

ABSTRACT & RESEARCH FOCUS

Abstract:

Interracial romantic relationships in the United States became legal as from 1967 after the Supreme Court ruling that declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional. Since then, mixed-race marriages have increased and proliferated rapidly (Sharon & Joyner, 2011). Many psychology researchers investigated how the racial mix of partners in relationships is associated with the timing to sex cohabitation and marriage, and how these have been carried out over the years. There is evidence that involvement in interracial sexual relationships declines with increasing age among young adults (Joyner & Kao, 2005). This research study tracks and tries to explain the changing patterns of involvement in interracial and interethnic romantic relationships during the transition to adulthood using a life course perspective that highlights the role of age-graded changes in context.

Research Focus:

Interracial relationships in the United States became legal as from 1967 after the Supreme Court ruling that declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional. Since then, mixed-race marriages have increased and proliferated rapidly (Sharon & Joyner, 2011). Many psychology researchers investigated how the racial mix of partners in relationships is associated with the timing to sex cohabitation and marriage, and how these have been carried out over the years. There is evidence that involvement in interracial sexual relationships declines with increasing age among young adults (Joyner & Kao, 2005). This research study tracks and tries to explain the changing patterns of involvement in interracial romantic relationships during the transition to adulthood using a life course perspective that highlights the role of age-graded changes in context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Wilson, McIntosh, & Insana (2007) indicate that little research has been conducted on interracial dating due to American views on dating and marriage. People who interracially date are not necessarily similar to those who interracially marry. Americans tend to view marriage as a more committed, permanent relationship and view dating as short-term, non-committal, and recreational. The authors suggest that interracial dating may be more socially acceptable than interracial marriage (Wilson et al., 2007).



LITERATURE REVIEW (CONT'D)

- Lewis & Ford-Robertson (2010) reported that most interracial dating relationships occur among college students, whereas most interracial marriages are between older, previously married middle-class persons living and interacting in integrated settings. Consequently, race and ethnicity of persons involved in interracial romantic relationships are factors that may influence the progression of the relationship from dating to marriage.
- Two models served as the theoretical foundation for the present study; the Interracial Relationship Development Model (Foeman & Nance, 1999) and the Interracial Couple Relationship Success (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2010). The *Interracial Relationship Development Model* was developed in 1999 by Foeman and Nance in order to understand the formation and development of interracial couple relationships. The model specifically focuses on the development of Black/White interracial relationships taking into consideration the historical experiences of anti-miscegenation between the two racial groups in the United States. The model consists of four stages that begin at the formation of the interracial couple relationship that is racial awareness, coping, identity emergence, and maintenance. The *Interracial Couple Relationship Success* (ICRS) model uses a deductive theory building technique that adapted an existing theoretical framework to capture the unique experiences of couples in interracial relationships with a focused scope on the pathways to successful romantic outcomes (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2010).

EXPECTED RESULTS & LIMITATIONS

One of the strengths of the research is that it aims to investigate interracial and interethnic romantic relationships, their strengths, challenges and factors that have helped them to transition to marriage. This will be important in understanding experiences that are culture and racial bound that contribute to refreshing the memories of the couple in the relationship success and the strengths in overcoming challenges of the unique relationship of different races and ethnicities of the couple. In addition, the results from this study can support the creation of a new theoretical model informing interventions designed to improve relationship quality among interracial and interethnic couples.

Limitations on this study would be the unwillingness of participants to tell their story in detail and give false or misleading information. Being that talking about their relationship, some are reserved and secretive or may want to paint a picture that is not the reality of their situation in relationship. The ability of the participants to open up and feel comfortable with discussing their history would be difficult based on one's experiences with such. Another limitation is the sample, and these findings will not represent the exact percentage dynamics of the interracial and interethnic relationships in the population of the United States.