

Spring 5-1-2011

Assessing the Validity of The Communalism Scale Using Cultural Groups

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The University of Southern Mississippi

ASSESSING THE VALIDITY OF *THE COMMUNALISM SCALE*
USING CULTURAL GROUPS

by

LaShawn Thompson

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2011

ABSTRACT

ASSESSING THE VALIDITY OF *THE COMMUNALISM SCALE*

USING CULTURAL GROUPS

by LaShawn Thompson

May 2011

Communalism has become a very important variable for research investigation recently because the field of cultural psychology has been searching for new models to foster a clear understanding of culture or for ways to improve current models. This study investigated the validity of using *The Communalism Scale* to assess the communal (group focus rather than individual focus) aspect of culture in specific ethnic groups. Until now, the scale was used only with African Americans; however, the current study assessed the validity of the scale with several cultural groups. Results from previous studies have demonstrated clear internal consistency for *The Communalism Scale*; however, there appeared to be a need for further validation of the scale. Research hypotheses included predictions about *The Communalism Scale* with regards to specific ethnic groups and geographical location of these groups. This study found that the communalism construct was endorsed by several ethnic groups, including Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, European American, and multiracial ethnic populations. Results also indicated significant differences between ethnic groups and some of these differences were noted regardless of geographical location. Understanding the value of using *The Communalism Scale* with cultural groups adds to the current cultural model and has the ability to influence the effectiveness of measuring communalistic aspects of culture.

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USING CULTURAL GROUPS

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A Dissertation
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of The University of Southern Mississippi
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

It is my pleasure to dedicate this document to the many people who have supported and blessed me in many ways through this entire process. First, I would like to dedicate this document to my son, Kayleb C. McGee, who inspires me every day to keep pushing and believing in myself. I have learned perseverance and strength of faith through my son and his trials in life. I love you Kayleb, and I will forever appreciate the joy you bring to my life. Additionally, I would like to dedicate this document to my family and friends. Thank you to my father, George L. Thompson III, for always believing I was making a difference in every little thing I accomplished. Thank you to my mother, Celeste R. Thompson, for taking care of myself and my son in every way since the beginning. Thank you to my family and friends for praying, believing, and providing support throughout this process. I will forever be grateful for all the help which sustained and held me together. Therefore, I owe my deepest gratitude to my family and friends to whom I now dedicate this body of work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to thank those who made the completion of this document possible. The completion of this document, and ultimately my degree, would not have been possible without the generous and encouraging support of my committee. So with great enthusiasm, I would like to thank the dissertation director, Dr. Andrea Wesley, and the other committee members, Dr. Sheree Watson, Dr. Mary McNeese, Dr. J.T. Johnson, and Dr. John Koeppe, for being supportive and patient during this process. I would especially like to thank Dr. Andrea Wesley for her continued support and mentorship through my entire graduate career. I will forever be grateful for Dr. Wesley's dedication to my dreams. I am proud to call Dr. Wesley both my mentor and my friend, and I look forward to sharing the same positive mentor experiences that Dr. Wesley provided for me with others. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Sheree Watson for her enormous role in the completion of my doctorate degree, Dr. Mary McNeese for her support and spiritual guidance over many years of friendship, Dr. J.T. Johnson for his immense statistical assistance, and finally Dr. John Koeppe for his continued encouragement.

Special thanks to Dr. A. Wade Boykin for giving me authorization to use a measuring tool entitled, *The Social Outlook Questionnaire: The Communalism Scale*. I am grateful that I was allowed to use this scale in both my thesis and my dissertation and I look forward to continuing a partnership with Dr. Boykin in the future with regards to this measuring tool.

Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all of those who provided support for me in any respect during the completion of this project, and ultimately, my degree.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a global society where it is difficult to understand one other, it is imperative that we study culture. War has always been present in our world and if we examine what lies beneath the intense animosity among countries and people of different cultures, we might find that we simply do not possess the capacity to understand and respect each others' differing values and beliefs. How can we expect to work together if we do not understand and respect each other? How can we expect to create a world where all people are valued no matter their differences if we cannot simply appreciate each others' divergent ideas, perspectives, and actions?

Understanding culture and the differences in culture have long been a focus for many researchers. In fact, the goal of cultural psychology is to understand how culture influences cognition, affect, and behavior (Oyserman, Kemmelmeier, & Coon, 2002). Significant research in this area has helped us identify with and value differences in culture over the past thirty years. More specifically, culture can be defined as "shared standard operating procedures, unstated assumptions, tools, norms, values, habits, about sampling the environment" shared by a community of individuals (Triandis, 2001, p. 908).

Although researchers have been studying culture for quite some time, it has recently been recognized in major areas such as political arenas, education, and economy issues. For example, programs such as *The Clinton Global Initiative* are now providing an avenue to discuss cultural issues of this world and are bringing to light the importance of understanding culture as it pertains to helping one another prosper despite our different

values and beliefs (The Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), 2010). In addition, Darwish and Huber (2003) suggest that some educational systems, especially those in Europe, may need to strongly consider intercultural education to facilitate change in attitudes towards different cultures which could one day prevent problems from occurring between neighboring communities of different cultures. Furthermore, Hostede (as cited in Oyserman, 2006), revitalized the study of cultural issues by proposing that it is imperative that we include culture in our study of world economics in order to help us to understand the drive behind each others' fiscal needs. In the past twenty years, there has been a growing demand among organizations (especially in business) to improve knowledge about cultural differences between nations so that conquest in the global market may be achieved (Fougere & Moulettes, 2007). Consequently, it is becoming apparent that culture is an increasingly important variable in understanding many issues in our world today and, therefore, warrants continued attention in research.

Understanding culture allows us to ultimately understand each others' cognitions, affects, and behaviors so that working together and helping one another become possible. The fate of our world may very well lie in our ability to comprehend and relate to one another. In a 2004 interview, Hostede insisted that "understanding the big differences in mindsets between people from different countries helps enormously in interpreting what's going on and where we can and cannot hope for progress" (Hoppe, 2004, p.79). Therefore, continued research on culture, specifically similarities and differences between cultures, generational changes in culture, and changes in values and beliefs of particular groups, continues to be an important element in helping us to learn about one another and, therefore, to relate to one another.

At the forefront of the current discussion on cultural research are the social concepts of individualism and collectivism and how studying these concepts are beneficial to understanding groups of people. Oyserman (2006) suggested that cultural research gains its focus when it begins its discussion on the social, cultural constructs labeled as individualism and collectivism. This movement began when Hofstede (as cited in Oyserman, 2006), suggested that societies operated in one fashion or the other (individual or collective) and that these two constructs were extremes on a continuum of social behavior. Oyserman suggests that although Hofstede did not coin these social construct terms, his model simplified the complexity of culture into basic concepts which allowed researchers to begin to ask questions about culture and how it might be shaped by these constructs.

These social concepts represent ways of interacting, among specific groups of people, and can be helpful if used as a foundation for extracting meaning out of cultural cognitions, affect, and behavior when studying groups of people (Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, & Coon, 2002). Typically, the construct of individualism describes how individuals in a group may tend to rely on themselves to function within their society with little help from others. Western cultures such as North America have been described in research as individualistic cultures.

The construct collectivism, on the other hand, refers to a way of interacting in a group that generally focuses on members of the society helping one another to function. Nations such as Korea, People's Republic of China, Japan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and India have all been described in the literature as being collectivistic cultures (Eaton & Louw, 2000). Loosely interpreted, members of individualistic groups are more likely to

only be responsible for caring for themselves independently of help from others, while collectivist communities often take the responsibility of caring for each other. These constructs have become frequently used explanatory constructs in cultural research and have allowed researchers to make predictions in affect, cognition, and behavior across groups of people.

Utilizing Social Constructs as Predictors

Researchers believe that:

individualism and collectivism as a model of culture does provide a way of making specific predictions about how the mind works that can be generalized across superficial differences in groups, time, place, and situations- and highlights powerful commonalities in the subjective construal of tasks and situations, providing insight “into systematic differences in values, ways of thinking, ways of relating to others, ways of being a self, and bases of well-being. (Oyserman, Kemmelmeier, & Coon, 2002, p. 111)

Making predictions across groups allows us to relate better to one another in that it allows a deeper appreciation of a specific groups’ response to a situation. It is also possible that we are able to recognize the needs of a group of people by studying their ways of interacting; as a result of predictive power, we are able to provide assistance that is positive, well-received, and precise. For example, it has been well-documented that African American nuclear families are more inclined to include extended family in the household when compared to European American nuclear families. Understanding that this group of people prefer to live as one unit allows for a deeper understanding of behaviors, cognitions, and affect in this group. Being able to predict this phenomenon

allows for a more positive response when situations such as adoption or loss of family members occur in this group. Overall, uncovering the ways of relating to others within a group can be beneficial and worthwhile when trying to gain a deeper understanding of specific groups' values and beliefs. Furthermore, understanding culture has allowed applied practitioners to make changes in the way we provide psychological services such as counseling, how we divulge educational information, the way we effectively provide medical treatment, and countless other ways that the health service delivery systems benefit from knowledge of cultural values and beliefs.

Some researchers may argue that studying groups of people and using concepts such as individualism and collectivism to categorize groups hinders our understanding of individuals and may allow us to view culture in stereotypical ways. Fougere and Moulettes (2007) report that using the individual-collectivist model to assess culture may leave the impression that one way of connecting to others is superior to the other. These researchers warn that inferences from this type of research could lead one to believe that individualistic cultures, or western cultures, can be associated more positively with “more economic development, more wealth, greater social mobility, stronger development of middle class, a more modern and urban society, a lower birth rate, more universal education system and individualistic thinking” (Fougere & Moulettes, p. 11). In contrast, cultures operating at lower levels of individualism (collectivist cultures) could be viewed negatively as “treating science and technology as magic” and seeing interest in the “collective good as evil” (Fougere & Moulettes, p. 11). In addition, Miller (2002) proposed several limitations to using the individualistic-collectivist model, indicating that this model fails to acknowledge that culture is exceedingly complex, avoids the meaning

of self as it pertains to the group, neglects situational variation in behavior, and groups cultures together, ignoring the subtle differences between them. Researchers aligning themselves with these ideals believe that future research should bring meaning and depth back to the study of culture, as well as cultivate a process oriented understanding of culture (Miller, 2002).

On the contrary, it is the primary responsibility of cultural psychology not to explain specific individuals, but to identify “cultural contingencies that moderate individual’s thought and behavior” (Oyserman et al., 2002, p.110). Some researchers contend that current research in this area is flawed and is failing to further the goals of cultural psychology (Miller, 2002). Therefore, there is still a strong sense of the need to understand groups and the differences and similarities between groups. A resulting outcome is that the field of cultural psychology has seen a “rebirth” or a renewal of commitment by researchers to study culture. There has been a continued research focus that has occurred in cultural psychology over the past twenty years, in the study of the differences and similarities between and across groups of individuals (Oyserman et al., 2002).

Although studying individualistic and collectivistic societies has been a focus for many researchers, some researchers have insisted that there are other possible ways of viewing how people in groups relate towards one another. Some researchers have suggested that groups of individuals may also chose to live in an expanded categorized third relationship, communalistic societies (Moemeka, 1998). A communal society can loosely be defined as one’s living with a group and being completely dependent on that group to function and survive. Communalism asserts the premise that not only can

people relate to each other in a group by depending on self (such as in individualistic communities), helping others (such as in collectivistic communities), but they may also relate to others by being solely dependent on each other as a positive part of their culture (Moemeka, 1998). Recently the concept of communalism has been studied as a different way of knowing how people in a group, community, or society relate to one another.

The focus of this research was on the communalism construct and its measurability in the population, as well as in specific cultural groups. This research answered questions about the value of the concept of communalism in cultural research in understanding social issues. The information gained from this research added to the literature by gaining pertinent knowledge about the usefulness of the scale, and, therefore, this information could possibly assist future researchers interested in assessing the communal construct within and across cultures. Using a valid and useful scale to assess the communal construct will facilitate a deeper understanding of the construct and its importance in cultural groups. This research provided additional information about *The Communalism Scale* and its usefulness with ethnic groups.

Rationale

The concept of communalism is still fairly new to the literature when compared to the body of research that has been compiled on other cultural models such as individualism and collectivism. Literature suggests that the communalism concept is present in countries such as Nigeria, Brazil, Korea, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, and Jamaica and recently has been used to describe behaviors in the African American community of the United States (Moemeka, 1998). Although research in this area has gained momentum, measuring communalism in cultures and populations is also in its infancy

when compared to the other social constructs. Currently, an objective measure of communalism does exist as an inventory format and has been researched within the African American population. However, this measure has been found to be valid with African American populations only. According to the finding of this research (Moemeka, 1998), the concept was found to be present in this population. However, the scale has not been formally validated with other cultural groups. Formally validating the use of *The Communalism Scale* with additional cultural samples will add to the literature on communalism and will allow future researchers interested in this concept to accurately study and measure this social phenomenon. The scale could possibly be used to correctly identify cultures that have previously been labeled as collectivist cultures in present literature, adding to the current cultural model already present and being used to describe, predict, and interpret cultural group phenomenon. Correctly identifying cultures could have tremendous consequences on the levels of assistance provided to individual members of specific cultures by health service professionals.

Statement of the Problem

As stated above, the communalism construct has been used in published research with only one cultural group, African Americans in the United States. However, unpublished research recently conducted, at a local state university, has shown that when assessing the communalism construct with both African American and European American students, researchers found no difference in the mean scores between both cultural groups. The authors of *The Communalism Scale* (Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, & Albury, 1997) maintain that the scale measures the communalism concept and that it should only exist in cultures that appear to promote communalistic values such as in

Nigeria, Brazil, Korea, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, and Jamaica. Descendants of people from these cultures, such as African Americans, are proposed to also have communalistic values. According to the theory that provides the foundation for the communalism concept, communalism values should not be present in Europeans and their descendants. However, current research found this concept to be present in European American students, therefore, those research results leads one to question the construct validity of the concept and how it is currently measured. Geographical location could explain the values obtained during the research with both African American and European American students. Specifically, data was collected from a southern university sample of students and, therefore, values obtained from the scale could be due to geographical region limitations in the sample. Consequently, the current research proposed to assess the validity of *The Communalism Scale* by using large sample size of participants from different geographical regions in the United States to evaluate the levels of the construct in different cultures.

Research Hypotheses

Research hypotheses included predictions about the valid use of *The Communalism Scale* with members of varying ethnic groups and the differences between these ethnic groups on this scale. Given the exploratory nature of the study, hypotheses were difficult to formulate, however, using current unpublished research findings some proposed hypotheses were listed as follows:

1. Data from *The Communalism Scale* will yield results indicating that there are no differences between African American participants and European American participants, located in the southern geographical region.

2. Data from *The Communalism Scale* will yield results indicating a significant difference between specific ethnic groups.

There is no additional evidence available to suggest possible differences in the scores between different cultural groups on the communal construct when using this scale. Given the exploratory nature of this part of the study, no additional hypotheses were proposed about specific differences in scores that might occur between ethnic groups from differing geographical locations.

Definition of Terms

1. Collectivism-“a social order that recognizes the rights of individuals to self-actualization and acknowledges that self-actualization would be easier to achieve if people banded together for the purposes of pooling resources and making decisions” (Moemeka, 1998, p. 123).
2. Communalism-“the principle or system of social order in which, among other things, the supremacy of the community is culturally and socially entrenched” (Moemeka, 1998, p. 124).
3. Culture- “shared standard operating procedures, unstated assumptions, tools, norms, values, habits, about sampling the environment” shared by a community of individuals (Triandis, 2001, p. 908).
4. Individualism-“a social order that places importance on the individual over the groups or the community” (Moemeka, 1998, p. 124).

Delimitations

There were limited amounts of voluntary restrictions to the scope of this study. This research was interested in assessing the validity of a specific cultural scale and

therefore the sample population was not controlled and confined to a specific institution or geographical location. Data was collected using current internet survey software. Thus, with this strategy, no limitations were required for the sample.

Assumptions

Assumptions for this research were mainly centered on the sample population. This research assumed that participants were voluntary participants of the study, and that they would be participating without coercion. Also, the study assumed that participants would answer questions asked openly and honestly. Furthermore, this research assumed that participants would not be able to determine the objective of the study and, therefore, would be unable to provide answers that would invalidate result data.

Justification

The purpose of this study was to provide additional information for the current pool of knowledge regarding the validity of *The Communalism Scale*. This study was valuable in validating the scales' use with cultural groups. Providing evidence to support the use of this scale, with certain cultures, will have significant ramifications in the cultural psychology research on social issues. Researchers may be able to provide additional cultural knowledge about certain cultural groups that may help policymakers, educators, and economists, provide better support for specific cultural groups in America. Furthermore, adding validity information to the scale will provide researchers with an effective tool to use in cultural research and may strengthen social order research by proving the existence of the construct of communalism and how it differs in contrast to both individualism and collectivism, therefore, adding to the current model (see Appendix A).

Literature Review

What is communalism? Communalism is a social construct that generally describes the level of connectedness possessed by a community, culture, or group of people sharing values. Moemeka (1998) describes communalism as “the principle or system of social order in which, among other things, the supremacy of the community is culturally and socially entrenched” and in such communities “people are not seen as important in their own right, each one is an integral part of the whole and derives his or her place in the context of the community” (p. 124). In order to fully understand what communalism is, it is necessary to first define and describe two other types of social constructs that have been investigated in past and present research.

The term communalism is fairly new in social construct research when compared to other social constructs reflecting specific cultural comparisons. Until recently, when describing relationships among groups of people, researchers used two terms, collectivism and individualism. Collectivistic groups of people or cultures tend to describe community members that assist each other in daily living and survival, but also function as individuals in the community; although community unity is visible. In contrast, members of individualistic communities tend to function independently; assisting others in their community or culture is not highly valued. In individualistic communities, members tend to care about their own concerns and are not compelled to help others, unless these behaviors yield positive benefits for those providing the assistance.

Moemeka (1998) describes individualism as “a social order” that places importance of the individual over that of the group or the community (p. 122) and

collectivism as “ a social order that recognizes the rights of individuals to self-actualization and acknowledges that self-actualization would be easier to achieve if people banded together for the purposes of pooling resources and making decisions” (Moemeka, p. 123). Furthermore, “individualists and collectivists differ in kinds of sociability they prefer, the meaning of social interactions, and their beliefs about important groups” (Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 112). Individualism frames even important group memberships as “temporary and voluntary, whereas collectivism is characterized by the belief that fitting into groups is an important, inevitable part of being human” (Oyserman et al., p. 112). Trandis (2004) suggests that individualistic and collectivistic aspects of culture describe more than social closeness in communities. For example, Eaton and Louw (2000) indicate that people of African descent appear to be more social individuals with increased levels of interactions with others. In an experiment, they found that African students produced a significantly greater proportion of social responses on a measure when compared to English speaking, non-African decent students. Additionally, in collectivistic cultures, the nature of the communication between group members may appear different than in other groups. With reference to communicating, people in these groups appear to pay more attention to context instead of content, or how something is said and not what is being said. Those members of a collectivistic culture also appear to view behavior as due to the external forces in the environment, rather than to internal forces that can be controlled. Clearly there is evidence to suggest distinct differences in group interaction and attribution of behavioral differences in communities such as these.

Addressing Communalism from the Perspective of Current Research

As mentioned above, in past research communalism has rarely been used to describe connectedness in cultures. Communalism is thought of as a deep connection between people that share history, tradition, and possibly location, that compels them to help each other beyond a general “help thy neighbor” mentality. Previous research has assumed that individualism and collectivism comprised a continuum with one construct on each end of that continuum. In the past, researchers have used individualistic and collectivistic terms to describe connectedness in a culture. However, some researchers have now expanded the continuum to include a third description of cultural connectedness (Moemeka, 1998). While previously collectivism was seen as the end point of the connectedness spectrum, it is now communalism that functions as the social construct at that extreme end point that describes deep cooperation among community members. To rephrase these construct relationships in simpler terms, individualism is seen as the far left in the spectrum, and has community members functioning as individuals; collectivism is seen as the middle of the spectrum and has community members functioning as individuals but assisting others when necessary; and finally communalism as the far right of the spectrum in which there are no individuals but only a community made up of many that deeply commit to functioning as one entity.

Now, instead of describing countries/cultures as individualistic or collectivist it may be possible to describe them as being characterized as a model of cultural interactions at the extremes of individualistic or communalistic, with collectivism being the middle term. Furthermore, Wiredu (2008) suggests that we may think of individualism and communalism as ways to describe individual goals in life;

“communitarianism and individualism are both just ways of arranging the pursuit of the interests of individuals, the difference is that there are many more issues of human well-being regarding which an individual has obligation and rights in a communitarian society than in an individualistic one” (p. 334). It is clear that there is room in cultural research to add constructs to help study culture and adding communalism into the discussion of culture appears valid as the next step in cultural research. In addition, adding to these constructs will help further the goals of cultural psychology.

Research in cultural psychology entails more than applying current psychological instruments in differing cultural contexts to test the generality of existing psychological theories; it also requires enlarging the constructs tapped by psychological measures to permit the assessment of previously unrecognized forms of psychological functioning. (Miller, 2002, p. 106)

One unrecognized form of psychological functioning could be a communalistic aspect of culture.

Shift in Research

Recently, there has been a shift in social construct research. Oyserman (2006) gives a brief summary of the history of the study of individualism and collectivism. Initial research on these constructs assumed these constructs were simple and could be measured on one scale; secondary research included labeling individuals and cultures as either individualistic or collectivist; and finally tertiary research has focused on determining the existence of levels of each construct with the assumption that all cultures contain individuals who may emphasize one construct over the other and either construct may be elicited depending on certain social situations (Oyersman, 2006). Aizawa and

Whatley (2006) suggest that individuals possess both a tendency to behave individually and a tendency to align with social networks; however, the tendency to emphasize one way of being over the other can be determined by cultural socialization. This shift in focus could now include communalism when describing the levels of cooperation in cultures. Researchers in the field are debating the usefulness of the individualistic/communalistic model and this may be the perfect time to study the usefulness of adding the communalism construct to the existing model.

There is so much disagreement in the field today about the existence of these constructs and the degree of their existence within certain cultures that cultural researchers are now looking at other ways to study social interactions in culture, such as analyzing the process and level of interactions instead of using the overall simple categories of individualism and collectivism.

Scholars continue to debate whether the constructs represent opposites on a bipolar continuum or whether they are orthogonal, making it possible for both to concurrently exist within the individual. These arguments aside, scholars agree that individualism and collectivism make up a portion of a culture's core set of values and serve as organizing principles for both interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. (Williams, 2003, p. 370)

Li and Aksoy (2007) report that there are still pervasive questions, in the research, about the cultural dimensions of both these constructs. Furthermore, Chen, Meindl, and Hunt (1997) state that the conceptualization and the measurement of the constructs of individualism and collectivism remain elusive. Additionally, Oyserman and Lee (2008) insist that there are clear gaps in our knowledge of these construct. While the evidence

for the use of the individualism/collectivism construct continuum in understanding culture is supportive, it is also inconclusive. There is evidence that many researchers believe that we may need to test new assumptions in order to make progress in restructuring the current model (Oyserman & Lee, 2008).

Nonetheless, although there is much debate about these social constructs, some researchers insist that studying individualism and collectivistic aspects in culture is still a good model to use when trying to understand a culture (Oyserman et al., 2002). Li and Aksoy (2007) found that the individualism/collectivism scale, developed by Triandis and Gelfand, is still a valid measure to use when measuring these constructs. Improving this model will help the field overall in studying culture as a whole. Some researchers seeking to improve the model insist that future research should use a model of individualism and collectivism that sees them as separate constructs with multiple dimensions (Li & Aksoy, 2007). Viewing these constructs as separate may require individual scales that measure each construct independently. Furthermore, Markus and Kitayama (1991) report a concern in measuring the independent self and the interdependent self using existing scales with multiple cultures. Specifically, these researchers wonder if it is possible for these scales to transcend language barriers and word meaning across cultures.

It is evident that there are questions about both the conceptualization and measurement of these constructs. Oyserman et al. (2002) propose that scientific progress on the individualism-collectivist model can best be successful by providing scale measures that are both reliable and that separate the actual components of cultural differences. Determining functional and effective scales of measurement for these constructs helps to provide some clarity about these social constructs and directly affects

our effectiveness in using them to describe and predict behavior. The current study was proposed to provide additional, relevant information on the effectiveness of measuring these constructs.

Controversial Issues in Research of the Communalism Construct

While communalism research may yield information about culture as a whole, certain ethnic groups are thought to possess higher levels of this construct within their culture. More recently researchers have been studying the communalism concept and determining its existence and function in the African American community. Some researchers insist that the concept has been carried over from ancestry rooted in African culture (Jagers & Mock, 1995). They argue that communalistic values are still present in the African American community today and can be used to help understand the community in many ways. An examination of these communal values is “needed to gauge the degree to which specific Afro-cultural dimensions have been retained” and “it is essential in determining how these dimensions influence psychological functioning in this population” (Jagers & Mock, 1995, p. 154).

Support for Communalism in African American Culture

Communal values can be observed in all aspects of African American lifestyle both in daily activities and communal gatherings. Examples such as the creation of the Kwanza celebration, an African American holiday that celebrates seven principles including unity, collective work, and cooperative economics, can be presented as support for the existence of a strong communal connection between African American communities (Hill, 1999). Strong kinship bonds among African American people also provide evidence that communal values, which originated in Africa, appear to have been

transplanted to America and still remain in the African American culture that exists today. “Undoubtedly, the most enduring cultural strength that black Americans brought with them from the African continent was the extended family and its strong kinship networks” (Hill, 1999, p. 123). Harvey (as cited by Hill, 1999) stated that:

the deep sense of kinship has historically been one of the strongest forces in traditional African life. Kinship is the mechanism which regulates social relationships between people in a given community; almost all of the concept pertaining to and connected with human relationships can be understood and interpreted through kinship system. (p.123)

Some have suggested that the kinship bonds in the African American culture of today are of great importance to the subjective well-being of this community of people. Ellison (1990) indicated that, “while the literature is not unequivocal, the weight of the evidence seems to indicate that extended families comprise the core of many black social networks” and that these “kinship ties of Black Americans may be positively related to subjective assessments of life quality” (p. 298). These kinship networks can be viewed by some to be the foundation of the existence of the African American community, providing emotional, economic, and social support to its members. A review of the literature reveals that at the heart of these kinship relationships lies the “Black Church” (Hill, 1999).

The “Black Church” can also be seen as an extension of the kinship network in the African American culture. Today, churches in the African American community provide opportunity for the information dissemination, networking, social correspondence, community development, and economic development of its members

(Hill, 1999). Consequently, communal values are also prevalent in the rearing of African American children, in educational environments, and also in social services rendered to the African American community (Watkins, 2002).

Boykin (1983) indicates that current African American cultural traditions and orientation reflect a traditional African worldview. These values include communalism, verve, affect, movement, spirituality, expressive individualism, social time perspective, orality, and harmony. The values are typically transferred to the youth of this culture. Communalistic values can be seen in the socialization of the youth in the African American population. It has long been established that African American children learn effectively “with others, around others, and in interaction with others” (Watkins, 2002, p. 3), which is consistent with communal values. Furthermore, Bulcroft, Carmody, and Bulcroft (1996) insist that minority parents develop and teach different socialization strategies to their children in order to cope with environmental challenges. The cultural emphasis on communalism is reflected in these socialization strategies (1996). Therefore, it appears that there is some evidence that African Americans, in western culture, are socialized from their youth with communal values.

Some insist that knowing the existence of this construct in a community can be useful. If we know cultural values on the spectrum of cooperation, connectedness, perceptions, and attitudes, then we know how to approach dilemmas or problematic situations within the populations or cultures in the most effective and successful ways, i.e., learning styles, health problems, and risky harmful behaviors. For example, if we are to use the theoretical and community focused information about the cultural values of African American children to teach them in a more progressive way in the classroom,

then we must first reveal the existence of these certain socialization values and practices which are different from European American children's values (Tyler et al., 2008). Due to this socialization differential, it can be inferred that a greater number of communal values may be present in this specific ethnic group and, therefore, services that utilize communalistic values as a foundation should be recommended.

Even though there appears to be strong evidence for the socialization of African American youth towards communal values, some researchers believe that these communal values are innate within this culture. For instance, in a study of African American preschool children and toddlers, Watkins (2002) found "a natural tendency for African American peers to work with each other with cooperative structures" (p. 14). It was also determined that these children had specific inclinations to seek out teachers for social help and to seek out peers for academic help (Watkins, 2002). These results provide support for instinctive cooperative learning style existent in African American youth. Additionally, Dill and Boykin (2000) found that African American students performed more effectively on a recall task when they studied using communal learning techniques, such as group work, than when using peer tutoring or individual methods. Also, Hurley, Boykin, and Allen (2005) found that African American students learning in high communal strategies performed better on math tasks than they had previously. In Africa, educators insist that inherent communal values should be included in learning strategies and are currently pushing for multiracial schools in Africa to embrace a cooperative learning strategy throughout the educational system.

The multiracial schools should accommodate and celebrate both the different unique libertarian and communitarian cultural identities that the learners bring with them to schools; both intra and extracurricular activities of the school should enhance the feelings and the expression of self-determination and self-definition of learners and educators in a communal setting. (Mazibuko, 2006, p. 84)

These results emphasize the importance of innate communal values in African American youth and African youth specifically in learning and servicing these populations' educational needs.

When considering the intrinsic communal needs of a culture, it is imperative to discuss biological needs. The biomedical ethics theory recognizes the importance of biology in the African American lifestyle and provides for ethical measures to deliver services that accommodate African Americans (Toldson & Toldson, 2001). One service in which communal values seem to be present for this group is psychological service. According to Toldson and Toldson (2001), African Americans have lower rates of using traditional psychological therapy when compared to the rest of the population and tend to handle their problems with faith and family. Group therapy and community based services are grounded in communal values that are consistent with African American values. In addition, Wallace and Constantine (2005) found that "consistent with an Africentric cultural orientation, family members, close friends, and trusted community members are viewed as primary resources of assistance when many African Americans experience problems or concerns" (p. 371). The popular use of these communal based services and the inclination to seek out group members for support emphasizes the continued need for using ethical measures to deliver services according to biological

needs. According to the biomedical ethics theory, communalistic values stem from a natural biological need in African Americans therefore, providing tangible evidence for the existence of communalism in this population.

In summary, there appears to be strong evidence for the presence of the communal aspect of culture in the African American population. Evidence includes, but is not limited to, the creation of holidays that focus on cooperation, participation in strong kinship networks, involvement in organizations that promote cooperativeness, the socialization of youth, the education of youth and finally the innate biological needs of the culture.

Opposition for Communalism in African American Culture

Although there is research that supports the premise of the existence of communal values in the African American population, there has been some debate in the research with respect to the existence, function, and importance of studying the concept of communalism in the African American population. One argument is that communalism is not present in the African American culture or at least not present to the degree being suggested, and, therefore, can offer no help in understanding this population. Oyserman et al. (2002) suggest that European Americans are high in individualism and low in collectivism, as are African Americans. Furthermore, others believe that communal values are represented more strongly in European American populations than in African American populations. Tyler et al. (2008) found no significant difference in cultural socialization between African American and European American households and, in fact, found that African American households tended to support competition and materialism more than European American households. These research results suggest that more

African American households in this study may actually have more cultural values aligned with individualism, rather than with communalism. Furthermore, Scott (2003) found that African American youth in his study did not use a strong communalism approach when dealing with stressful racial situations. However, the youth did use spiritualism to help solve problems. Taken together, these results speak to the ability of African American youth to see themselves as self-sufficient with the help of religion to support them, rather than relying on others. These findings suggest that even though communal values may be present in the youth, it is possible that more youth are steering away from using these skills to solve problems. This evidence directly supports the premise that African Americans may not exhibit, to the same extent, the social cultural values of communalism as previously indicated or that these values may be experiencing a generational shift.

Wiredu (2008) suggests that Western communalism (groups of people previously thought to have communal values who now reside in primarily western or individualistic cultures), as opposed to traditional African communalism, does not exist in the same context. Although, individuals living in western communalism cultures appear to have the same values as individuals in traditional African communalism cultures, they still live in a primarily individualistic society which may alter their beliefs and values toward individualism and away from communalism. Due to this, there appears to be a greater chance that African Americans' value systems may resemble more individualistic beliefs that are similar to the dominant culture than traditional communal beliefs transported from African ancestry. This appears to support the premise that African Americans may live more aligned with the values of individualistic societies than communal values,

furthering the premise that even though some communal values may be taken into consideration in African American lifestyles, individualistic values may take precedence over traditional African communal values due to the overall influence of the dominant individualistic society in which they reside. Furthermore, Scott (2003) emphasizes the positives of reinforcing individualistic values in African Americans:

Although an individualistic orientation may be considered disadvantageous to the collective good of African Americans, a degree of individualism may be appropriate given the mainstream environments that many African American youth currently inhabit and will have to negotiate in the future. (p.251)

Other researchers, such as Osha (2008) suggest that communalism may be non-existent even in Africa today and that cultures are moving towards other ways of socializing. If this is true, then the chances of finding pure traditional African communalism in African Americans may be dismal at best. In fact, Jones (1997) has a radical view of African American socialization which is in direct opposition to the idea that African Americans possess traditional African communal values. This author suggests that theorists have mislabeled African Americans as a communal culture in Western society when in fact they may be the most individualistic population. He argues that theorists, who claim that African Americans possess communal values, rather than individualistic values, are degrading African Americans by insisting that they cannot function individually, but instead must rely on the community. The authors' perspective of the demeaning of African Americans can be found in this quote, "Some whites argue that slavery prevented black Americans from becoming individualists, while others conclude that Africans are inherently a conservative people, incapable of developing

great civilizations, and oriented toward community good and not individual achievement” (Jones, 1997, p. 20).

Furthermore, Jones (1997) insists that it is European Americans who can be considered communalistic with values to match as evidenced by this quote:

The white people of North America did not survive because they were individuals, but instead prospered by creating and maintaining a rich and complex range of institutional supports including, but not limited to schools, colleges, financial institutions, churches, and government agencies; each of these was racially exclusive, offering help to the white community while denying it to Blacks, therefore Whites not blacks have been the cooperative communalists. (Jones, 1997, p. 20)

Furthermore, Scott (2003) reports that some character traits that are consistent with African American nature, like strong work ethic and goal-striving orientation, have been mislabeled and have generally been associated with western culture and not considered a part of African American lifestyle. This supports the premise that individualistic values are seen as positive and important for success, which is a sharp contrast with communal values suggesting a negative perception of communal groups.

It is also possible that groups can generally fall into one of the three social construct categories; however, there may be a certain percentage of members in the group that could clearly classify themselves in a category that is different from their group’s general category (Triandis, 2004). Some researchers (Gushue & Constantine, 2003), suggest that perhaps the bicultural (both African and American) status of African Americans makes them both prone to communal and individualistic characteristics. In

their study, they found that African American female college students were able to have the support of their cultural group without being fused with the group and, therefore, were able to maintain self-identity instead of losing it. These results are evidence for labeling the African American community as more collectivistic than communalistic. Throughout history this question has been evident of the African American population. Simply because this group of people appears to have two possible identities; one linked to Africa and one to America. W.E.B. DuBois (1970) put it so eloquently when he said,

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness- an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts two unreconciled strivings: two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 3)

The controversy of this argument suggests that more research should be conducted to determine the overall existence of communal values in current African American culture (Tyler et. al., 2008) and other cultural groups as well. It is clear that continued research is needed to help partial out these models. Studying communalism may prove to help narrow down the important constructs in cultural study. Gushue and Constantine (2003) also suggest that research with African Americans of diverse ages, geographical locations, religious, spiritual traditions, and life domains continue to assess in-group variation in terms of social constructs.

Importance of Studying Communalism

Communalism has become a very important variable of study recently because the field of cultural psychology has been searching for new models to contribute to one's understanding of culture or for ways to improve current models. Wiredu (2008) suggests that there is still a need to clarify communalism as a theory and to determine its importance to society. Eastern cultures, especially those in Africa, have been traditionally defined as communalistic societies. Wiredu (2008) insists that traditional African culture is primarily communalistic in structure. This author concludes that African communalism appears to be the norm rather than the exception in African populations. He adds that African communities are built on kinship relationships in which community members learn reciprocity of obligations and rights that extend to neighbors, towns, regions, nations, and so on.

In these types of communities, individuals learn a connection which involves a deep obligation toward one another (Wiredu, 2008). Western cultures such as the United States have been categorized as individualistic cultures in which its members are independent of one another. Hundreds of years ago, when cultures and groups of people were more separated and easily defined, it may have been a relatively easy task to categorize a culture of people as individualistic, collectivistic, or communalistic. However, in today's world of overlapping global economic, environmental, and survival concerns, it is becoming increasingly difficult to measure the characteristics of a given culture because of the influences of other cultures, as well as the changing of traditions and values as a result of these influences.

It is possible that other cultures, in addition to those of eastern countries, can also exhibit communalistic characteristics. Wiredu (2008) suggests that communalism values are not exclusive to eastern cultures. In contrast, many other cultures use communalism values in daily life activities. For example, the “Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is a principle or value traditionally thought of as primarily a Christian value, when in fact it is a global principle underlying traditional African communalism (Wiredu, 2008). Therefore, if we carefully examine some of our own core values we might find that communalistic values make up our core belief system for many cultures of this world.

Humans are capable of cooperating with unrelated individuals to an extent that is unprecedented among animals, and human society would not be recognizable without this ability: we would have no trade, no moral or legal systems, and no universities, religions, unions, armies, political parties, or organizations of any kind. (Price, 2008, p. 230)

Although the origin of human cooperativeness is still unknown and current theories appear to be lacking (Price, 2008), studying communalism may lead researchers to discovering valuable information about all cultures, not just a limited few. Providing additional knowledge about human cooperation or communalism could, in return, uncover universal aspects of human nature that have been overlooked in earlier research. This information may be used in a global manner with knowledge being useful to a wide range of researchers, educators, practitioners, economists, archeologists, biologists, sociologists, psychologists, to name only a few (Price, 2008).

Significance of the Study

Communalism does appear to be an important social construct contributing to the integrity of the African culture, but is its existence a reality in the African American population? Is there a clear distinction between these values in the African American population as compared to other cultures, or are communalistic values also present in other populations such as European Americans? Furthermore, does the variable of geographical location explain the existence of communal values in certain populations? Simply stated, are communal values distinct in the African American population when compared to other populations, such as European Americans or do European Americans also share communal values? Furthermore, do ethnic groups that share geographical location and similar backgrounds tend to also share communal values?

Due to this debate in the field and the aforementioned questions, there appears to be a need for a more comprehensive study of communalism in the African American population and an exploratory investigation of its possible existence in other cultures as well. Boykin, Jagers, Ellison, and Albury (1997) constructed *The Communalism Scale*, a questionnaire developed to more empirically measure the construct of communalism. Oyserman (2006) suggested that at the beginning of the research on individualism and collectivism, it was assumed that these constructs could be tested together and, therefore, Triandis (as cited by Oyserman, 2006), developed the Individualism-Collectivism Scale (ICS) to assess these constructs at an individual level. However, Oyserman (2006) indicates that this was an incorrect assumption and that these constructs should be tested separately. *The Communalism Scale* was developed to test the communalism construct separately as proposed by Oyserman (2006). It has been shown to be positively correlated

with collectivist and in-group tendencies and was normed on four samples from the African American population. However, there appears to still be a need for continued validation of this scale. Can communal values be accurately measured by *The Communalism Scale*, which has been specifically developed and tested for and with African Americans?

Schimmack, Oishi, and Diener (2005) suggest that the measurement of social constructs needs improvement. They propose that some measures that are currently available do not have any convergent validity. Overall, they advocate for validation of scales that measure social constructs so that the field can move forward in a positive direction (Schimmack et al., 2005). It is important that we correctly assess these constructs, to bring about a more effective role of using these measures, considering the global impact of distinguishing between cultures. Schimmack et al., (2005) also suggest that cross-cultural studies continue to update information on social constructs nationally due to generational changes in culture. “In the future, cross-cultural psychologists need to deepen the understanding of the causes and consequences of individualism and validate additional dimensions of cultural differences” (Schimmack et al., 2005, p. 30). However, new measures need to demonstrate validity. Adding to the validation information for *The Communalism Scale* will increase the literature on communalism and will allow future researchers interested in this concept to accurately study this social phenomenon and correctly identify cultures that have previously been labeled as collectivist cultures.

Objective of Study

This study attempted to add to the current validity of *The Communalism Scale* for use in the African American community to measure communal values and possibly in

other cultures as well. This tool can potentially be used in research to measure and re-measure the cultural values or changes in cultural values in a given population, within a certain population, or between cultures. Boykin et al. (1997) suggested that *The Communalism Scale* be used to explore the role of geographic region and that it should also be used with different cultural groups to further help understand the application of the measure, “exploring the endorsement of communalism by other cultural groups may be important to understanding the application scope of the communal orientation” (Boykin et al. p. 417). Furthermore, Jagers and Mock (1995) suggest that further research should involve a more diverse sample of African Americans. Agreeing with Boykin’s (1997) suggestions, these authors also suggest that the measure should be used with other cultures, “because interpersonal competition is fundamental to Anglo-American culture, the implications of a communal orientation for participation in such task and reward structures is of considerable interest” (p. 165). Following that future research suggestion, this study proposed to add to the current validity of this scale by using African American population samples, as used in the pilot studies, as well as using another cultural groups (European American). Adding to the validity information about *The Communalism Scale* will provide information about the usefulness of this model in studying cultural differences and it could clearly speak to the effectiveness of measuring communalistic/individualistic aspects of culture.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample included approximately 646 participants including students from universities in different geographical locations of the United States and individuals not currently enrolled as college students. The sample can most readily be described as a convenience sample. Researchers attempted to sample participants from four major geographical areas in the United States. These geographical areas are the Northeast, Midwest, South, and West regions as delineated by the U.S. Census Bureau. Participants' ages ranged from 18 and above. This type of sampling was chosen in order to obtain data that more closely represent the general population. The only selection criterion for participation was age limit requirements. The sample did not have any restrictions on gender or ethnicity. Originally, it was anticipated that only data from African American and European American participants would be utilized in the study; however, data revealed adequate levels of participation from other ethnic groups which were later added in the analysis. Participants were recruited in several ways which will now be described.

Participants were recruited through an electronic mailing system, i.e. email. For example, researchers contacted professors associated with universities, through email, and petitioned these professors to distribute the online study through email to their undergraduate and graduate students. Also, researchers utilized current email associates to transmit the survey to persons who may not be connected to an institution of higher learning. Researchers also used social networking sites to disperse the survey in order to

provide a more normal representation of the current population. Examples of social networking sites that were used include “Facebook” and “MySpace.”

The researcher obtained IRB permission (see Appendix D) and permission to convert the original scale from the paper and pencil version to an electronic version (see Appendix B). However, due to low response rates for web-based research, researchers also planned to use the original paper and pencil version of *The Communalism Scale* if preliminary findings suggested that a low response rate was likely to occur in this study. However, this was not the case, and the paper and pencil version was not utilized.

Participation required approximately 15- 25 minutes of the participants’ time. Participants had an opportunity to be entered into a drawing to win one of five \$20 gift certificates from major retailers. After completion of the online study, student participants were able to print a confirmation of survey participation. Researchers suggested that professors provide any participating students with research participation credit towards course work upon completion of this study. This suggestion was included in the instructional email sent to professors when the survey was distributed via web services.

Instruments

The Communalism Scale. *The Communalism Scale* was developed to assess this social construct in cultures that are suspected to have high levels of communalism values. The creation of the scale grew out of a lack of measures in the current literature that assessed this social construct (Boykin et al., 1997). Construction of the scale occurred in several steps. First, authors of the scale defined the social construct of communalism by conceptualizing the construct and presenting it to a panel of five judges. Secondly, the

scale items were generated, and lastly, the items were tested for reliability, validity, and endorsement.

Initially, Boykin et al. (1997) conceptualized a definition of communalism into a scenario form. The original conceptualization scenario contained five distinct themes.

These core components were (1) primacy of social existence, (2) sanctity of social bonds and relations, (3) transcendence of group duties and responsibilities over individual concerns, (4) anchoring of individual identity in the group, and (5) an emphasis on sharing and contributing in support of the group. (p. 411)

The themes and the scenarios were presented to the panel of judges for inspection and to help gain clarity on the conceptualization of the construct. This was done to establish content validity. The judges were considered to be erudite in African and African American cultures and provided insight on the construct for the authors of the scale. Using the judges' feedback, the researchers revised the original definition of the concept and the final conceptualization of communalism was generated. The final conceptualization is as follows:

Communalism denotes awareness of the fundamental interdependence of people. One's orientation is social rather than being directed toward objects. There is overriding importance attached to social bonds and social relationships. One acts in accordance with the notion that duty to one's social group is more important than individual rights and privileges. Hence, one's identity is tied to group membership rather than individual status and possessions. Sharing is promoted because it signifies the affirmation of social interconnectedness; self-centeredness and individual greed are frowned upon. (Boykin et al., 1997, p. 411)

Next, the authors generated 54 initial items for the scale that reflect the five themes of the construct. These items were written for at least an eighth grade reading level comprehension and ten of these items were reversed keyed to control for response bias (Boykin et al., 1997). These items were then presented to the same panel of judges for inspection. Judges agreed, with 80% agreement rate, that 46 of the items were consistent with the five themes in the revised conceptualization of the construct. All items were then placed on a six-point Likert-type scale with choices ranging from *completely false* (1) to *completely true* (6) with no midpoint provided (Boykin et al., 1997).

Lastly, the items were tested for reliability and validity. Four samples in all of African American students from a historically Black university were used to test reliability and validity of the scale. The students were chosen from the pool of introductory psychology classes at the university. The first and second samples contained 140 students and 57 students. The third and fourth samples contained 274 students and 135 students.

The first and second samples were used to assist in item reduction. Only items which met statistical significance ($p < .05$) for item-total scale correlation were kept for the scale. Therefore, 31 items that met this standard were kept. Twenty-six items (items 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, & 39) are scored, five were reversed keyed (items 1, 9, 24, 29, & 34) and nine filler items (items 3, 7, 12, 15, 23, 26, 31, 36, & 40) were added to reduce response bias (Boykin et al., 1997). Participants completed the scale in approximately twenty minutes. In order to evaluate the construct validity and homogeneity of the scale, the second sample was also given the social independence scale which features three scales that assess cooperation,

competitive, and individualistic attitudes. Sample three was administered the final 40-item scale version and the social independence scale as well. Additionally, sample four was used to assess the internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity. This sample received the final version of the scale, the social independence scale, and after three weeks 120 of the original sample completed the final version of *The Communalism Scale* (see Appendix C) again.

In reference to internal consistency, Cronbach's coefficient alphas were obtained equaling .84 for sample one and .87 for samples two and three. Sample four produced a .89 coefficient alpha and upon test-retest the coefficient alpha produced was .81. These results indicate a stable scale with good internal consistency. As for mean endorsement, five mean endorsements were obtained and yielded an average endorsement of 4.3 on a six point scale which is above the neutral point of 3.5 indicating that the "scale items are reasonably reflective of the social orientation of those surveyed" (Boykin et al., 1997, p. 415). Also, the authors report no mean differences between genders in any of the four samples. As for validity, results of initial testing reveal that the relationship between communalism and the social independence scale went as expected meaning that higher communalism scores were associated with cooperative attitudes and lower communalism scores were associated with individualistic academic attitude.

According to Jagers and Mock (1995), "although findings from these studies suggest the measure has construct validity, additional data are needed to bolster confidence in the psychometric properties of this newly developed scale" (p. 154). In their study, Jagers and Mock (1995) used a sample of 110 African American students to assess the relationships between communalism and measures of self-concept,

interpersonal attitudes, collectivism, and individualism. They found a mean endorsement of 4.19, which is consistent with the results from the original internal consistency study and no gender differences in scale endorsement. They also found varying results in these relationships. As anticipated, communalism was found to have a negative correlation with distance from in-group measures and self-reliance with competition scales while it had a positive correlation with concern for in-group scales. There was some contradictory findings in that *The Communalism Scale* was positively related to common fate responding, which tends to be a communal concept, and there tended to be no systematic relationships between communalism scores and individualistic scores. Due to the findings of this study, the researchers suggest that more validity research should be conducted.

Since the conception of this scale, several others studies have used *The Communalism Scale* to assess the communal concept. Mattis, Hearn, and Jagers (2002) administered the scale to 171 African American men of varying ages and found that the participants in the study, across age, were committed to the values consistent with the communal construct. They also found that there were no relationships found between financial stress, relational stress, everyday racism, current religious involvement and communalism, indicating that none of these variables were able to significantly predict communal endorsement. Therefore, the study concludes that “these findings are consistent with the notion that communalism is a cultural value and that it may be fairly resistant to psychological and sociostructural events and stresses” (Mattis et al., 2002, p. 210), providing support for this social construct as an innate way of being within a specific culture or grouping of individuals. Additionally, some researchers have attempted to vary the sample of participants by using 151 African American males from

northern and southern locations (Mattis et al., 2004). They found that there was no significant relationship between communal scores and involvement in volunteer work. However, when controlling for all other factors, communalism scores did appear to be a significant and positive predictor of the amount of time the men spent volunteering, indicating “that communalism may be particularly important as a predictor of African American men’s levels of commitment to pro-social activities, rather than a predictor of the likelihood of involvement in such activities” (Mattis et al., 2004, p. 269).

Results from previous studies have demonstrated clear internal consistency of *The Communalism Scale*; however, there appears to be a need for further validation of the scale. “Our understanding of the utility of this measure needs to be expanded in several ways,” and “future efforts should employ diverse samples of African Americans and other people of African descent to explore further the psychometric properties of the scale” (Jagers & Mock, 1995, p. 165). This study purposed to follow this suggestion by including participants from different geographical locations of the U.S. Future suggestions also recommend that a “program of systematic study to describe adequately the current status of communalism and to determine its utility for the psychosocial functioning of African American people” be developed (Jagers & Mock, 1995, p. 165). The current study proposed to add to the understanding of the communalism construct.

Demographic questionnaire. A questionnaire was constructed with the following information to be provided by the participant: age, gender, ethnic classification, primary language, highest level of education completed, student status, marital status, place of birth, current state of residence, current geographical location, geographical classification of current community (urban, suburban, rural), length of years residing at current

location, religious affiliation, frequency of religious activities, current household income, primary area of employment, length of internet usage, and frequency of accessing the world-wide web was given to the sample population along with the above mentioned instrument.

Procedure

Researchers used an online survey program from Qualtrics.com to administer the instrument. A demographic questionnaire and *The Communalism Scale* were converted from paper and pencil format to electronic format using an electronic program associated with the Qualtrics.com website. Researchers had previously obtained written permission, from the author of *The Communalism Scale*, to change the format of the questionnaire. This survey technique allowed researchers to survey a large pool of participants from different geographical locations.

Researchers enlisted professors in university settings, associates through email contact lists, and social networking sites to distribute the online study through email. Participants received an email that included general information about the study and then participants were given the opportunity to choose to participate in the study. If students chose to participate, they continued to a web page containing a consent form. Participants were asked to read the consent form carefully before choosing to continue. After reading the consent form, participants began the study. Participants were given a brief overview of the study's purpose. Participants were instructed to read carefully all instructions included for each part of the questionnaire packet. In the directions, participants were instructed to respond and answer each item in an open and honest manner. The researcher was available for any questions via email or telephone after completion of the study and

could be contacted, at the participants' discretion and convenience, at the contact information given on the consent form and via email.

Immediately following the completion of the demographic questionnaire, *The Communalism Scale* was administered. The last page of the survey included a general debriefing statement, researcher contact information, and a statement which thanked the participants for their voluntary participation. Data collection began on the date that the emails were sent to the professors, associates, and social networking sites. Since electronic collection of data has the potential to be infinite, the researcher provided a date for the initial completion of data collection. Upon the arrival of this date, the researcher accessed participation rate of the study and determined if the date should be adjusted due to low participation rates. Upon completion of the data collection, data was transferred into a statistical program referred to as PASW and data was analyzed. Additionally, a drawing was held to identify the participants who had won the participation prizes. These winning participants were contacted by email address (provided during the data collection) and the prize was sent through the mail to the physical mailing address obtained from the winners.

Data resulting from the electronic version was initially stored by the website providing the data collection service. However, after all raw data collection occurred, raw data was deleted from the server and statistical data from the electronic version was stored on the computer of the university statistician who assisted in data analysis. Statistical data was only assessed by the researchers involved with the study and the persons providing statistical services for the study. After ten years, raw data will be

deleted or destroyed from all remaining servers and all statistical results will be maintained by the primary researcher with one back-up file maintained.

Research Hypotheses (Restated)

Research hypotheses included predictions about the valid use of *The Communalism Scale* with members of varying ethnic groups and the differences or similarities between these ethnic groups in reference to this scale. Given the exploratory nature of the study, hypotheses were difficult to formulate; however, using current unpublished research findings, the proposed hypotheses are listed as follows:

1. Data from *The Communalism Scale* (dependent variable) will yield results indicating that there are no differences between African American participants (independent variable a) and European American participants (independent variable b), located in southern geographical locations; and that scores will not be statistically different, after calculating differences for all four geographical locations.
2. Data from *The Communalism Scale* will yield results indicating a significant difference between specific ethnic groups.

Given the exploratory nature of this part of the study, no additional hypotheses were proposed about specific differences that might occur between ethnic groups from differing geographical locations.

Analysis

Frequencies and percentages were calculated for demographic variables including age, gender, ethnic classification, primary language, highest level of education completed, student status, marital status, place of birth, current state of residence, current

geographical region, geographical classification of current community (urban, suburban, rural), length of years residing at current location, religious affiliation, frequency of religious activities, current household income, primary area of employment, length of internet usage, and frequency of accessing the world-wide web. Means and standard deviations for all ethnic groups were calculated for the communalism variable. Statistical tests, such as ANOVAs and Post Hoc analyses, were used to examine the significance of the differences between the ethnic groups on the communalism variable, and to assess if there were differences in ethnic group scores based on geographical location. Finally, reliability of *The Communalism Scale* was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The primary objective of this study was to provide additional information for the current pool of knowledge regarding the validity for *The Communalism Scale*. An additional objective of this study was to provide support for the usefulness of the scale in measuring communal values with specific ethnic groups such as African Americans. *The Communalism Scale* has been utilized in the past only with an African American sample; therefore, this study added to the current information on the scale by utilizing the scale with not only the African American ethnic group, but other ethnic groups, such as European Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders. It was important to study this cultural measurement tool because it could potentially be used in research to measure and later repeat the measurement of the cultural values or changes in cultural values in a given population, within a certain population, or between cultures. Furthermore, results from this type of study, using *The Communalism Scale*, could assist in adding to the current social, cultural model that currently exists to explain connectedness in communities. In this chapter, the characteristics of the sample and the results of the analysis are presented below.

As previously noted, 646 participants across the United States of America completed this survey containing a demographic questionnaire and *The Communalism Scale*. Participants listed themselves as currently living in 38 out of the 50 states in the United States of America, including the District of Columbia. Data was collected from every major geographical location (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West) as indicated by the United States Census Bureau (see Table 1). The participants were recruited

exclusively using an electronic mailing system method including utilizing email associates, contacting university professors through email, and social-networking sites such as *Facebook*. Additionally, participants included students from universities and colleges across the country and non-students as well. This type of convenience sample was used in order to obtain data that would more closely represent the general population in the United States. Data was collected using a common online survey site, *Qualtrics*, and was analyzed using a statistical program referred to as PASW formally listed as SPSS.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage -Geographical Location N=646

Location	Frequency	Percent
Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania)	125	19.3
Midwest (Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota)	73	11.3

Table 1 (continued).

Location	Frequency	Percent
South (Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)	296	45.8
West (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington)	152	23.5

The demographic questionnaire inquired about characteristics of the participants. Questions on this part of the survey requested specific demographic information: age, gender, ethnic classification, primary language, education level, highest level of education completed, student status, marital status, place of birth, current state of residence, current geographical region, geographical classification of current community

(urban, suburban, rural), length of years residing at current location, religious affiliation, frequency of religious activities, current household income, primary area of employment, length of Internet usage, and frequency of accessing the world-wide web. Frequencies and percentages of the demographics were calculated using the statistical program listed above (PASW). The results from the demographics survey are as follows.

The sample included 79.4% females and 20.6% male participants with the 18-25 year old age range the highest at 46.4% of participants, followed by the 26-35 year-old age group at 21.4% (see Table 2). In terms of ethnicity, European Americans were 52.3%, African Americans were 26.3%, and Asian/Pacific Islanders were 11.8% of the sample (see Table 3). Additionally, English was the primary language most indicated by the participants at 95.4% (Table 4). With reference to education, participants indicated that 38.9% had completed at least “some college,” followed by 18.1% completing a Bachelor’s degree, while 15.9% and 8.2% self-reported as attaining a Master’s and/or Doctoral degree respectively (see Table 5). Additionally, 62.7% of the sample indicated that they were students either seeking an undergraduate degree, graduate degree, or non-degree seeking, while 37.3% of them reported that they were not students (see Table 6).

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage-Age of Participants N=646

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	300	46.4
26-35 years	138	21.4
36-45 years	87	13.5

Table 2 (continued).

Age	Frequency	Percent
46-55 years	55	8.5
55 and older	66	10.2

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage-Ethnic Group N=646

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Arab	1	.2
Asian/Pacific Island.	76	11.8
Black/African Amer.	170	26.3
Caucasian/White	338	52.3
Hispanic	15	2.3
Indigenous/Aboriginal	1	.2
Latino	3	.5
Multiracial	26	4.0
Other	16	2.5

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage-Primary Language N=646

Language	Frequency	Percent
Arabic	0	0
English	616	95.4
Spanish	8	1.2
Other	22	3.4

Table 5

Frequency and Percentage-Level of Education N=646

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Grammar School	0	0
High School or Equiv	90	13.9
Vocational/tech.(2yr)	14	2.2
Some college	251	38.9
Bachelor's degree	117	18.1
Master's degree	103	15.9

Table 5 (continued).

Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Doctoral degree	53	8.2
Professional degree	13	2.0
Other	5	.8

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage-Student Status N=646

Status	Frequency	Percent
Yes, I am currently a student but not working toward a degree	18	2.8
Yes, I am currently a student working on a degree other than a graduate degree (undergraduate, technical, certificate, vocational)	262	40.6

Table 6 (continued).

Status	Frequency	Percent
Yes, I am currently a student working on a graduate degree	125	19.3
No, I am not a student	241	37.3

The remaining demographic variables include information about marital status, geographical classification of current community (urban, suburban, rural), length of years residing at current location, religious affiliation, frequency of religious activities, current household income, primary area of employment, length of Internet usage, and frequency of accessing the world-wide web. With reference to marital status, 51.1% reported being single, 31.7% indicated that they were married, while 8% said they were living with another person (see Table 7). With respect to location, participants indicated that 50.8% lived in suburban areas, 29.1% lived in urban areas, and 20.1% reported living in rural areas. Also, data from the sample showed that 24.1% of participants have lived in their current area two to five years, 23.1% less than two years, and 12.4% have lived there 10-15 years (see Table 8).

Table 7

Frequency and Percentage-Marital Status N=646

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Divorced	37	5.7
Living w/other	52	8.0
Married	205	31.7
Separated	4	.6
Single	330	51.1
Widowed	2	.3
Other	16	2.5

Table 8

Frequency and Percentage-Length of Years at Current Location N=646

Length at Location	Frequency	Percent
< 2 years	149	23.1
2-5 years	156	24.1
6-9 years	63	9.8

Table 8 (continued).

Length at Location	Frequency	Percent
10-15 years	80	12.4
16-20 years	73	11.3
21-25 years	30	4.6
26-30 years	16	2.5
31-35 years	11	1.7
36-40 years	4	.6
> 40 years	8	1.2
All my life	56	8.7

Data from religious inquiries showed that participants indicated they were 45.5% Christian, followed by 18.1% Catholic, and 7.9% Agnostic. Twenty-seven percent of participants reported that they attend religious activities once per month, 26.3% revealed they never attend religious activities, and 16.4% report attending religious activities once per week; additional data is listed in Tables 9 and 10. Slightly more than 41% of participants chose “student” as their primary employment, 11% chose “healthcare and social assistance,” while 8% chose Adult Education (universities and colleges) as their primary source of employment (see Table 11). In regards to employment, participants indicated that 29.3% of them had a household income of less than \$20,000 and 23.5%

reported household incomes over \$90,000; data showed that the remaining participants reported household incomes that mainly fell in between the levels indicated above (see Table 12). Finally, data collected concerning web usage indicated that 91.8% of participants have been using the Internet for seven years or more and 95% access the worldwide web daily (see Tables 13 and 14).

Table 9

Frequency and Percentage-Religious Affiliation N=646

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Agnostic	51	7.9
Atheist	25	3.9
Buddhist	16	2.5
Catholic	117	18.1
Christian	294	45.5
Hindu	3	.5
Jewish	18	2.8
Muslim	3	.5
Jehovah's Witness	2	.3

Table 9 (continued).

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Protestant	27	4.2
Pagan/Wiccan	6	.9
Spiritual/NewAge	24	3.7
Non-Christian	6	.9
Other	54	8.4

Table 10

Frequency and Percentage-Religious Activity N=646

Religious Activity	Frequency	Percent
Never	170	26.3
< Once a Month	179	27.7
Once a Month	47	7.3
2-3 Times a Month	67	10.4
Once a Week	106	16.4

Table 10 (continued).

Religious Activity	Frequency	Percent
2-3 Times a Week	69	10.7
Daily	8	1.2

Table 11

Frequency and Percentage-Primary Employment N=646

Employment	Frequency	Percent
Homemaker	23	3.6
Retired	30	4.6
Student	267	41.3
Unemployed	17	2.6
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, or Hunting	3	.5
Arts, Entertainment, or Recreation	3	.5

Table 11 (continued).

Employment	Frequency	Percent
Broadcasting	1	.2
Education-College, University, or Adult	52	8.0
Education- Primary/Secondary	15	2.3
Education-Other	20	3.1
Construction	3	.5
Finance and Insurance	12	1.9
Government and Public Administration	16	2.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	76	11.8
Hotel and Food Services	12	1.9
Information-Services and Data	4	.6
Information-Other	2	.3
Processing	1	.2
Legal Services	4	.6

Table 11 (continued).

Employment	Frequency	Percent
Manufacturing	2	.3
Military	20	3.1
Publishing	2	.3
Real Estate, Rental, or Leasing	1	.2
Retail	16	2.5
Scientific or Technical Services	5	.8
Telecommunications	4	.6
Transportation and Warehousing	2	.3
Utilities	2	.3
Other	31	4.8

Table 12

Frequency and Percentage-Household Income N=646

Income	Frequency	Percent
Below \$20,000	189	29.3
\$20,000 - \$29,999	51	7.9
\$30,000 - \$39,999	49	7.6
\$40,000 - \$49,999	50	7.7
\$50,000 - \$59,999	48	7.4
\$60,000 - \$69,999	46	7.1
\$70,000 - \$79,999	34	5.3
\$80,000 - \$89,999	27	4.2
\$90,000 or more	152	23.5

Table 13

Frequency and Percentage-Web Use N=646

Web Use	Frequency	Percent
6 to 12 mth	7	1.1
1 to 3 years	8	1.2

Table 13 (continued).

Web Use	Frequency	Percent
4 to 6 years	38	5.9
7 years or >	593	91.8

Table 14

Frequency and Percentage- Internet Access N=646

Internet Access	Frequency	Percent
< Once a Month	1	.2
2-3 Times a Month	3	.5
Once a Week	8	1.2
2-3 Times a Week	20	3.1
Daily	614	95.0

Statistical Analysis

As noted above, the research participants were asked to complete a questionnaire packet containing a demographic questionnaire and *The Communalism Scale*. A

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of *The Communalism Scale*. Means and standard deviations for represented ethnic groups were calculated (see Tables 15 and 17). ANOVAS were performed to assess the differences between ethnic groups on *The Communalism Scale*. The results of the statistical analyses for the hypotheses tested in this study are presented in the remainder of this section.

Table 15

Means and Standard Deviations-Communalism Ethnicity by Geographical Location

N=508

Location	African American			European American		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Northeast	9	4.29	.38	98	4.02	.59
Midwest	9	4.13	.48	61	4.19	.54
South	146	4.25	.58	131	4.15	.64
West	6	3.78	.85	48	4.12	.58

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Data from *The Communalism Scale* (dependent variable) will yield results indicating that mean differences between African American participants (independent variable a) and European American participants (independent variable b), located in the southern geographical regions, will not be statistically different, after

calculating differences for all four geographical regions. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in this sample after calculating the difference in scores on *The Communalism Scale* from the two aforementioned ethnic groups from all four geographical locations divided by the Census Bureau (Northeast, Midwest, West, and South). A 2-Way ANOVA analysis concluded that there was no significant difference in the mean scores of these two ethnic groups and that geographical location had no bearing on the difference between the groups. Specifically, there was no difference between African Americans and European Americans in this sample on *The Communalism Scale* and there was no interaction effect due to geographical location. Consequently, there was no significant difference in scores for the two ethnic groups sampled in the southern geographical location. Datum from ANOVA results suggests that the significance level is above meaningful limits ($p > .05$) for the interaction between ethnicity and geographical region. Thus, for this sample (N = 508; Total of African Americans and European Americans in this sample) geographical location and ethnicity had no interaction effect on communalism scores for both ethnic groups. Other racial groups were not included in this analysis due to insufficient number of participants in the respective groups. Therefore, the analysis of these results did support this hypothesis (see Table 16).

Table 16

2-Way ANOVA-Communalism, Ethnic group by Geographical Location N=508

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	2573.644	1	2573.644	7558.067	.000

Table 16 (continued).

Source	Type III Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q Ethnicity	.009	1	.009	.027	.870
Q Location	1.218	3	.406	1.193	.312
QE * QL	1.237	3	.412	1.211	.305
Error	170.258	500	.341		
Total	9555.568	508			
Corrected	174.082	507			

Hypothesis 2: Data from *The Communalism Scale* will yield results indicating a significant difference between the means for ethnic groups in this sample. Due to the exploratory nature of this part of the study, no specific differences in means were hypothesized. ANOVA analysis concluded that there was a significant difference in the means of the ethnic groups in this analysis (N=610), therefore, results suggest that significance level is within meaningful limits ($p < .05$) (see Table 18). Ethnic groups used for this analysis were Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, European American, and a multiracial ethnic group. Means and standard deviations for these ethnic groups are listed in Table 17.

Table 17

Means and Standard Deviations-Communalism and Ethnic Group N=610

Ethnicity	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Asian/Pacific Islander	76	4.44	.50	.05
African American	170	4.36	.53	.04
European American	338	4.26	.60	.03
Multiracial	26	4.28	.58	.11
Total	610	4.31	.57	.02

Table 18

ANOVA-Ethnic Group

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.726	3	.909	2.752	.042
Within Groups	200.083	606	.330		
Total	202.809	609			

Additionally, data revealed that Asian/Pacific Islanders have higher mean levels on *The Communalism Scale*; African Americans in this sample have the next highest mean, then the Multiracial ethnic group and lastly the European American ethnic group. Asian/Pacific Islanders appear to have the highest communal values of the sample.

Additionally, Post Hoc analysis revealed that there are significant differences between the scores on *The Communalism Scale* of three out of four ethnic groups used in this analysis. Specifically, there was a significant difference between the African Americans, European Americans, and Asian/Pacific Islanders in this sample, however, there was no significant difference found with the multiracial ethnic group. Analysis revealed that European Americans were significantly different than both the Asian/Pacific Islander and African American ethnic groups. Post Hoc analysis concluded that there was a significant difference in the means of three ethnic group mentioned above in this analysis (N=610), therefore, results suggest that significance level is within meaningful limits ($p < .05$) (see Table 19).

Table 19

Tukey's LSD Post Hoc-Communalism and Ethnic Groups N=610

(I) How would you classify yourself?	(J) How would you classify yourself?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Asian/Pacific Islander	African American	.07	.07	.36
	European American	.18*	.07	*.01
	Multiracial	.15	.13	.23
African American	Asian/Pacific Islander	-.07	.07	.36
	European American	.10*	.05	*.04
	Multiracial	.08	.12	.49
European American	Asian/Pacific Islander	-.18*	.07	*.01
	African American	-.10*	.05	*.04
	Multiracial	-.02	.11	.82
Multiracial	Asian/Pacific Islander	-.15	.13	.23
	African American	-.08	.12	.49
	European American	.02	.11	.82

* $p < .05$

Additional analyses included a Cronbach's alpha of *The Communalism Scale*. With reference to the reliability of *The Communalism Scale*; Cronbach's Alpha was calculated and found to be adequate and consistent with previous finding (Cronbach's Alpha=.884; N=646). This is an indication that this scale is a reliable measure when used with several different ethnic groups, including African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, European Americans, and multiracial groups. Reliability scores for all ethnic groups were above .85 indicating good internal consistency of the scale.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

A brief summary and interpretation of the findings from this study will be presented. The finding will be discussed in the context of previous research and current literature. Additionally, the implications for this study will be addressed and limitations of the study will be presented. Finally, the directions for future research will be discussed.

Summary of Findings

With regards to the first hypothesis, there was no interaction effect of geographical location for scores on *The Communalism Scale* for the African American and European American sample. The alternative hypothesis specifically predicted that there would be an interaction effect of geographical location for participants from the southern geographical region. Preliminary data showed no significance between an African American and European American sample from the southern geographical location of the United States using *The Communalism Scale*. Therefore, it was hypothesized that for this sample there would also be no significant difference between the African American ethnic group and the European American ethnic group on *The Communalism Scale*. With regards to the specific hypothesis, there was no significant difference in the scores of the African American and European American ethnic groups for the southern geographical region. Thus, the hypothesis was supported. Additionally, results show that there were no significant differences on *The Communalism Scale* between ethnicity, between locations, or the interaction of ethnicity and location.

With regards to the second hypothesis, there was a significant difference between the scores on *The Communalism Scale* for several ethnic groups in the sample. This hypothesis was not specific in defining which ethnic groups would be significantly different from each other due to the exploratory nature of this part of the study. Until now, *The Communalism Scale* had not been utilized with any ethnic group other than African Americans. Therefore, there was no preliminary data to contribute to the development of the initial hypothesis. Specifically, the results revealed that there was a significant difference between the scores of the African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and European American ethnic groups. Asian/Pacific Islanders were significantly different from the European Americans; the African Americans were significantly different from the European Americans; and the European Americans were significantly different from both the African American and Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic groups. Lastly, reliability analysis for *The Communalism Scale* was completed. Reliability for the scale was also determined to be adequate and consistent with previous findings.

Interpretation of Findings

Hypothesis one was supported by the results of the statistical analysis. *The Communalism Scale* scores of African Americans and European Americans in the southern geographical location area of the United States were found not to be significantly different. These findings were consistent with preliminary analysis that showed similar scores on *The Communalism Scale* with these two ethnic groups. These findings are not considered to be fully supportive of the existing communalism theory. The foundation of the communalism theory states that this construct should be present only in those descendants from communal cultures such as African Americans. The

authors of *The Communalism Scale* insist that this scale is measuring an aspect of culture that is more prevalent in the African American culture (Boykin et al., 1997). However, two studies, one preliminary and the current study, using two different samples, have found similar results, indicating that the African American and European American scores on this scale appear to reflect common relationships within both cultural groups. Boykin et al. (1997) emphasized that additional research with this scale should explore the role of geographical region and endorsement of the communalism construct by other cultures in order to understand the application of the communal orientation. Following those suggestions, the current study examined these dimensions and found that the communal construct appears to exist at comparable levels in European Americans, as well as in African Americans populations. The results lead to questions of the primary foundation of the communal theory.

Explanations of the current finding could be founded in theories of bi-culturalism and problems with the construct itself. African Americans in North America represent a bi-cultural composite of both Africans who immigrated to this country and other cultures, such as European Americans. Over time, this bi-culturalism could account for the cultural groups responding similarly on constructs such as the communal orientation. Tyler et al. (2008) found evidence to suggest no significant difference between the cultural rearing of children from African American and European American families, providing evidence for this theory of bi-culturalism and strengthening the argument that these groups are more alike than they are different. This evidence also provides support for a generational shift that could be occurring in the African American culture as a whole. Furthermore, the fact that African Americans live in a predominantly European American society could

facilitate a diluting of traditional communal values within this ethnic group. This dilution process could cause cultural values to shift so that those values now reflect the values of the majority ethnic group. This could offer an explanation of why scores for these two ethnic groups are similar.

Also, there could be problems with the scale itself. It was suggested by Wiredu (2008) and Osha (2008) that traditional African communalism does not exist today currently in Africa or in North America in descendents of Africans. It is possible that the scale is not measuring a true communal construct, but some other construct that is prevalent in both the African American and European American ethnic groups. If the scale is indeed measuring true communalism, as suggested by the authors (Boykin et al., 1997), then it also possible that Europeans Americans, in the southern geographical regions, maintain the same levels of communal orientation as in the African American population. In fact, Jones (1997), in a radical view of the construct, insisted that European Americans valued communalistic beliefs highly and use connections within their own culture to strengthen each other; this type of helping behavior is the foundation of the communalism theory. Furthermore, there is still the possibility that the results obtained in this sample with these ethnic groups could be explained through analyzing geographical location. This explanation will now be explained further.

Data analyzed using all four geographical locations (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West), concluded that there were no differences in scores on *The Communalism Scale* for both the African American and the European American ethnic groups, indicating that participants from both these groups in all four areas appeared to have similar scores. However, on a closer examination of the analysis for Hypothesis one, it

was found that there was not a comparable number of participants in certain geographical location categories (Northeast, Midwest, and West), when compared to the number of participants in the South, therefore, analysis for these areas may not reflect actual occurrences of the communal orientation represented in reality. Specifically, there were disproportionate numbers of African American participants in the areas listed above, with which to compare scores to those of European Americans. Therefore, it is difficult to accurately report that there are no differences in scores for these ethnic groups in the Northeast, Midwest, and West geographical locations of the United States, even though the analysis for this sample shows no difference in scores. In fact, there may have actually been a difference in the scores of *The Communalism Scale* among participants these geographical locations. However, the power from the current sample may have not been strong enough to detect this difference. Further analyses of these regions with adequate, comparable numbers of participants from each geographical area are needed in order to determine the accurate levels of communal orientation of these groups in these particular areas. Therefore, there still remains the possibility that communal scores could be significantly different for African Americans and European Americans in the Northeast, Midwest, and West geographical locations.

For these reasons, it could be said that the current data does not provide full support for the communalism theory. However, the current data is also inconclusive when considering all geographical regions and should be examined with caution. As a result, a conclusion about the levels of the communal orientation existing in these groups cannot be fully explained using this sample. Further research must be conducted. As Wiredu (2008) suggests, clarification of this construct will provide for a deeper understanding of

culture. This clarification was not fully achieved through this sample and, therefore, the search for improved understanding of this ethnic construct must continue. Oyserman et al. (2002) indicated, in their meta-analyses, that it is difficult to ascertain differences in culture, even with using the current cultural model of individualism and collectivism. They emphasize that replications of this type of research is rare and that differences in samples, methods, and design make it almost impossible to tell whether cultural differences can be attributed to these social constructs or if they are generalizable across populations and regions. The current research also had difficulty obtaining unambiguous results. It appears that the results from hypothesis one does little to bring clarification to the construct and does little to support the inclusion of the communalism construct into the current model.

Hypothesis two found that there were significant differences in the scores on the communalism variable for three of the ethnic groups utilized in the sample. The hypothesis was supported because the Asian/Pacific Islander and African American ethnic group scores were significantly different from the European American ethnic group.

On first glance it appears that these results support the theory of communalism. Using the communalism theory, it would be expected that the scores from the Asian/Pacific Islander and African American ethnic groups would differ from the European American scores. However, upon extensive examination of the mean scores it can be seen that the African American scores do not differ from the European American scores. Even though the statistical analysis indicated a significant difference in the scores of these ethnic groups, the means appear very similar. Coupled with the previous findings

from Hypothesis one, which concluded that there were no statistical differences in these groups, it is possible that some sampling error occurred when Asian/Pacific Islander and multiracial ethnic groups were added to the analysis. A close examination of this data indicated that the communal orientation appears to be present across all ethnicities sampled in this study including African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and European American, and multiracial ethnic groups.

However, one interesting finding of the analysis was that the Asian/Pacific Islanders had the highest mean scores for the communal construct. This was an unexpected finding because the scale was originally designed to detect a social construct that was supposed to be predominant in the African American culture. The fact that Asian/Pacific Islander mean scores were higher than African American scores underscores the importance of adding information to the validity and usefulness of using this scale with different ethnic groups. One explanation for these results is highlighted in the fact that these ethnic groups share a history of oppression in the western world, that could allow them to share past experiences and, therefore, share an understanding of the need for communal beliefs within their own respective cultures. Due to this fact, the communal orientation could possibly exist at the same level or above those of African Americans.

Another possible explanation for the high levels of communal beliefs in the Asian/Pacific Islanders group may be examined through geographical location. Simply stated, 62 of the 76 participants used in these results listed themselves as living in the state of Hawaii. It is possible that the isolation of these people from the mainland of the United States could emphasize the continued use of cultural aspects that have been

passed down from ancestors who relocated from eastern countries. It is possible that Asian/Pacific islanders inherited their sense of communal aspect of culture from their ancestors, who like African American descendants, immigrated to the western world years ago. Furthermore, due to their geographical isolation, it may be difficult for people living away from the mainland to be highly influenced by western ideas of individualism. Moreover, if we consider the findings of this study that African Americans appear to endorse communal beliefs to the same degree as European Americans (in the southern regions) after assimilation into the western individualized culture, then perhaps the high communal beliefs within the Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic group seems plausible because the assimilation process could be halted due to the geographical separation from the mainland. Furthermore, the separation from the mainland indicates a separation from resources. It is plausible to speculate that in Hawaii, a communal orientation may be imperative for survival. The idea of assisting others and close-knit connections with people could only aid in survival of people who are geographically disconnected from the vast majority of the country.

To complicate matters further, in reviewing the high communal scores for the Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic group, it should be noted that the immigrant ancestors of current people living in Hawaii were primarily from the Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino cultures. These cultures in the past have been labeled as collectivist communities. If this present data is showing a stronger communal value system for Asian/Pacific Islander than a collectivist orientation, then this finding provides support for using *The Communalism Scale* to redefine and re-categorize cultures in the world that have been mislabeled thus far. Redefining these cultural groups may bring about a deeper understanding of these

cultures as described by Eaton and Louw (2000) and emphasized by the authors of the scale (Boykin et al., 1997).

In summary, the findings of this study were not in clear support of the use of *The Communalism Scale*. The results should be interpreted with caution for ethnic populations. This study found no differences between African Americans and European Americans in the southern geographical regions using the scale; it was unable to determine if there were geographical differences between ethnic groups in other geographical regions. It found that the Asian/Pacific Islander ethnic groups had a higher score on the scale than African Americans and European Americans. Overall, this study emphasized the continued need to conduct more cultural research in hopes of answering some of the questions the current research failed to answer.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations to the study include those concerning sample selection and method of survey administration. The sample for the study was a convenience sample and, therefore, was a limitation to the study. Data collected from a convenience sample may yield results that are different than if the populations of the study were taken from true experimental sampling procedures in which the experimenter carefully chooses the participants. Utilizing a convenience sample appeared to help increase the number of participants in the sample, especially those from geographical areas that were inaccessible to the researcher (i.e., Hawaii). However, the majority of the sample still remained predominantly from the South. This greater regional contribution to the participant pool may have affected the results of the study. Using this type of sampling always poses a risk to the validity of the results obtained.

Also, the method of obtaining the participants, via electronic procedures, did present a limitation to both the number of participants collected for the sample and the actual data that was collected from the sample. Specifically, data was limited to those who had access to the Internet and computer equipment. Data was also limited to persons who were connected to the researcher or persons who were accessed by the researcher. Those with no primary connection/access to the researcher had a decreased probability of being included in the study; this may have affected the sample and, therefore, the results.

Additionally, the computer programming chosen to collect data had limitations of its own built into the programming. Due to the programming regulations and the manner of the collection method of this study, it was difficult to restrict participants from responding more than once to the survey. Therefore, it is possible that some participants may have responded more than once to the survey, either unknowingly or willfully for reasons that are unknown. Furthermore, due to the electronic collection process it was difficult to obtain participants from certain geographical locations. This inability to secure an adequate representation of participants in the study's groups may have hindered the data collection and therefore the study results. Overall, data collection procedures and using a convenience sample together may have placed some limitation on the results obtained in this study.

Implications of Study

Overall, the results for this study signify the importance of continued research with the communalism variable. The findings suggest that the variable is present, in ethnic groups of the United States. However, the overall differences in the communal orientation between ethnic groups is still somewhat unclear. At times the data showed no

difference between ethnic groups' scores and at times it showed clear differences. The inability of this data to reveal consistent information about the construct highlights the importance of research design and sampling methods. It is still unclear whether this variable exists today in Western civilization in the African American culture to the extent insisted by the authors of the scale and it is still unclear if there is an interaction of geographical location with the construct. Moreover, the findings of this study did not find irrefutable support to strengthen the communalism theory.

However, the study did add to the current knowledge in existence about *The Communalism Scale*. This study found good internal consistency for *The Communalism Scale*. This validity information is valuable and practical in the continued use of this scale to study culture. Additionally, two findings from this study will help to stimulate further research on the variable. Providing evidence that the communalism orientation exists at comparable levels in both African American and European American ethnic groups, in the southern regions, stresses the crucial need for geographical data collection with this scale. Also, the findings associated with Asian/Pacific Islanders accentuate the importance of using many different ethnic groups to continue to validate the usefulness of this scale with ethnic groups. Taken as a whole, the results do not emphasize the abandonment of this construct or the measurement of it using this scale, on the contrary it advocates for continued study of the construct.

Directions for Future Research

Directions for future research with *The Communalism Scale* and the communalism social construct should emphasize a replication of the study. However, future research should concentrate on adequately sampling participants from all

geographical areas. Future research with this scale should also continue to focus on diversity within the sample including differing ethnic groups and differing characteristics of the participants in the sample to decrease limitations due to sampling size and sampling method. Future findings will assist in either strengthening the theory behind communalism so that this construct can be added to the current cultural models or it will assist in redefining the concept and identifying its true place within culture research.

APPENDIX A
PROPOSED CULTURAL MODEL

Differences in Cultural Variability

<u>INDIVIDUALISM</u>	<u>COLLECTIVISM</u>	<u>COMMUNALISM</u>
Self Interest	Interest in Collective	Community interest
Self Reliance	Collective power	Reliance on others
Individual welfare	Welfare of collective	Community welfare
Separate entity	Individuals united	Born into Community

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION TO CONVERT SCALE

Permission to Copy and Use Measurement Tool

I, A. Wade Boykin, hereby give permission to Ms. LaShawn Thompson, M.A. and Andrea L. Wesley, Ph.D. of The University of Southern Mississippi to copy and use *The Communalism Scale* in their research project involving assessing communalistic aspects of culture in both African-American and European-American populations. I also give the above mentioned persons permission to change the format of *The Communalism Scale* from paper and pencil format to electronic format. I understand that if the scale becomes part of the final research components of the project, Ms. Thompson and Dr. Wesley will share results of their research with me and my research team.

Signed:

A. Wade Boykin
A. Wade Boykin, Ph.D.

9/23/08
Date

There are very few things I would not share with family members.

Completely False Mostly False Somewhat False (more false than true) Somewhat True (more true than false) Mostly True Completely True

I am happiest when I am part of a group.

Completely False Mostly False Somewhat False (more false than true) Somewhat True (more true than false) Mostly True Completely True

I believe that there is too much emphasis placed on sports.

Completely False Mostly False Somewhat False (more false than true) Somewhat True (more true than false) Mostly True Completely True

It is family group membership which gives a sense of personal identity.

Completely False Mostly False Somewhat False (more false than true) Somewhat True (more true than false) Mostly True Completely True

Older members of my family are often relied on for advice/guidance.

Completely False Mostly False Somewhat False (more false than true) Somewhat True (more true than false) Mostly True Completely True

I don't mind if my cousins come to live with me.

Completely False Mostly False Somewhat False (more false than true) Somewhat True (more true than false) Mostly True Completely True

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
 Tel: 601.266.6820
 Fax: 601.266.5509
 www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 10100801

PROJECT TITLE: **Assessing the Validity of the Communalism Scale
 Using Cultural Groups**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 10/07/2010 to 10/07/2011

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **LaShawn Thompson**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Psychology**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **10/18/2010 to 10/17/2011**

Lawrence A. Hosman

 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

10-20-2010

 Date

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