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## Toward the Development of the Stereotypic Roles for Black Women Scale

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*Preliminary findings on the validation of the Stereotypic Roles for Black Women Scale (SRBWS) are presented. A sample of 186 African American women took the SRBWS along with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Racial Identity Attitude Scale–B. A confirmatory factor analysis supported a four-factor structure of the scale, and moderate reliability estimates were found for each of the inter-related but distinct subscales. Stepwise regression analyses revealed that Mammy and Sapphire images were significant predictors of self-esteem scores and that the internalized stereotypic roles contributed unique variance over racial identity attitudes in understanding self-esteem in Black women. Suggestions for future research and validation of the SRBWS are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Black women; stereotypic role; scale development*

Multicultural awareness has brought to the field an understanding of the importance of cultural factors on individual and group functioning, particularly the influence of race and ethnicity. One criticism of the research in the

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field, however, is the focus on single identity factors that ignores the richness and complexity that comes from examining multiple identity factors (Reynolds & Pope, 1991). For many individuals, race, gender, social class, and their influences on identity cannot be separated. The influence of multiple identity factors must be examined, particularly for groups that experience multiple sources of oppression, such as African American women.

African American women have unique experiences based on the interactions of racism and sexism. African American women also have unique values and beliefs, which influence identity and functioning. For example, they have more neutral or liberal gender roles and expectations than White women (Davenport & Yurich, 1990; Harris, 1996). They are also likely to adhere to Afrocentric values of collective survival, emotional vitality, and a being orientation to time (Brown, Lipford-Sanders, & Shaw, 1995). African American women are likely to value spirituality, be collective in orientation, and place a high importance on nurturing relationships both within and extended from the family (Abdullah, 1998; Boyd-Franklin, 1991; Greene, 1994). Other important African traditions include oral tradition, role sharing, a sense of self-worth from African spiritualism, and an emphasis on harmony and unity (Freeman, 1994; Greene, 1994). These values and the interaction of sexism and racism influence the identity and self-concept of African American women.

The literature that focuses on identity development of African American women tends to explore one dimension of identity development, either racial identity or gender issues. The most widely researched model on racial identity development for African Americans is a four-stage model developed by Cross (1995). According to the revised model, the first stage, preencounter, has three characteristics: assimilation (pro-American values and low salience to race), miseducation (negative stereotypes and African Americans), and self-hatred (negative attitudes about the self due to race). The second stage, encounter, occurs after an experience happens that changes one's awareness of race and is characterized by confusion, depression, or alarm. In immersion/emersion, the third stage, individuals have an overromanticized immersion into Black culture (intense Black involvement) or strong feelings against White culture and values (anti-White). The fourth stage, internalization, is characterized by working to empower the Black community (Black nationalist) or by Black self-acceptance with other cultural variables emphasized (bicultural and multiculturalist) (Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, & Worrell, 2001). Research suggests predictable relationships between identity development and self-actualization, self-esteem, and psychological functioning (Carter, 1991; Parham & Helms, 1985a, 1985b; Pyant & Yanico, 1991).

A similar four-stage model was developed by Helms (1990) and explores womanist identity. Womanist was chosen instead of feminist as it represents the experiences of women of color. In the first stage, preencounter, individuals have traditional gender roles and behave in ways that devalue women. The second stage, encounter, occurs when individuals have experiences that cause them to question previously held beliefs. In the third stage, immersion/emersion, idealization of women occurs, as well as rejection of male-dominant definitions of women, and later is characterized by an exploration of positive values of womanhood. Finally, in internalization, the new definition of womanhood is incorporated into self-concept. Research finds relationships between womanist identity and self-esteem, perceptions of environmental bias, and gender role expectations (Carter & Parks, 1996; Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992).

Although there has been some understanding that the socialization process differs for White and African American women, theory and research examining racial and gender identity treat them as separate processes and thus conclude that for African American women, racial identity may occur before womanist identity (Carter & Parks, 1996; Parks, Carter, & Gushue, 1996; Poindexter-Cameron & Robinson, 1997). Poindexter-Cameron and Robinson (1997) examined the relationship between racial identity, womanist identity, and self-esteem and found positive correlations between internalization attitudes of racial identity and womanist identity to self-esteem. Carter and Parks (1996) examined the relationship between racial and womanist identity with mental health symptoms of African American and White women. They found no significant relationship between womanist identity and psychopathology for African American women. The study did not take into account the influence of racial identity or the interaction between racial and womanist identity.

Due to the legacy of slavery, particularly the requirements for heavy labor and sexual victimization, societal images of African American women differ from White women (Bell, 1992; Fordham, 1993; Greene, 1997; West, 1995). The societal images and expectations of African American women are that they are dominant, aggressive, sexually promiscuous, rebellious, rude, and loud (Bell, 1992; Fordham, 1993; Greene, 1994, 1997; Jackson & Sears, 1992; McNair, 1992; Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). African American women continue to report experiences of bias and discrimination based on their status as both African American and women (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). There are three stereotypes of African American women derived from slavery—Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel—that are relevant in contemporary times (Abdullah, 1998; Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). Mammy, during slavery, was an obese, dark-skinned woman with

broad features who worked in the master's house, often serving as nanny, housekeeper, and cook (Greene, 1994; Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). She was expected to take care of the needs of others, often to the neglect of her own needs. Mammy was seen by Whites as nonthreatening, nurturing, and possessing selfless devotion to others (Abdullah, 1998). Mammy was expected to be uncomplaining, congenial, and a deferential problem solver (Mitchell & Herring, 1998). The stereotype of Mammy has contributed to African American women's being perceived as nurturing, good caretakers, strong, supportive, and selfless (Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). Internalization of this stereotype may lead to the need to be nurturing and supportive of others, often at one's own expense, while presenting a façade of strength (Abdullah, 1998; Gainor, 1992; Greene, 1994; West, 1995). According to Abdullah (1998), internalizing the Mammy stereotype has been theorized to be connected to poor self-concept.

Sapphire, a character from the Amos and Andy radio and television show of the 1940s and 1950s, was seen as nagging, emasculating, shrill, loud, argumentative, and a master of verbal assaults (Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). The perceptions of African American women from this character include arrogance, being controlling, loud, hostile, obnoxious, and never satisfied (Bell, 1992; Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). Sapphire is also seen as comedic and is often not taken seriously (Jewell, 1993). African American women who internalize this image may have difficulty expressing their needs or displaying anger. They may assume that the only way to be heard is to be aggressive, loud, or rageful (Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). African American women may have difficulty with assertiveness and competition and may restrict or suppress their assertiveness to protect others (Adams, 2000; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). African American women may also fear verbal expressiveness, particularly anger, or may use anger to cover or mask vulnerability (West, 1995). They may also fear that signs of assertiveness or anger label them as aggressive, controlling, and manipulative (Bell, 1992).

The stereotype of Jezebel was derived from the sexual exploitation and victimization of African American women, often as a way to justify sexual relations with enslaved women. Jezebel is perceived as seductive, manipulative, hypersexed, animalistic in desires, and unable to control sex drives (Mitchell & Herring, 1998; West, 1995). African American women are often viewed as promiscuous, loose, immoral, sexually aggressive, and lacking sexual restraint (Bell, 1992; Daniel, 2000; Greene, 1994, 1997; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Internalization of this stereotype may lead women to perceive sexuality as one of few assets or may cause repression of sexual feelings (West, 1995). These stereotypes and images' influence are alive and real

today and point to the need for examining the complex influence of oppressions on identity development.

African American women are socialized to appear strong, tough, resilient, and self-sufficient (Shorter-Gooden & Jackson, 2000). African American women are viewed (even by themselves) as being impervious to the hardships of life (Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003). Many African American women will develop a façade of strength and may have difficulty admitting to difficulties or asking for support (McNair, 1992). Mitchell and Herring (1998) discussed the "Superwoman" who believes she is capable of accomplishing multiple tasks successfully. Superwomen often feel weak and feel like failures if they are not successful or need to ask for help and may adopt this strategy to avoid being judged by the other stereotypes (Greene, 1994).

"Strong Black Woman" is a mantra for so much a part of U. S. culture that it is seldom realized how great a toll it has taken on the emotional well-being of the African American woman. As much as it may give her the illusion of control, it keeps her from identifying what she needs and reaching out for help. (Romero, 2000, p. 225)

The need to portray an image of survival and strength often prevents women from expressing their inner desires and needs, psychological distress, and depressive or anxiety symptoms and from seeking counseling or psychological services (Boyd, 1993; Gainor, 1992; Greene, 1994; West, 1995). The internalization of the Superwoman can lead to a façade of high self-esteem, which when cracked reveals anxiety and low self-esteem (Jordan, 1997). The façade also serves to hide feelings such as anger, fear, shame, pride, and loneliness. The Superwoman, for example, often avoids anger because it is connected with physical harshness and causes women to feel out of control (Romero, 2000). For middle-class women, the need to be strong is sometimes connected to survivor's guilt as they feel undeserving of their success, pressuring themselves to be strong and to sacrifice for others (Thompson, 2000).

Internalized racism occurs when women internalize the societal stereotypes about African Americans and/or idealize Whites and White culture. African American women, fearing that their behaviors will be judged or perceived according to the stereotypes, thereby validating the stereotypes, nonetheless react to the stereotypes in a variety of ways (Greene, 1994). For instance, African American women may be inhibited or emotionally constricted; they may act out the behaviors associated with the stereotypes or reject other African Americans who remind them of the stereotypes. The fear may also lead to the *imposter phenomenon*, a preoccupation with failure of being discovered as an intellectual phony and feelings of low self-worth. The

multiple oppressions have also led to a sense of divisiveness among African American women or stress in interpersonal relationships (Gainor, 1992; Jackson & Sears, 1992).

The prevalence of both racism and sexism and the continuation of negative myths and stereotypes about African American women serve to highlight the importance of understanding the influence of the unique racial and gender stereotypes on the development of African American women's identity development and mental health. Although many authors have speculated about the role of the stereotypes on functioning of African American women, the stereotypes have not been empirically studied. This study includes the initial steps to develop a scale that explores the stereotypes of African American women, including Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel, and the Superwoman images, and determine whether the stereotypes can be measured. Specifically, this investigation will focus on three research questions and corresponding hypotheses. First, is the Stereotypic Roles of Black Women Scale (SRBWS) a valid and reliable measure of the stereotypic roles of African American women? Second, what is the relationship between the four stereotypic roles and self-esteem? Third, do the stereotypic roles for Black women account for more variance in self-esteem than racial identity attitudes? It was hypothesized that the Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire stereotypes will be negatively related to self-esteem in the women. The Superwoman stereotype was hypothesized to be positively related to self-esteem of women. It was also hypothesized that the attitudes associated with the stereotypes will have a similar or stronger relationship with self-esteem than racial identity attitudes.

## METHOD

### PARTICIPANTS

There were 186 African American women in the study. Participants were recruited from two universities and from churches in the Midwest to obtain a diverse sample. The women ranged in age from 18 to 63 years, with a mean age of 27.9 ( $SD = 11.1$ ) and a modal age of 18. The majority of participants were undergraduate students who were completing or had completed some college work (65%); 17% of participants had completed baccalaureate degrees, 5% had completed some graduate coursework, and 3% had graduate degrees. About 33% of women in the sample had income levels between U.S.\$15,000 and U.S.\$30,000, 21% had income levels between U.S.\$31,000

and U.S.\$50,000, 39% reported income levels of less than U.S.\$15,000, and 4% reported income levels of more than U.S.\$50,000.

## MEASURES

*Racial Identity Attitude Scale-B (RIAS-B).* The RIAS-B (Parham & Helms, 1981) is a 30-item scale that measures attitudes associated with the racial identity development model developed by Cross (1971). The scale has four subscales that correspond to the stages. Respondents are asked to rate attitudes based on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Higher scores on the subscales indicate agreement. Parham and Helms (1981) found internal consistency reliability coefficients ranging from .66 to .72 for the scales. Validity evidence for the RIAS-B has been consistently found as racial identity attitudes measured in the scale have relationships with self-esteem, self-actualization, psychological functioning, and preferences for counseling. For this study, the reliability coefficients for each of the stages were preencounter (.62), encounter (.44), immersion (.56), and internalization (.74).

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE).* The RSE Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10-item scale in which participants respond to positive and negative self-statements that are rated on a 4-point scale (1 = *not at all true of me* and 4 = *very true of me*). Higher scores indicate more positive self-esteem. The five negative statements regarding self-esteem are reverse scored; thus, possible score ranges are from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem. Although the RSE Scale was initially used with adolescents, it has been shown to be reliable when used with adult African American women (Hoffman & Hale-Benson, 1987) and with an African American college student sample (Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cancelli, 2000). Alpha-reliability estimates for scores from paper-and-pencil administrations of the RSE Scale have generally ranged from .72 to .88 (Wylie, 1989). The reliability coefficient alpha for this study was .81.

*SRBWS.* The SRBWS is a 61-item scale designed by the researchers for the study to examine perceptions and stereotypes of African American women. The scale has four subscales that correspond to the stereotypes of Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire, and Superwoman. Thirty-four items were originally generated by the first author based on the literature on the constructs to be measured following the rational approach to scale development (Dawis, 2000). The 34-item scale was distributed to a small sample of 10 undergradu-

ate and graduate college women, aged 18 to 36, to determine readability and appropriateness or suitability of items. Additional items were added by the first and second authors to compose the final scale based on the pilot reactions and on the definitions of the constructs (Dawis, 2000). Items are rated according to a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Higher scores indicate more agreement or endorsement of the images. Mammy items included "I feel guilty when I put my own needs before others," "People often expect me to take care of them," and "I am always helping someone else." Jezebel items included "Black women will use sex to get what they want" and "Black women are often treated as sex objects." Sapphire items included "Black women are usually angry with others" and "People respond to me more if I am loud and angry." Superwoman items included "Black women have to be strong to survive" and "If I fall apart, I will be a failure."

#### PROCEDURES

African American women attending two racially mixed midwestern universities and several churches were recruited to participate in the study. Participants were given an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the study, which also served as informed consent. Participants were administered the surveys in groups. Surveys were given a random order to control for order effects. No compensation was offered for participation in the study.

#### RESULTS

Mean scores and scale ranges calculated for each of the measures used are listed in Table 1. The first set of analyses was conducted to determine the viability of the 61-item SRBWS through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), using LISREL (Jorgenson & Sörbom, 1996). Preliminary factor analysis of the 61-item scale was reduced to 34 items due to low intercorrelations among variables composing the scales. CFA was selected to test the fit of the model based on the theory of the stereotypic images, as CFA includes a deductive approach based on correspondence between the pattern of observed data and patterns implied by the theoretical model. CFA differs from exploratory factor analysis only in that the number of factors and patterns of loadings are hypothesized before analysis (Hoyle, 2000). The hypothesized model in this study included four first-order factors reflecting the constructs Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire, and Superwoman. LISREL was run using maximum like-

**TABLE 1**  
**Mean Scores for the Racial Identity Attitude Scale–B and**  
**Stereotypic Roles of Black Women Scale**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Mammy	3.01	.70	1.20	5.00
Sapphire	2.41	.64	1.00	4.00
Jezebel	2.31	.69	1.00	4.13
Superwoman	3.19	.67	1.36	4.73
Self-esteem/RSE	3.41	.49	1.60	4.00
Preencounter	1.97	.62	1.00	4.78
Encounter	2.88	.76	1.00	4.75
Immersion	2.47	.63	1.13	5.00
Internalization	3.83	.61	1.00	5.00

NOTE: RSE = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

likelihood estimation procedures. This procedure was chosen as the best method for performing CFA when variables are not necessarily normally distributed (i.e., robust relative to deviations from normality; Jorgenson & Sörbom, 1996). Initially all 61 items were included in the CFA, providing a poor fit for the model. Items were eliminated or modified based on the results on recommendation of the modification indices that indicate the amount the chi-square statistic would be reduced on the elimination of specific items. In addition, paths between error variance terms among the items were freed to generate a model that would minimize the error variance among the factors. Goodness-of-fit analyses were then conducted.

Goodness of fit of the data was assessed using the chi-square goodness-of-fit index, the minimum fit chi-square index, the normal theory weighted least squares chi-square, the comparative fit index, and the root mean square error of approximation values based on a 90% confidence interval. Even though the chi-square statistic was higher than desired, the other measures suggested that the model adequately fit the data, specifically the comparative fit index, the standardized root mean square residual (.08), and the goodness-of-fit index (.83). As suggested by Jorgenson and Sörbom (1996), there is no one index that can be used to assess the overall goodness of fit of a model, thus, many indices must be taken into consideration when evaluating whether the model fits the data.

The four-factor model was compared to the null model and a three-factor model (see Table 2). The three-factor model collapsed the Mammy and Superwoman as there is some overlap between the two stereotypic roles. The

**TABLE 2**  
**Fit Indices for Stereotypic Roles of Black Women Scale**

<i>Model</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Null	1970.745	561			
Global factor	954.550	476	0.722	0.782	0.0830
Three factor	520.054***	473	0.827	0.938	0.0261
Four factor	514.525**	470	.828	0.944*	0.0255

NOTE: GFI = goodness-of-fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .066$ . \*\*\* $p < .0763$ .

**TABLE 3**  
**Intercorrelations for Stereotypic Roles of Black Women Scale and Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) Scale**

<i>Mammy</i>	<i>Sapphire</i>	<i>Jezebel</i>	<i>Superwoman</i>	<i>RSE</i>
Mammy	.34*	.23*	.59*	-.31*
Sapphire		.71*	.48*	-.36*
Jezebel			.35*	-.25*
Superwoman				-.25*

\* $p < .05$ .

chi-square results were significantly different for the proposed four-factor model and the null model, suggesting that the four-factor model is the best fit,  $\chi^2(6, N = 147) = 440.025, p < .001$ . Although there were few differences between the three-factor and four-factor model, the data suggest that the four-factor model has the greatest degree of fit.

Moderate internal consistency reliability coefficients were found for each of the subscales based on the 34-item scale: Mammy (.52), Sapphire (.70), Jezebel (.72), and Superwoman (.67). Scale intercorrelations suggest moderate overlap between the subscale variables (see Table 3).

The second research question is What is the relationship between the four stereotypic roles and self-esteem? It was hypothesized that the Mammy, Sapphire, and Jezebel scales would be negatively related to self-esteem scores, and the Superwoman scale would be positively related to self-esteem scores. The second set of analyses was set to determine the relationship between the stereotypic roles and self-esteem. A stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to analyze the relationship between self-esteem,

as the dependent variable, and the stereotypic roles of Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel, and Superwoman as the independent variables and to determine the amount of variance in self-esteem scores. Multiple regression was chosen as the procedure because it reflects the partial correlations between the set of variables and determines the unique proportion of variance accounted for by the predictor variables, in this case, the stereotypic roles. The results indicate that 19% of the variance in self-esteem scores may be attributed to Mammy and Sapphire scores,  $F(2, 182) = 21.19, p < .00001$ ; Jezebel and Superwoman were eliminated in the stepwise regression. Mammy subscale scores were negatively correlated with self-esteem ( $\beta = -.24, p < .01$ ). The results suggest that the more African American women feel as if their role is solely to serve others, to be nurturing, and to be deferential, the lower their self-esteem. Sapphire was also found to be negatively correlated to self-esteem ( $\beta = -.28, p < .01$ ). These results provide partial confirmation of the research hypotheses, as the Mammy and Sapphire scales were negatively related to self-esteem scores.

The third research question asks whether the stereotypic roles for Black women account for more variance in self-esteem than racial identity attitudes. It was hypothesized that the stereotypic roles would add a unique independent contribution to the variance in self-esteem scores. A stepwise multiple regression analysis included self-esteem scores as the dependent variable with the RIAS-B subscales as independent variables. Results indicate that 16.8% of the variance in self-esteem is accounted for by preencounter and internalization attitudes,  $F(2, 181) = 18.31, p < .00001$ . Preencounter attitudes were negatively correlated with self-esteem ( $\beta = -.19, p < .001$ ), suggesting that individuals with anti-Black attitudes or with low salience to race have lower levels of self-esteem. Internalization attitudes were positively correlated with self-esteem ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ). The results suggest racial pride and integration of racial identity, as measured by internalization attitudes, are associated with higher self-esteem. A third set of multiple linear regression analyses was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between the stereotypes and racial identity attitudes and self-esteem and to assess whether the stereotypic roles have a unique contribution to the variance in self-esteem. As noted, the stereotypic roles accounted for 19%, whereas racial identity attitudes accounted for about 17% of the variance in self-esteem scores, a 2% difference. Results indicate significant differences in the amount of variance,  $R^2$  change = .125 ( $F = 7.892, p < .01$ ), confirming the research hypothesis. The  $R^2$  change indicates that the stereotypes of African American women add a significant independent contribution to variance in self-esteem.

## DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study included the initial components scale development based on a rational approach to item development and a CFA to verify the four-factor structure of the scale (Dawis, 2000). The study also attempted to assess whether the stereotypic roles assigned to African American women according to the legacy of slavery could be empirically measured. The SRBWS is a newly developed 34-item scale designed to measure the presence of attitudes that reflect the stereotypes of Mammy, Sapphire, Jezebel, and Superwoman. The scale adds to the multicultural sensitivity in the field of psychology by providing a measure to assess identity factors for African American women based on the intersection of race and gender, stemming from images and stereotypes from slavery. CFA supports the four-factor model as the best fit for the scale. The four factors were found to have adequate internal consistency. Moderate subscale correlation coefficients suggest that the subscales are measuring related yet distinct and separate constructs. Mean scores and responses to the scale indicate that African American women in the sample were able to identify with the stereotypes and suggest that some women may indeed hold stereotypic attitudes toward themselves and other African American women.

The second research question explored the relationship between the four stereotypic roles and self-esteem. Correlation coefficients partially confirmed the research hypotheses, as Mammy, Jezebel, and Sapphire were negatively correlated to self-esteem. Contrary to the hypothesis, the Superwoman image was also negatively correlated to self-esteem. Regression analyses indicate that only the stereotypic roles of Mammy and Sapphire are negatively related to self-esteem. Images of Mammy include being nurturing to others, respectful of others, and a problem solver. Internalization of this stereotype may lead to the need to serve and to care for others, often setting aside one's own needs in the process. According to Abdullah (1998) and Greene (1994), this selflessness may be related to low self-esteem for women who have internalized this need. Some women may end up defining themselves only in relationship to others and may base their happiness on others' well-being and satisfaction. Results also indicate a negative relationship between Sapphire and self-esteem. Sapphire is seen as argumentative and harsh. Women who internalize this stereotype may fear being perceived as overly aggressive and may have difficulty expressing their anger. Women may also believe that they have to be loud to be heard, to receive attention, or to make their point. Women who internalize this stereotypic role may have low self-esteem if they struggle with expressing their feelings of anger, disappointment, or hurt. Women who try to suppress their feelings often lose

their temper, feeling out of control, which then leads to a sense of guilt and lowered self-esteem (Childs & Palmer, 2001).

The study found no significant predictive relationship between the stereotypical roles of Jezebel and Superwoman. It was hypothesized that Jezebel would be negatively related to self-esteem as women may struggle with issues with their sexuality. One reason for the lack of relationship found in this study is that African American women may feel comfortable with their sexuality. The self-esteem scale used focuses more on global self-esteem and therefore may not tap into traits associated with sexuality. The RSE Scale measures global self-esteem rather than specific sources of self-esteem. For example, self-esteem can be based on internal and external sources. Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, and Bouvrette (2003) identified seven domains for what they call contingencies or sources of self-esteem; they include others' approval, physical appearance, outdoing others in competition, academic competence, family love and support, being a virtuous or moral person, and God's love. The items for the Jezebel questions are more focused on interpersonal relationships rather than views about self, and perhaps a different scale such as the Crocker et al. (2003) scale would produce different findings. Other researchers have found differences in the way that African American women relate to their sexuality. Wyatt, Forge, and Guthrie (1998) found different patterns of demographic characteristics and of sexual risk taking among a community sample of African American, Latina, and White women. In particular, they found that African American women were more likely to accept money for sex and to have a sexual relationship with someone other than their primary partner. Although this finding could be interpreted as reflecting these women's promiscuity, a closer look at the demographic characteristics of African American women may help to explain further these relationships. For example, women who lived alone, who were single with a child, or who lived in single extended households with family members or roommates were more likely to be African American. They were also more likely to be high school graduates, younger than age 40, and living in working-class neighborhoods. Sex for money may represent a bartering arrangement that is not uncommon for people who are not financially stable and who often need money to pay for living essentials, such as rent, food, or clothing. These situations usually involve established relationships in which two people do not share housing but have an understanding about the expectations that each partner has for entering into the relationship. Similarly, the study found no relationship between the Superwoman stereotype and self-esteem. The Superwoman stereotype holds that African American women are strong, resourceful, and can handle multiple tasks and roles and has been conceptualized as a coping mechanism (Greene, 1994; McNair, 1992; Mitchell & Her-

ring, 1998; West, 1995). Taken together, more investigation of the stereotypic attitudes and their relation to self-esteem and self-concept is warranted.

Finally, the study sought to explore the strength of the relationship of the stereotypes with self-esteem in comparison to racial identity attitudes. The four stereotypes contributed uniquely to the amount of variance explained in self-esteem scores. African American women's identity is connected to their racial attitudes plus their stereotypic attitudes about African American women. "Blackness," "femaleness," and the hybrid "Black-femaleness" are relevant according to this investigation.

Although this is an initial exploration in the measurement of the images, there are some potential practical and clinical implications from the study. First, the study verifies the veracity and accuracy of the stereotypical images in the lives of African American women. Therapists and researchers will need to move beyond the assessment of racial or gender identity to include a discussion of the stereotypic roles and their influence on identity development and functioning. Second, a discussion of the images will help clinicians to understand the socialization processes, from parental messages, peers, and media images, that influence identity development.

### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study offers a significant contribution to the understanding of identity issues for African American women. It is the first step in the development of a scale to measure stereotypic roles, and future research is being conducted to continue with validation of the scale. There are several limitations to this study, however. First, the study would be strengthened by an increased sample size. Although the SRBWS had moderate reliability and some evidence of construct validity, it needs further validation with a larger and more representative sample. This initial study suggests a relationship between the stereotypes and psychological adjustment, particularly self-esteem. The hypotheses that self-esteem would be related to the Jezebel and Superwoman stereotypes were not supported, pointing to a second limitation of the study. The RSE Scale used tends to measure global self-esteem. Future research should explore the relationship between the stereotypic roles and psychological symptoms, including depression, anxiety, anger management, and psychosomatic symptoms. The next step in developing this instrument necessitates an investigation of the SRBWS's convergent and discriminate validity. For instance, how is the instrument related to other scales of internalized oppression, experiences of sexism, racism, and discrimination distress? Finally,

research could also address socialization messages with youth around the stereotypes and the influence of the internalization of the stereotypes on interpersonal relationships. This new instrument might prove useful to researchers interested in identity development processes in African American women, and only time will tell if it proves to be useful in clinical arenas as well. For instance, is there a cutoff score that indicates that “too much” of the stereotypic attitudes are related to pathological or problematic mental health or interpersonal outcomes?

In conclusion, the SRBWS appears to be promising and has the potential to assess the particular influences of negative societal images on African American women. It is hoped that future investigations will also attempt to explore the complexities of African American women.

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