	140			.16	.21
3) Keep others from knowing how bad things are	143				.55

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .62

Table 15
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Perceived Success" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	ISC*
1) I am doing well in school	001		.07	.35	.26	.38	.29	.38	.28	.64
2) I believe that doing well in school is very important	002			.09	.27	.20	-.06	.20	.22	.67
3) I am having problems now with my academic work	003				.34	.39	.28	.18	.36	.61
4) I have had problems with my academic work prior to now	004					.11	.29	.09	.42	.64
5) My problems in school are all academically-related	005						.25	.12	.19	.68
6) I am having problems in more than one course	010							.15	.21	.63
7) I have failed none/one/more course(s) within the past academic year	010								.19	.68
8) I am a good student (var.043)	041									.63

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .68

Table 16
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Activities" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	ISC*
1) I am currently involved in physical education activities as a requirement	006		.26	-.23	.48
2) I am currently involved with physical education activities voluntarily	007			-.29	.37
3) How many times a week are you involved with activities outside of academic work	014				.20

*ISC = Item Scale Correlations
Scale Alpha = .53

Table 17
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Satisfaction with Current Status" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	ISC*
1) I am satisfied with the number of academic credits I am carrying	008		.13	.28	.18	.10	.09	.17
2) I am a good student (043)	41			.73	.48	.28	.32	.58
3) I have always been a good student in college (044)	42				.63	.17	.27	.62
4) I was a good student in high school (045)	43					.33	.29	.48
5) I am satisfied with the major I have chosen (046)	44						.61	.47
6) The major I chose reflects what I want to do with my career (047)	45							.50

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .72

Table 18
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Peer Group (Race Only)" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	5	ISC*
1) I always go out with people of the same race	018		-.38	-.42	.31	-.31	.47
2) I feel comfortable around people of other races	019			-.72	-.36	.43	.64
3) I only feel comfortable with people of my own race	020				.40	-.42	.64
4) I feel more comfortable with class peers of my own race	023					-.55	.55
5) I feel comfortable with my class peers regardless of race	025						.58

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .79

Table 19
Corrected Item Scale Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Source of Support/Interpersonal" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	ISC*
1) I have friends in school who are very supportive of me	027		.44	.35	.16	.40
2) I seek out help from other women when there is a need (049)	047			.70	.30	.61
3) I seek out help from other Black women when there is a need (050)	048				.50	.64
4) Being with other Black women is important in my ability to cope better while attending this college (093)	091					.39

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .

Table 20
Corrected Item Correlations and Cronbach's Alpha
for "Parental Influence" Scale

Item	No.	1	2	3	4	ISC*
1) I identify with my mother (057)	54		.74	.26	.32	.36
2) My mother has (had) a positive influence on me (058)	55			.20	.26	.48
3) I identify with my father (059)	56				.90	.60
4) My father (has) had a positive influence on me (060)	57					.63

*ISC = Item Scale Correlation
Scale Alpha = .72

The Life Report Scales were constructed on the basis of dropping items which did not correlate highly with other items. This raised the Alpha levels and increased the overall scale's reliability to measure coping strategies (attitudes and behavior) and perceived success of Black women. The Ways of Coping scales were used as they were described by Lazarus et al. (1985). All scales used in this study were found to have Cronbach Alphas that were acceptable. The Life Report Scales had better reliability than Ways of Coping Scale.

Table 21 is a presentation of the means, standard deviation, and T values on each of the Ways of Coping and Life Report scales by grade point average. With these scales, there is significance with how these Black women perceived their success. That is, Black women with higher GPA perceived themselves as more successful (T value = 4.37; $p < .001$). Furthermore, significantly more Black women with high GPA's agreed with items in the Satisfaction with Current Status scale (T value = 2.28; $p < .05$), and in the Personal Striving Scale (T value = 2.10; $p < .05$) a trend was noted when comparing high and low GPA groups.

Table 22 is a presentation of mean, standard deviation and T values for comparing geographical region groups with Ways of Coping and Life Report Scales, using the same analytical approach, more Black women from rural and suburban areas tended to use coping strategies represented

Table 21
Means, Standard Deviations and T-tests for Comparing Grade
Point Average Groups on Ways of Coping
and Life Report Scales

Variable by Scales	Low Group 1 (n=30*)		High Group 2 (n=28*)		T-test value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Problem Focused	16.80	7.13	14.82	6.62	1.04
Wishful Thinking	7.16	4.34	6.60	4.02	.51
Detachment	5.83	3.73	4.67	3.67	1.19
Seek Social Support	10.53	5.48	10.75	4.17	- .17
Focused on the Positive	5.93	3.48	5.18	2.45	.96
Self Blame	3.66	2.92	3.64	2.95	.03
Tension Reduction	2.33	2.07	2.18	2.49	.38
Keep to Self	3.63	2.55	3.00	2.58	.94
Perceived Success	18.00	3.89	13.57	3.82	4.37***
Activities	10.32 (n=19)	2.56	8.94 (n=16)	2.74	1.58
Satisfaction with Current Status	12.70	4.14	10.25	4.03	2.28**
Peer Group (Race Only)	17.30	3.73	18.79	3.79	-1.50
Source of Support -Interpersonal	8.30	3.09	7.93	3.16	.45
Parental Influence	11.50 (n=24)	4.09	9.59 (n=22)	2.26	2.00*
Interracial Contact/ Attitude	19.30	5.44	19.96	6.10	- .44
Spirituality	10.47	4.08	10.39	4.38	.07
Seeking Help	11.89 (n=27)	3.08	11.82 (n=22)	3.50	.07
Personal Striving	22.17	6.81	18.71	5.67	2.10*
Relationship with Faculty	22.97	5.56	21.25	7.05	1.02

*p<.001
**p<.01
***p<.05

Table 22
Means, Standard Deviations and T-tests for Comparison of
Geography with Ways of Coping and Life Report Scales

Variable by Scales	Urban Group 1 (n=22*)		Rural/Suburban Group 2 (n=30*)		T-test value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Problem Focused	14.50	6.16	14.47	7.58	.54
Wishful Thinking	6.59	4.13	6.70	4.03	-.10
Detachment	4.77	2.94	5.03	3.86	-.28
Seek Social Support	8.95	4.60	11.33	4.87	-1.80***
Focused on the Positive	5.23	3.12	5.30	3.03	-.08
Self Blame	3.41	3.05	3.33	2.80	.09
Tension Reduction	1.64	1.62	2.37	1.36	-1.32
Keep to Self	3.59	2.26	2.80	2.46	1.20
Perceived Success	15.23	4.67	15.73	4.28	-.40
Activities	10.44	2.88	8.79	2.57	1.47
Satisfaction with Current Status	(n= 9) 11.05	4.34	(n=19) 11.43	4.60	-.31
Peer Group (Race Only)	17.91	3.73	18.60	3.73	-.66
Source of Support -Interpersonal	7.95	3.60	8.49	2.93	-.55
Parental Influence	11.40	3.85	10.04	2.78	1.20
Interracial Contact/ Attitude	19.45	5.28	19.27	5.29	.13
Spirituality	10.73	4.10	10.27	4.50	.38
Seeking Help	11.13	2.95	12.75	2.77	-1.75***
Personal Striving	19.05	6.37	21.67	6.78	-1.43
Relationship with Faculty	20.32	6.28	24.37	5.58	-2.41**

*p<.001

**p<.05

***p<.01

in the Seeks Social Support Scale (T value = -1.80 ; $p < .10$) as compared to Black women from urban areas. However, significantly more Black women from urban areas agreed with items in The Relationship with Faculty Scale (T value = 2.41 ; $p < .05$) and more from urban areas tended to agree with items in Seeks Help Scale (T value = -1.75 ; $p < .10$).

Table 23 is a presentation of means, standard deviation and T values relating Ways of Coping and Life Report scales to type of college. As indicated by Table 23, significantly more Black women from the private colleges agreed with items in the Perceived Success Scale ($T = 4.62$; $p < .001$) and Personal Striving ($T = 3.10$; $p < .01$) as compared to women from the state university. Furthermore, significantly more Black women from private colleges showed a greater tendency to agree with items in Satisfaction with Current Status Scale ($T = 2.29$; $p < .05$) and Peer Group Scale ($T = 2.63$; $p < .05$).

Finally, Table 24 is a presentation of chi-square analyses relating socioeconomic status (SES) to Ways of Coping Scales and Life Report Scales. Again, as indicated by Table 24, there is only a tendency for Black women from higher socioeconomic status to agree with items from the Activities Scales as compared to women from lower SES.

The findings in this study do not provide support for the hypothesis that a significant positive correlation exists between geographical region or socioeconomic status

Table 23
Means, Standard Deviations and T-tests for Comparing
College on Ways of Coping and Life Report Scales

Variable by Scales	Private Group 1 (n=45*)		State Group 2 (n=16*)		T-test value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Problem Focused	14.82	6.00	18.19	7.38	-1.62
Wishful Thinking	6.78	3.82	7.00	5.06	- .16
Detachment	5.29	3.65	5.13	3.95	.15
Seek Social Support	10.31	4.18	11.38	6.13	- .64
Focused on the Positive	5.29	2.92	6.31	3.61	-1.02
Self Blame	3.73	2.99	3.44	2.80	.36
Tension Reduction	2.07	2.13	2.56	2.53	- .70
Keep to Self	3.42	2.36	3.00	3.10	.50
Perceived Success*	22.11	3.63	25.69	2.21	-4.62
Activities	7.71	1.43	7.30	1.25	.89
Satisfaction with Current Status	10.91	4.65	13.75	4.11	-2.29
Peer Group*** (Race Only)	16.02	2.38	14.56	1.71	2.63
Source of Support -Interpersonal	7.89	2.76	8.50	2.03	- .93
Parental Influence	9.22	2.80	9.00	2.10	.29
Interracial Contact/ Attitude	19.62	5.42	19.19	6.75	.23
Spirituality	10.49	4.33	10.13	4.37	.29
Seeking Help	8.06	1.43	9.00	1.26	-1.53
Personal Striving**	22.38	6.00	26.63	4.20	-3.10
Relationship with Faculty	19.07	5.10	18.69	3.10	.35

*p<.001

**p<.01

***p<.05

Table 24
Chi-Square Analysis and Percent Agreement: Socioeconomic
Status with Ways of Coping and Life Report Scale

Coping Scale	SES Level	% Agree	Corrected Chi-Square Value
Problem Focused	High	51.5	.00
	Low	48.1	
Wishful Thinking	High	54.5	.05
	Low	48.1	
Detachment	High	48.5	.00
	Low	44.4	
Seek Social Support	High	54.5	.05
	Low	48.1	
Focuses on the Positive	High	54.5	1.19
	Low	37.0	
Self Blame	High	45.5	.27
	Low	55.6	
Tension Reduction	High	54.5	1.91
	Low	33.3	
Keeps to Self	High	45.5	.05
	Low	51.9	
Activities	High	81.8	2.69**
	Low	59.3	
Peer Group	High	51.5	.00
	Low	48.1	
Source of Support/ Interpersonal	High	42.4	.22
	Low	51.9	
Parental Influence	High	63.6	.14
	Low	55.6	
Interracial Contact	High	60.4	.98
	Low	44.4	
Spirituality	High	51.5	.11
	Low	59.3	
Seeks Help	High	54.5	.01
	Low	59.3	
Personal Striving	High	45.5	.27
	Low	55.6	
Relationship w/Faculty	High	51.5	.08
	Low	44.4	

**Probability $p < .10$ = trend only.

All chi-square values are with 1 degree of freedom.

and achieved success. However, these results do provide some suggestive findings regarding coping styles and their relationship to success level. The significance of the findings are relatively marginal.

Table 25
Interscale Correlations for All Scales Used in this Study

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Problem Focused		.13	.21	.40	.61	.30	.20	.30	-.03	.43	.03	.16	-.22	.06	-.10	-.11	-.14	-.20	-.27
Wishful Thinking			.50	.41	.08	.47	.31	.50	.07	.17	.11	.06	.13	.01	-.06	.01	.10	.06	.12
Detachment				.23	.39	.55	.28	.63	-.03	.04	.12	-.08	.04	.14	.03	-.15	-.04	.05	-.07
Seeks Social Support					.17	.10	.28	.15	-.03	.03	.02	.06	-.20	-.31	-.06	-.07	.02	.07	.02
Focuses on Positive						.35	.23	.18	-.01	.24	-.09	.18	-.10	.04	-.13	.03	.01	-.14	-.20
Self Blame							.19	.42	-.04	-.12	.09	-.06	.06	-.14	-.04	.01	.04	.13	-.21
Tension Reduction								.39	.12	.02	.13	-.22	-.17	-.03	.12	.06	.14	.17	.01
Keeps to Self									.05	.07	.19	-.07	.10	.00	.03	-.15	-.18	.01	.01
Perceived Success										.10	.56	-.38	-.10	.00	.25	.03	.06	.57	.34
Activities											.18	.07	.11	.27	-.30	.19	-.30	-.06	-.03
Satisfaction with Current Status												-.47	.22	.22	.26	.06	.12	.74	.12
Peer Group													.02	-.11	-.52	-.05	.07	-.57	-.06
Source of Support/Interpersonal														.47	-.17	.20	.32	.25	.01
Parental Influence															.10	.19	.40	.08	-.08
Interracial Contact																-.22	.16	.27	.05
Spirituality																	.06	.10	.04
Seeks Help																		.20	.10
Personal Striving																			.18
Relationship with Faculty																			

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are limited. However, although the stated hypotheses were not supported, some interesting findings evolved and are consistent with other studies. For instance, this study demonstrated a significant relationship between perceived success and higher grade point average (GPA). This was consistent with the study by DeCesare and others (1975), who found that Black students who were successful tended to have high aspirations and control over their lives. Furthermore, the Black women in this higher GPA group were influenced in a positive way by a parental figure (mother or father), were satisfied with their current academic status, and were aspiring to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

This might suggest that positive identification with or positive influence by a parent of either sex is crucial in academic performance. Extending this further, one might wonder if the role models provided by the parents were positive because: (1) the parents were successful academically or occupationally; (2) the parents placed a high value on seeing their daughters succeed; (3) the parents fostered in their daughters positive self-concepts,

by providing support and encouragement; or (4) the parents provided strong role models of how to overcome obstacles and still survive.

The other findings related to higher GPA's might suggest that maintaining one's sense of direction and attaining set goals are important in self-perception, self-confidence and level of motivation.

The significant correlation between Black women from urban areas and relationship with faculty might suggest the importance of potential exposure to individuals from various sociocultural backgrounds providing models for later interaction in a predominantly white college environment. That is, quite possibly Black women from urban areas are more likely to have been exposed to and have interacted with caucasian individuals, providing a familiarity and perhaps a greater degree of comfort with them. What this finding might also suggest is identification with same sex or same race.

Another interesting finding related to urbanity is the positive endorsement of items in the Seeking Help Scale. That is, urban Black women were more likely to seek out help from other women in general (Black women in particular) and felt comfortable with this coping strategy. This may suggest that given their experience in a potentially complex geographical area, urban Black women have evolved a coping style that is effective and expedient. As pointed out by

other researchers (Myers, 1980), Black women seek out other Black women for support and encouragement and to define their level of success. This finding might also suggest that in general, given the complexity of an urban area, Black women have learned to utilize and feel comfortable with their support networks. This adaptational style may have prepared them well for the realities of a predominantly white environment.

A significant correlation was found between Black women who attended private college and perceived success. This might suggest that Black women who think they are doing well and perceived themselves as good students are more likely to attend private college. This is certainly consistent with the findings of other researchers (Astin, 1976; Sprey 1962) and is no different from the experience of other groups. Additionally, there was a significant relationship between Black women who attended private colleges and extracurricular activities. This might suggest that being involved in non-academic activities is important to these women and may have a positive effect psychologically as well as physically. It might also suggest that activities outside of the academic arena are an integral part of their coping strategy. Further, this finding might indicate that Black females in private colleges are encouraged more to participate in extracurricular activities than are those Black females at the state college.

Finally, the tendency for more Black women from higher socioeconomic status to participate more in extracurricular activities may be related to financial ability and/or pre-college exposure to a wider breadth of non-academic activities. Prior college exposure or encouragement to participate in so-called "middle class" pasttimes may be carried over to college life.

Prior to the implementation of this study, it was noted by this investigator that Black women are constantly confronted with two major obstacles: sex and discrimination. However, given these potentially immobilizing obstacles, many Black women are able to attain their goals.

Certainly, regardless of their social class origins, Black women differ from one another in their early childhood expectations. Exposed to a diverse, complex set of experiences as children, they form a variety of conscious and unconscious hopes long before they are able to act on them as adults. When these early aspirations were then subjected to the real constraints and opportunities of adulthood, some of these women followed their initial goals, but most met sometimes unanticipated social circumstances that encouraged and often required them to change, at times quite dramatically. Furthermore, although many Black women take divergent paths in their quest, the experiences and choices they make are often used to foster their strengths.

The major focus of this study was on the coping style of Black women: what allowed them to not only master their environment, but also deal with painful affect while maintaining a positive self-esteem and positive perspective. This study attempted to explore some possible reasons for their ability to adapt. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest that coping is looked at as equivalent to solving problems by acting effectively to obviate them. These researchers point out "...the problem is not that solving problems is undesirable, but that not all sources of stress in living are amenable to mastery or even fit within a problem solving framework..." Emphasizing problem solving and mastery devalues other functions of coping (p. 138-139). Coping strategies are used to deal with problems such as emotional conflicts and maintaining self-esteem in the face of racism and sexism, by either minimizing, accepting, or ignoring these problems are just as significant in the individuals' adaptational behavioral repertoire as problem solving maneuvers that aim to master the environment.

This researcher suggest that for many Black women, their beliefs about their status in this western culture permits them the psychological flexibility to work, often effectively. They know the reality of their positions and attempt to attain their goals in spite of the emotional, psychological, and economic oppression. I suspect that many Black women use these oppressive forces as motivation to

achieve mastery over their environment by relieving the stress associated with these forces. Indeed, this perspective was substantiated by interviews with many women in this study who reported that knowing that it was expected that they would fail spurred them on to work even harder and accomplish more.

This study did have some limitations. For example, a more comprehensive measure of success might have been possible if the interview data had been used. Unfortunately, the clinical data could not be used because of the unavailability of a qualified person to assist in reliability coding. Time constraints prevented thoroughly training someone to fit the requirements for this purpose. Also, although this investigator takes as truth what the subjects report on the objective checklists, at times, perceptions can be distorted. Therefore, a way to validate the self-report scale should be explored and used, to test the reliability of what these Black women said they did or felt.

This study was also limited by trying to use traditional methods of assessing coping in terms of mastery (looking at GPA). This method does not permit the full scope of what it takes for these women to succeed. Furthermore, it has already been suggested that many Black women define their success in terms of other Black women. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) already point out that mastery of

one's environment is limiting in terms of assessing coping. Thus, looking at coping strategies in terms of effectiveness in relieving the stress associated with the problem, rather than mastery over the problem, might be more fruitful in understanding how Black women do as well as they do.

Another limitation was the lack of control of demographic variables, i.e., matching these women on age, sex, SES, geographic, and GPA and then looking at coping strategies and level of success. Finally, one of the private colleges did not have the traditional grading system reflected in GPA, thus a more effective way of assessing GPA should be used or colleges which do not use grade point systems should be excluded from the study.

Some interesting prospects are open for further exploration. Looking at the coping strategies of Black women in predominantly white colleges versus predominantly Black colleges might provide some interesting findings. A longitudinal study would also be interesting to explore how success in school relates to success after school (after possibly redefining the term success).

It might also be fruitful to look at how Black women in Black versus white colleges define their success to determine if definitional differences exist and if so, if these differences influence their choices of college.

Appendix A

Demographic and Socioeconomic Items

1. Birthdate: _____ Age: _____
2. Year in School: Freshman _____
Sophomore _____
Junior _____
Senior _____
3. Current Grade Point Average: _____
4. Grade Point Average for: Freshman year _____
Sophomore year _____
Junior year _____
Senior year _____
- (Please include an estimate of your current year's grade point average.)
5. Major: _____
6. Intended Major: _____
7. Career Interests: _____
8. Ethnicity: African _____
Black American _____
West Indian _____
Hispanic _____ (Please specify: _____)
Other _____ (Please specify: _____)
9. Marital Status: Divorced _____
Engaged _____
Married _____
Never Married _____
Separated _____
Widowed _____
Other _____ (Please specify: _____)
10. Religion: Baptist _____
Catholic _____
Episcopalian _____
Lutheran _____
Protestant _____
Other _____ (Please specify: _____)
None _____

11. Number of children in birth family: ____
12. Birth order: ____ (e.g., 1st child, 2nd child, etc.)
13. Parents' Ages: Mother ____ Father ____
14. Parents' Race: Mother ____ Father ____
15. In your family, who has earned most of the money to pay most of the bills during your lifetime?
- ____ Your father (or stepfather)
- ____ Your mother (or stepmother)
- ____ Both your father (or stepfather) and mother (or stepmother)
- ____ Someone else (Please specify: _____)
16. What is the occupation of the above person(s)?
- Father (or stepfather) _____
- Mother (or stepmother) _____
- Other person _____
17. In a few words, tell me the kind of work this person(s) has done in his/her occupation most of your life:
- _____
- _____
- _____
18. Has this person(s) worked for him/herself -- or has he/she been employed by somebody else during most of your life?
- He worked for himself (or owns business)
- She worked for herself (or owns business)
- He is employed by somebody else
- She is employed by somebody else
- He sometimes worked for himself and sometimes was employed by somebody else
- She sometimes worked for himself and sometimes was employed by somebody else

19. How far did this person(s) go in school?

(Please place an "M" for Mother and an "F" for Father if you have been referring to both of them in the last few questions -- or an "O" for "Other" if you have been referring to someone else.)

- ☐ Did not attend school at all
- ☐ Some elementary (grade school) education
- ☐ Some high school education
- ☐ Graduated from high school
- ☐ Technical training without college (business school, trade school, etc.)
- ☐ Some college (junior college)
- ☐ Graduated from college
- ☐ Professional training after college or graduate work
- ☐ Other (Please specify: _____)

20. If you have been referring to only one parent in the last few questions, please specify here how far the other parent has gone in school: _____

21. Place of Residence: (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> City | <input type="checkbox"/> Small town |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urban area | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suburb | <input type="checkbox"/> Metropolis |

Appendix B

Items for Life Report Scale

Purpose of the Study

My name is Deborah Nunnally Lewis. I want to understand what coping styles Black women use to get through school. I want to know those coping strategies that you have used and whether or not you have found them to be useful.

The following questions and/or statements will help me to understand the coping strategies used. Please respond to each item by circling the number that corresponds with your feelings; if no answer exactly expresses your feelings, please circle the answer that comes closest. When you get to any item preceded with an asterisk (*), please consult with the interviewer. For those items which do not apply, please write N/A.

1 = Strongly agree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly disagree
2 = Agree 4 = Disagree

Item:

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 001. I am doing well in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 002. I believe that doing well in school is very important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 003. I am having problems now with my academic school work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 004. I have had problems with my academic work prior to now. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 005. My problems in school are all academically-related. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| *006. I am currently involved in physical education activities as a requirement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| *007. I am currently involved with physical education activities voluntarily. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 008. I am satisfied with the number of academic credits I am carrying. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 009. I am carrying more academic credits than I can handle. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1 = Strongly agree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly disagree
 2 = Agree 4 = Disagree

010. I am having problems in more than one course. 1 2 3 4 5
- *011. I have failed to complete none/one/more (circle choice) course(s) within the past academic year. 1 2 3 4 5
- *012. I have failed none/one/more (circle choice) course(s) within the past academic year. 1 2 3 4 5
013. I enjoy participating in activities outside of my academic work. 1 2 3 4 5
- *014. How many times a week are you involved with activities outside of academic work? (Circle appropriate number.) 0 1 2 3 4 5
015. I try to do fun things more than once a week. 1 2 3 4 5
016. I never take a chance to do things i enjoy. 1 2 3 4 5
017. I always go out with people of the same sex. 1 2 3 4 5
018. I always go out with people of the same race. 1 2 3 4 5
019. I feel comfortable around people of other races. 1 2 3 4 5
020. I only feel comfortable with people of my own race. 1 2 3 4 5
021. I have a good relationship with my peers at school. 1 2 3 4 5
022. I feel comfortable with my class peers at school. 1 2 3 4 5
023. I feel more comfortable with class peers of my own race. 1 2 3 4 5
024. I feel more comfortable with class peers of my own sex. 1 2 3 4 5

1 = Strongly agree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly disagree
 2 = Agree 4 = Disagree

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 025. I feel comfortable with my class peers
regardless of race. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 026. I feel comfortable with my class peers
regardless of sex. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 027. I have friends at school who are very
supportive of me (help me out when
I'm having problems.) | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 028. I have a good relationship with at
least one professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 029. I have a good relationship with more
than one professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 030. I can strongly identify with at
least one professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 031. I can identify with more than one
professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 032. The professor(s) I feel most comfortable
with is/are of my race. | 1 2 3 4 5 . |
| 033. The professor(s) I feel the most comfort-
able with is/are of the same sex. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 034. The professor(s) I feel the most comfort-
able with is/are of the same race and sex. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 035. The professor(s) I feel the most comfort-
able with is/are of a different race. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 036. The professor(s) I feel the most comfort-
able with is/are of a different sex. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 037. The professor(s) I feel the most comfortable
with is/are of a different race and sex. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 038. I go after what I want. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 039. I achieve the goals I set for myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 040. I always wanted to go to college. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 041. I have high expectations for myself. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

1 = Strongly agree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly disagree
 2 = Agree 4 = Disagree

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 042. I believe I am capable of meeting my expectations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 043. I am a good student. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 044. I have always been a good student in college. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 045. I was a good student in high school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 046. I am satisfied with the major I've chosen.
(If not applicable, circle N/A) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 047. The major I chose reflects what I want to do with my career life.
(If not applicable, circle N/A) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 048. When obstacles are placed in my path towards my goal(s), I can work around them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 049. I seek out help from other women when there is a need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 050. I seek out help from other Black women when there is a need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 051. I seek out help from others regardless of race or sex when there is a need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 052. I seek out professional help when there is a need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 053. I seek out professional help from academic counselor, mental health counselor, minister, other _____ (Circle one) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 054. I feel comfortable asking for help when there is a need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 055. I seek out help from faculty when there is a need. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 056. I handle my problem(s) myself when I'm having a problem(s). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 057. I identify with my mother. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

1 = Strongly agree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly disagree
 2 = Agree 4 = Disagree

058. My mother has (had) a positive influence on me. 1 2 3 4 5
059. I identify with my father. 1 2 3 4 5
060. My father has (had) a positive influence on me. 1 2 3 4 5
061. I identify with another relative. 1 2 3 4 5
 (Circle:) Aunt
 Uncle
 Sibling(M/F)
 Cousin(M/F)
 Grandparent(M/F)
062. I identify with someone than a family member. (Circle: Male/Female) 1 2 3 4 5
063. This person has (had) a positive influence on me. 1 2 3 4 5
064. I grew up in a multi-cultural neighborhood. 1 2 3 4 5
065. I grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood. 1 2 3 4 5
066. I felt comfortable with the neighborhood I grew up in. 1 2 3 4 5
- *067. My attitude about racial differences has changed throughout the course of time at this college. 1 2 3 4 5
- If so, how?
-
- *068. I have experienced racial conflict with my peers at school. 1 2 3 4 5
- *069. I have experienced racial conflict with faculty at school. 1 2 3 4 5
070. I am experiencing racial conflict with my peers at school. 1 2 3 4 5

1 = Strongly agree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly disagree
 2 = Agree 4 = Disagree

071. I am experiencing racial conflict with
 faculty at school. 1 2 3 4 5
072. My attitude and beliefs about racial
 differences have had to change during my
 time at school in order to cope better
 at this college. 1 2 3 4 5
- *073. I have (compromised) my beliefs and
 attitudes in order to cope better at
 this college. 1 2 3 4 5
074. My beliefs and attitudes have been
 compromised because I am attending a
 predominantly white college. 1 2 3 4 5
075. My social interaction pattern has
 changed as a result of attending a
 predominantly white college.
 (Explain on back) 1 2 3 4 5
076. I have become more open-minded about
 racial differences as a result of
 attending a predominantly white college. 1 2 3 4 5
- *077. My attitude and beliefs about racial
 differences have not changed.
 (Negatively/Positively) 1 2 3 4 5
- *078. I interact as comfortably with white
 students as I did prior to attending
 this college. 1 2 3 4 5
- less _____ more _____
- *079. I have compromised my beliefs as a Black
 woman since attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5
- If so, how? (Use back)
080. I am tolerant of Black/white homosexual
 relationships. 1 2 3 4 5
081. I am more tolerant of Black female-white
 male dating since attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5

1 = Strongly agree 3 = Neutral 5 = Strongly disagree
 2 = Agree 4 = Disagree

082. I feel positive about Black female-white male dating. 1 2 3 4 5
083. I have had to change my beliefs and attitudes about Black female-white male dating since attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5
084. I feel positive about Black male-white female dating. 1 2 3 4 5
085. I am more tolerant of Black male-white female dating since attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5
086. I have had to change my beliefs and attitudes about Black male-white female dating since attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5
087. I have had to change my beliefs and attitudes about Black male-white female dating in order to cope better at this college. 1 2 3 4 5
088. I have had to change my beliefs and attitudes about Black female-white male dating in order to cope better at this college. 1 2 3 4 5
089. My spiritual connectedness has been very important in my ability to cope better while attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5
090. Attending church has been important in my ability to cope while attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5
091. Praying regularly is important to me. 1 2 3 4 5
092. Praying is important to me when I'm feeling stressed. 1 2 3 4 5
093. Being with other Black women is important in my ability to cope better while attending this college. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C

Predictor Measures

1. Individual can accept limitations.
Sets realistic expectations.
2. Individual is industrious/independent.
Highly motivated/compelled.
3. Individual was exposed to early childhood stresses
and successfully survived through them.
4. Individual has a strong need to go beyond family
expectations.
Individual has a strong need to go beyond family's level
of educational and/or occupational attainment.
5. Individual has support network of individuals who
facilitate strengths and give encouragement;
"hang in there," or "keep on plugging."
6. Individual strongly identifies with positive role model.
7. Individual has had successful interactions with majority
culture.
8. Has had negative interactions with majority culture and uses
these interactions to fuel positive goals.
9. Individual has strong convictions about goals.
10. Individual is bicultural.
11. Individual forces self to focus on positive traits versus
negative traits.
12. Individual seeks spiritual, emotional, and/or physical
comfort during difficult times.
13. Individual has a strong sense of self and/or she has a
strong sense of capability.
14. Recently attained high SES with high level of individual
or family stress experience.
15. Low SES with successful coping through previous individual
or family stress experience.

16. Supportive extended family members.
Positive relationship with parental figures.
(Position) Place in birth order of siblings.
17. Grew up in an interracial or multicultural neighborhood.
18. Previously attended an interracial or multicultural school system.
19. Family's coping style is successful (strong, flexible).
20. Degree of satisfaction with major or classes.
21. Positive relationship with professors.
22. Openminded (flexibility) vs. Narrowmindedness (inflexible).
23. Prior strong academic performance.
24. Participate in Black-oriented club, sororities, or other support groups.
25. Multicultural dating.
26. Family's perspective on racial issues.
Racial background of parental figures or other family members.
Are the parents an interracial couple?

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