

Enhancing the Prison Environment Alongside Incarcerated Women

Incarcerated Women's Perceptions of Their Best Selves in Prison: Themes & Age Variations

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Positive Outcomes in Prison

- Studying positive outcomes is not a novel concept
 - Well-being and happiness research (Diener et al., 1999; Huppert, 2009; Oishi et al., 2019)
 - Posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004)
 - Positive psychology (Morse et al., 2022)
 - Positive Criminology & Good Lives Model (GLM) (Ronel & Segev, 2015; Ward & Brown, 2004)
- Narratives of reinvention & growth can be located in prisons (Helfgott et al., 2020; Maier & Ricciardelli, 2021; van Ginneken, 2015, 2016)
 - Posttraumatic growth in prison
 - Reflect & envision future self
 - Opportunity for productivity
 - Incarceration as new beginning

Age-Graded Corrections

- Positive outcomes related to aging – purpose in life, well-being, positive affect, coping skills
(Bailey, 2016; Charles et al., 2001; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998; Shook et al., 2017; Skinner & Edge, 1998)
- Desistance & the age/crime curve– developmental & sociological factors
(Doherty & Bersani, 2018; Laub & Sampson, 2001; Scott & Steinberg, 2008)
- Identity development & human agency
 - Desistance as deliberate act of self-change (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009)
 - Identity development related to age & crime (Rocque et al., 2016)
 - Redemption narratives & “tragic optimism” (Maruna, 2001)
 - Early desistance narratives in prison – identity change in prison also related to age
(Martin et al., 2019)

Current Study

- **What are the most common themes among incarcerated women's perceptions of their best selves in prison?**
- **Are common themes among responses invariant when grouped by age?**

Data & Methods

- **Participatory Action Research (PAR)**
 - Team of incarcerated women and ASU researchers (faculty and graduate students)
 - Collaboration in all stages
 - Designing questionnaire
 - Recruiting participants
 - Conducting interviews
 - ASU researchers – 101 interviews
 - Incarcerated interviewers – 99 interviews

Data & Methods

- Women's state prison in Goodyear, Arizona – medium security unit
- Semi-structured interviews with 200 incarcerated women – January-April 2022
- Interview questionnaire – 4 sections, open and closed-ended questions
 1. Appreciative inquiry
 2. Vignettes – perceptions of PAR in prison programming
 3. Trust among women on the unit
 4. Background information

Measures & Analysis

- *Best Self Perception* – “Tell me a story about a time you were at your best in here in the last couple of weeks.”
- *Age* – “How old are you?”
 - Young adulthood (ages 20-35, n = 71)
 - Middle adulthood (ages 36-49, n = 87)
 - Late adulthood (ages 50-83, n = 42)
- Analysis
 - Thematic analysis using Atlas.ti (intercoder agreement = 84%)
 - Frequencies of themes and sub-themes across all 200 responses
 - Frequencies of themes when grouped by adulthood life stages

What are the most common themes among incarcerated women's perceptions of their best selves in prison?

Personal Growth (51%, n = 102)

- Practicing maturity
- Physical health & wellness
- Pride in accomplishments
- Positive attitude
- Perseverance
- Religion & spirituality
- Recovery & sobriety
- Life skills

“Every day you have to find a way to face the struggles and challenges in here.”

Employment (25%, n = 50)

- Working (in general)
- Performing well at job
- Interviewing for or starting new job

“I’m always at my best when I’m working. I’ve never worked this hard before.”

Healthy Relationships (18%, n = 36)

- Relationships with children
- Family relationships
- Relationships with other women on the inside
- Communication with the outside

“Nothing could ruin that day... having my daughter is the one thing in life that I don’t regret.”

What are the most common themes among incarcerated women's perceptions of their best selves in prison?

Incarceration Experience (17.5%, n = 35)

- Appreciation or support from others
- Celebrations
- Case or sentence-related
- Dignity & humanity
- Positive experiences with staff
- Hobbies & leisure
- Healthy living situations

"It feels good to be trusted by another normal person."

Programming & Education (17%, n = 34)

- Working towards education
- Participating in a program
- Completing a program
- Completing education

Helping & Supporting Others (16.5%, n = 33)

"I usually help people out as best I can. I don't help people to get things in return."

At One's Best Every Day (4.5%, n = 9)

Not At One's Best (3.5%, n = 7)

Are common themes invariant when grouped by age?

Theme	Young Adulthood Ages 20-35 (n = 71)	Middle Adulthood Ages 36-49 (n = 87)	Late Adulthood Ages 50-83 (n = 42)
Personal Growth	43.7% (n = 31)	57.5% (n = 50)	50% (n = 21)
Employment	19.7% (n = 14)	29.9% (n = 26)	23 .8% (n = 10)
Healthy Relationships	16.9% (n = 12)	18.4% (n = 16)	19% (n = 8)
Incarceration Experience	16.9% (n = 12)	17.2% (n = 15)	19% (n = 8)
Programming or Education	18.3% (n = 13)	19.5% (n = 17)	9.5% (n = 4)
Helping & Supporting Others	9.9% (n = 7)	16.1% (n = 14)	28.6% (n = 12)
At One's Best Everyday	4.2% (n = 3)	4.6% (n = 4)	2.4% (n = 1)
Not at One's Best	5.6% (n = 4)	1.1% (n = 1)	4.8% (n = 2)

Conclusions & Implications

- Themes as a roadmap or guide for creating more enabling environments
- Several themes were consistent across women of all ages
- Specific opportunities for holistic programming
 - Personal Growth
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Employment
 - Programming & Education
- Older women (middle, late adulthood) – Helping & Supporting Others
 - Mentorship opportunities – benefits for mentee and mentor

Thank you

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Cultural Embeddedness and the Meaning of Trust among Incarcerated Women

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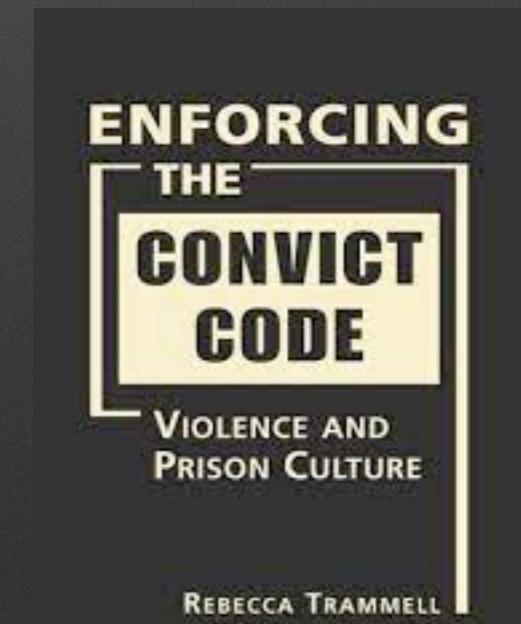
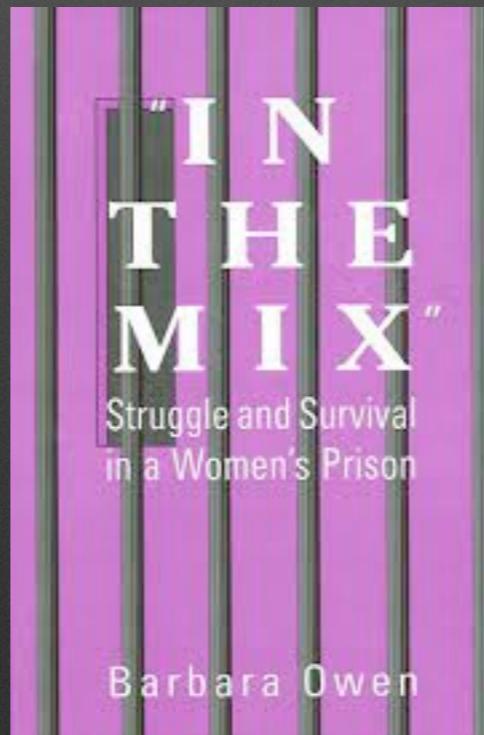
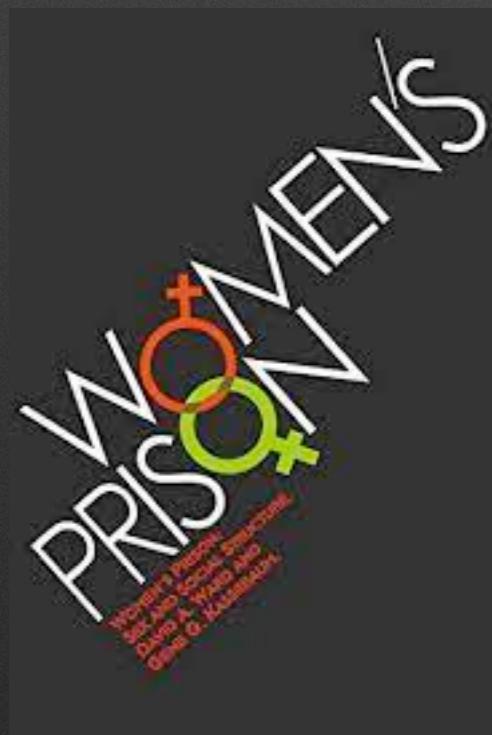
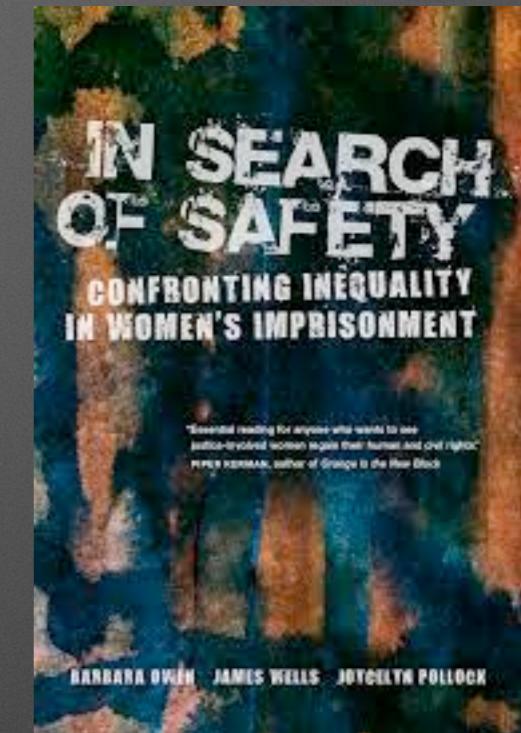
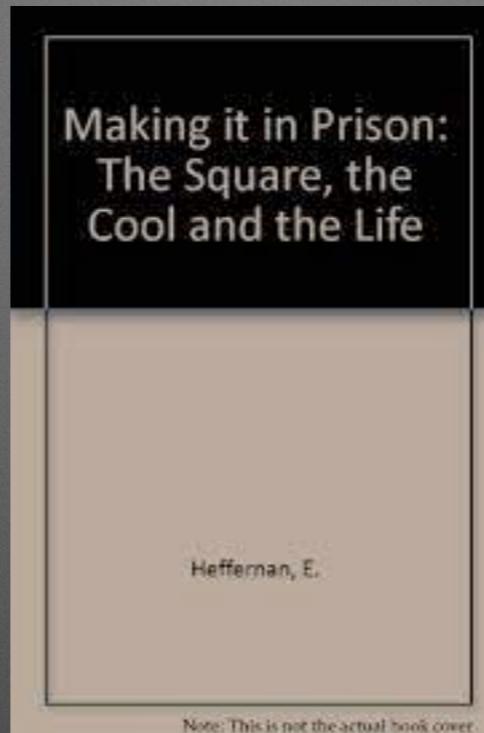
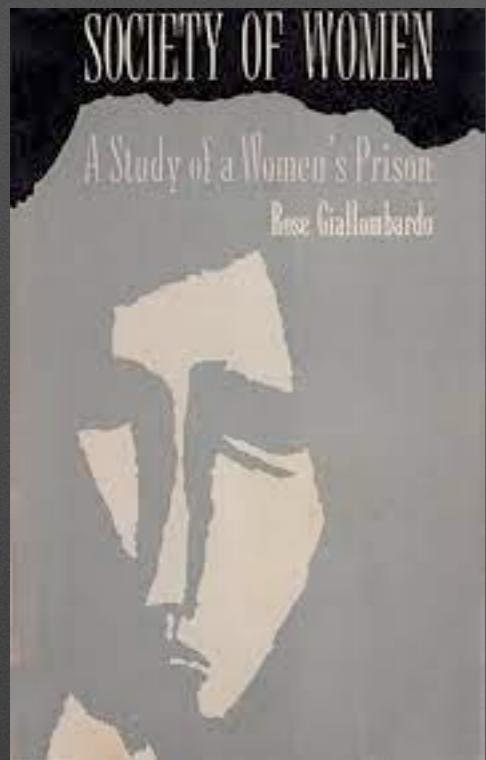
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Women's Prison Culture



Women's Prison Culture

- *What do these studies have in common?*
 - Women's prisons are really different from men's prisons.
 - RELATIONSHIPS!!!
- “Interpersonal relationships are the anchors of prison culture” (Owen: 1998, 119)

Relationships are Tricky

- Extensive work shows that women in prison:
 - Want a close relationship to share personal information and cope with incarceration
 - Are concerned about sharing personal information due to relational violence
 - Experience “Partial Justice” (Rafter 1990); lack of formal solution
 - Women in prison face a dilemma...

Trust as a Salient Domain

- This is a *trust situation*:
 - Transactions involve uncertainty and vulnerability
- As a result, trust becomes a salient domain of "culture" in women's prisons
 - Rules of privacy and transactions of information

Today's Presentation

- Much has been said about prison culture...
 - "Trust is a salient domain of culture in women's prisons"
 - But, little work has been dedicated to:
 - *Conceptualizing and operationalizing cultural domains.*

Culture

- What do we mean when we say:
 - "Trust is a salient domain of culture in women's prisons"
 - There is shared meaning about what defines a trust relationship.
 - These meanings are learned and enacted in social interaction.

Cultural Embeddedness

- Culture is not monolithic
 - Goldberg et al (2016)
 - Some people "know" more than others about the content of shared meanings:
 - *cultural* embeddedness
 - Like *structural* embeddedness, inequality in knowledge may confer advantages.

Cultural Embeddedness

- "Entering the prison world, like any new experience, involves learning a unique set of strategies, behaviors, and meanings" (Owen 1998: 168)
- Individuals have to learn what trust relationships "mean".
- Variation in this knowledge may influence women's experiences in prison.

Current Study

- Questions:
 - How do individuals differ in their level of cultural embeddedness?
 - How does cultural embeddedness influence women's perceptions of social relationships and programming?

Measuring a Cultural Domain

- We developed measures on the meaning of trust through focus groups and qualitative data collection.
- Major focus on:
 - being able to share information, have it not repeated or used against you, and not judged.
- Nine True/False statements to measure the meaning of trust.

SORRY FOR THE FONT!!!

I would like you to think about what it means to trust other women on this unit. Next to each item below, please indicate whether the statement is true (T) or false (F) regarding the meaning of trust on this unit.

Trust means that if someone tells you something personal, you should keep it between you and them and not share it with others.

Trusting someone means that you can tell them something personal and know they will not share it with others.

Trusting someone means you can discuss personal matters and they will not judge you.

Trusting someone means that you can tell them personal information and know it will not be repeated.

Trust means that you can tell someone something personal and know that they will not judge you.

Trust means that if you tell someone something personal about yourself, they won't use it to get something from you.

Trusting someone on this unit means that you can share something personal and know that it will stay with them.

Trust means that if you tell someone something personal about yourself, they won't use it to manipulate you.

Trust means that you can talk to a women on this unit and know she will be honest with you.

Analytic Approach

- Question:
 - How do individuals differ in their level of cultural embeddedness?
 - Approach: Cultural Consensus Analysis

Cultural Consensus Analysis

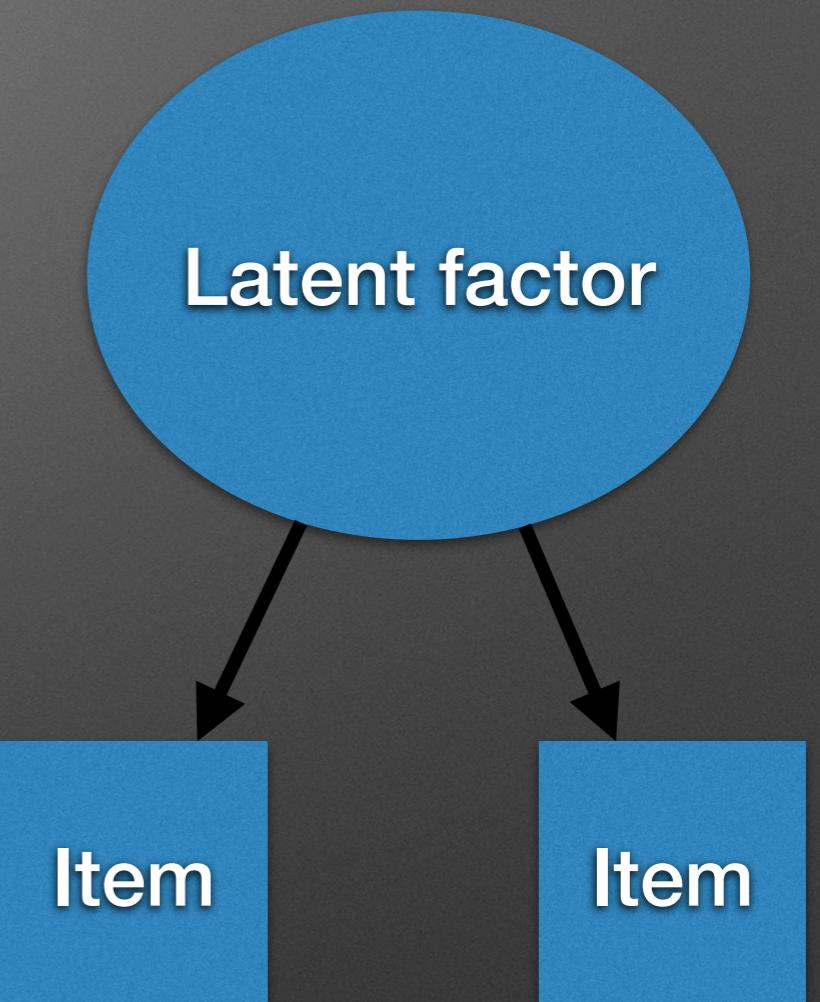
- Cultural Consensus Analysis (Romney, Weller, and Batchelder 1986)
 - Agreement among *individuals*, not agreement among *items*.
 - In a group in which there is shared meaning on a domain, there will be consensus in the responses.
 - There are culturally "correct" answers to our questions and we are trying to recover it.

Cultural Consensus Analysis

- Individuals differ in their cultural expertise.
 - Some will know more of the culturally correct answers than others.
 - These individuals are more *culturally embedded*.

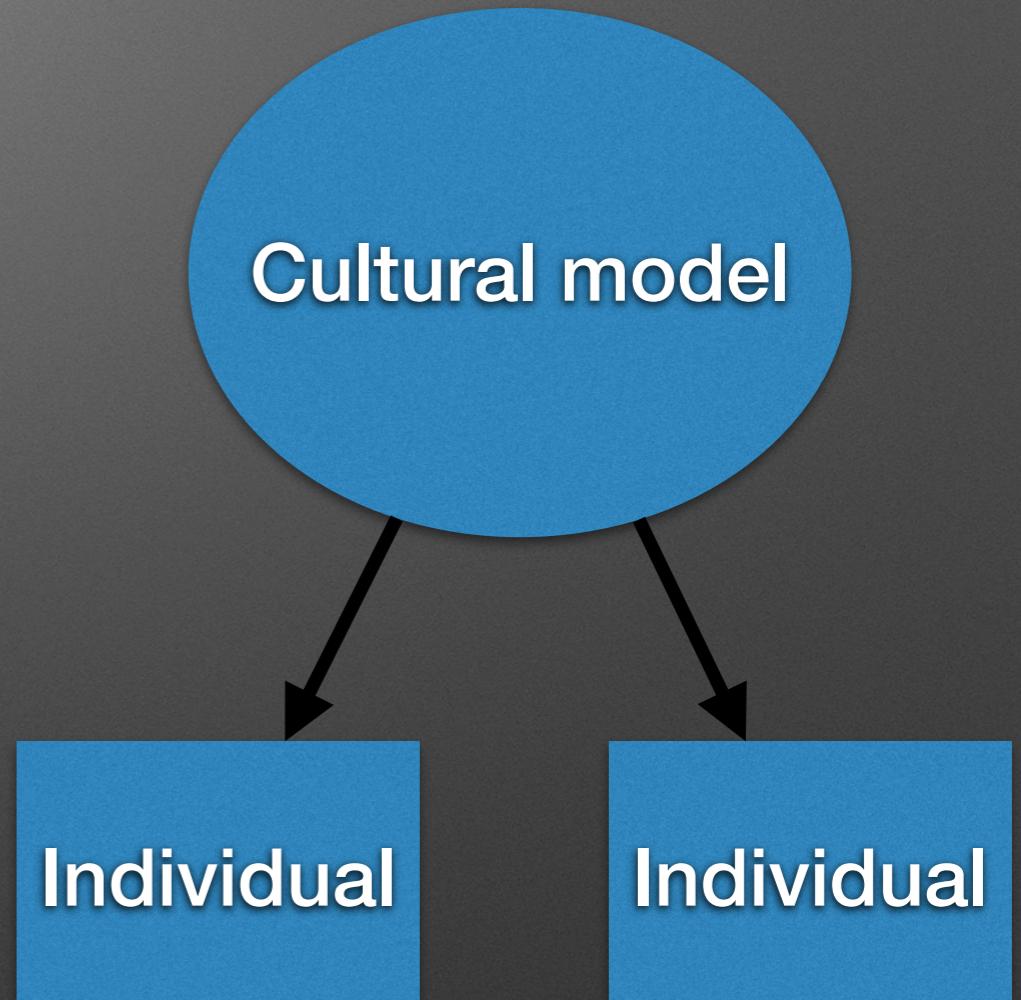
Measuring a Cultural Domain

- Factor analysis
 - Get a matrix of item x item correlations
 - Item i is correlated with item j
 - The first factor represents the latent construct that generates the items
 - Loadings represent how well that item correlates with the latent factor



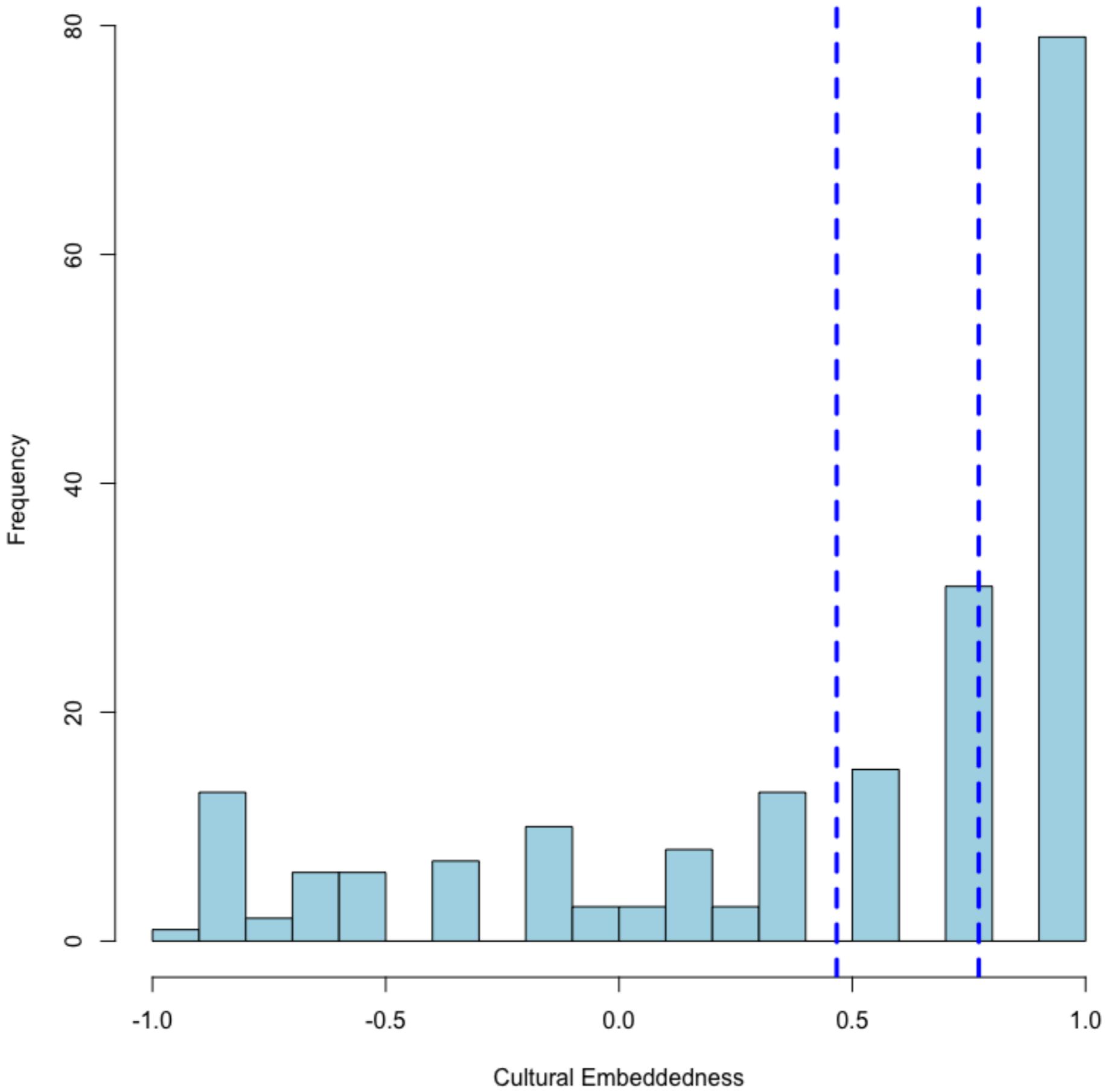
Measuring a Cultural Domain

- Like a factor analysis
 - Get a matrix of $n \times n$ correlations among respondents
 - i agrees with j
 - The first factor represents the shared cultural model
 - Loadings represent how well that individual knows the cultural model

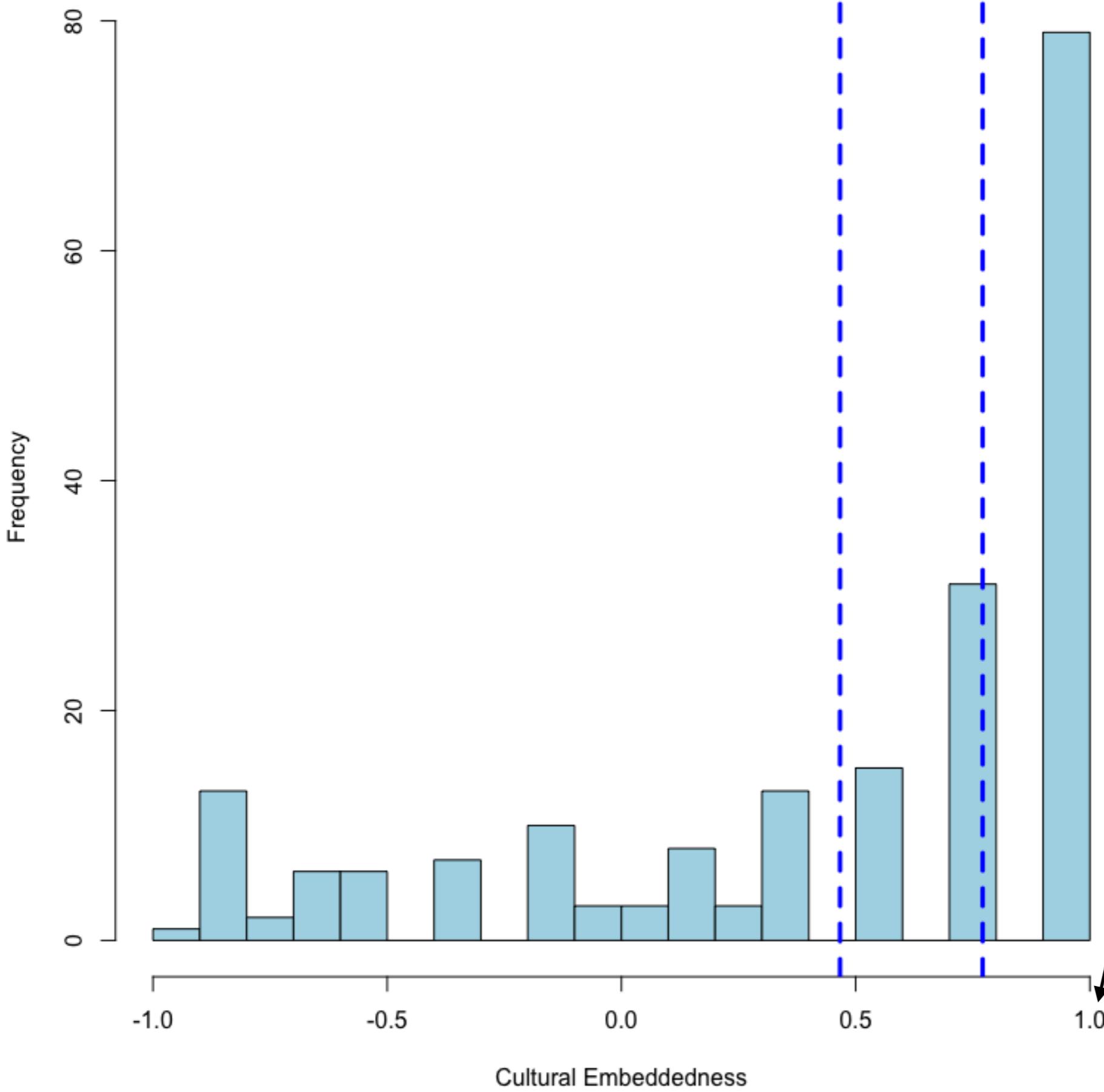


- Question:
- How do individuals differ in their level of cultural embeddedness?

Distribution of Cultural Embeddedness Scores

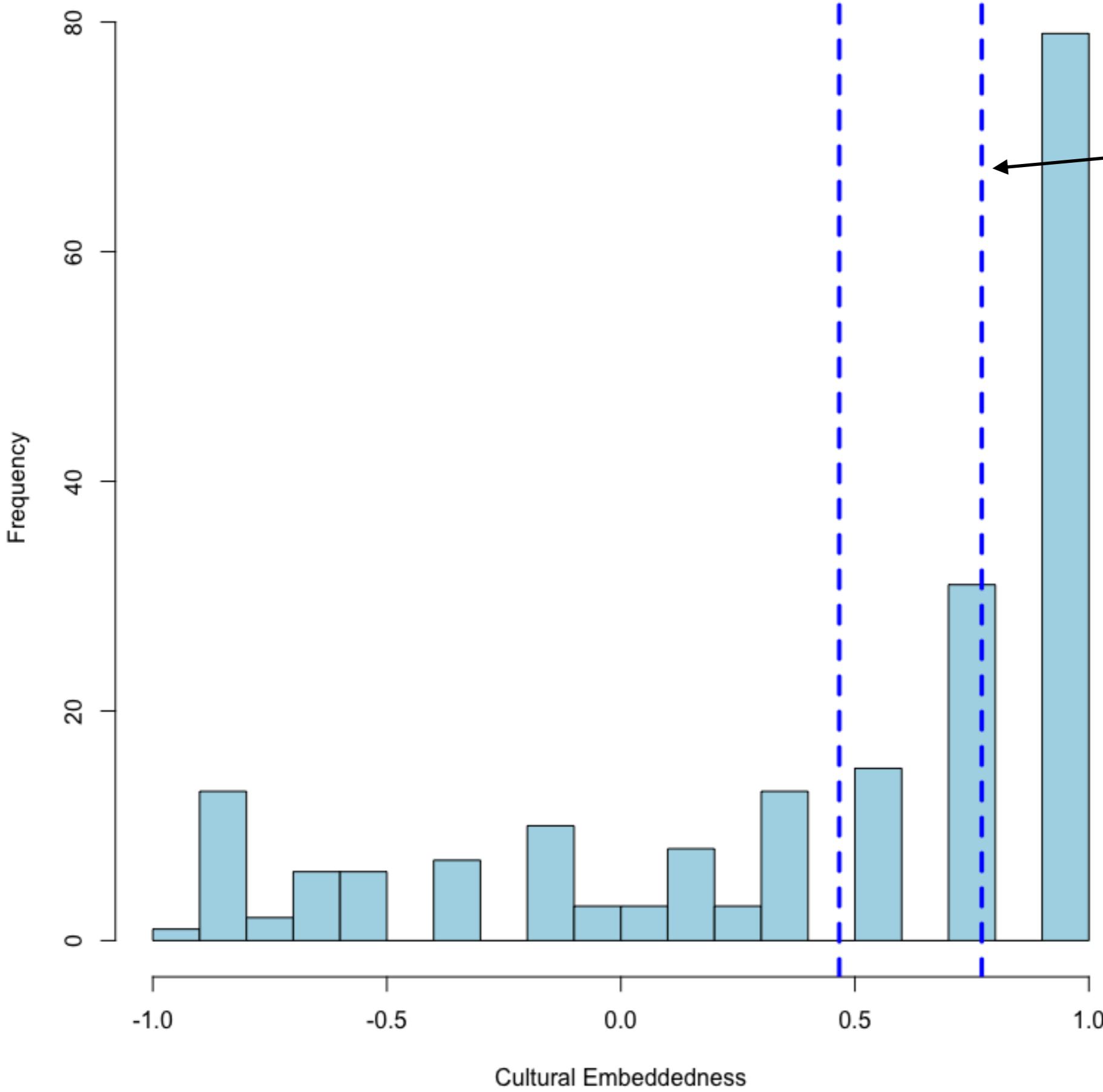


Distribution of Cultural Embeddedness Scores



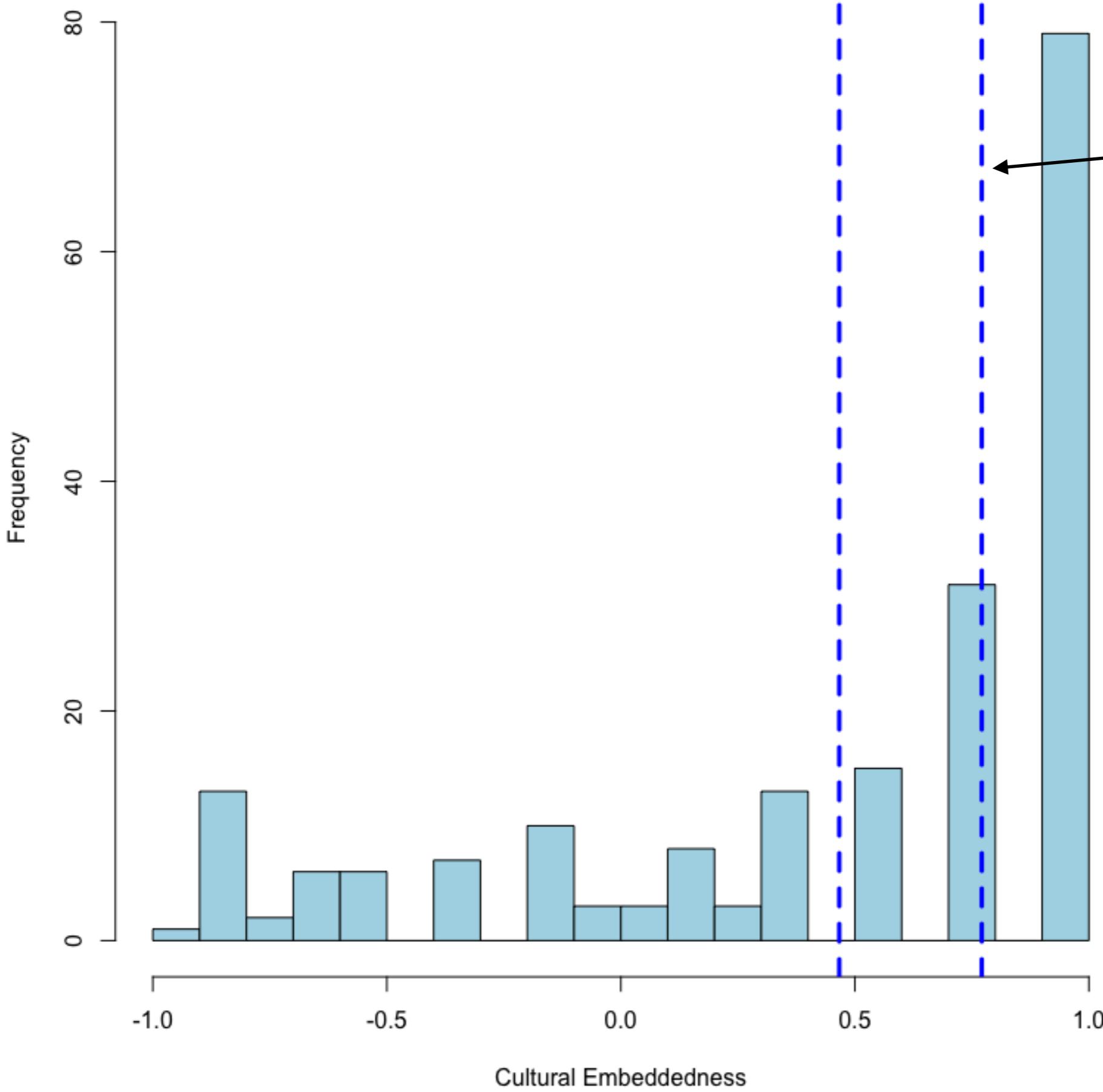
If everyone said these items are "True", they would all have a score of 1.

Distribution of Cultural Embeddedness Scores



Median score
is 0.77

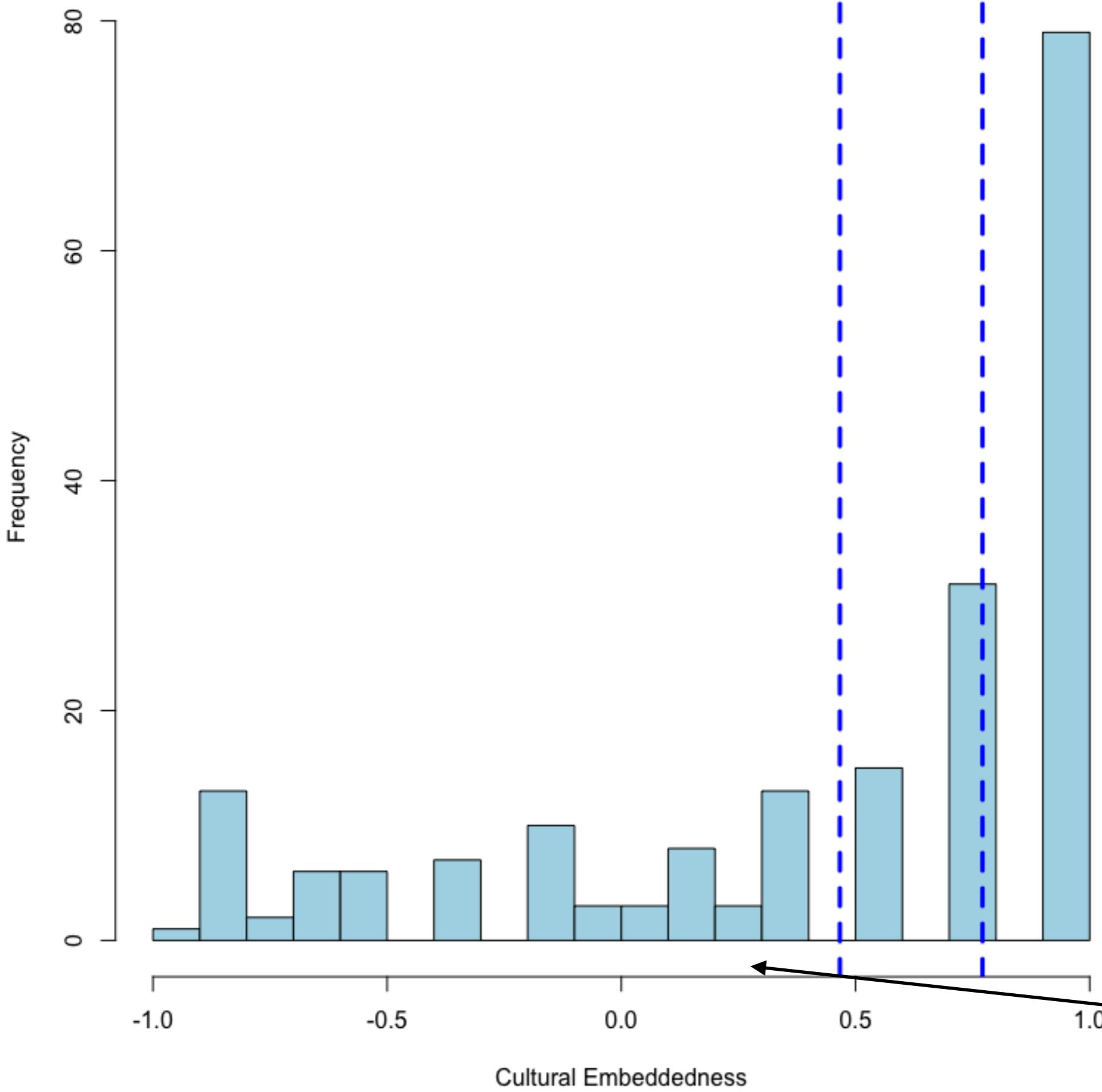
Distribution of Cultural Embeddedness Scores



Median score
is 0.77

The "median person" has a correlation of .77 with the "key"

Distribution of Cultural Embeddedness Scores



Takeaway:

A large fraction
is culturally
embedded

A smaller
fraction is not

Cultural Embeddedness

- Question:
 - How does cultural embeddedness influence women's perceptions of social relationships and programming?
 - Relational Health
 - Psychological Safety

Relational Health

- Belle Liang and colleagues (2002)
 - "Growth-fostering relationships" are characterized by:
 - Mutual engagement, Authenticity, Empowerment, Ability to deal with conflict
 - "Community relational health"
 - A sense of growth-fostering relationships in one's community.

Relational Health

Community Relational Health

Next to each statement below, indicate the number that best applies to your relationship with or involvement with other women in this unit. 1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always.

I feel a sense of belonging to women in this unit.

I feel better about myself after my interactions with women in this unit.

If women in this unit know something is bothering me, they ask me about it.

Women in this unit are not free to just be themselves. (reversed)

I feel understood by women in this unit.

I feel mobilized to personal action after meetings with women in this unit.

There are parts of myself I feel I must hide from women in this unit. (reversed)

It seems as if women in this unit really like me as a person.

There is a lot of backbiting and gossiping among women in this unit. (reversed)

Women in this unit are very competitive with each other. (reversed)

I have a greater sense of self-worth through my connection with women in this unit.

My connections with women in this unit are so inspiring that they motivate me to pursue relationships with other people.

Women in this unit have shaped my identity in many ways.

Women in this unit provide me with emotional support.

Psychological Safety

- Amy Edmondson (2016)
 - Belief that the "team" is a safe space for interpersonal risk taking.
 - Ok to ask for help, try a new idea, etc.
 - Group programs for incarcerated women have similar features of "interpersonal risk taking"

Psychological Safety

Programming

Next to each statement below, indicate your agreement regarding interactions among women in programming. 1 = Never; 2 = Seldom; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Always.

You can't share personal information in programming because people will gossip. (reversed)

If you make a rule that "what is said in here, stays in here", people will follow it.

If you make a rule that "what is said in here, stays in here" and someone breaks the rule, there is really nothing you can do about it. (reversed)

In programs, it is easy to speak up about what is your mind.

If you make a mistake in this unit, other women will often hold it against you. (reversed)

People in this unit are usually comfortable talking about problems and disagreements.

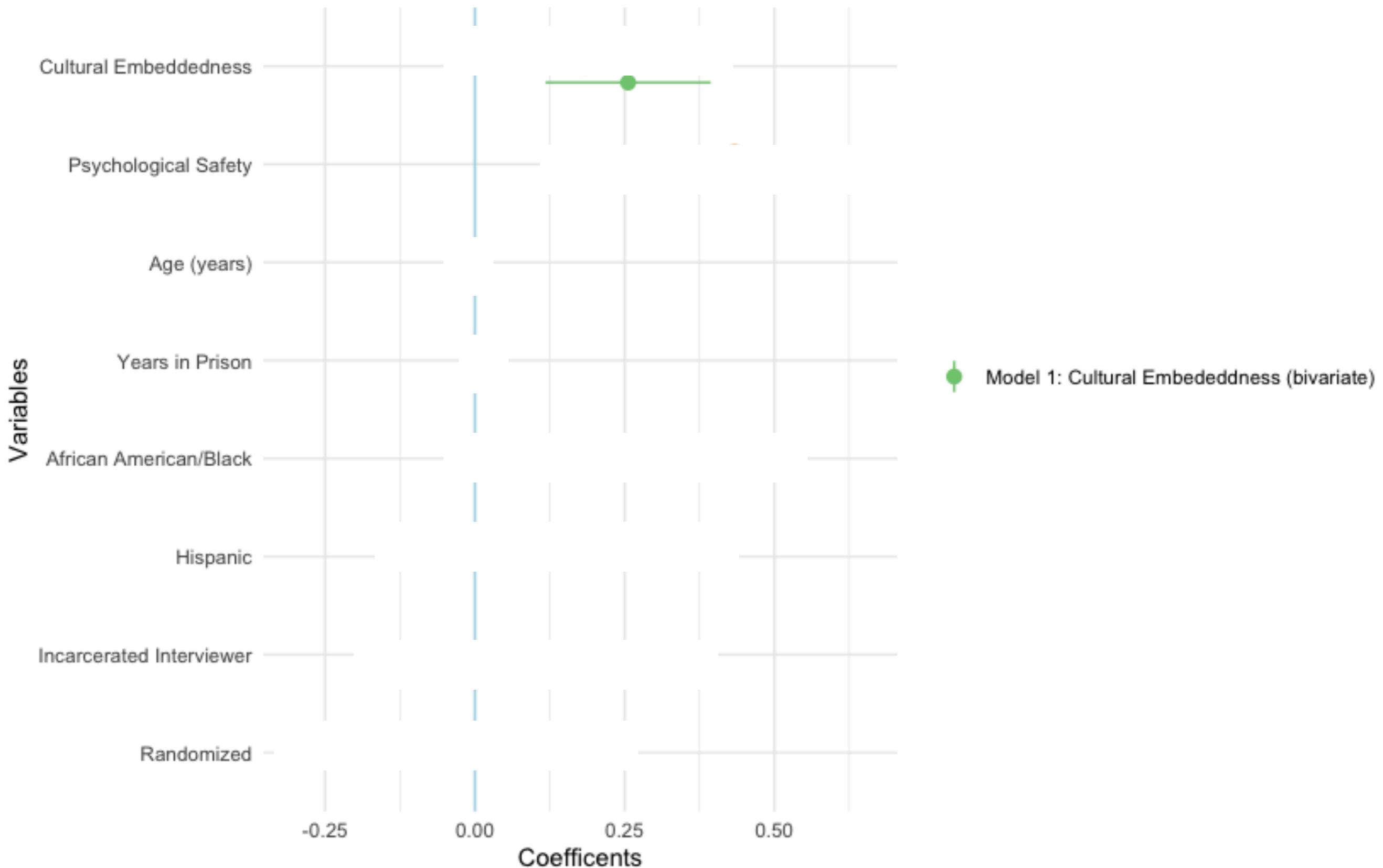
People in this unit are eager to share information about what *doesn't* work as well as to share information about what does work.

Expectations

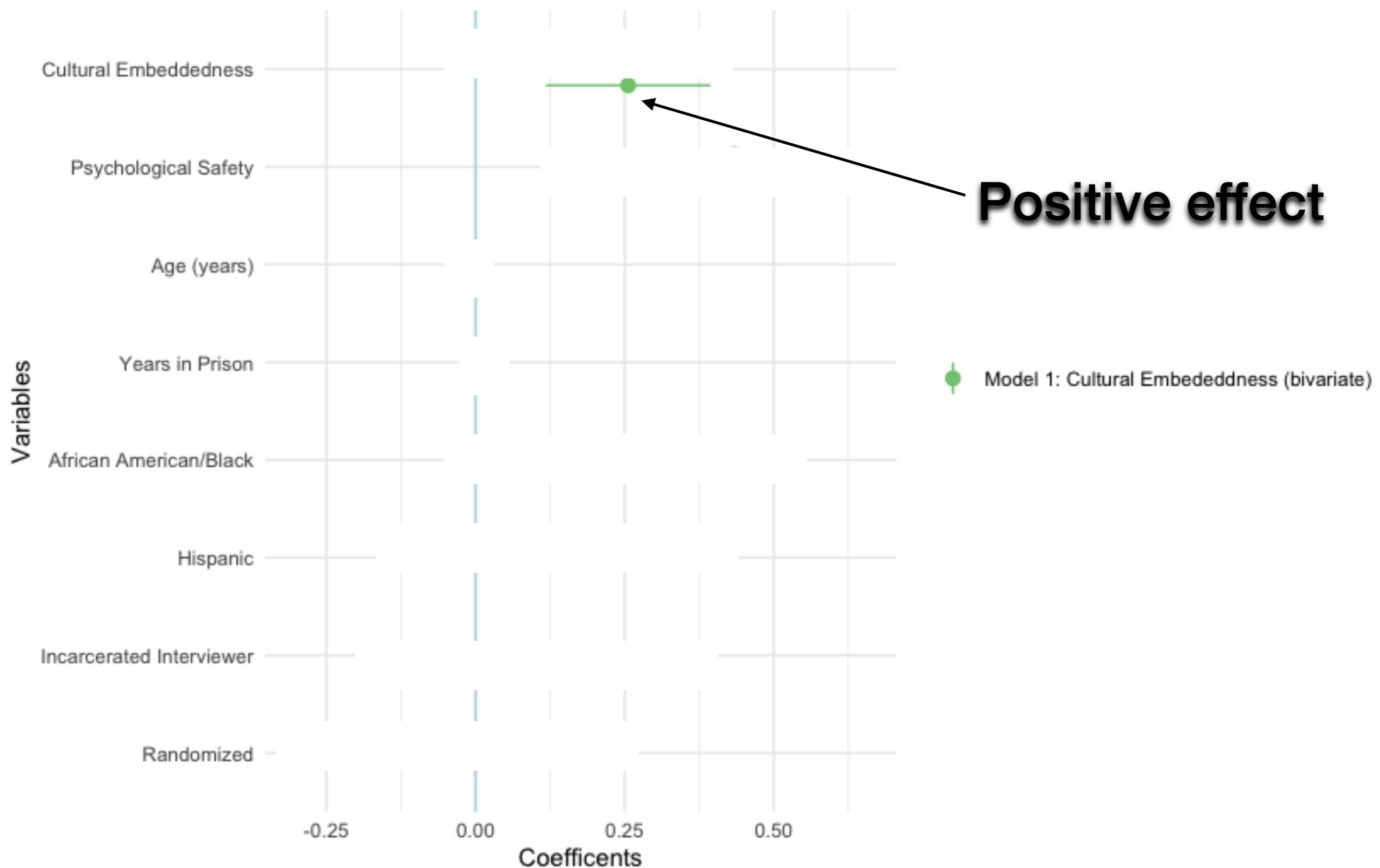
- More culturally embeddedness:
 - *Lower Relational Health and Psychological Safety*
 - Aware of the reality of prison, not naive
- *Higher Relational Health and Psychological Safety*
 - Aware of how to create relationships and the setting

Results: Predicting Relational Health

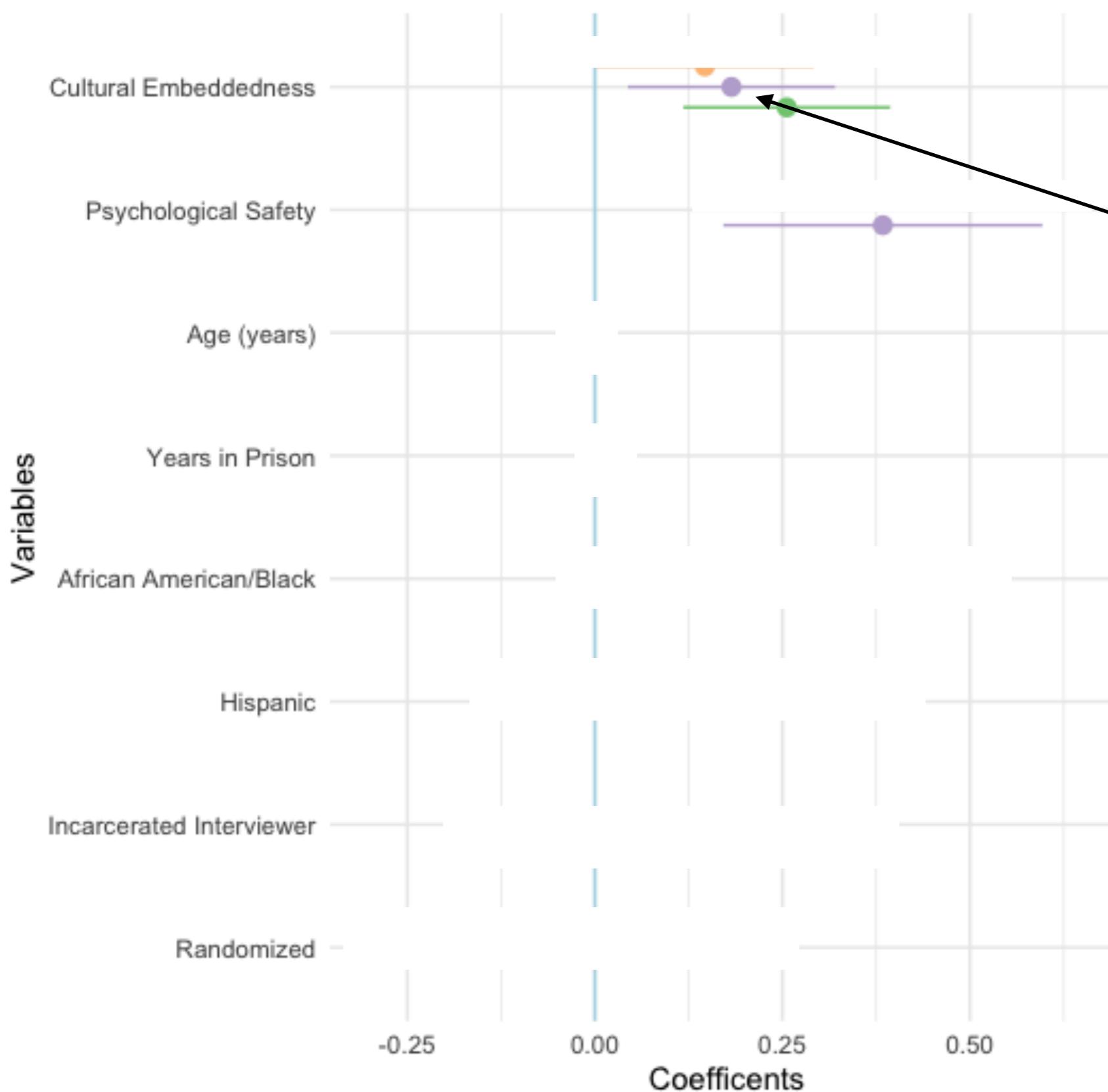
Models Predicting Relational Health



Models Predicting Relational Health



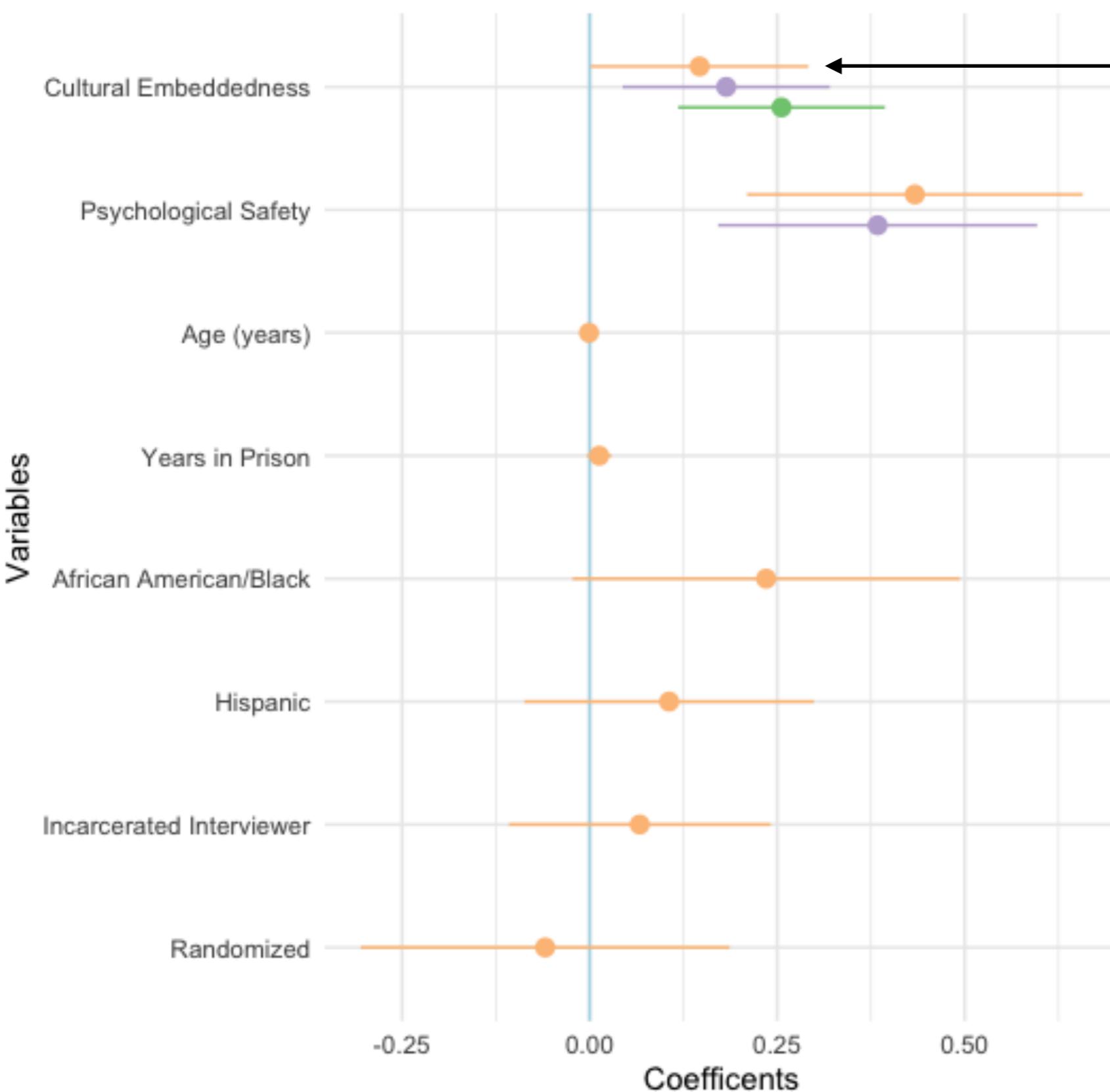
Models Predicting Relational Health



Effect declines

Captures the effect "net" of measurement overlap

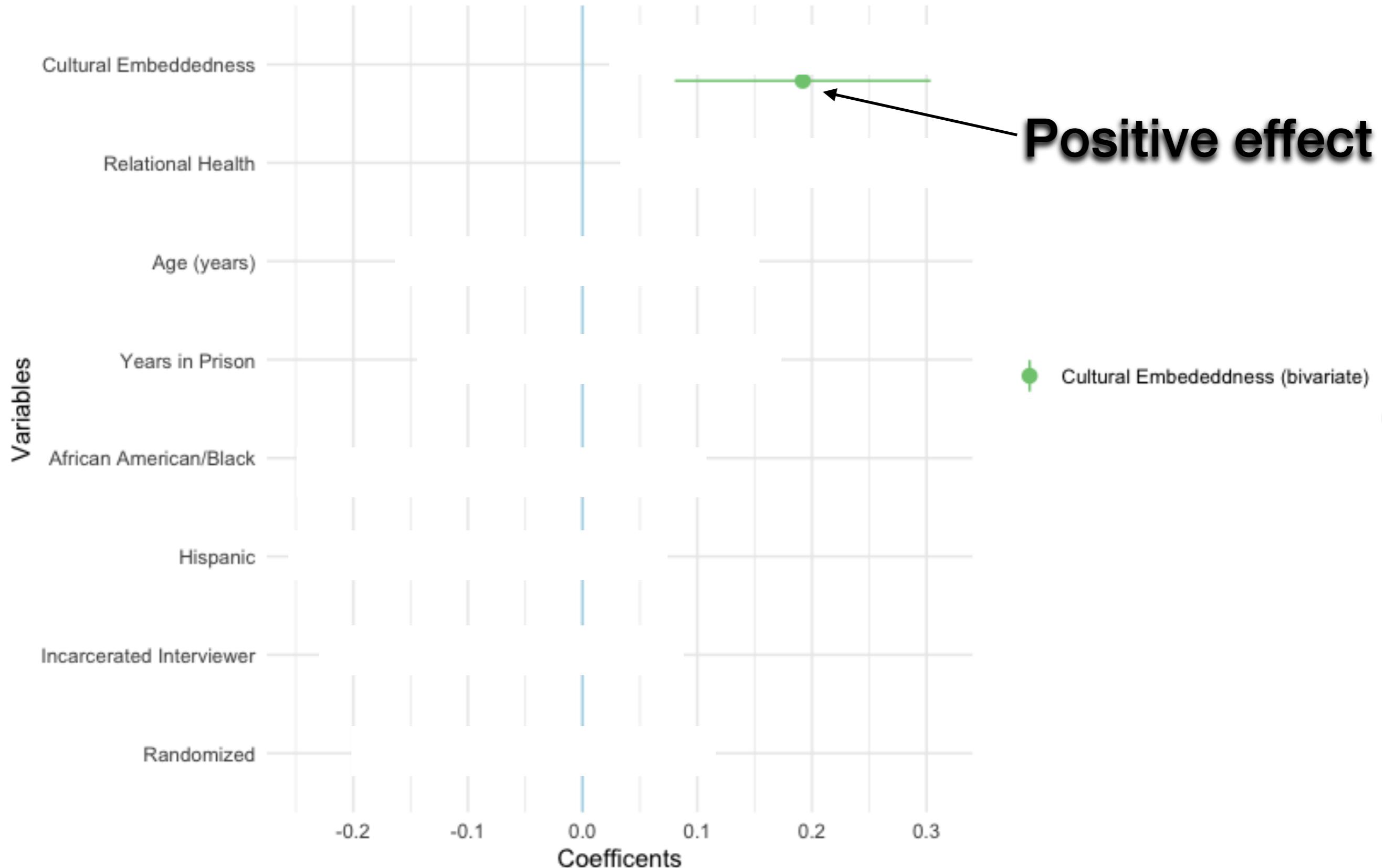
Models Predicting Relational Health



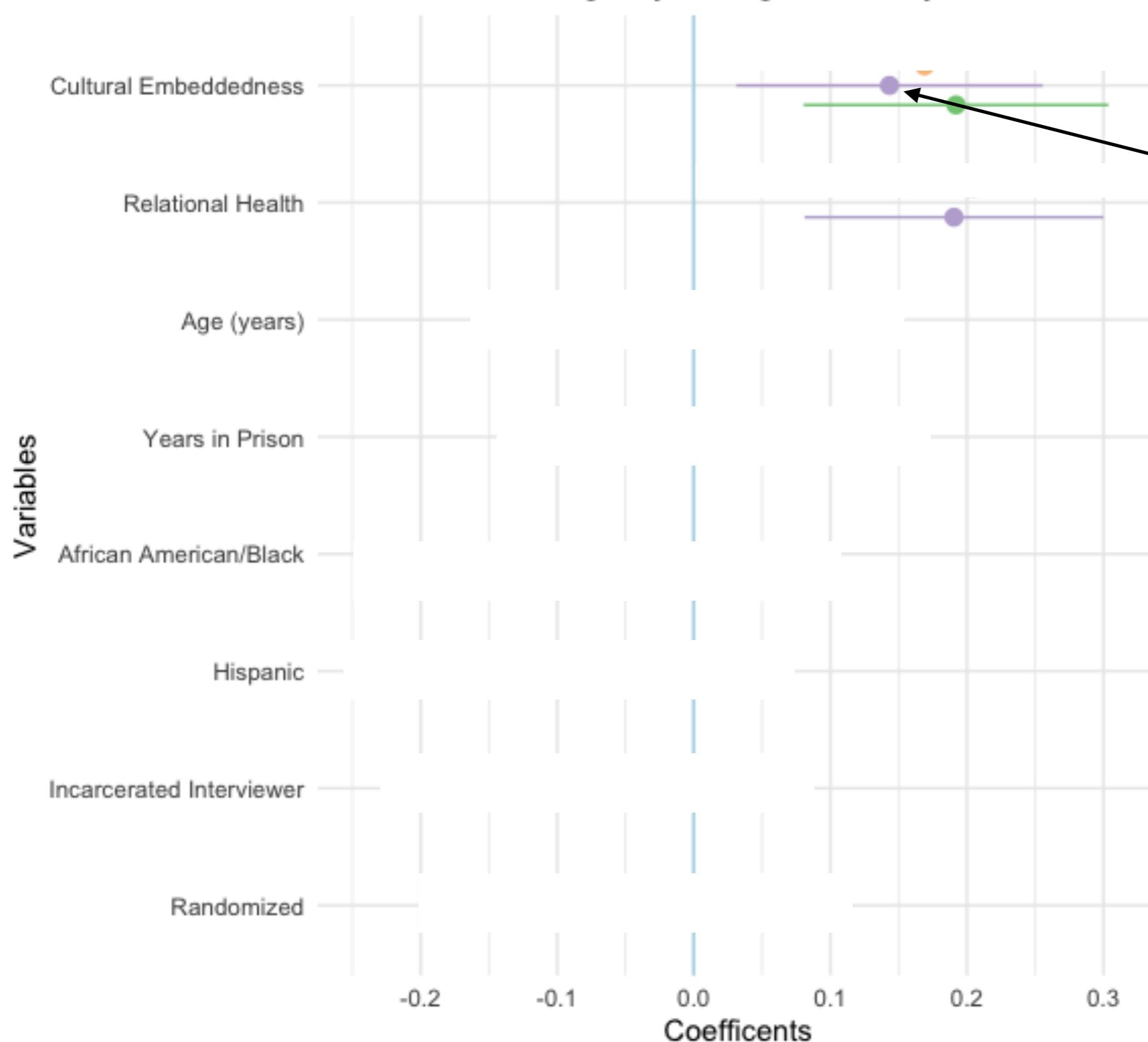
**Robust to
additional
controls**

Results: Predicting Psychological Safety

Models Predicting Psychological Safety



Models Predicting Psychological Safety



Effect declines

Captures the effect "net" of measurement overlap

- Cultural Embeddedness (bivariate)
- Model 2: Including Relational Health

Models Predicting Psychological Safety

Cultural Embeddedness

**Robust to
additional
controls**

- Cultural Embeddedness (bivariate)
- Model 2: Including Relational Health
- Model 3: Full

Relational Health

Age (years)

Years in Prison

African American/Black

Hispanic

Incarcerated Interviewer

Randomized

-0.2 -0.1 0.0 0.1 0.2 0.3

Coefficients

Variables

Discussion

- Much has been said about prison culture...
 - But, little work has been dedicated to *conceptualizing* and *operationalizing* cultural domains.
- Questions:
 - How do individuals differ in their level of cultural embeddedness?
 - How does cultural embeddedness influence women's perceptions of social relationships and programming?

Discussion

- How do individuals differ in their level of cultural embeddedness?
 - Group of "knowledgeable" individuals who largely agree with each other.
 - Another group who disagree
 - Points to *cultural heterogeneity*

Discussion

- How does cultural embeddedness influence women's perceptions of social relationships and programming?
 - More cultural embeddedness was related to more *positive*:
 - perceptions of social relationships
 - beliefs about the psychological safety of programming

Limitations

- Cultural domains are measurable, but operationalization is *hard*. Did we have enough items?
- One unit. Are these generalizable?
- Cross sectional.
 - Limits causal inference
 - Limits the questions we can ask

Thank you!

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Changing the Narrative: Racial and Ethnic Variations in Positive Interactions between Prison Staff and Incarcerated Women

Alexis Klemm, B.S.

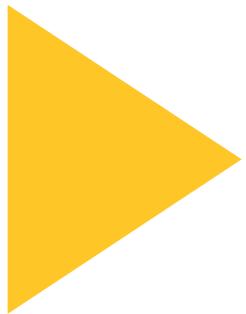
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What general themes emerge from the responses to the question “*tell me about your best experience with a staff member at this prison*”?



Are there variations in themes based on racial/ethnic identity of respondents?

Procedural Justice & Legitimacy

Perceptions of procedural justice impact the way people within the system choose to engage with the system and whether they perceive it as legitimate

(van Hall et al., 2022; Barkworth & Murphy, 2021; Reisig & Mesko, 2009)

Previous studies have looked at this nuance in staff-incarcerated interactions and perceptions of authority

(Crewe et al., 2015; Beijersbergen et al., 2015)

Effects of race on perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy

(Johnson et al., 2017; Atkin-Plunk et al., 2019; Solomon, 2019; Wheelock et al., 2019)

Instrumentality & Relationality

(Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992; Tyler, 1989; Tyler, 1997)

Data

“tell me about your best experience with a staff member at this prison”

“what would you identify as your race or ethnicity?”

- White
- Black or African American
- Hispanic
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other

Method



200 responses uploaded to Atlas.ti. All 200 responses reviewed by two graduate student coders



Each coder open-codes initial 20% of responses



Coders meet to discuss coding decisions and establish coding scheme



Each coder re-coded initial 20% of responses based on established coding scheme



Coders meet to calculate intercoder agreement



Remaining 80% of responses was split between two coders to be coded using the established coding scheme



Coders met to create thematic groupings of codes, creating major themes and subthemes

What general themes emerge?

Kindness and Support from Staff (51.5%, n=103)	Practical Assistance from Staff (31%, n=62)	Treated with Humanity and Respect (21%, n=42)	Staff Effort and Responsiveness (17%, n=34)
Concern or compassion for women (n=35)	Helpfulness from staff in general (n=23)		Staff positive attitudes and optimism (n=15)
Encouragement or emotional support from staff (n=27)	Assistance with programming or education (n=17)		Staff exceeds women's expectations (n=11)
Recognition, appreciation, or opportunities from staff (n=17)	Assistance with medical needs (n=16)		Staff professionalism and accountability (n=8)
Good communication with staff (n=10)	Assistance with finding and/or maintaining employment (n=6)		
Staff advocate or stand up for women (n=9)			
Patience from staff (n=5)			
<i>“a staff member comforted me when I had a death in the family”</i>	<i>“really helpful every day. If we need something she is there for us”</i>	<i>“treating me not like an inmate but an equal human being”</i>	<i>“upbeat, uplifting, always makes your day better especially when you’re having a bad day”</i>

Racial variations across themes – White/Non-white

Major Theme	White (n=88)	Non-white (n=112)
Kindness and Support from Staff (n=103)	53.4% (n=47)	50% (n=56)
Practical Assistance from Staff (n=62)	35.2% (n=31)	27.7% (n=31)
Treated with Humanity and Respect (n=42)	19.3% (n=17)	22.3% (n=25)
Staff Effort and Responsiveness (n=34)	19.3% (n=17)	15.2% (n=17)

Racial variations across themes – White/Hispanic

Major Theme	White (n=88)	Hispanic (n=58)
Kindness and Support from Staff (n=103)	53.4% (n=47)	43.1% (n=25)
Practical Assistance from Staff (n=62)	35.2% (n=31)	27.6% (n=16)
Treated with Humanity and Respect (n=42)	19.3% (n=17)	22.4% (n=13)
Staff Effort and Responsiveness (n=34)	19.3% (n=17)	18.9% (n=11)

Discussion

Themes relate back to these ‘instrumentality’ and ‘relationality’ models of Procedural Justice Theory

White respondents’ heightened interest in simply having their needs met

Non-white respondents’ heightened appreciation for acts that are indicative of respect and value of status

Limitations



Selection bias due to non-random sample



White/non-white is very broad



Racial identity is not inherently reflective of experiences of racial stigma and discrimination



Do not know the race of staff

Next Steps

- Plan to further collapse themes into categories of ‘relational’ and ‘instrumental’ to determine likelihood of reporting different types of support by race
 - Kindness and Support from Staff & Treated with Humanity and Respect > Relational
 - Practical Assistance from Staff & Staff Effort and Responsiveness > Instrumental
- Plan to recode race and expand race categories for analyses



2019 Inside Out Prison Exchange Program Class,
ASPC-Perryville

“A teacher in GED class had so much faith in me. He didn't push too hard, but I could tell he saw the potential in me when I didn't see it in myself. He never gave up on me.”

Thank you!

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Additional Themes

Many Positive Experiences (6%, n=12)	No Best Experience (12%, n=24)	Negative or Mixed Experiences (4.5%, n=9)	Don't Know or Skipped (2.5%, n=5)
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Full Results

	 American Indian or Alaska Native □ 10 ○ 18	 Black or African American □ 9 ○ 22	 Hispanic □ 58 ○ 126	 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander □ 1 ○ 1	 Other □ 34 ○ 77	 White □ 88 ○ 208	Totals	
 Don't Know or Skipped	2 ○ 5			2			3	5
 Kindness and Support from Staff	6 ○ 103	3	8	25	1	19	47	103
 Many Positive Experiences	1 ○ 12			3		2	7	12
 Negative or Mixed Experiences	1 ○ 9	1		4		1	3	9
 No Best Experience	1 ○ 24	2	1	9		2	10	24
 Practical Assistance from Staff	4 ○ 62	2	4	16		9	31	62
 Staff Effort and Responsiveness	3 ○ 34	1	1	11		4	17	34
 Treated with Humanity and Respect	1 ○ 42	2	3	13		7	17	42
Totals		11	17	83	1	44	135	291

Who's Asking? Participatory Action Research, Interviewer Bias, and the Production of Knowledge in Prison

**Kevin A. Wright, PhD
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Does it **matter who is asking the
question in prison research?**

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

- Power sharing
- Empowered participation
- Action
 - ...with coresearchers

“Enabling people in prison to participate in research design (including defining measurements and collecting data) can enhance findings and yield positive change by making reforms more accurate, credible, and useful.”

Farrell et al., with Fine (2021:6)
Participatory Research in Prisons
Urban Institute

Center for Correctional Solutions PAR in Arizona

- 2 Projects (2017, 2020)
 - Reducing Recidivism
 - Enhancing the Prison Environment
- Medium Security Men's Prison
- 6 Trained Interviewers
- Nearly 800 interviews completed

Haverkate et al. (2017)

On PAR with the Yard: Participatory Action Research to Advance Knowledge in Corrections
Corrections: Policy, Practice, and Research, 5(1), 28-43

“We believe answers are more honest when asked by fellow prisoners as opposed to a university researcher...Prisoners, oftentimes, portray a front to people they do not know. Our research showed 12% were homeless/couch-to-couch prior to their incarceration. If research was completed by the university researchers, we believe the numbers would be artificially less than what we found.”

Thrasher et al. (2019:20)

Reimagining Prison Research from the Inside-Out
Journal of Prisoners on Prisons, 28(1), 12-28.

“The fact that we were interviewed by fellow prisoners made it much easier to be completely honest. The interviewers spoke our language...The interviewers allowed me trust that my answers would be to “our” benefit as prisoners and not to “our” detriment.”

Shaun, as quoted in Thrasher et al. (2019:23)

Nagging Issues

Are we creating new knowledge?

Are we missing ethical concerns in taking this approach?

Does it matter who is asking the question in prison research?

Research Questions

Are we creating new knowledge?

- Do responses to trust questions vary by interviewer type?
- Do responses to open-ended questions on the prison experience vary by interviewer type?

Are we missing ethical concerns in taking this approach?

- Do responses to comfort level of interview vary by interviewer type?

	ASU (n = 80)	Incarcerated (n = 78)
Age	39.31 (11.08)	41.59 (12.32)
Children	2.45 (1.74)	2.58 (1.76)
Children < 18 years	1.39 (1.55)	1.36 (1.39)
Times to prison	1.76 (1.22)	2.13 (2.43)
Years incarcerated	5.59 (6.72)	5.41 (5.81)
Longest time incarcerated	6.46 (6.40)	6.88 (5.81)
White	39%	46%
Black	6%	4%
Hispanic	29%	32%
Other	27%	18%
Single	42%	54%
First time in prison	62%	56%
More than high school	48%	67%

Do responses to trust questions vary by interviewer type?

15 True/False questions on what trust means on the unit

14 Never – Always questions on involvement with other women

You can't talk to women on this unit about personal matters without being judged

Interviewer	Response	False	True
ASU	24 (33%)		48 (67%)
Incarcerated	35 (47%)		39 (53%)

$$\chi^2 = 2.96, p = .086$$

Do responses to open-ended questions vary by interviewer type?

	ASU (n = 80)	Incarcerated (n = 78)
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Tell me something about yourself or your life you are proud of.

Personal Growth and Resilience	72%	51%
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What is your favorite way to pass your time in here and why?

Self-Betterment & Productivity	74%	53%
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Tell me about your best experience with a member of staff

None/Negative	26%	8%
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What is the difference between an ordinary day and a great day?

Positive Environment/Tolerable Conditions	75%	42%
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Do responses to comfort level of interview vary by interviewer type?

Would you have been more comfortable completing this interview with [someone incarcerated at Cruz OR an ASU researcher]?

Do responses to comfort level of interview vary by interviewer type?

Response	Doesn't Matter	Would NOT Be More Comfortable
Interviewer		
ASU	21 (26%)	59 (74%)
Incarcerated	49 (63%)	29 (37%)
$\chi^2 = 21.40, p < .001$		

Talked to ASU, Preferred ASU

- They are not legitimate; They will share the information and antagonize
- Do not trust incarcerated women at Santa Cruz
- “They are like me”; higher respect for someone from ASU
- Fear or apprehension that answers will be discussed elsewhere
- I would've thought it was fake
- Because they judge you (incarcerated women); easy to be honest with someone that she doesn't know

Talked to Cruz, Preferred Cruz

- More comfortable with someone in orange that can relate
- Because my interviewer is an inmate & we have shared experiences, understand what it's like, an ASU person wouldn't care
- I feel like with inmates you can be more open with what happens inside of here
- Easier to talk to incarcerated women who understand
- Because I would be more comfortable with an inmate because I feel like an ASU researcher will be judgmental

Research Questions

Are we creating new knowledge?

- Do responses to trust questions vary by interviewer type?
 - No
- Do responses to open-ended questions on the prison experience vary by interviewer type?
 - No, with a few exceptions

Are we missing ethical concerns in taking this approach?

- Do responses to comfort level of interview vary by interviewer type?
 - Yes

Challenges and Implications

Sample size and composition

Context matters

- Identity
- Topic

Our work ahead...



Thrasher et al. (2019:16)

Reimagining Prison Research from the Inside-Out
Journal of Prisoners on Prisons, 28(1), 12-28.

"We strongly recommend that, if given the opportunity, every prisoner should experience the unfamiliar sensations and thought processes that come along with conducting meaningful research. For us, there exists a newfound motivation to be involved and make a difference."

Questions?