

The Perceptions of College Students About Interracial Relationships

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ABSTRACT

As America's population becomes increasingly more diverse ethnically and culturally, the opportunities for individuals of differing racial backgrounds and ethnic groups to mix interracially when engaging in romantic relationships increase also. The purpose of this study was to compare college students' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships compared to college students' perceptions of couples engaged in romantic relations with individuals of the same racial heritage. Possible effects of subject age, gender and educational level are examined as well. The research was conducted in the southwest region of the U. S., using adult college students drawn from student populations on one publicly supported, historically Black university and one private Baptist university.

The purpose of this research is to make a comparative examination of attitudes and perceptions concerning interracial dating. In total, 107 students completed the Korolewicz Interracial Dating Preference Questionnaire (K-IDPQ), an instrument designed to assess attitudes toward interracial dating. Results indicate that African Americans and those with previous interracial dating experiences were significantly more likely to express openness to becoming involved in an interracial relationship.

INTRODUCTION

In recent history, society was more likely to hold fast to social norms, with the results that racial boundaries were rarely crossed in the dating and marriage realms (Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995). Possible consequences then and now include family rejection and social ridicule. Research supports the view that the majority of the U.S. population continues to view interracial dating as a social taboo (Knox, Zusman, Buffington & Hemphill, 2000; Mills, Daly, Longmore, & Kilbride, 1995). Yet, as our society becomes more heterogeneous, interracial dating and marriage seem to be more prevalent today than ever before.

As America's population continues to become increasingly more ethnically and culturally diverse, opportunities for individuals of different racial background and ethnic groups to engage in interracial relationships increase as well (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000). The purpose of this study was to investigate college students' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships compared to college students' perceptions of couples engaged in romantic relationships with individuals of the same race/ethnicity. This study will also examine perceptual pattern related to the age, gender and educational level of respondents as well. Adult college students drawn from the graduate student populations of a publicly supported, historically Black university and one private, Baptist university served as subjects for this study.

HYPOTHESIS

The researcher anticipated that there would be a significant difference in college students' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships compared to perceptions of couples engaged in same race romantic relationships. It was further hypothesized that college students' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships would differ according to age, gender and educational level of respondents.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

One of the most salient features of anyone living in today's society is cutaneo-chroma (Hall, 1994), also referred to as skin color. Skin color may have an effect on every aspect of life, including job placement, earnings, access to education opportunities, and most importantly, interpersonal relationships (Hall, 1994). As the heterogeneity of society spreads through every facet of the world in which we live, and integration evolves in every existing

social class, the prevalence of interracial-interpersonal relationships continues to increase. A study by Harris and Kalbfleisch (2000) suggests that due to the increase in people of color in America's schools, workplace and society, the potential for interracial romantic relationships is inevitably going to rise. Research investigations into interracial friendships and romantic relationships have been numerous and document the increase of interracial relationships, including marriages (Davison & Schneider, 1992; Bingham, 1993; Qualls, et al., 1992; Mills, et al., 1995; Passet & Taylor, 1991; Sigelman & Welch, 1993). Although the majority of intimate relationships in the U.S. are intra-racial, a growing minority is choosing to become romantically involved in interracial relationships (Qualls, Cox & Schehr, 1992).

Solsberry (1994) reported that the majority of interracial romantic relationships are among college students, but most interracial marriages occur between middle class individuals who are much older and live and work within integrated environments. Additionally, Solsberry predicts that as the integration of education, work and social environments continue to grow, contact between races will increase-thus augmenting the probability of interracial romantic relationships.

African American/Anglo interracial relationships were known to exist soon after the first Africans came to America as slaves in the 17th century. Soon after, African American/Anglo marriages were outlawed in most states. Such relationships were essentially nonexistent until the Emancipation. Since then, there has been a steady increase commencing in the 1900s and continuing until today. Research efforts toward understanding why a few choose to date and marry outside their racial boundaries have resulted in two broad categories of theoretical explanations-the structural approach theory and the racial motivation theory (Kouri & Lasswell, 1993).

According to Kouri and Lasswell's (1993) structural approach theory, intimate interracial relationships increase when a community's structure endorses such unions. Structural theory suggests that people involve themselves in interracial relationships for the same reasons people enter into racially homogeneous relationships. Over the past several decades, desegregation of neighborhoods, schools and the workplace has increased the opportunity for those of different races/ethnic backgrounds to come into closer contact. Social contact has resulted in an increase in the number of intimate interracial relationships. From the structural theory point of view, as interracial relationships increase in number, society becomes less sensitive to what was once socially unacceptable to most of the population.

In opposition to the structural approach, Kouri and Lasswell (1993) report that racial motivation theory which suggests intimate interracial romantic relationships occur because of racial differences and in spite of them with indifference to racial differences. Racial motivation theory further suggests that members of opposite racial groups are attracted to one another because of their physical appeal. The racial motivation theory notes that curiosity about differences may create an increased sexual interest for some. Additionally, individuals may go against social norms as a form of rebellion or as a sign of independence. It has been suggested that some who profess independence may, in fact, be counter conformists who desire to operate against socially accepted norms.

In the past, most research on relations between African and Anglo Americans has measured perceptions through social distance (Kouri & Lasswell, 1993). However, these studies did not examine one important area of social distance, i.e., interracially romantic

relationships. Other studies have addressed social distance indirectly, dealing with wide ranges of social interaction but excluding perceptions of interpersonal relationships (Passet & Taylor, 1991). It has been suggested that society, in general, views interracial couples differently than they view couples of homogeneous racial orientation (Bingham, 1993; Mills, Daly, Longmore & Kilbride, 1995; Passet & Taylor, 1991; Sigelman & Welch, 1993; Qualls, Cox, Schehr, 1992).

Some indications in the literature that gender differences and perceptions of interracial relationships do exist, although all do not agree on the nature of that relationship. Carter (1990) found that women were less prejudiced than men toward interracial relationships. Furthermore, Passet & Taylor (1991) reported that even though women continued to be less frequently involved in this type of relationship, they rate themselves as being more tolerant of interracial romantic relationships.

Perhaps behavior is a better measure of true perceptions of interracial relationships. After all, it is much easier for people to say that interracial dating does not offend them, but avoiding such a relationship may suggest something else (Davison & Schneider, 1992). Sigelman & Welch (1993), report that there were no significant difference between the perceptions of men and women toward interracial relationships, but that African American women was more in favor than African American men, and Anglo men were much more in favor than Anglo women of interracial relationships. In other studies both men and women reported that race made a difference in determining intimate interpersonal relationships, with females reporting more negative perceptions of interracial relationships than males (Mills, Daly, Longmore, & Kilbride, 1995; Solsberry, 1994). Todd, Mckinney, Harris, Chadderton & Small (1992) also reported that men were more favorable toward interracial relationships. An American public opinion poll concluded that 51% of men and women reporting would accept a member of their family being married to someone of another ethnicity, but of that 51%, 76% stated they would not favor such a relationship (Solsberry, 1994).

It has been reported by Todd, et al., (1992) that African American women and Anglo men favor interracial relationships over the preferences of African American men and Anglo women. However, what about the differences between the two races in general? Researchers have found evidence that pointed to the idea that African Americans are significantly more receptive to interracial relationships than Anglos (Mills, Daly, Longmore, & Kilbride, 1995; Passet & Taylor, 1991). In fact, Solsberry (1994) suggests that African Americans are significantly more tolerant of these types of relationships than Anglos. Studies have shown that African Americans have a more favorable perception of interracial romantic relationships than Anglos, and more African Americans than Anglos believe interracial relationships of any degree are unacceptable to Anglos (Passet & Taylor, 1994; Todd, McKinney, Harris, Chadderton, & Small, 1992). The study by Lee, Campbell and Miller (1991) complement other research in its findings that African Americans were more favorable than Anglos toward interracial relationships. It has been reported that African Americans are almost twice (83% vs. 43%) as likely to be accepting of a relationship of this type at a significance level of ($p < .0000$) (Knox, Zusman, Buffington, & Hemphill, 2000).

One incongruity in the findings pertaining to perceptions of interracial relationships can be found in Passet and Taylor's (1991) study. They found that Anglo women have a more favorable perception of interracial relationships than African American women. Although this finding was not statistically significant, it is interesting because of the

overwhelming differences in the opposite perceptions of the two races in general. Although the acceptance of interracial romantic relationships seems to be on the rise, the level of acceptance varies to some degree across racial boundaries (Solsberry, 1994).

Research suggests there is evidence that age affects perceptions of interracial romantic relationships. Todd and others (1992), report that interracial relationships diminish with age. They also indicated that as people grow older, they are more likely to conform to social norms than in earlier years. The riots of April 1992 in Los Angeles following the Rodney King verdict affirm the contention that society has not solved its racial differences. As destruction spread through the streets and racial tensions rose, it became apparent that human behavior scientist have much work to do in developing solutions to interracial conflict (Carter, 1994). Because societal changes may be rapid, measures of perception must be kept contemporary to be useful (Lee, Campbell, & Miller, 1991).

STUDY DESIGN

With growing population numbers and some decline in disparity in socioeconomic status among different racial groups, the likelihood of couples being engaged in interracial romantic relationships is on the rise. Kouri & Lasswell, (1993) and other scholars do not agree on why couples choose to become involved in interracial relationships. However, they do agree, to some extent, that the number of intimate interracial relationships is on the rise in our nation (Qualls, Cox & Schehr, 1992). The current study was designed to investigate college students' perceptions of individuals engaged in interracial romantic relationships compared to college student's perceptions of romantic relationships of individual of the same race/ethnicity. In addition, perceptions of college students according to age, gender and educational level will be examined.

Subjects in the study were asked to fill out a short demographic sheet requesting information such as age, ethnicity, gender, and educational level. Each subject was administered the appropriate portion of the Korolewicz Interracial Dating Preference Questionnaire (K-IDPQ). The control group was given four scenarios involving couples of their own race. There are eight same race scenarios, four for each ethnic group (African Americans and Anglos), included in the study. The control group was administered so that the testing subjects were the same race/ethnicity as the subjects in the presented scenarios- this is consistent with the instrument's intended design. The experimental group was given the interracial romantic scenarios, four in all. The two groups were then compared, and the effects of ethnicity, age, gender and educational level were examined within the experimental group. In order to make the appropriate comparisons, the sum of the K-IDPQ scores from the four scenarios for each subgroup (ethnicity, gender, age, educational level) was compared.

POPULATION

The sample (N = 153) for this study was chosen based on accessibility, included students in graduate and undergraduate counseling classes to accommodate for the age aspect of this study. The ethnic breakdown of the sample included 5 Latino/Latina (2.5%), 34 Anglos (16%), 68 African Americans or 33% of the sample. Undergraduate counseling classes surveyed had 77 females (37%), and 23 males (11%). Ethnic demographics of the control group were one (1) Israeli (0.5%), 7 Latino/Latina (3.0%), 12 Asian Americans (6.0%), 59 Anglos (29%), and 21 African-Americans (10%). Subjects were randomly assigned to control group and experimental groups based on the random assignment of test scenarios.

Random ordering of tests was accomplished by numbering each of the test scenarios (103 control group tests and 104 experimental group tests), placing corresponding numbers into a container and mixing them thoroughly. As a number was drawn from the container, the test with that corresponding number was placed in order prior to administration. A same-race test scenario for both races was placed together and inconspicuously marked so that only the researcher was aware of the marking. This ensured that the control group subjects received a scenario reflecting their own race/ethnicity.

INSTRUMENT

The study was conducted utilizing the Korolewicz Interracial Dating Preference Questionnaire (K-IDPQ). The K-IDPQ is a self-report questionnaire that consists of twelve scenarios (control group receives the same race couples, four scenarios for each ethnicity-African-American and Anglo; and experimental group receives interracial romantic couples) followed by five questions after each scenario. Questions that appear after each scenario are based on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly not prefer, 2 = not prefer, 3 = prefer and 4 = strongly prefer. Korolewicz Interracial Dating Preference Questionnaire is scored by comparing the total scores of the interracial scenarios with the total scores of the intra-racial scenarios. Scores can range from + 20 to + 80. The higher the K-IDPQ score the more favorable the respondent is toward accepting the described romantic scenario.

An item analysis was conducted to establish the content validity of each question. The method used was an upper and lower index of discrimination where a D-score close to fifty percent (50%) is significant. The results of the item analysis were as follows:

Table 1
Item Analysis of the Korolewicz Interracial Dating Preference Questionnaire (K-IDPQ)

Item	D-Score
How would you feel if you were participating in this situation?	45%
How would you feel if one of your relatives was participating in this situation?	46%
How would you feel seeing two strangers in this situation?	47%
How would you feel if a friend were participating in this situation?	49%
How do you think your parents would feel if you were participating in this situation?	7%

Each D-score was derived by subtracting the percentage of subjects passing the item in the lower criterion group from the percentage of subjects passing the item in the upper criterion group. D-scores are expressed in percentages and can have values from +100 to -100.

Comparisons between perceptions of interracial dating in the experimental group and the control group were made using an independent samples t-test. Additional comparisons will be made according to age, gender and educational levels utilizing the Pearson (r) product moment correlation coefficient.

ANALYSIS

The sample for this study was 153 college students with the control group consisting of 71 and the experimental group totaling 82 subjects. The independent samples t-test compared the mean K-IDPQ score of the same-race romantic scenarios or control group ($M_1 = 63.31$, $n = 71$) with the mean K-IDPQ score of the interracial scenarios or experimental group ($M_2 = 52.62$, $n = 82$). The resulting t-score with 151 degrees of freedom was $t = -5.997$, as revealed in Table 2. This was found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level of probability, suggesting that the perceptions of college students were more favorable toward same-race scenario couples than toward interracial scenario couples. These findings are consistent with previous research and supportive of the hypothesis for this research study, which predicted a difference in perceptions toward interracially romantic couples compared to perceptions of romantic couples of the same race/ethnicity.

Table 2
Mean K-IPDQ scores comparing Control and Experimental group

Sample	n	Mean (M)
Control Group (M ₁)	71	63.31
Experimental Group (M ₂)	83	52.61
Significance		
t = -5.997*	df = (151)	p < 0.05

* indicates a significant relationship

Within the experimental group, comparisons were made between the males and females using an independent samples t-test to examine perceptions of college students toward couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships. The t-test compared the mean K-IPDQ score for females (M₁ = 52.09, n = 47) and the mean K-IPDQ score for males (M₂ = 52.18, n = 22). The resulting t-scores 67 degrees of freedom was t = .029. This was found to be statistically insignificant (p > 0.05), suggesting that male and female perceptions toward interracial couples are not significantly different. These findings did not support the hypothesis, which predicted a gender difference in the perceptions of college students.

Table 3
Mean K-IDPQ Scores Comparing Males and Females

Subgroup	n	Mean
Females (M ₁)	47	52.09
Males (M ₂)	22	52.18
Significance		
t = .029	df = (67)	p > 0.05

Comparisons were also made within the experimental group among African American subjects and Anglo subjects using an independent samples t-test to examine the perceptions of college students concerning interracial romantic relationships, as revealed in Table 4. The independent t-test compared the mean K-IDPQ score of African American subjects (M₁ = 56.91, n = 35) with the mean K-IDPQ score of Anglo subjects (M₂ = 47.18, n = 34). The resulting t-score with 67 degrees of freedom was t = 3.420, which was found to be statistically significant and suggests that African American college students' perceptions differ from those of Anglo college students toward interracial romantic couples. These

findings were supportive of the hypothesis, which predicted a difference in perceptions according to ethnicity/race; other researchers have previously reported similar results.

Table 4
Mean K-IDPQ Score by Ethnicity

Subgroup	n	Mean
African-Americans (M_1)	35	56.91
Anglos (M_2)	34	47.18
Significance $t = 3.420^*$	$df = (67)$	$p < 0.05$

* indicates a significant relationship

Comparisons were made within the experimental group among African American males and African American female college students using an independent t-test to examine their perceptions concerning interracial romantic relationships. The t-test compared the K-IDPQ score of African American males ($M_1 = 57.62$, $n = 12$) with the mean score of African American females ($M_2 = 56.39$, $n = 23$). The resulting t-score with 33 degrees of freedom was $t = .312$, as revealed in Table 5. This was found to be statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$) suggesting that African American males and African American females perceptions toward interracial couples are not significantly different. The findings did not support the hypothesis, which predicted a difference in perceptions according to ethnicity and gender, but are consistent with the literature.

Table 5
Mean K-IDPQ Score of African American Males Compared to African American Females

Subgroup	n	Mean
African American Males (M_1)	12	57.92
African American Females (M_2)	23	56.39
Significance $t = .312$	$df = (33)$	$p > 0.05$

Additional comparisons were made within the experimental group among Anglo males and Anglo females using an independent t-test to make comparisons of perceptions of couples engaged in interracial relationships. The independent t-test score for Anglo males ($M_1 = 45.30$, $n = 10$) was compared to K-IDPQ scores for Anglo females ($M_2 = 47.96$, $n = 24$). The resulting t-score with 32 degrees of freedom was a t-score of $(-.720)$, as revealed in

Table 6. This was found to be statistically insignificant, suggesting that Anglo males and Anglo females have perceptions of interracial couples that are very similar. The findings did not support the hypothesis, which predicted a difference in perceptions according to ethnicity and gender. Several previous research studies have concluded that Anglo males have a more favorable perception of interracial dating than Anglo females.

Table 6
Mean K-IDPQ Score of Anglo Males Compared to Anglo Females

Subgroup	n	Mean
Anglo Males (M_1)	10	45.30
Anglo Females (M_2)	24	47.96
Significance $t = -.720$	$df = (32)$	$p > 0.05$

Comparisons were also made between African American males and Anglo males using an independent samples t-test to measure perceptions of interracial couples. Mean K-IDPQ scores were compared for African American males ($M_1 = 57.92$, $n = 12$) with the mean scores of Anglo males ($M_2 = 45.30$, $n = 10$). The resulting t-score, (2.228) with 20 degrees of freedom is revealed in Table 7. This was found to be statistically significant, suggesting that African-American males' perceptions of interracial couples differed significantly from the perceptions of Anglo males concerning interracial couples. These findings did support the hypothesis, which predicted a difference in perceptions of interracial couples according to race/ethnicity and gender. Research studies in this area are inconsistent, as some report that African American males have a more favorable perception of interracial dating, while other scholars suggest that Anglo males have a higher rate of favoritism toward interracial dating.

Table 7
Mean K-IDPQ Score Comparing African American Males and Anglo Males

Subgroup	n	Mean
African American Males (M_1)	12	57.92
Anglo Males (M_2)	10	45.30
Significance $t = 2.228^*$	$df = (20)$	$p < 0.05$

* indicates a significant relationship.

Additional comparisons were made within the experimental group between African American females and Anglo females. Mean K-IDPQ scores for African American females ($M_1 = 56.39$, $n = 23$) perceptions were compared to Anglo females ($M_2 = 47.96$, $n = 24$). The resulting t-score with 45 degrees of freedom was $t = 2.545$, as shown in Table 8. This was found to be statistically significant, suggesting that African-American females' perceptions of interracial couples differed significantly from those of Anglo females. These findings did support the hypothesis, which predicted a difference in perceptions concerning interracial couples related to ethnicity and gender.

Further subgroup comparisons were also made within the experimental group between African American females and Anglo males. Mean K-IDPQ scores for African American females ($M_1 = 56.39$, $n = 23$) perceptions were compared to Anglo males ($M_2 = 45.30$, $n = 10$). The resulting t-score with a degrees of freedom 31 was $t = 2.724$, as shown in Table 9. This was found to be statistically significant suggesting that African American females perceptions of interracial couples differed significantly from the perceptions of Anglo males concerning interracial couples. The findings did provide additional support for the hypothesis, which predicted a difference in perceptions concerning interracial couples related to ethnicity and gender.

Table 8
Mean K-IDPQ Scores Comparing African American Females and Anglo Females

Subgroup	n	Mean
African American females (M_1)	23	56.39
Anglo females (M_2)	24	47.96
Significance $t = 2.545^*$	df = (45)	$p < 0.05$

* indicates a significant relationship.

Further subgroup comparisons were also made within the experimental group between Anglo females and African American males. Mean K-IDPQ scores for Anglo females ($M_1 = 47.96$, $n = 24$) perceptions were compared to African American males ($M_2 = 57.92$, $n = 12$). The resulting t-score with a degrees of freedom of 34 was $t = - 2.546$, as revealed in Table 10. This was found to be statistically significant; suggesting that Anglo female's perceptions of interracial couples differed significantly from the perceptions of African American males concerning interracial couples. The findings did provide additional support for the hypothesis, which predicted a difference in perceptions concerning interracial couples according to race and gender.

Table 9
Mean K-IDPQ Scores Comparing African American Females and Anglo Males

Subgroup	n	Mean
African American females (M ₁)	23	56.39
Anglo males (M ₂)	10	45.30
Significance t = 2.724*	df = (31)	p < 0.05

* indicates a significant relationship.

Table 10
Mean K-IDPQ Scores Comparing Anglo Females and African American Males

Subgroup	n	Mean
Anglo females (M ₁)	24	47.96
African American males (M ₂)	12	57.92
Significance t = - 2.546*	df = (34)	p < 0.05

* indicates a significant relationship.

A Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the degree of relationship between level of education and K-IPDQ scores within the experimental group. The correlation coefficient between the level of education and K-IDPQ scores was determined to be $r = .044$, with $n = 82$. This result would suggest an insignificant relationship with little or no predictive value between the educational level variable and K-IDPQ scores within the experimental group. A second Pearson (r) was also used to determine the degree of relationship between age and K-IDPQ scores within the experimental group of the sample. The Pearson coefficient between age and K-IDPQ scores was determined to be $r = -.049$, again suggesting an insignificant relationship with little or no predictive value between the variables age and K-IDPQ scores within the experimental group. The result of Pearson's analysis of K-IDPQ scores is displayed in Table 11.

Table 11
Pearson (r) Correlation Coefficient of K-IPDQ Age and Education Level

Variable	Pearson (r) score
Level of education	r = .044
Age	r = .049

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate college students' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships compared to college student's perceptions of couples engaged in romantic relationships of the same race/ethnicity. This study also examined whether the perceptions of college students concerning interracial romantic relationships are significantly impacted by demographic variables such as age, gender and educational levels. The study was conducted utilizing the Korolewicz Interracial Dating Preference Questionnaire (K-IDPQ). The K-IDPQ is a self-reporting questionnaire that consists of twelve scenarios (control group receives the same race couples, four scenarios for each ethnicity-African American and Anglo; experimental group receives interracial romantic couples followed by five questions after each scenario).

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in college students' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships compared to college students' perceptions of couples engaged in romantic relationships of the same race/ethnicity. Perceptions of those from different age groups, educational levels and genders toward interracial romantic couples were also expected to differ significantly.

Based on the results of the K-IDPQ scores, comparisons of the subgroups within the experimental group, and Pearson's coefficients conclusions about this study's experimental group can be drawn. Most prominently, this research discovered that there is a significant difference in college students' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships compared to college students' perceptions of couples engaged in same race/ethnicity relationships. This conclusion is consistent with a majority of the literature, which suggests that African Americans are more favorable or tolerant of these types of relationships (Solsberry, 1994; Passet & Taylor, 1994; Todd, McKinney, Harris, Chadderton, & Small, 1992; Lee, Campbell & Miller, 1991).

An important finding of this study was the significant difference between African American and Anglo perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships. Previous research has shown that African Americans have a more favorable perception of interracial relationships than Anglos as reported by Mills, Daly, Longmore, & Kilbride, (1995) and Passet and Taylor (1991). Knox, Zusman, Buffington & Hemphill (2000)

reported that African Americans are twice as likely to be accepting of interracial relationships ($p < .0000$). Lee, Campbell and Miller (1991) had complementary finding that African Americans were more accepting of interracial romance than were Anglos. There was a significant difference in perceptions of African American males and Anglo males with regard to individuals engaged in interracial relationships. African American males had a significantly more favorable perception of interracial romantic couples than did Anglo males.

The research findings by Todd, McKinney, Harris, Chadderton, & Small, (1992) revealed a significant difference in African American females and Anglo female's perception of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships, with African American females more accepting than Anglo females. This supports the current research finding of a significant difference between African American females and Anglo females, with African American females having a more favorable perception of couples in interracial romantic relationships. However, Passet and Taylor's (1991) study had contrary conclusions, finding Anglo women to have a more favorable perception of interracial relationship than African American women.

The results of this study concluded that there was a significant difference between African American females and Anglo male's perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationship. There was a significant difference in Anglo females and African American male's perception of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships. These findings are consistent with other research findings that have noted that African American women and Anglo men favor interracial relationships over the preferences of African American men and Anglo women (Todd, McKinney, Harris, Chadderton, & Small, 1992; Solsberry, 1994; Passet & Taylor, 1994).

This research study determined that there was not a significant difference in the perceptions of males versus female with regard to interracial romantic relationships. There was no significant difference between African American males' and African American females' perceptions of individuals engaged in interracial relationships. There was no significant difference between Anglo males' and Anglo females' perceptions of couples engaged in interracial romantic relationships. This finding would support the research of Sigelman and Welch (1993) when they concluded that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of men and women toward interracial relationship. However, findings by Mills, Daly, Longmore, & Kilbride, (1995) and Solsberry (1994) suggested women had more negative perceptions of interracial relationships than did men. Todd, McKinney, Harris, Chadderton and Small (1992) also reported that men were more favorable toward interracial relationships than were women.

This research data determined there was no significant relationship between this sample's level of education and their perceptions of interracial romantic couples. This conclusion would be inconsistent with findings of Solsberry (1994) where it was reported that most interracial marriages occur between middle-class individuals who are much older than college students, and live and work in multicultural environments. This finding would lead to the assumption that educational level would be a significant variable because it is educational level that most greatly impact earning potential and socioeconomic status. Perhaps, it may be as described by Harris and Kalbfleisch (2000), who suggest that

interracial relationships are due to increase because people of color in this country have increased.

There is some evidence in the literature that points to age affecting perceptions of interracial romantic relationships. Todd and colleagues (1992) found that individual perceptions of interracial relationships diminish with age. However, Solsberry (1994) reported that the majority of interracial romantic relationships are among college students. Therefore, this study's finding that there was no significant relationship between college student's age and their perceptions of interracial romantic couples is validated.

There are several things we have learned about interracial romantic couples. First, there has been some increase in the numbers, but the number of interracial couples is still quite small. Second, there is still substantial evidence that race plays a significant factor in the formation of interracial couples, particularly on college campuses. Finally, individuals involved in an interracial relationship do so for reasons based on love and affection rather than exploitation of another.

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