The relationship between multicultural church attendees’ Cultural Intelligence and response to racism

Jared Marshall Sorber

Dr. Andrew Alexson, Chair, Dissertation Committee

Dr. Brenda Davis, Member, Dissertation Committee

Dr. Raymond Chang, Member, Dissertation Committee

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor

of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Division between races and cultures exists throughout American society. Most churches in America continue to meet separately along racial lines despite believing in the same God who calls his followers to unity in him. Multicultural churches, which are growing in number and size, seek to unify diverse groups of people around the gospel of Jesus Christ with the hope of bringing that unity to the world around them.

The purpose of this quantitative research study is to explore if there is a relationship between multicultural church attendees' Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and response to racism. Four hundred twenty-nine multicultural church attendees participated in the study, completing the demographic survey and instruments used in the correlational analysis. The tools used were the Anti-Racism Behavioral Inventory (ARBI) and the Short Form Cultural Intelligence Survey (SFCQ).

Findings indicated a positive monotonic relationship between CQ and anti-racism behaviors. Follow-up research is proposed to build on this study, determining the nature of the relationship and ultimately leading to how Cultural Intelligence and anti-racism behaviors can be best fostered in churches. Other research is needed to identify spirituality's influence on multicultural church attendees' CQ and anti-racism behaviors.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Amie, your love, support, patience, and hard work made this possible. To my sons, Joel and Jacob; may my example of faith, perseverance, and hard work encourage you to pursue your passions, dreams, and calling continually.

To my parents, Marshall and Sheila Sorber, your sacrifice and love is the foundation this is built upon.

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I want to thank others who have played a significant role in my completion of the doctoral program and my dissertation. Dr. Jim Strecker traveled this journey with me from beginning to end. Thanks for your wisdom, encouragement, guidance, and example. To Karen Eastham, who seemed to sincerely want to read everything I wrote for school. Your encouragement and grammatical insight gave me confidence in my writing ability. To Theresa LaMotte, your willingness to read my dissertation and provide feedback from your expertise and experience means so much to me.

Thank you to Pastors, Ministers, Elders, Elders Counsel of Women, leaders, staffers, partners, and attendees of Bridgeway Community Church. So many of you have encouraged me, and it means the world to me that you would participate in my study. Gaining access to a large enough sample of multicultural churches in the mid-Atlantic was daunting. I am grateful to the following pastors and churches for granting me access to their congregations: Pastor Marshall Boney at ReIgnite Church in Virginia Beach, VA; Pastors Marshall Benbow and Jacob Sorber at Grace Community Church in Greensboro, NC; Pastor Joel Kurz at the Garden Church in Baltimore, MD; Pastor Naeem Fazal at Mosaic Church in Charlotte, NC; Pastors Joel Solomon and Kevin Turpin at New Life Church in Virginia Beach, VA; Pastors Don Colman and Nathan Walton at East End Fellowship in Richmond, VA; Pastor Matthew Watson at Christ City Church in Washington, DC; Pastor Ian McFadden at Saint Moses Church in Baltimore, MD; Pastor Mark Tindle at Seneca Creek Community Church in Gaithersburg, MD; David Schmidgall at National Community Church in Washington, DC; and Pastor Andrew Chung at Washington Christian Fellowship in Washington, DC.

I cannot thank my family enough. Thank you, Amie, Joel, and Jacob, for your support!

EPIGRAPH

"But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community. It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. The type of love that I stress here is not eros, a sort of esthetic or romantic love; not philia, a sort of reciprocal love between personal friends; but it is agape which is understanding goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. It is the love of God working in the lives of men. This is the love that may well be the salvation of our civilization."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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APPENDIX A: THE ANTI-RACISM BEHAVIORAL INVENTORY

Instructions and Instrument

Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by using the response format below. There are no right or wrong answers. Just respond as honestly as you can.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5

1. When I hear people telling racist jokes and using negative racial stereotypes, I usually confront them.

2. I give money to organizations working against racism and discrimination.

3. I actively seek to understand how I participate in both intentional and unintentional racism.

4. I feel guilty and ashamed when I think of the history of racism and slavery in the US.

5. I actively seek to educate myself about the experience of racism.

6. When I read in articles in newspapers or magazines that are perpetuating racist ideas, I generally write a letter to the editor.

7. I interrupt racist conversations and jokes when I hear my friends talking that way.

8. I am actively involved in exposing companies that uphold exclusionary and racist practices.

9. It bothers me that my country has yet to acknowledge the impact of slavery.

10. I have challenged acts of racism that I have witnessed in my workplace or at school.

11. The US should offer some type of payment to the descendants of slaves.

12. I make it a point to educate myself about the experience of historically oppressed groups in the US (e.g. slavery, internment of Japanese, American Indians and the trail of tears etc.).

13. The US has not acknowledged the impact of slavery.

14. Because of racism in the US Blacks do not have the same educational opportunities as compared to Whites.

15. I often speak to my friends about the problem of racism in the US and what we can do about it.

16. Within the US racism, is largely perpetuated by the White racial majority.

17. I write letters to local and state politicians to voice my concerns about racism.

18. I do not like to talk about racism in public.

19. I volunteer with anti-racism or racial justice organizations.

20. I interrupt racist conversations and jokes when I hear them in my family.

21. The police unfairly target Black men and Latino’s.

Scoring Procedure:

1. Reverse score item 18 (5=1, 4=2, 3=3, 2=4, 1=5)
2. Sum items for subscales scores
3. Sum all items for total ARBI score

Awareness of Racism = 4, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 21

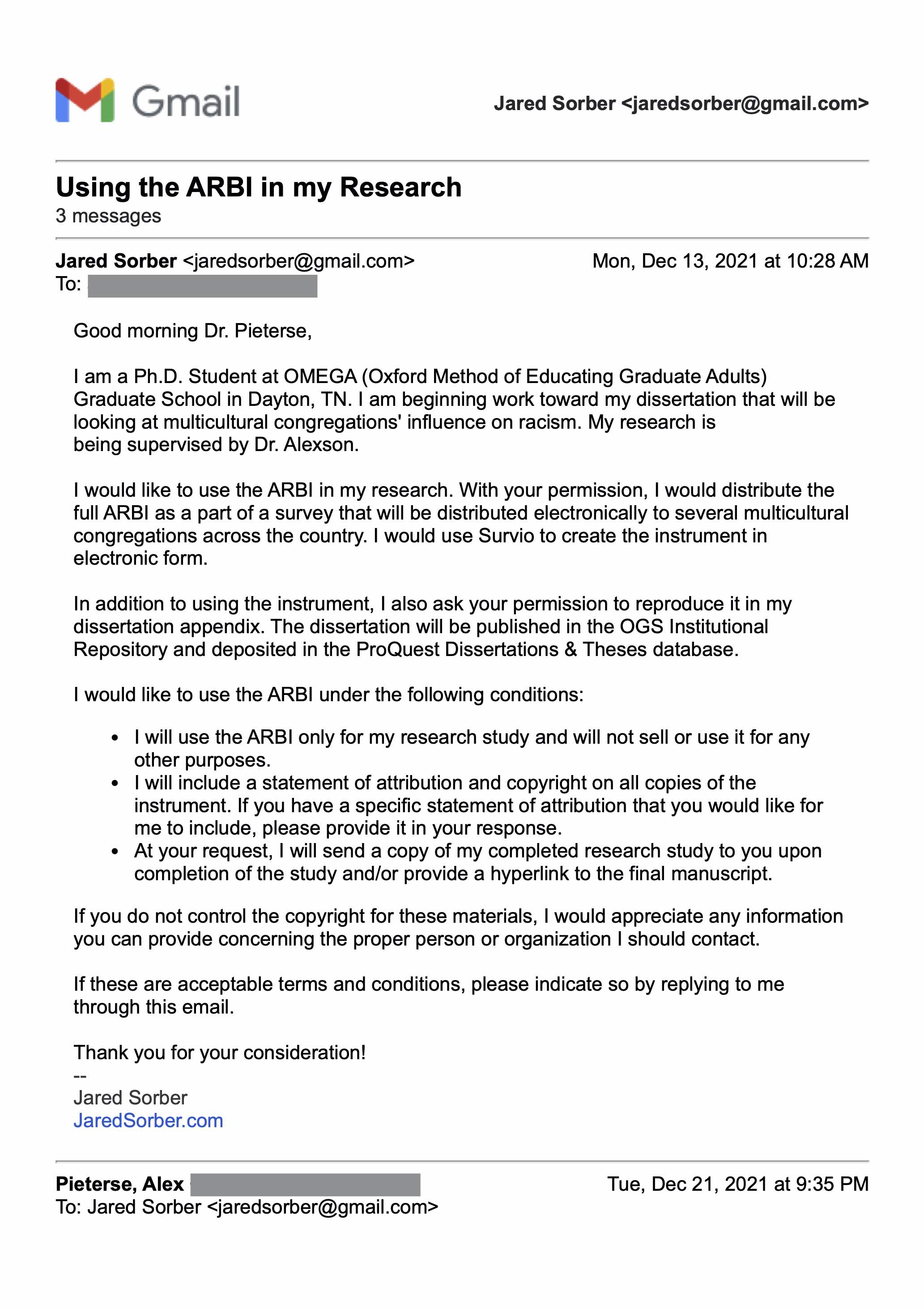
Individual Advocacy = 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20

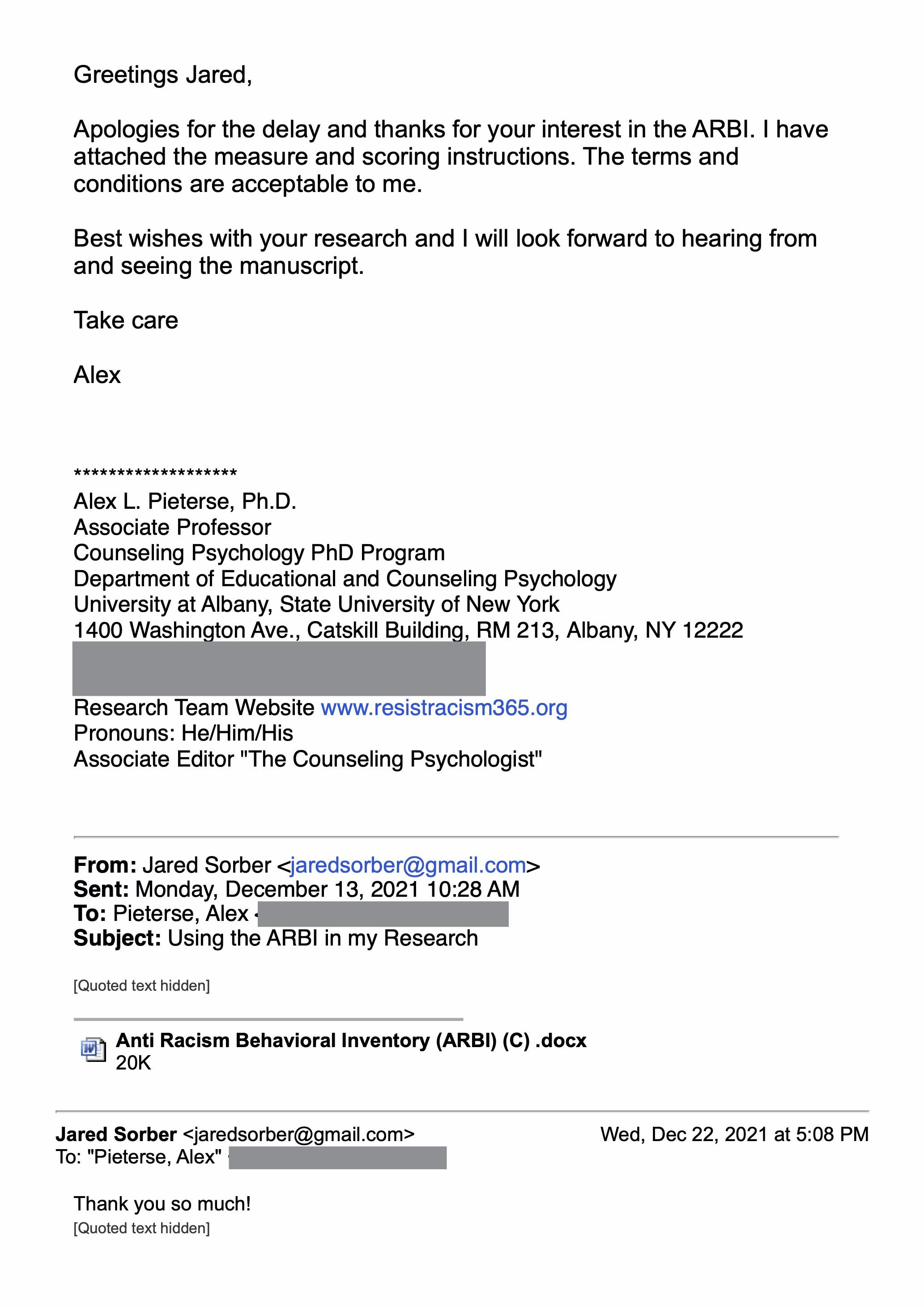
Institutional Advocacy = 2, 6, 8, 17, 19

Interpretation

Items are designed to tap into awareness of racism and behaviors associated with active involvement in challenging racism and anti-racism activism. Higher scores reflect more of the construct being measured such that a higher score on awareness means greater levels of racism awareness, and higher scores on individual and institutional advocacy mean higher levels of engagement in anti-racism activism in those domains.

Permission to use the Instrument





Appendix B: THE SHORT FORM CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE

Instructions and Instrument

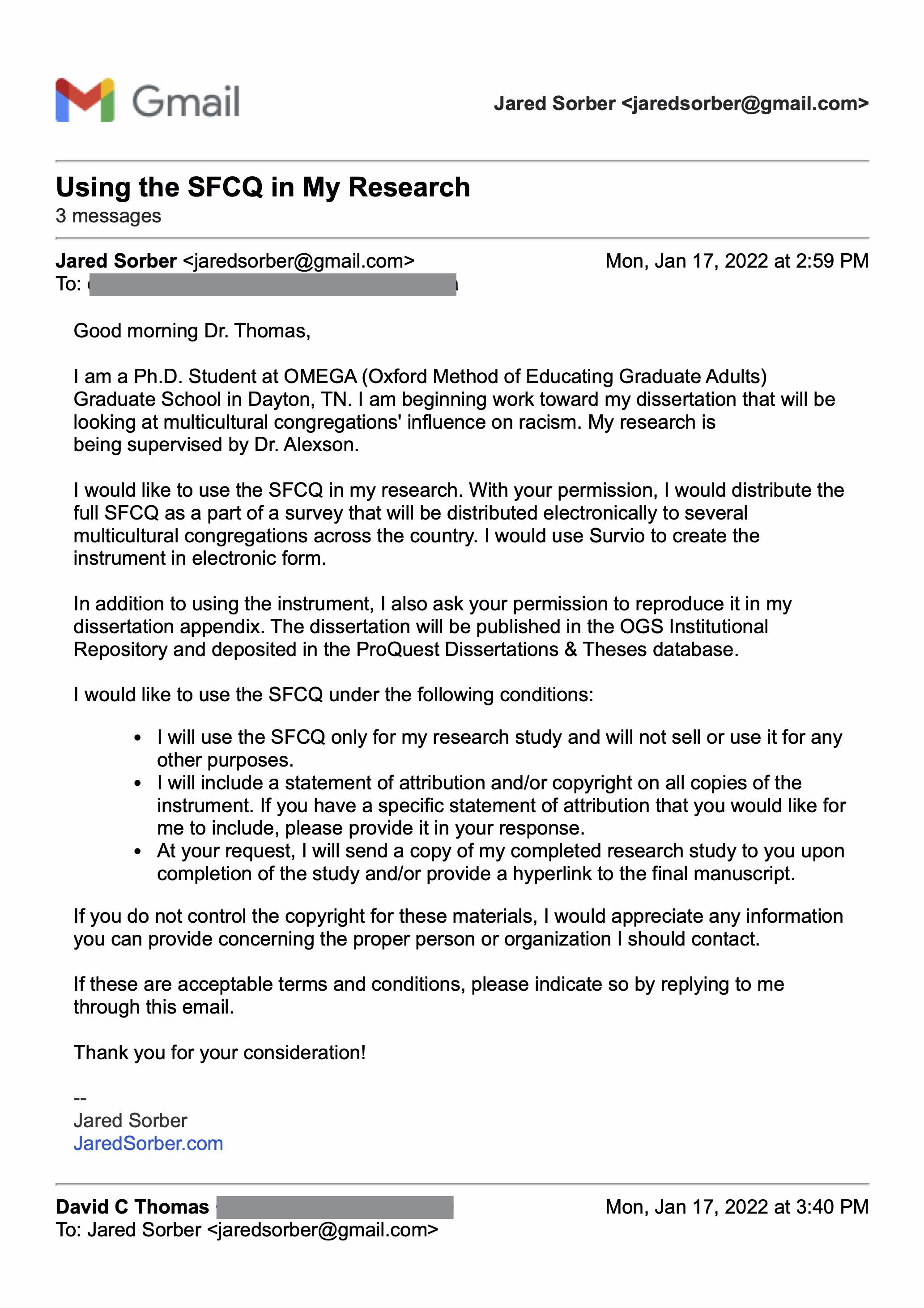
Cultural Intelligence David C Thomas et al. (2015)

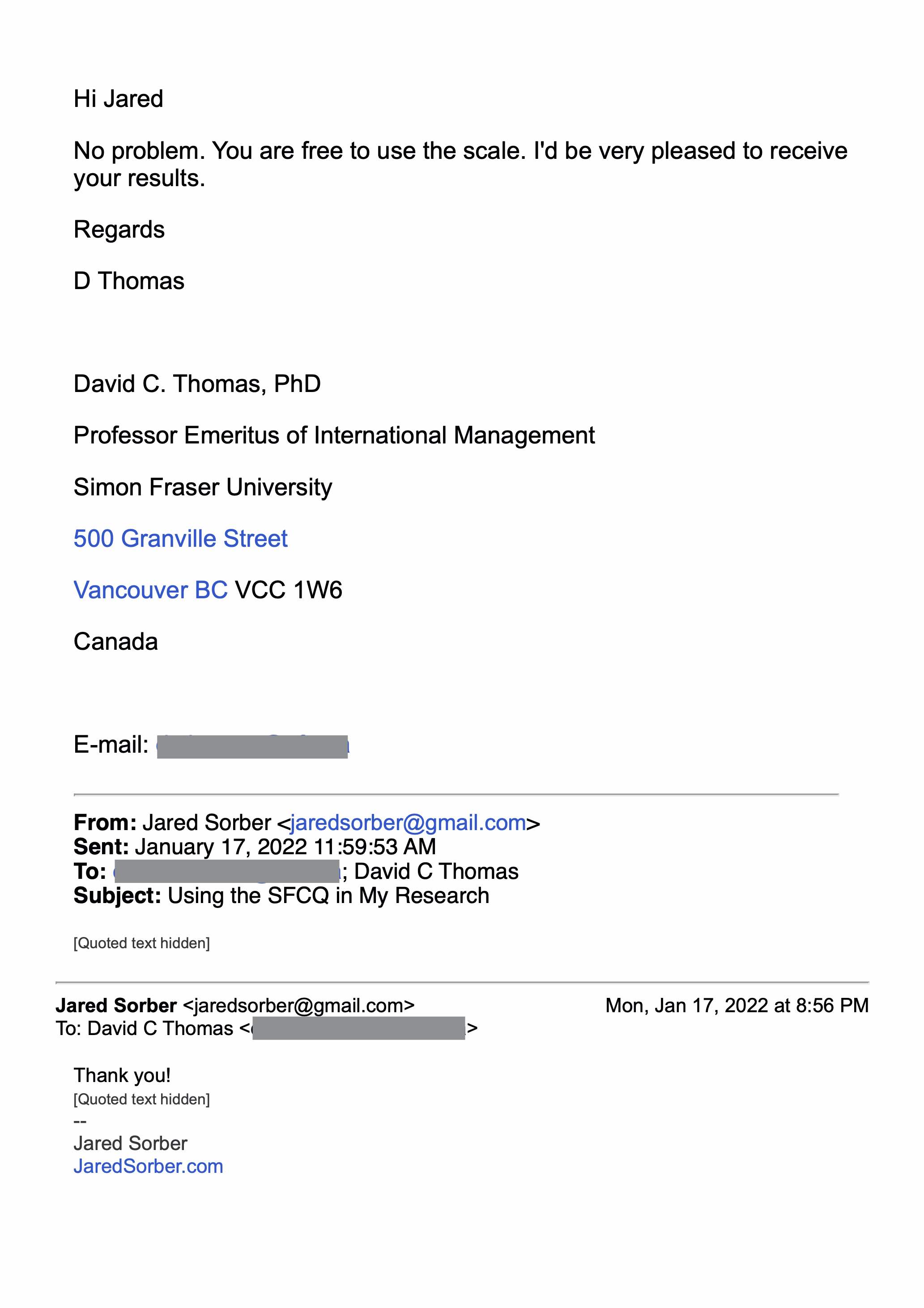
Instructions: Below are 10 statements about one’s experience when interacting with people from other cultures. Please indicate to what extent each of the following statements describes you.   
1=Not at all; 2=A little; 3=Somewhat; 4=A lot; 5=Extremely well

1. I know the ways in which cultures around the world are different. (K)
2. I can give examples of cultural differences from my personal experience, reading, and so on. (K)
3. I enjoy talking with people from different cultures. (S)
4. I have the ability to accurately understand the feelings of people from other cultures. (S)
5. I sometimes try to understand people from another culture by imagining how something looks from their perspective. (S)
6. I can change my behavior to suit different cultural situations and people. (S)
7. I accept delays without becoming upset when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people. (S)
8. I am aware of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with someone from another culture. (M)
9. I think a lot about the influence that culture has on my behavior and that of others who are culturally different. (M)
10. I am aware that I need to plan my course of action when in different cultural situations and with culturally different people. (M)

K = Knowledge Item.  
S = Skill Item.  
M = Metacognition Item.

Permission to use the Instrument





APPENDIX C: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age, in years?

* 18-29
* 30-44
* 45-59
* 60-74
* 75+

1. What is your gender?
   * Male
   * Female
   * Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which of the following describes your race/ethnicity (choose one)?
   * American Indian or Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)
   * Asian or Asian American (non-Hispanic)
   * Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
   * Hispanic
   * Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)
   * White or Caucasian (Non-Hispanic)
   * Biracial or Multi-Racial (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   * Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the highest-level education you completed?
   * Did not complete high school
   * High school diploma or equivalent
   * Trade School Certificate or Associates Degree
   * College (BA or BS or equivalent)
   * Masters or equivalent
   * PhD, MD, or other Terminal Degree
4. How long have you been a Christian?

* I am not a Christian
* 4 years or less
* 5 to 9 years
* 10 to 19 years
* 20 to 30 years
* More than 30 years

1. What language(s) do you speak fluently?

* English
* Spanish
* Chinese
  + Cantonese
  + Mandarin
  + Hokkien
  + Other:
* Korean
* French
* Other:

1. In what country were you born?

* United States
* Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you currently a citizen of the United States?

* Yes
* No (please list your country or countries of citizenship): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What church do you attend most regularly?

* Bridgeway Community Church
  + Columbia, MD
  + Owings Mills/Reisterstown, MD
* Grace Community Church, Greensboro, NC
* New Life Church, Virginia Beach, VA
* Reignite Church, Virginia Beach, VA
* The Garden Church, Baltimore, MD

1. For how long have you attended the church you selected above?

* 0-3 years
* 4-7
* 8-11
* 12+

1. Is your church diverse? (multicultural/multiethnic)

* Yes
* No

1. Which of the following best describes your recent church attendance?

* At least once a week,
* two to three times a month,
* Monthly,
* Holidays and special occasions.

1. I regularly attend church…

* In-person
* Online
* Both in-person & online
* I don’t attend regularly

1. Is your spouse of the same ethnicity as you?

* Yes
* No
* I am not married

1. What is your role at your church (check all that apply)?

* Attendee
* Member
* Volunteer
* Ministry Leader
* Staff
* Clergy

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM  
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH STUDY**

The relationship between multicultural church attendees’

Cultural Intelligence and response to racism.

**Researcher:** Jared Sorber, Doctoral Candidate, Omega Graduate School

**Researchers’ statement**

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what we would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or about this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called “informed consent.” I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

**Purpose of the study**

This study aims to evaluate the potential relationship between multicultural church attendees’ Cultural Intelligence (CQ) and response to racism. Participation in this study will help expand knowledge on the relationship between Cultural Intelligence and the response to racism of multicultural church attendees, equipping attendees to address racism and bridge cultural divides in their family, community, church, and society.

**Study Procedures**

The study consists of completing a demographic questionnaire and answering two survey question sets consisting of a total of 31 items. The surveys are self-assessed; one asks questions about your Cultural Intelligence (10 questions), and the other asks about your response to racism (21 questions). In total, the demographics survey and questionnaires should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The data you provide is used for academic purposes, further research, and potential funding for future projects intended to improve multicultural churches and how they cross cultures and respond to racism.

**Alternatives to participating in this study**

Participation in this study is voluntary; you have the option not to participate or stop filling out the instruments at any point. Only 100% completed questionnaires will be used in the study.

**Benefits of the study**

The expected benefits of this study are to inform and aid the multicultural church in increasing its attendees' Cultural Intelligence and responding to racism.

**Confidentiality of research information**

All of the information you provide will be confidential. All data is coded by a unique identifier associated with your answer. The researcher has no access to identifiable data. The data collection does not elicit information that would require mandatory reporting (e.g. about child abuse, elder abuse, or harm to self or others).

**Contact information:**

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher. Jared Sorber, Email: [JaredSorber@gmail.com](mailto:JaredSorber@gmail.com), Phone: 443-812-4147

An Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) is overseeing this research. An IRB is a group of people who perform an independent review of research studies to ensure the rights and welfare of participants are protected.

The Omega Graduate School Institutional Board of Review has reviewed my request to conduct this research project. If you have any concerns about your rights in this study, please contact the OGS IRB at ogsirb@ogs.edu.

**Subject’s statement**

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research or if I have been harmed by participating in this study, I can contact the researcher or the IRB.

Your Name:

Date:

Are you 18 years or older?

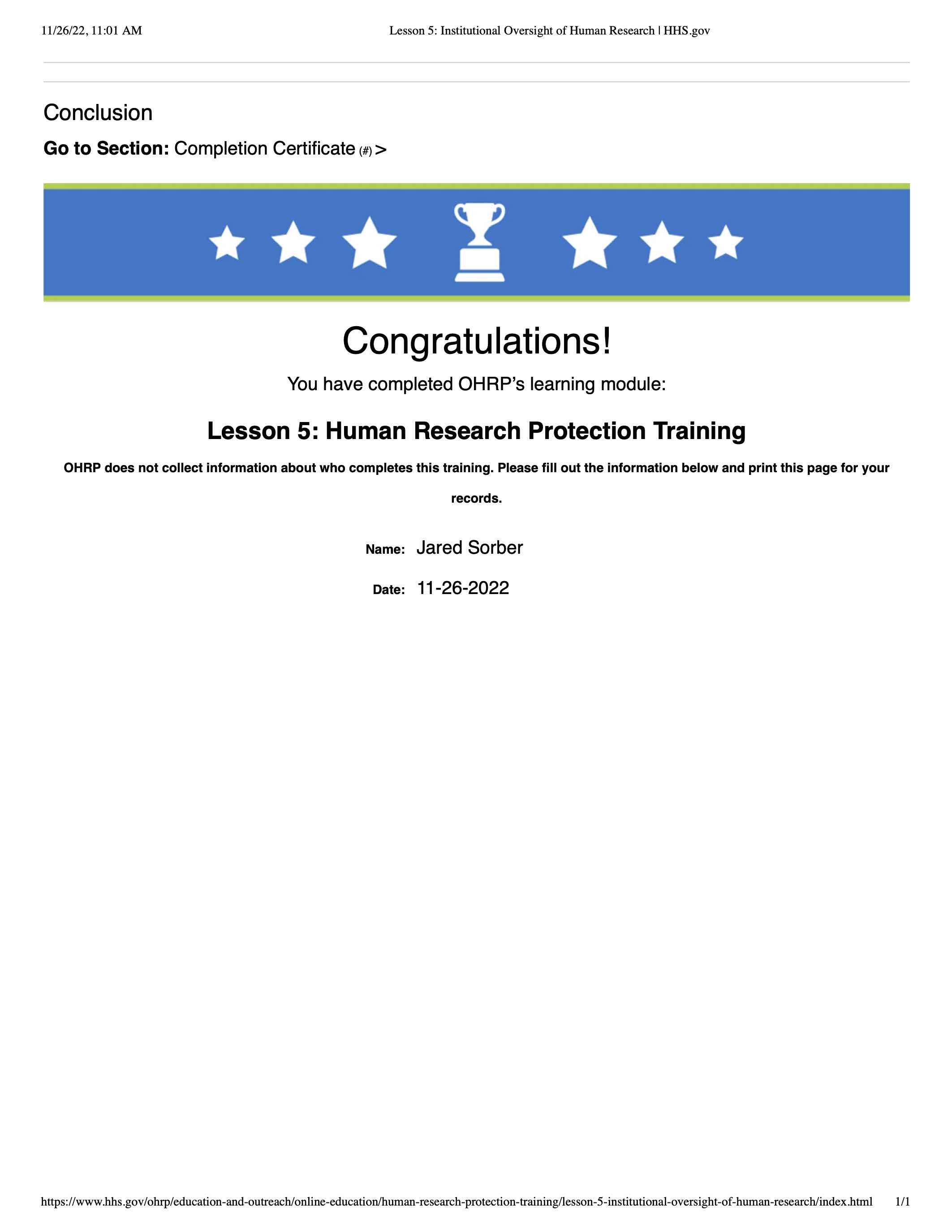
Informed consent statement:

By clicking yes, you are consenting that you are willing to participate in this study.

APPENDIX E: OFFICE FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION

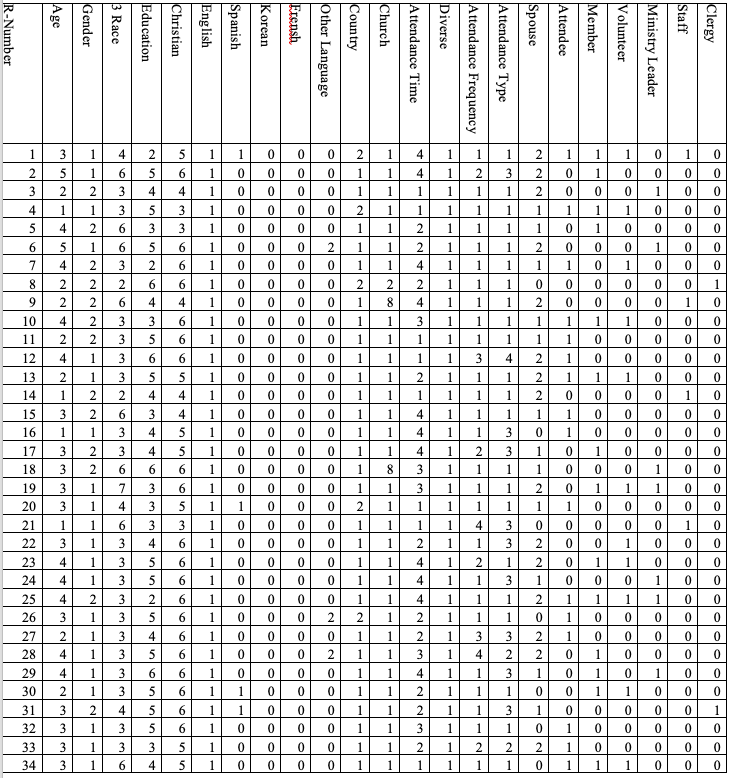
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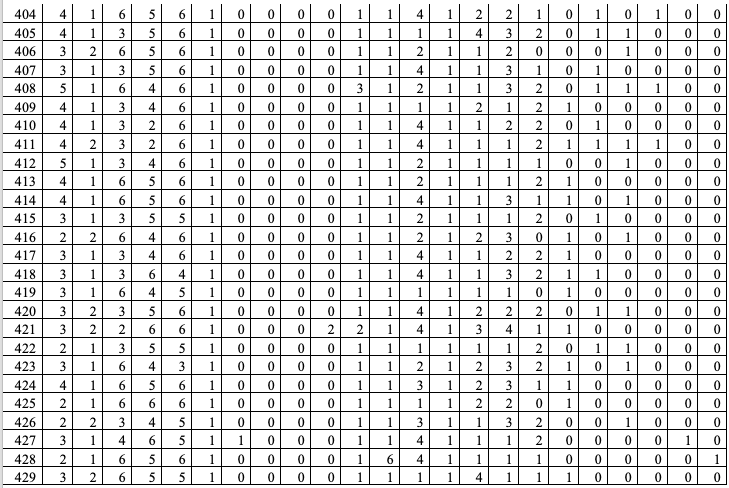
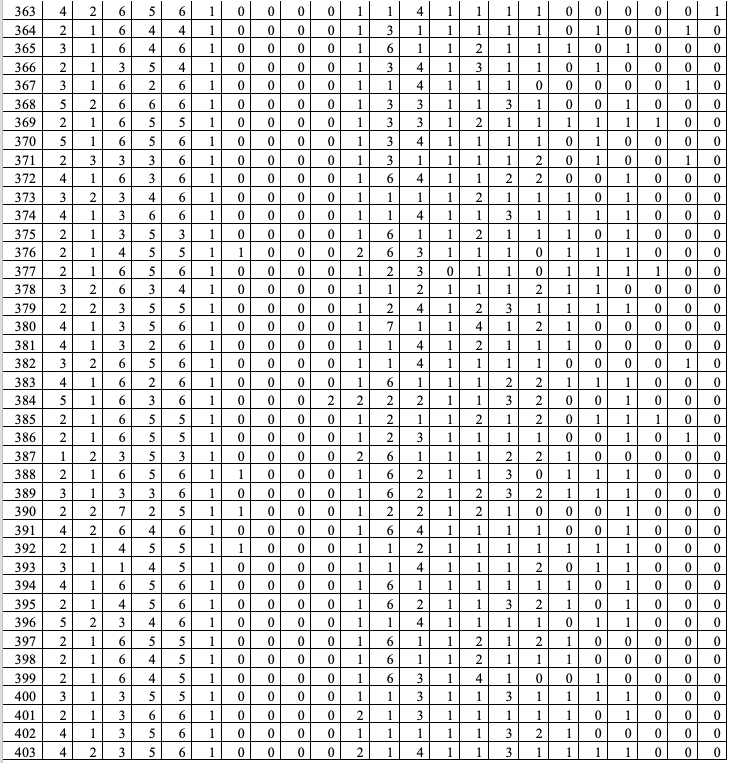
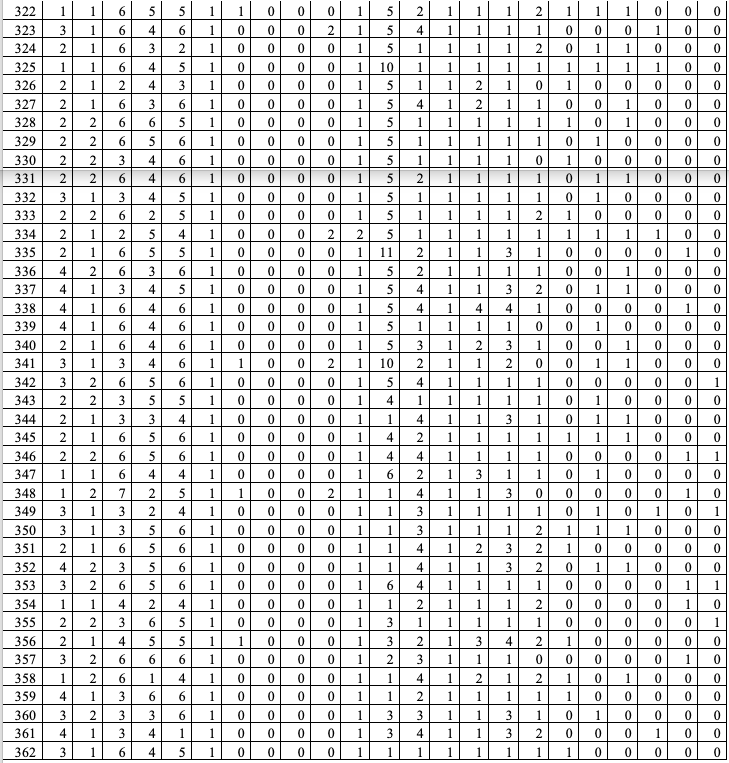
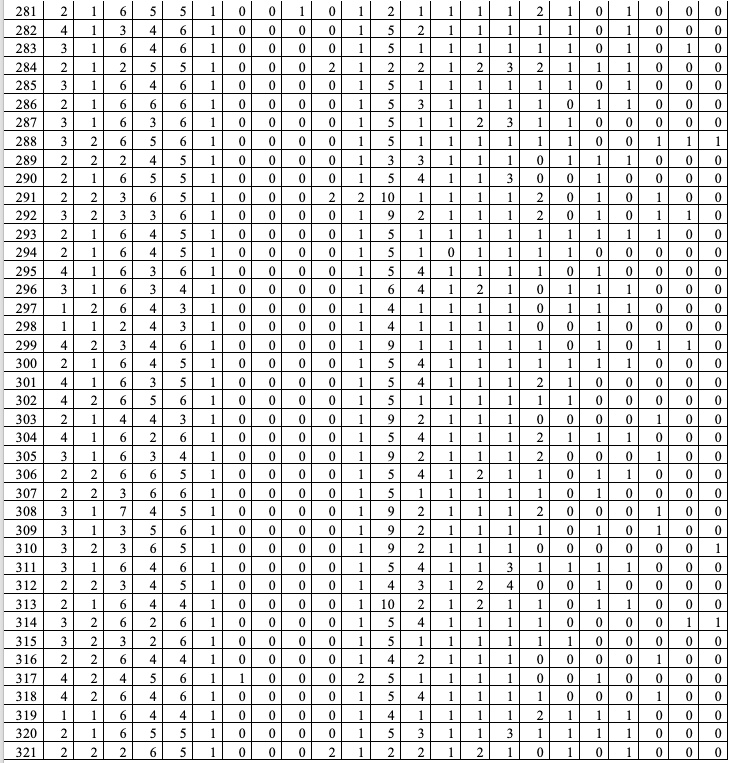
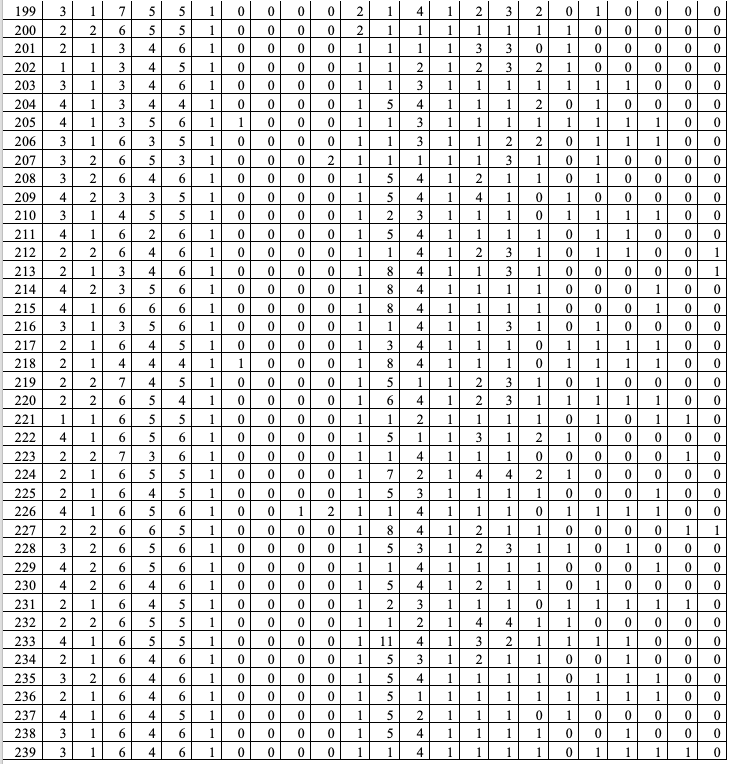
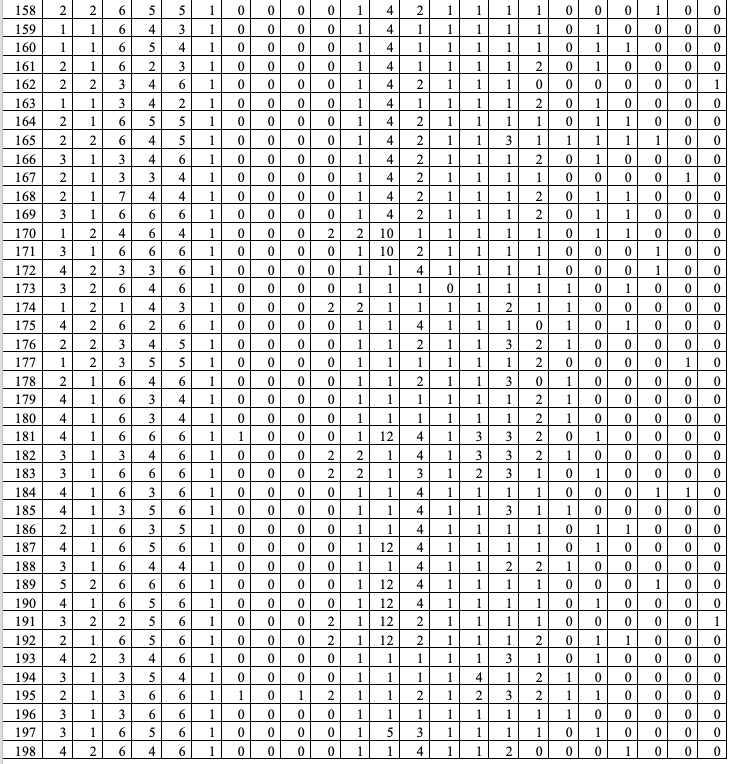
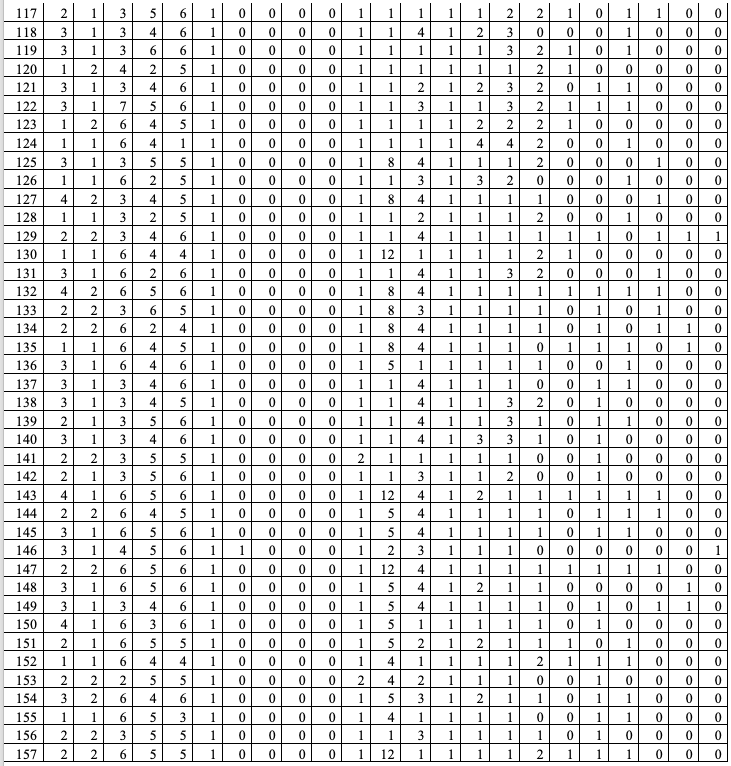
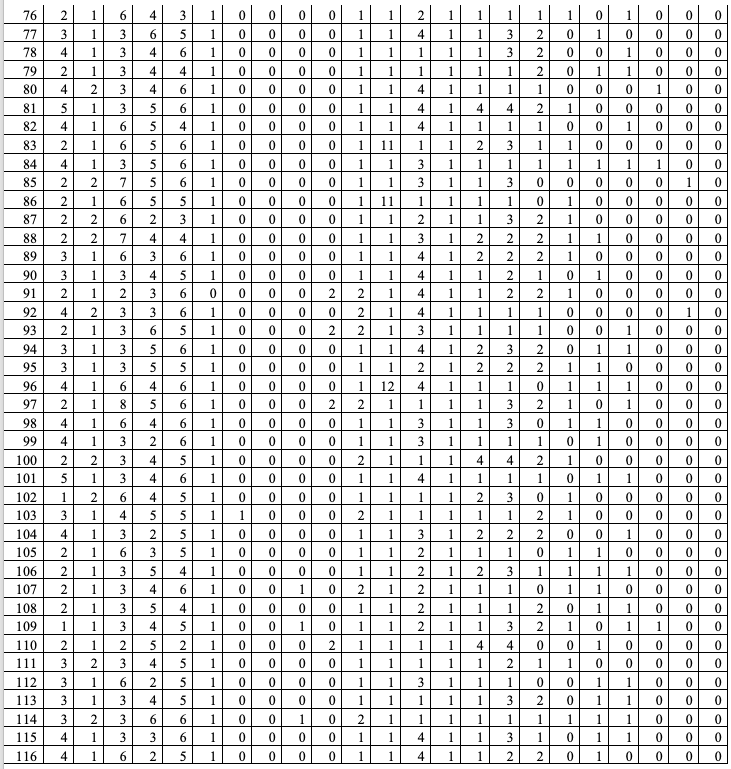
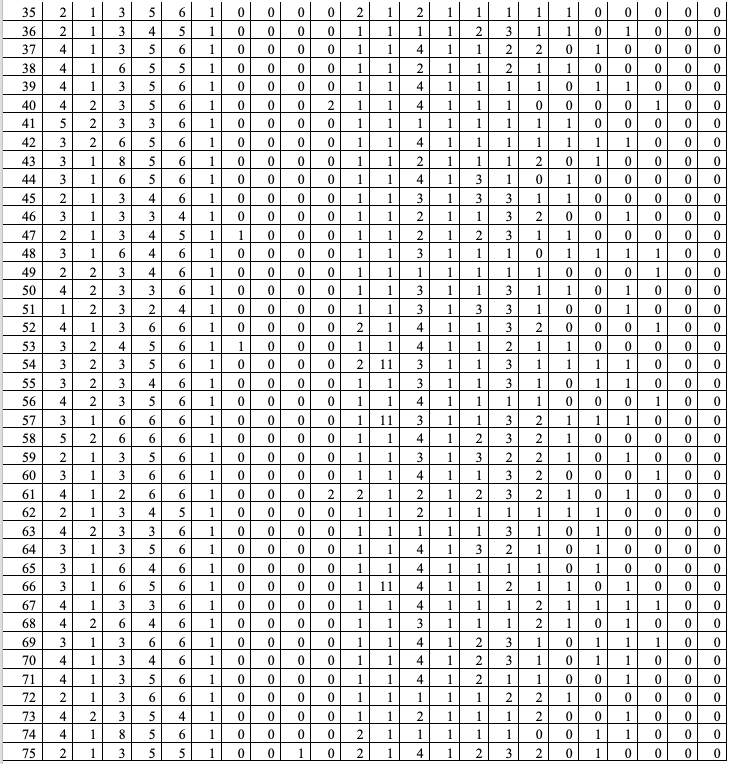
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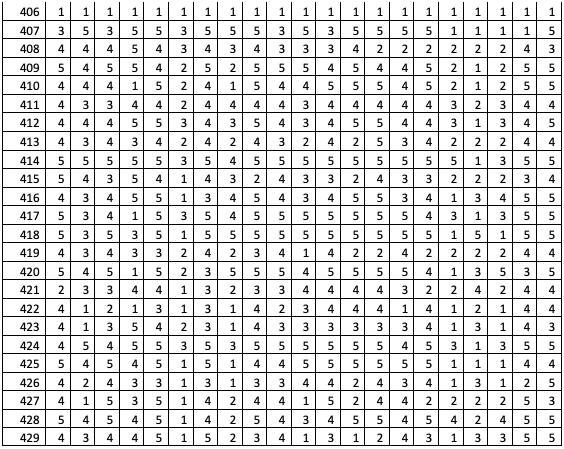
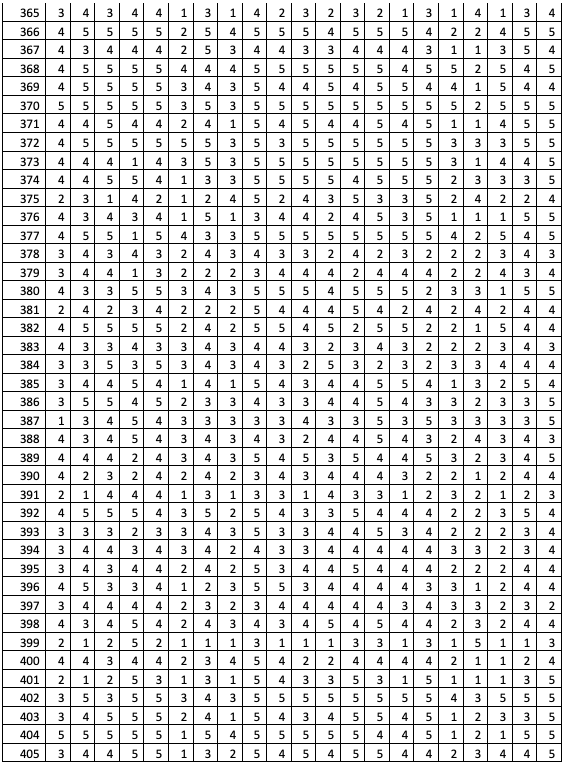
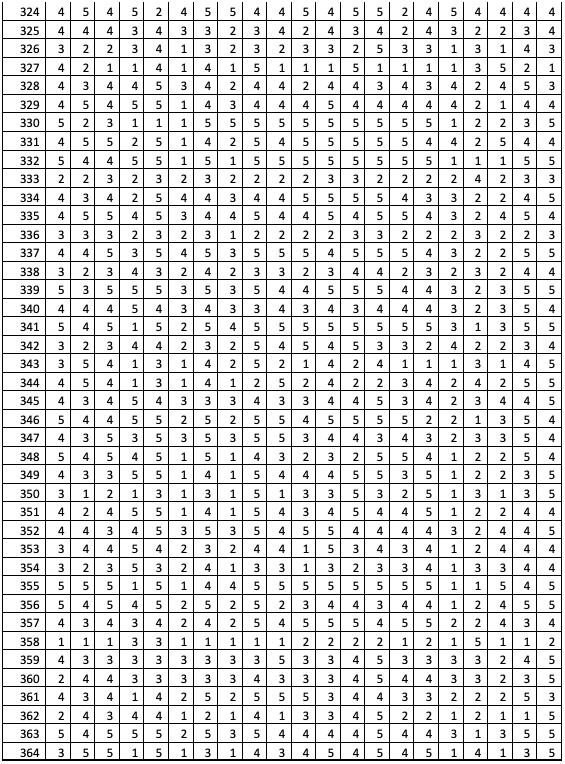
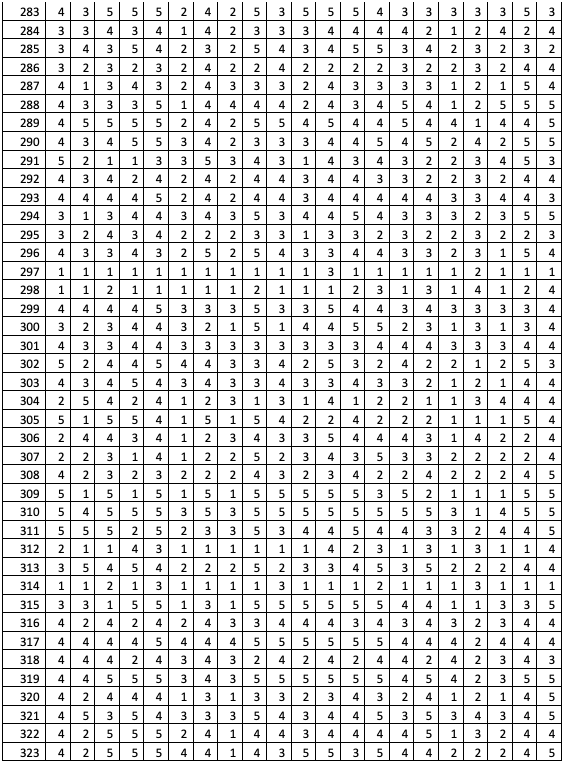
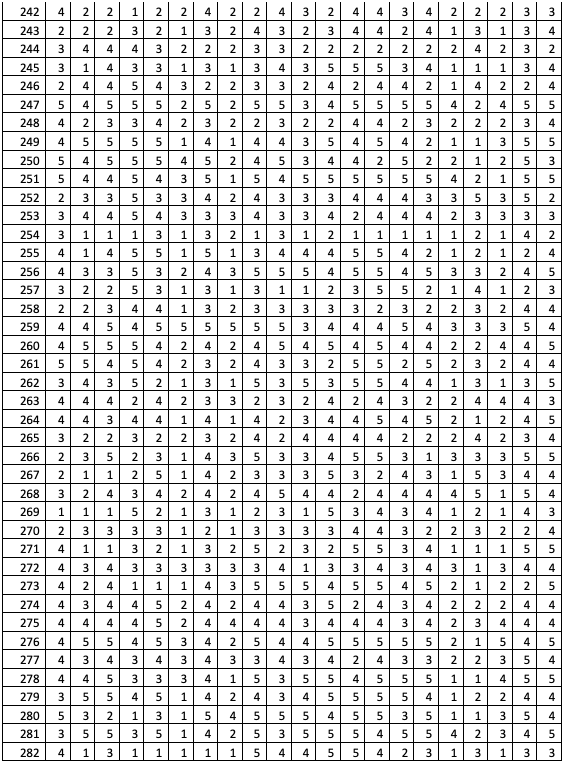
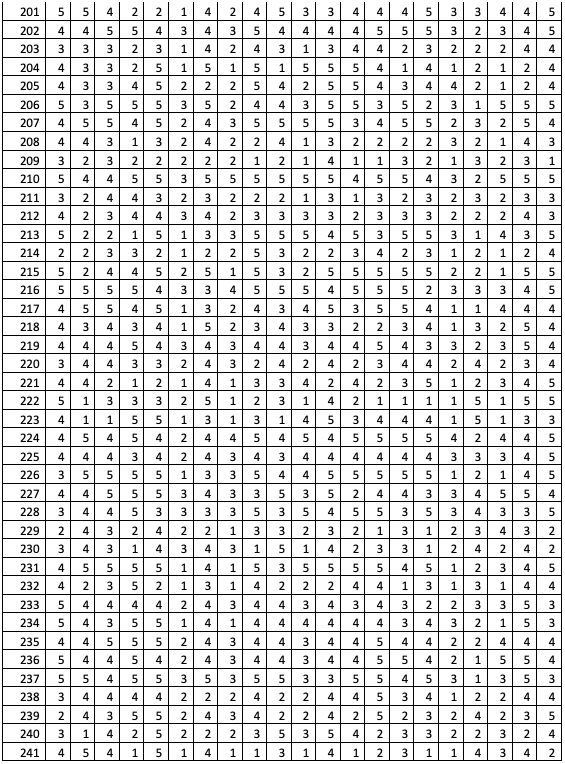
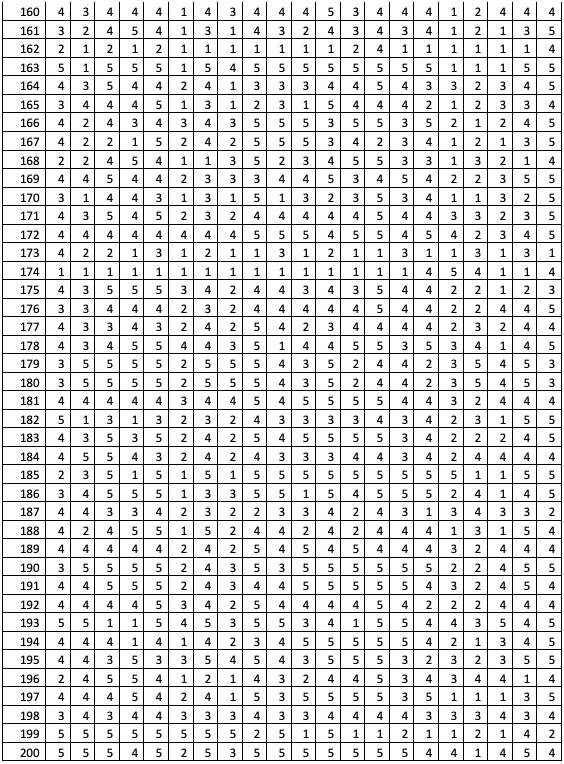
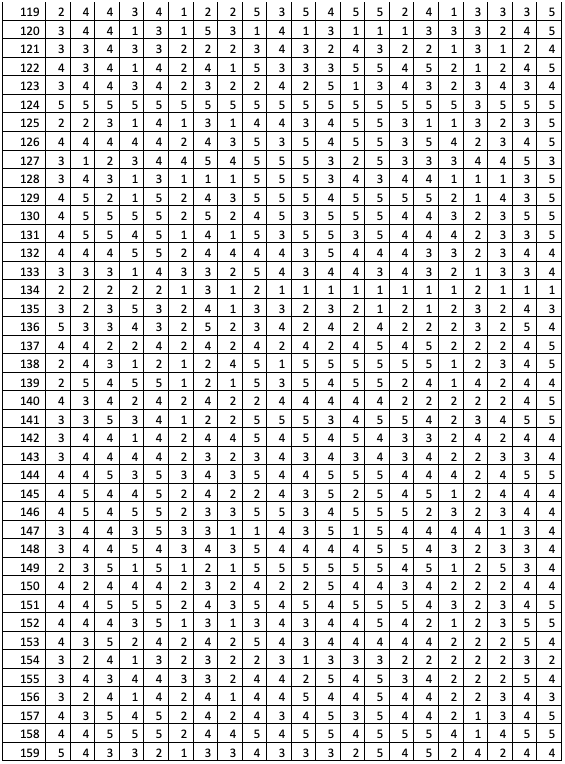
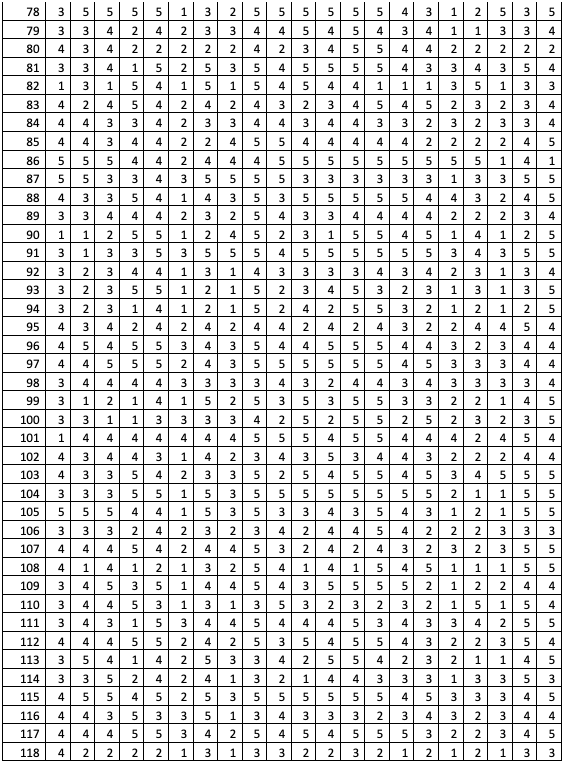
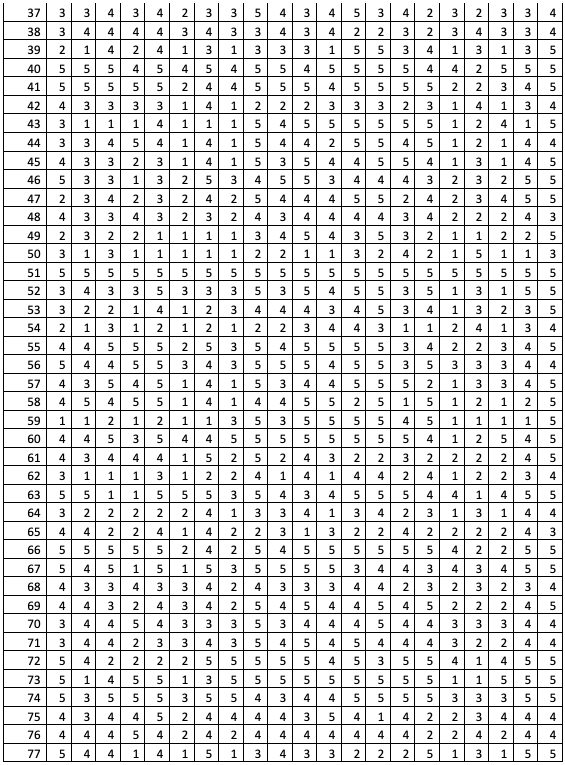
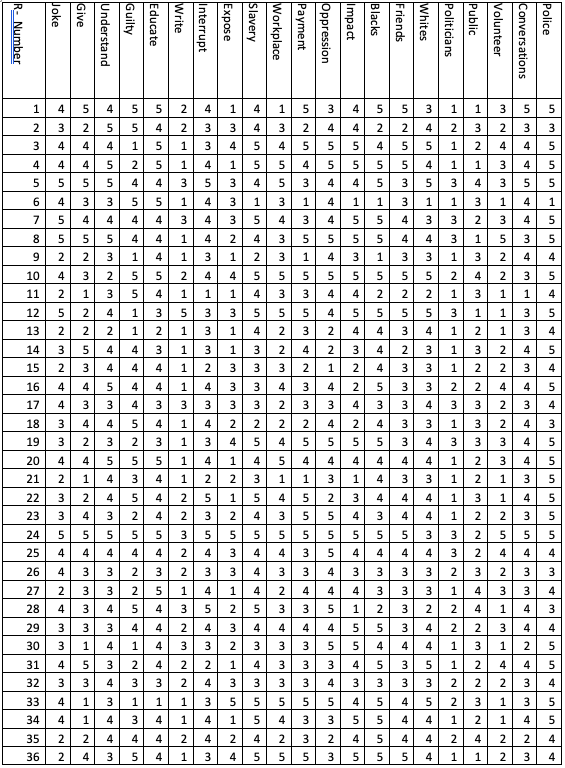
APPENDIX F: RAW DATA

Table 9

*Demographic Survey Raw Data*

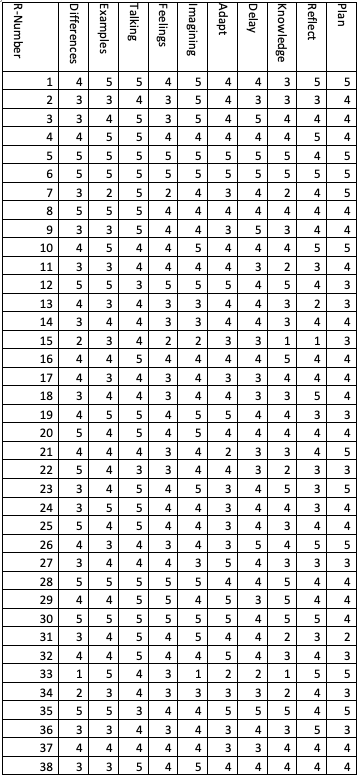


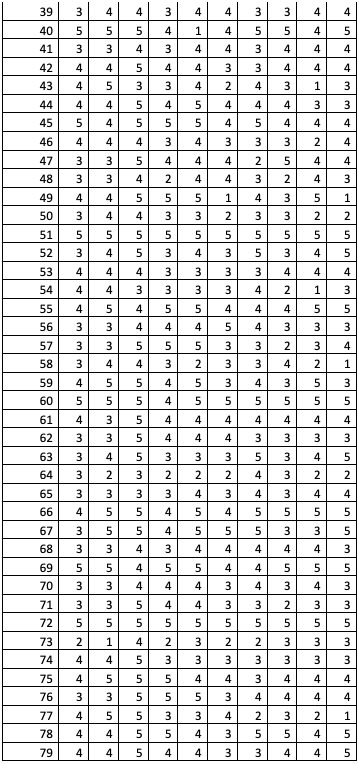
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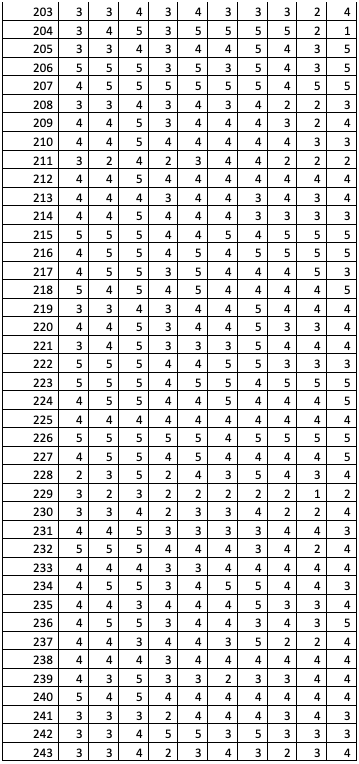
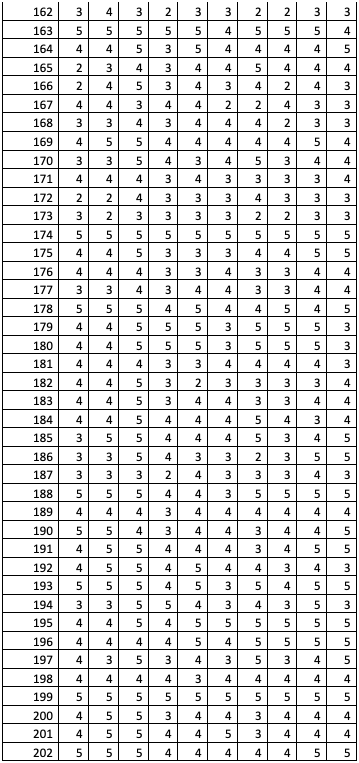
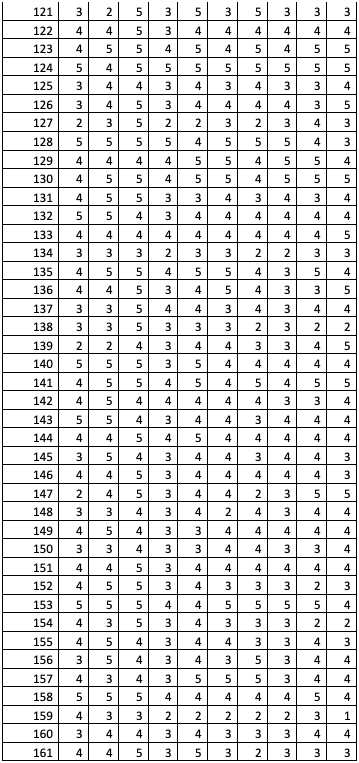
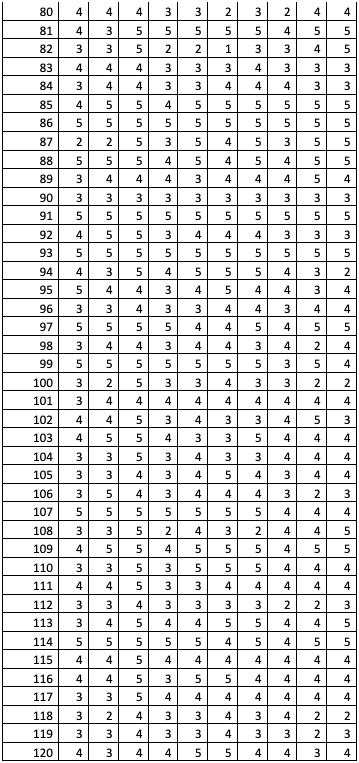
The Anti-Racism Behavioral Inventory Raw Data

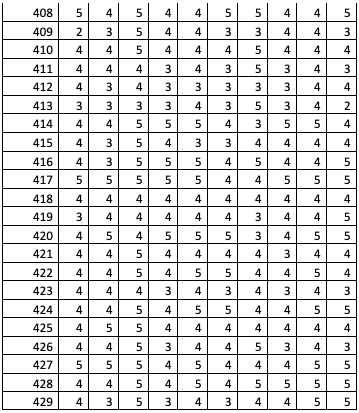
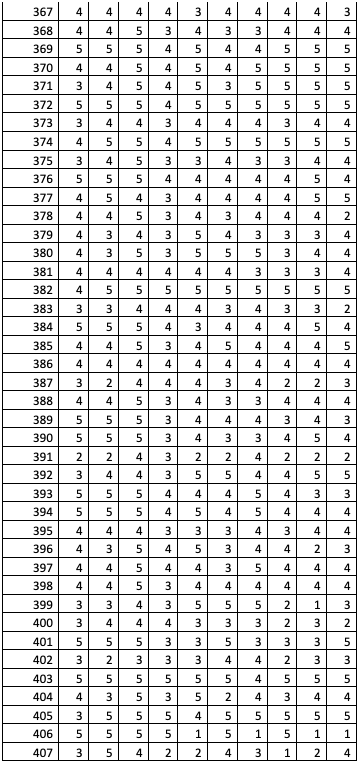
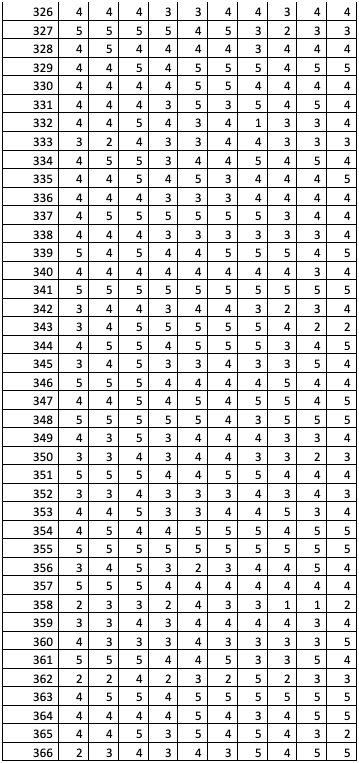
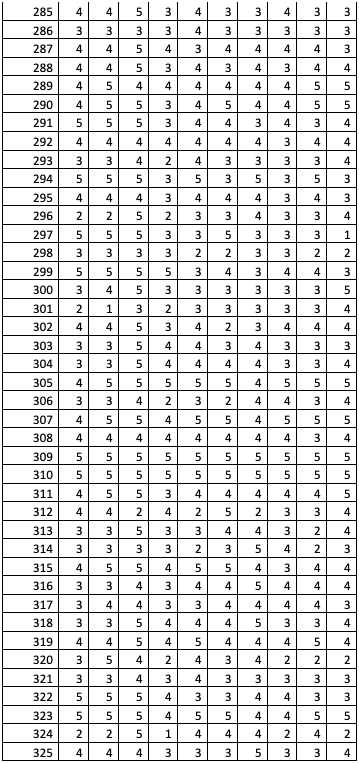
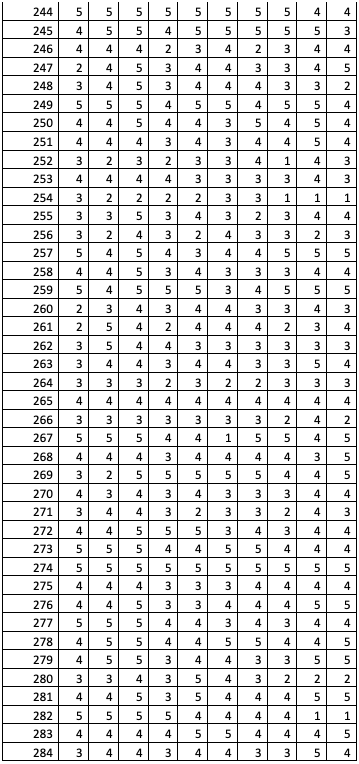
**Table 11**

*The Short Form Cultural Intelligence Survey Raw Data*

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Jared Sorber received his Bachelor of Religious Education from Davis College in Binghamton, New York, in 2000. He received a Master of Arts degree in Ministry in 2008 from Moody Graduate School in Chicago. He attended Omega Graduate School from 2019 through 2023, during which he completed a doctoral program, receiving a PhD. in the integration of religion and society. Sorber has worked at Bridgeway Community Church in Columbia, MD, since 2000. While at Bridgeway, Sorber has held many leadership positions, including the director of Student Ministries, Pastor of Family Ministries, Pastor of Events and Logistics, Creative Arts Pastor, Missions Pastor, and has served on the senior leadership team. In 2003 Sorber was licensed as a minister of the gospel, and in 2006 was ordained as a Pastor. Sorber has written for ministry publications on multicultural effectiveness, cross-cultural bridge-building, and racial reconciliation. His writings include a curriculum on living the life of a reconciler and a chapter on youth ministry in the Multi-Cultural Ministry Handbook (Anderson & Cabellon, 2010). Sorber has spoken at local, regional, national, and international conferences on multicultural effectiveness, cross-cultural bridge-building, and racial reconciliation, particularly in their application to youth ministry, family ministry, and missions. He has developed partnerships with leaders and organizations around the world, believing that when diverse groups of people from different backgrounds and perspectives work together in relationship, the ministry impact is more significant, and the journey is more fulfilling for everyone. Partnerships have been established in Kenya, Mexico, Romania, Ukraine, and Peru.