



# I ‘Wanna’ See You Be Brave: Investigating the Relationship Between Bravery And Coping in Youth and Young Adults

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## Introduction

- Coping strategies serve as adaptive responses to stress, and comprise two separate but equally important domains: cognition and behavior.
- Cognitively, coping strategies may alleviate maladaptive thoughts associated with stressors.
- Behavioral strategies are used to engage in actions that are incongruent to stressful experiences.
- Choosing to engage in a particular strategy is a transactional task, where individuals appraise their coping resources to select a response.
- The efficacy of a particular coping strategy is dependent on interpersonal and situational contexts.
- Bravery may be an interpersonal characteristic that supports the successful selection and implementation of a coping strategy.
- **Purpose:** (a) To understand bravery’s role within the transactional coping paradigm and (b) To understand how bravery impacts why and how individuals choose to engage in coping strategies.

## Method

### Procedures

- This study is part of a larger, ongoing international study with youth and young adults ages 13-25 years old.
- Data collection took place between May 2016 and March 2017 using the Qualtrics online platform.

### Participants

- All participants ( $N = 1,952$ ) in the current study are part of a larger international study examining the supports that youth and young adults need to create a kinder and braver world.
- A total of 1,687 participants (ages 13-25) completed measures of bravery and coping. Participants were excluded ( $N = 265$ ) for missing data.
- Participants had a mean age of 20.20 (3.24), with 70.8% identifying as White. Participants identified their gender identity as Female (57.3%), Male (31.8%), Genderqueer/Pangender (4.4%), and Transgender(3.7%).

## Measures

### Bravery:

- The *Bravery Scale* is a subscale of the *Kindness and Bravery Scale* (Swearer, 2016). Bravery was assessed with a 13- item scale (e.g., “When it matters, I will stand up to someone even if they have more power than me.”),  $\alpha = .70$ . Higher scores reflected greater bravery.
- Each item is scored on a 1-6 point scale. Scores range between 13 and 78.

### Coping:

- The *Brief Resilient Coping Scale (BRCS)* is a 4-item, uni-dimensional measure designed to capture how an individual copes with stress in an adaptive manner (e.g., “I look for creative ways to alter difficult situations.”),  $\alpha = .71$ .
- Each item is scored on a 1-5 point scale. Scores range between 4 and 20.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Bravery and Brief Resilient Coping Scale (BRCS)*

Scale	Total				Youth				Young Adults			
	M	SD	$\alpha$	N	M	SD	$\alpha$	N	M	SD	$\alpha$	N
<i>Bravery Scale</i>	63.32	8.09	.70	1687	63.04	7.90	.66	440	63.42	8.16	.71	1247
<i>BRCS</i>	15.27	3.28	.71	1687	14.65	3.34	.70	440	15.49	3.20	.71	1247

## Results

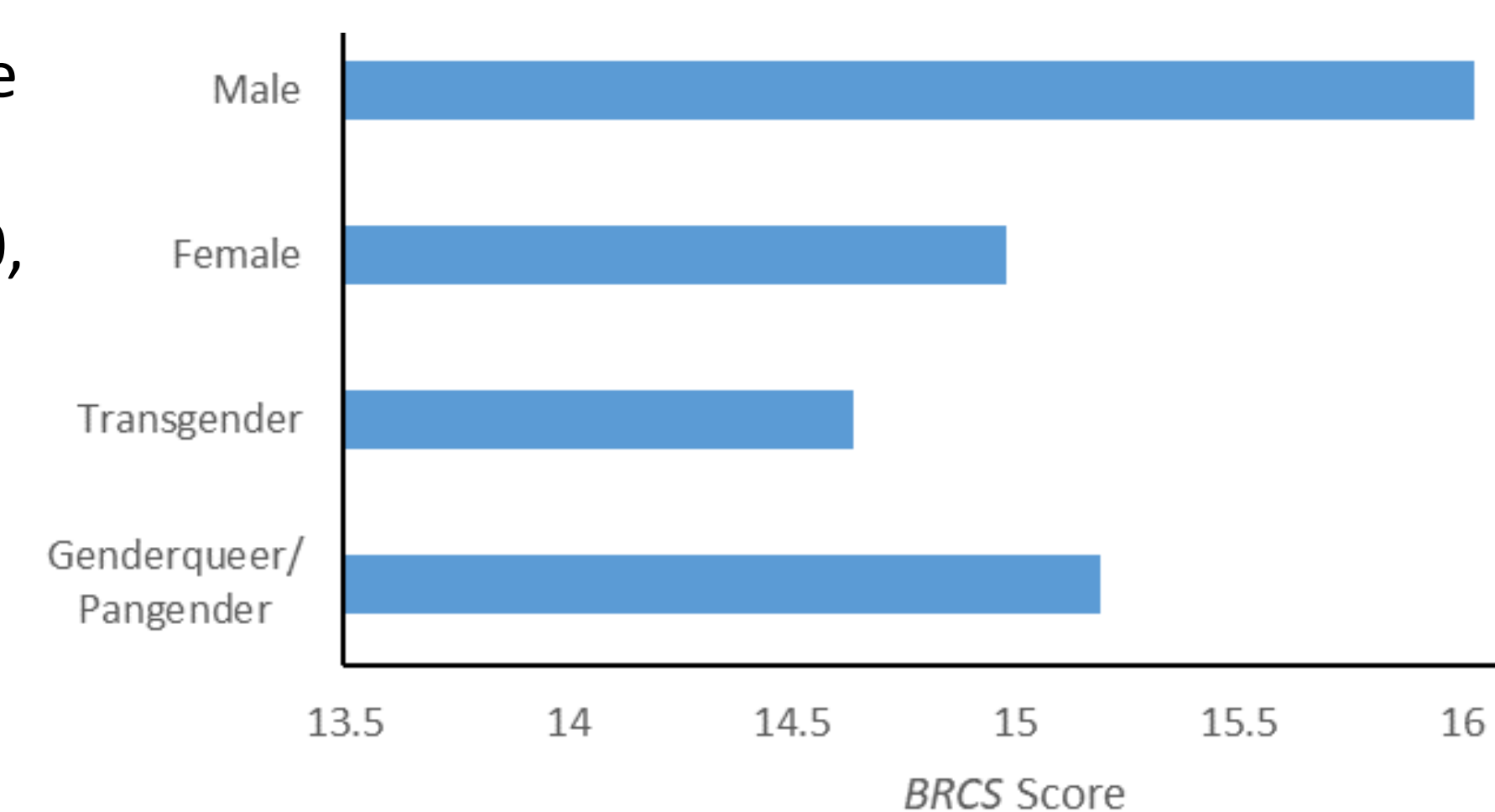
Table 2. *Simple Linear Regression for Bravery and BRCS.*

Source	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
(Intercept)	1.76	.54		3.27	.001
Bravery	.231	.01	.53	25.21	.000

### Simple Linear Regression:

- $[F(1,1685) = 635.58, P < 0.001]; R^2 = 0.27$

Graph 1. BRCS Means by Gender



- There is a statistically significant *BRCS* mean score difference between groups by gender identity as determined by one-way ANOVA ( $F(3,1635)=13.30, p<.001$ ). Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed significant *BRCS mean* score difference between males participants vs. female, transgender, and genderqueer/pansexual participants.

## Discussion

- Bravery is a significant predictor of coping ( $\beta = .53, t(1685) = 25.70, p < .001$ ).
- The results from this study suggest that bravery is a potential interpersonal factor in the transactional coping paradigm.
- When working with individuals to develop coping strategies and skills, it is important to consider the role bravery plays in coping.
- Males endorsed significantly higher coping scores than participants who identified as female, transgender, and genderqueer/pangender, suggesting that gender identity plays a role in coping.

### Limitations:

- Participants from this study were recruited through Lady Gaga’s Born This Way Foundation and may display unique demographic features when compared to the general population.
- Since this study utilized a cross-sectional design, we cannot assume a temporal relationship between bravery and coping since both variables were simultaneously assessed.

## Conclusions

- Bravery should be taught as a social-emotional skill for youth experiencing stressful experiences like bullying.
- Promoting bravery as part of the coping appraisal process may lead to reduced distress and enhanced well-being.