



Race-Related Stress and Academic Performance - Closing the Gap for

African American & Black Identifying Students

Ezra S. Jenifer (Faculty Advisor: Andrea Negrete)

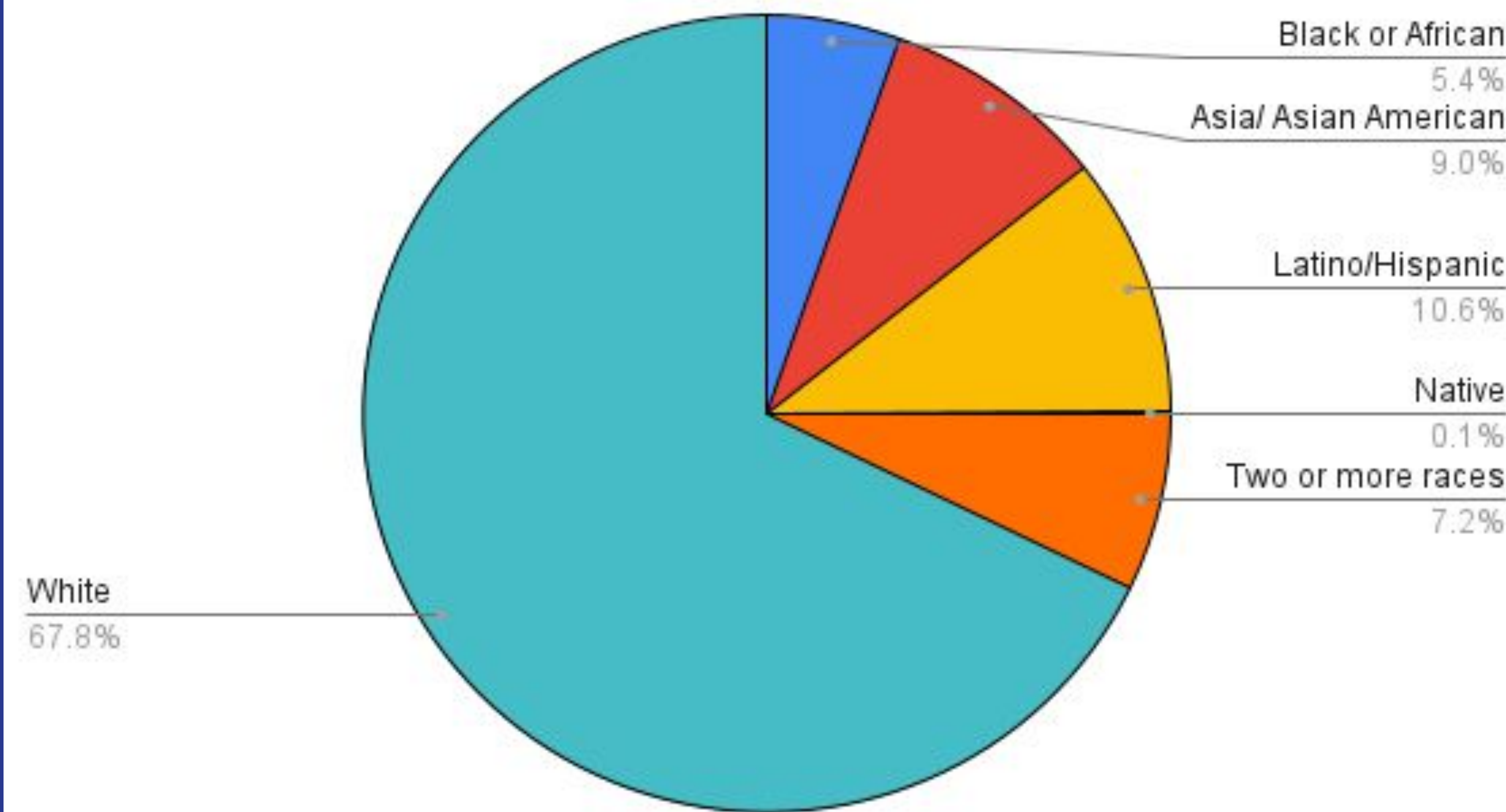
Introduction

- In the last decade, there has been an increase in African American & Black-identifying students attending higher education institutions (Bouchrika, 2022).
- When compared to Whites, Latinos, and Asian-American students, there are high disparities in **academic performance** and **graduation rates** among African American and Black-identifying students.
- A potential factor implicated in African American & Black-identifying students' academic performance may be *race-related stressors*.
- Race-related stressors are transactions, between individuals or groups, within an environment that has emerged from dynamics of racism, specifically threatening the well-being of individuals within a community (Harrell, 2000, p. 45).

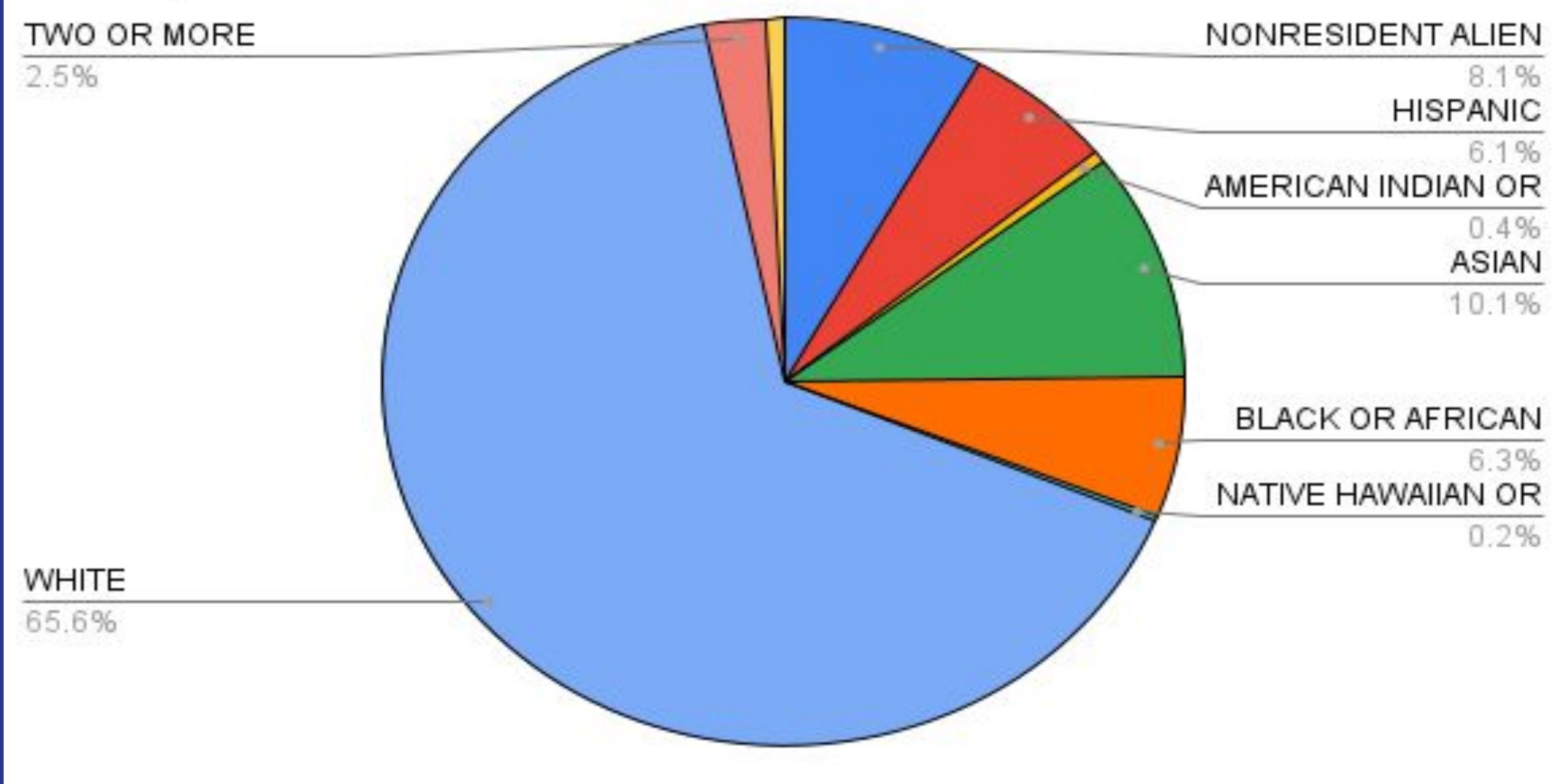
Method

- **Participants**
 - African American & Black-identifying undergraduate students attending Wesleyan University
 - Age range of 18-22 years old
 - Participants will be recruited through the following listservs: First-Generation Low-Income (FGLI) Advisory Board, the Resource Center, and the Student-Athletes of Color Council (SACLC).
- **Procedure**
 - A two-part quantitative and qualitative study will be conducted
 - **Quantitative:** 20-30 minute survey
 - **Qualitative:** semi-structured 30-60 minute interview with a sub-sample of 20-25 undergraduate students

Racial Breakdown of Wesleyan Student Body



Faculty and Academic Staff Diversity



Research Questions

- 1.) What are the ways in which African Americans & Black-identifying students experience race-related stress at a PWI?
- 2.) Are experiences of race-related stress shaping the academic experiences of African American & Black-identifying students?
- 3.) What types of resources do African American & Black-identifying students draw on to cope with race-related stress?

Data Analysis Plan

- **Data Analysis**
 - **Qualitative:** Thematic coding specifically focusing on answers addressing race-related stress, academic performance, and discrimination.
 - **Quantitative:** Regression analysis to examine the relationship between race-related stress and academic outcomes. Moderation analysis will be performed to examine if social support and critical consciousness serve a protective role.

Expected Results

Quantitative

- **Hypothesis 1:** Race-related stress will be negatively associated with academic performance.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Social support and critical consciousness will buffer against the negative impacts of race-related stress on academic performance.

Qualitative

- Inductive
- Exploratory

Significance

- Research on colleges campus are conducted with majority white participants
- Identify factors that can reduce the negative consequences of race-related stress on Black students