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# Perceptions of interethnic dating among college students

Elisaida Mendez

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PERCEPTIONS OF INTERETHNIC DATING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Elisaida Méndez

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Psychology

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Logan, Utah

2013

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**ABSTRACT**

## Perceptions of Interethnic Dating Among College Students

by

Elisaida Méndez, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2013

Major Professor: Melanie M. Domenech Rodríguez, Ph.D.  
Department: Psychology

This study intended to examine the demographic variables of gender, ethnicity, income, and the perception of success in interethnic/interracial couples. The Interethnic Couples Resource Questionnaire (ICREQ) was created and administered to 153 college students in a predominantly White campus. Other measures administered were the Modern Racism Scale and the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure. A pilot with Latino/a-White couples on the ICREQ revealed ethnicity not as a variable of interest among 32 college students surveyed. Additional ethnicities were added in the main study. Findings revealed, as in the pilot study, that income was the only significant variable in perception of success. A partial correlation analysis controlling for age revealed no changes in the relationship between income combinations and the Modern Racism Scale. Previous dating history did not moderate the relationship between perceived success across income pairings. The relationship between modern racism and perceived success also remained significant across three of the four income groups. Partial correlations by gender,

residential region, and parents' education did not reveal any relationship between modern racism and ratings based on income combinations. Limitations, recommendations, and implications are discussed.

(103 pages)

## **PUBLIC ABSTRACT**

### Perceptions of Interethnic Dating Among College Students

by

Elisaida Méndez, Doctor of Philosophy

Utah State University, 2013

The Department of Psychology at Utah State University proposed to examine the intersection of demographic variables. This phenomenon was studied in the context of power differential in relationships under the framework of social exchange theory and a racial hierarchy. The study examined the role of ethnicity, income, and gender in status and power balances in the perception of success of dating relationships. Social exchange theory explains the exchange of traits or resources in interpersonal relationships and relationship formation and based on a racial or ethnic hierarchy, race or ethnicity is seemingly overlooked when considering other valued traits.

The Interethnic Couples Resource Exchange Questionnaire (ICREQ) was created to assess the perception of success of interethnic and monoethnic dating couples considering the interplay of differences in income, gender, and ethnicity. The ICREQ consisted of 16 different couples scenarios. Each scenario reflected a different exchange level and was rated on a Likert scale by college students. Ratings were based on student's perception of the couple's likelihood to succeed as determined by their respective exchange and balance levels. The purpose of the study was to look at the perception of success of interethnic couples through the lens of the social exchange theory.

Findings showed no support for the theory. Income was the only variable found to play a role in the perception of success. Other analyses were conducted between the ICREQ and the Modern Racism scale and the Multi Ethnic Identity Measure. Age revealed no changes in the relationship between income combinations and the modern racism scale. Previous dating history made no difference in the relationship between perceived success across income pairings. The relationship between modern racism and perceived success also remained significant across three of the four income groups. Gender, residential region, and parents' education did not reveal any relationship between modern racism and ratings based on income combinations.

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Elisaida Méndez

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Interethnic relationships have been a controversial topic for many years. They are also relatively ubiquitous, occurring in a variety of settings such as work, neighborhoods, and schools. Such interpersonal relations have been on the rise given the growth of the diverse Latinos in the continental US, particularly in urban settings. Five US regions (Hawaii, DC, California, New Mexico, and most recently Texas) have a majority-minority population, where ethnic minorities represent more than 50% of the population (US Census, 2010a). A specific instance of interethnic relationship is interethnic marriage. Rates of intermarriage across ethnic groups are on the rise, as is the number of multiethnic children in the US. This trend is particularly noteworthy among Latinos, the fastest growing Latino group in the US, who have interethnic marriage trends above unions between Blacks and Whites (Lee & Edmonston, 2006).

It is important to clarify the meaning of the words “interethnic” and “interracial.” In this study, interethnic represents the combination of two different ethnicities in a couple and interracial represents the combination of two different races. The US Census Bureau complies with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) by presenting race as a reflection of social definitions in the context of the US country. Therefore, the definition of race in the US Census does not represent genetic, biological, or anthropological criteria. Furthermore, the US Census provides ethnic categories in accord with the OMB, where ethnicity is defined as “the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person, or the person’s parents or ancestors before their arrival in

the United States” (US Census Bureau, 2000, p. 2). They indicated that those who identify as having Spanish origin or who identify as Latino/a or Hispanic can be of any race (US Census Bureau, 2000). For purposes of this study, the terms of race and ethnicity will overlap in their use as they denote differences among the various groups.

The racial categories used by the Census 2000 and Census 2010b in accordance with the OMB are five (White alone, Black or African American alone, American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Asian alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone). A sixth category was added in the year 2000 to include “Some Other Race.” While these are the “alone” categories, other 57 possible combinations of these races are utilized by federal agencies in compliance with the OMB (US Census Bureau, 2010b).

The following are the specific racial and ethnic definitions endorsed by the US Census Bureau in accordance with the OMB standards:

Latinos/Hispanic: “Refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race” (US Census Bureau, 2010b, p. 2).

Blacks/African American: “Refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups from Africa. It includes people who indicated their race(s) as ‘Black, African American, or Negro’, or reported entries such as African American, Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian” (US Census Bureau, 2010b, p. 3).

American Indians or Alaskan Natives: “Refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation indigenous people who maintain tribal affiliation or community

attachment. This category includes people who indicated their race(s) as “American Indian or Alaska Native” or reported their enrolled or principal tribe, such as Navajo, Blackfeet, Inupiat, Yup’ik, or Central American Indian groups or South American Indian groups.” (US Census Bureau, 2010b, p. 3)

Asian: “Refers to a person having origin in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including for example , Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. It includes people who indicated their race(s) as “Asian” or reported entries such as “Asian Indian,” “Chinese,” “Filipino,” “Korean,” “Japanese,” “Vietnamese,” and “Other Asian” or provided other detailed Asian responses.” (US Census Bureau, 2010b, p. 3)

White: “Refers to a person having origins in the peoples of Europe the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicated their race(s) as “White or reported entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, or Caucasian” (US Census Bureau, 2010b, p. 3).

The 2010 US Census reported an increase in individuals who identify being of two or more races (US Census Bureau, 2010c). In the previous ten years, persons with two or more races represented 2.4% of the population (6.8 million people; US Census Bureau, 2000); whereas, in 2010, 3% of the population (9 million people) reported being of two or more races (US Census Bureau, 2010c).

The sociopolitical landscape is changing along with demographics, and there is evidence in multiple domains. Most notably, the 2008 election of the first Black president

in the US may be evidence not only of changing times but also of changing attitudes. Some believe that changing attitudes, regardless of causal direction, favor interracial romantic relationships, thus implying a gradual weakening of racial boundaries (Kang Fu, 2001), greater assimilation (Anderson & Saenz, 1994; George & Yancey, 2004), and consequently increased equality for all ethnicities (George & Yancey, 2004). Race is taken in consideration at conscious and unconscious levels encompassing cognitive processes, personal and collective motivations, and sociocultural influences (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991). Racism, and opposition to interethnic unions, exist and reflect modern ways of racist expressions (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991). In search of balance between two people with different resources, ethnicity or race may represent a less salient feature in the process of social exchange, thus, facilitating the formation of interethnic/interracial couples without much apparent significance on race or ethnicity.

Using interethnic unions as a parameter to measure racial and ethnic boundaries is dubious since various resources in the process of mate selection may lessen the impact of the minority or majority status as a factor in consideration. An example of a contributing factor in lessening the impact of race or ethnicity would include socioeconomic status (SES). In particular, social exchange theory stipulates that racial boundaries exert influence when selecting an interethnic partner (Kang Fu, 2001) because race can represent status (Rytina, Blau, Blum, & Schwartz, 1988), either high status (members of the White population) or low status (members of ethnic or racial minority groups). Kang Fu (2001) referred to this concept as the racial hierarchy, where according to his study, Mexican Americans and Blacks were at the bottom of the hierarchy and Whites were at

the top. Being at the top of the hierarchy would denote more status and therefore, more desirability in partner selection (Kang Fu, 2001). As such, changes in broader socio-political areas do not necessarily imply changes in micro-social contexts such as couples.

Interethnic dating is different than interethnic marriage (Firmin & Firebaugh, 2008). Firmin and Firebaugh suggested that people are more likely to date rather than marry someone outside their ethnic group, that is, people are less likely to marry exogamously. Individuals have a tendency to find long-term partners homogamously, which is with others who share similar qualities to the ones they possess, regardless of ethnicity (Knox, Zusman, & Nieves, 1997). Knox and colleagues may be appealing to the notion of individuals seeking people who share similar values and goals. However, according to Firmin and Firebaugh, age and generation are important contexts to understand these dynamics, as younger people of more recent generations are more accepting of interethnic dating and marriage than older people. Interestingly, George and Yancey (2004) found that older people were more prone to favor the creation of a common culture, thus, reducing multiculturalism. Taking education into account, the tendency of finding commonalities among other individuals, would lean towards promoting multiculturalism by preserving unique cultures (George & Yancey, 2004) and the more likely they would have attended a multiracial institution (Yancey, 2002). Therefore, it is important to examine dating and marriage separately, as well as take into account important demographic factors in testing social exchange theory such as gender and SES.

Historical opposition to interethnic relationships varies from region to region,

generation to generation, and person to person. As all the factors come into play, theories have tried to explain the formation of interethnic relationships. Among the theoretical frames that explain how interethnic relationships are formed is the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976). Emerson contended that the social exchange theory was a frame of reference against which different social theories can be compared. Social exchange theory has been extensively used in economics and explained by sociologists in multiple ways and contexts (Ballinger & Rockman, 2010; Cropanzano, Chen, & Prehar, 2002). However, Emerson proposed that exchange relations could be analyzed as units as opposed to examining behaviors and decisions on an individual basis. Therefore, the focus of this study lies in Emerson's contention that social interactions are concerned with identity and presentations of self as commodities. Stemming from this view, such social commodities or resources are susceptible to acquisitions or losses through negotiation exchanges. Since the early conceptions of this framework, Emerson (1976) argued that this process is sustained and the theory solidified contingent upon the resources granting some form of reward or reinforcers.

Contrary to this approach is the tendency to pair up with those of similar values, way of life, attitudes, and worldviews. Homogamous tendencies (mating of like with like), thus compete with the social exchange theory where implied differences that create inequities are negotiated and which are contingent upon the social structures (Rytina et al., 1988). Social exchange theory supports the occurrence of exchange of resources between people when matching of similarities does not occur in potential mates or partners. In mate selection, relevant resources of self-presentation and identity,

considered for a match or mismatch, would include ethnicity or race, phenotype, gender proportion, SES, prestige, education, and physical attractiveness among other demographical factors.

Kang Fu (2001) suggested that racial inequalities prevail even for people who intermarry. He described a racial hierarchy where Whites are the preferred group to marry, followed by Asians, and ending with Blacks and Mexican Americans as the least preferred groups for spouses. Under the social exchange lens, a Latino or Black person would need to bring a high valued characteristic (e.g., high income, prestige) to intermarry with a White person. This valued characteristic or resource would serve as compensation for their low racial status in exchange for their White partner's high racial status. In general, the magnitude of these differences challenge homogamous tendencies and when social structures do not lend themselves to facilitate this process, individuals look outside their common pool of resources to look for a mate, thus, facilitating the development of interethnic relations.

Given the competing dynamics in power of an evolving society, social exchange attempts to explain how different social forces move to create balance in power. Nevertheless, there are mixed results based on ethnic combination. Fu (2008) found that couples whether they marry within or outside their ethnic group, display equal status where no exchange took place. Previous and more recent studies have found support for the social exchange theory when the male partner was Black and the female was White (Schoen & Wooldredge, 1989), but not vice versa where social class would be about equal for both partners (Gadberry & Dodder, 1993; Gullickson & Kang Fu, 2010) or

higher for the woman than for the man (Monahan, 1971). Analysis from the US Census 1980, 1990, and 2000 revealed partial support for social exchange theory when the man is Black and the woman is White (Gullikson, 2006). On another study at a diverse campus, White college students showed preference in close relationships towards Mexican Americans and Blacks over Asian Americans (Chen, Edwards, Young, & Greenberger, 2001), a finding that contradicts the social exchange theory.

Limited research exists documenting perception towards interethnic relationships in present time, particularly from the perspective of college students. The purpose of this study is to look at the attitudes of college students towards interethnic relationships, considering other heterogeneous factors such as SES that challenge homogamous tendencies, and to see if such factors fall in accord with the social exchange and racial hierarchy frameworks. Secondly, this study intends to examine how attitudes toward interethnic relationships predict individual dating behaviors.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The present review will cover several aspects of interethnic and interracial relationships. It will describe past and present conditions and theoretical formulations that are considered to play a role in the development of interracial relationships. The review will focus on: (a) prevalence and historical context of interethnic dating and marriage relationships, (b) the role the history of inequities have had on the development of a socio-racial hierarchy, (c) the concept of a racial hierarchy, and (d) theories that attempt to explain the formation interethnic couples including the social exchange theory, and the characteristics that typify those who interracially date. The purpose of this review is to delineate the nature of racial contentions and agreements that have led to the social and personal traits of partner selection based on in-group or out-group preference, ethnicity, and SES.

#### **Prevalence**

Despite their formal prohibition and informal opposition, interethnic marriages have taken place throughout the centuries. Some mixed couples faced negative legal consequences here in the US. Officially, Maryland took the initiative in 1661 to ratify the first legal document forbidding members of different races to engage in sexual, conjugal, or marital relationship (Moran, 2001). This statute was enforced until 1924 throughout the US, after which some states either overturned or upheld it until 1967. Although many states targeted this ban toward Black and White unions, other states specified other ethnic

groups such as Asians. Thirty-eight states enacted antimiscegenation laws against Black and White unions, 14 states specified the prohibition against Asians and Whites, and seven states were against American Indians and White unions (Moran, 2001). Sixteen states up until 1967 had antimiscegenation laws. These were: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia (Organization of American Historians, 2010). This wide-ranging disapproval of interracial relationships has persisted in time as also seen through family schemes attempting to deter a member from marrying exogamously (Kalmijn, 1998). For example, relatives would play matchmaker or threat to withdraw financial support in an attempt to exert some influence over partner choices (Kalmijn, 1998).

The practice of endogamy, which is the tendency to marry within a specific group as required by custom or law, varies in prevalence across different ethnic groups. In the year 2000, Latinos' intermarriage was 14% of their population and had remained stable during the past decades (Lee & Edmonston, 2006). Based on past research, Kalmijn (1998) reported that Latinos and Blacks tend to marry within their respective ethnic group at prevalence rates of 65% and 85%, respectively. Although Asians tend to marry Whites, about 75% of these Asian subgroups marry endogamously (Kalmijn, 1998). American Indians are estimated to have the lowest rates of endogamy with 33% reported in 1998, 43% in 2000, and 45% in 2006 (Kalmijn, 1998; Lee & Edmonston, 2006; Waters, 2000). On the other hand, Blacks more often remain endogamous at 93% (Lee & Edmonston, 2006) and 95% (Waters, 2000). Last, approximately 25% of Whites marry

exogamously (Kalmijn, 1998). Different rates have been reported for Whites.

For Whites, the distinction between interethnic and interracial is significantly marked. When of the same race but with different cultures and nationalities, their intermarriage rate is over 50%; when of different race, it is 2% (Gaines & Leaver, 2002). Consistent with the reported low occurrence, Levin, Taylor, and Caudle (2007) noted that Whites date less frequently than other ethnic groups outside their racial group. While different rates have been reported through time, group's prevalence has remained in the same frequency order. Latinos intermarry more often than Black, and less often than other smaller ethnic groups such as Asians and American Indians (Lee & Edmonston, 2006). Nevertheless, studies conducted to date do not suffice to present a sound understanding of the grounds, effects, and progression of interethnic relationships. Despite this greater prevalence of interethnic relationships in other ethnic groups, the majority of research in this area is conducted with Black-White couples. The facts gathered based on Black and White relationships, limit the scope of applicable findings.

The 2010b US Census reported a decrease in the White population from 69% to 64% of the total population. While only 5% of the total population were Asian, Asians represented the fastest growing population and increased in numbers from 10.2 million (2000) to 14.7 million (2010). American Indians comprised 0.9% of the total population and Latinos and Blacks represented 16% and 13%, respectively, of the total population. Latinos represented more than half of the growth of the total US population since 2000. There were 3% who self-identified more than one race, a population that presumably represents the product of interethnic/interracial unions.

## Historical Opposition

Historically, in the US, Blacks have suffered the most severe oppression, as partially evidenced by the banning of Black-White interracial marriage in at least 27 states until 1967, with legal consequences of imprisonment or hard labor (Farrel, 2010). Initially, before any antimiscegenation laws were established, the state of Virginia would publicly humiliate those who participated in interracial sexual intimacies during the 1600s. Those found guilty not only had to pay court charges, but could also stand in public with a rod in their hands, do penance in church, and some were whipped.

Punishments changed over the years. For example, in the case of *Pace v. Alabama* in 1883, the Supreme Court upheld the anti-miscegenation statute as constitutional. Tony Pace, a Black man, and Mary J. Cox, a White woman, were sentenced to 2 years in jail on the basis of adultery or fornication. It was lawful to impose greater punishment for couples involving a Black person than for couples consisting of “any man and a woman” (U.S. Supreme Court, 2008). In 1948, the case of *Perez v. Sharp* (a Latino-White couple case) denoted the movement in favor of individual freedom and right to marry someone regardless of race. In the state of California, this case served to end the ban of interethnic marriages by concluding that these laws were unconstitutional, in opposition to racial equality and to the right to select a spouse with personal autonomy (Moran, 2001). However, in other states, the illegal status of such unions remained until 1967 when the *Loving v. Virginia* case (a Black-White couple), as ruled by the Supreme Court, ended the ban based on its discriminatory standpoint on race. It was considered a violation of equal protection (Moran, 2001). The law here overturned mentioned unions with also

Mongolians, Malay, and Mulattoes, thus implying that such unions were an occurrence during those times.

Maryland was the first state to declare an anti-miscegenation statute in 1661 (U.S. Government, 2007). Virginia declared its first miscegenation law 30 years later. This law stated: “whatsoever English or other white man or woman being free shall intermarry with a negroe, mulatto, or Indian man or woman bond or free shall within three months after such marriage be banished and removed from this dominion forever....” (Library of Congress, n.d., para. 7). This section of the law with its amendments remained in force until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967). It was not until 1967 that the state of Virginia’s Supreme Court, overturned such legal prohibition with all its amendments, thus precipitating all remaining states to do the same (Riley, 2010). Thirty-eight states enacted antimiscegenation laws against Black and White unions, 14 states specified the prohibition against Asians and Whites, and seven states were against American Indians and White unions (Moran, 2001). These laws served to draw boundaries between the free and the slaves, Whites and Blacks, and to maintain Blacks in their ascribed diminished status. This helped establish the racial hierarchy particularly when racial ambiguity threatened the status quo, the social order (Moran, 2001). While records of other racial groups (e.g., Native Americans) with Whites are lost and the documents refer to Black and White unions, the occurrence of these other interracial unions is reflected in the laws that sanctioned these unions (Riley, 2010). As immigration took form of several generations, the newer generations of immigrant workers were placed above Asian

Americans and Blacks, and below Whites (Wildman & Davis, 2005). Particularly the Irish were considered “non-Whites” (Wildman & Davis, 2005), thus denoting different levels of status.

In addition to states’ sanctions, religious and educational institutions have discouraged these types of unions to the point that they were seen in the past as taboo by society and family members (Gaines & Leaver, 2002). Persecution from different sources has defined the course our societal structure with such opposition encompassing multiple ethnic minority groups as they gradually have become part of the American social network. Consequently, people may feel constrained to freely choose a partner of a different race without judgment and negative consequences such as disapproval from friends, threats of withdrawing financial or emotional support from family members, or religious condemnation (Kalmijn, 1998). Therefore, it is important to examine the specific experiences of members of diverse ethnic and racial groups so that their experiences can be documented and understood both as a social phenomenon, and also for psychologists and other mental health providers who use social exchange theory as a conceptual framework to understand the interethnic couples with whom they work.

### **Racial Hierarchy**

The concept of racial hierarchy can be traced back to colonial times (Taylor, 2004). Descriptions of indigenous populations by Whites as savage and inferior, led to the pervasive notion of having a racial mark, which signified an enduring trait of inferiority (Taylor, 2004). This attribution transferred to other ethnic minority groups

thus, creating negative schemas for different ethnic groups as a whole in people's minds. These easily observed, blatant forms of discrimination have diminished considerably; their presence is still felt if in more underhanded circumstances (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991). There are still modern-day examples. For example, the publication of "The Bell Curve" by Herrnstein and Murray (1994) led to much controversy surrounding the authors' presentation of their material around intellectual differences across racial groups as blatantly racist. Dovidio and Gaertner (2004) described the attitudes that White people had towards Black people as stemming from the natural human tendency to categorize. Categorization as a natural tendency helps the human mind obtain quick access to all types of information previously stored. Within the context of US racial relationship history, including slavery and the interplay of power and oppression, negative notions were associated with specific groups and persisted through centuries. Thus, racial categorization became automatic and effortless. These categories are easily triggered by the symbolic presence of a Black person, a symbol that is weighed down with negative stereotypes. Competition for status and control along with unconscious attitudes to appraise more favorably those on one's own group, perpetuate that categorization system (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004).

As it evolved, the racial hierarchy benefited the White population with Euro-American based cultural definitions of race (Taylor, 2004). Racial labels were used by Whites to distinguish themselves from "the rest." They used negative attributions and associations in reference to ethnic and racial minority groups. Consequently, these labels became the "marker" of negative traits such as low intelligence, aggressive sexual

behaviors, and criminal behaviors (Taylor, 2004). The development of the racial hierarchy contributed to what Taylor called the “sight system,” which the collective unconscious of society employs to supply information and inferences about others. For the White population however, the label of their whiteness is overlooked as if not having an identity to own. Nevertheless, it represents the base, the standard from which other ethnic groups would be compared. White identity represents privilege (Wildman & Davis, 2005), and can be accessed sometimes by educational, occupational, or SES (Dalton, 2002). Hence, the criterion for being White has evolved to encompass a larger spectrum of characteristics, as defined by society as positively qualifying to be considered White. As such, despite its socio-historical changes, Whiteness remains at the top of the racial hierarchy (Kang Fu, 2001). Moreover, Blacks as well as Mexican Americans were considered to be at the bottom of the hierarchy and their intermarriages were not guided by endogamous tendencies (Kang Fu, 2001).

Between 1968 and 1986 the Southern US had significantly less interethnic marriages when compared to the rest of the country (Kalmijn, 1993). This pattern suggests the presence of social factors that play a role in the incidence of interethnic unions. In this study, Kalmijn (1993) found that Black men married White women more frequently than Black women married White men. Kalmijn (1998) posited that social status could explain these findings, with education being the key element in status acquisition. Black males bring their “maleness” and White women bring their “whiteness” creating a balance of power in a relationship that made these combinations more probable than the Black female-White male unions during that time. In the latter

case, the White male would bring two higher statuses: his maleness and his Whiteness. Therefore, this Black female-White male union would remain unbalanced and would be less likely to form in that era. Davis, Gardner, and Gardner (1941), described the historical social structure between Whites and Blacks as caste systems that were color-defined. Within these caste systems, there were different social classes. Each social class within their respective caste determined the appropriate behavioral norms and value for those in it. Therefore, social class and castes are hierarchy based, and thus each, according to Davis and colleagues, can represent the highest or lowest value of society in its respective end on the scale. These racial struggles, although more controversial in Black and White unions (Martin, Bradford, Drzewiecka, & Chitgopekar, 2003), have also been evident in White unions with other ethnic minorities as in the case of *Perez v. Sharp* (Moran, 2001).

The model of modern racism contends that racism still exists and that racist beliefs are publicly denied given social norms (McConahay, 1986). Holders of racist beliefs would voice principles of equality while opposing desegregation efforts and policies such as affirmative action (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998). Dovidio and Gaertner described this form of modern racism as more subtle yet equally frustrating for the Black population who continue to battle against negative notions of their race held by some White people. Dovidio and Gaertner argued that 10-15% of the White population endorsed the old fashioned, more overt type of racism while the remaining 85-90% may be supporting understated forms of racism while maintaining personal views of being non-racists and expressing it so.

Furthermore, while dating interethnically appears to be more accepted than to marry interethnically (Firmin & Firebaugh, 2008), differences in race may lead to more resistance than ethnic differences would (Martin et al., 2003). Martin and colleagues explained that while college campus may have more diversity, they remain segregated. Consistent with other reports, they added Whites with Blacks have not had the same dating rate as with other ethnic groups such as White and Latinos, based on the historical background of slavery and the negative portrayal of Blacks on the media. As such, interracial relationships are a source of ambivalence and hostility and are still regarded by some as unacceptable unions (Gaines & Leaver, 2002).

### **College Students and Interethnic Dating**

College students are at a developmental stage where they form social and personal meaningful relationships, and as young people, they were hypothesized to be more open to engage in out-group relationships. Research has found that college students are more likely to engage in interethnic relationships given the diversity that tends to characterize some university campuses (Fiebert, Nugent, Hersherberger, & Kasdan, 2004). Depending on factors such as location (Reiter, Krause, & Stirlen, 2005), opportunity for contact and proximity (Anderson & Saenz, 1994) the likelihood to interethnically date will vary from setting to setting.

Furthermore, online dating of current times reflects ethnic segregation. Patterns of ethnic dating preferences posted in 2009 and 2010 on social networks were looked at and compared with college students' dating practice (Anwar, 2011). ). Results indicated

that Blacks were more open to dating Whites than vice versa. Those who preferred dating within their own groups were women, older, and White. Despite having posted no ethnic preference in dating, over 80% of Whites initiated contact with only Whites, and 3% contacted Blacks. After being contacted by Blacks, 5% of White men and women responded to them (Anwar, 2011).

### **Theories and Contributing Factors**

Researchers have looked at the reasons that lead people to consider interethnic dating and marriage. Some studies have focused on social determinants (Ramirez & Soriano, 2001) and other studies center on individual and personal motivators. The social factors observed have given birth to different theories that attempt to explain how interethnic relations arise.

#### **Contact theory**

Contact theory, originally developed by Gordon Allport in 1954, lists four conditions for positive racial attitudes to emerge (Pettigrew, 1998). Specifically, the conditions for change are: equal group status within a given situation, common goal focus, intergroup cooperation, and supportive authorities. These conditions have been tested in different settings (e.g., in the military, the police, classrooms) as well as with different populations (e.g., Whites, Blacks, persons with disabilities, the elderly; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008) yielding positive results.

A context of interest is campus settings, where it has been contended that regardless of its multicultural composition, should the four conditions be met, contact

theory dictates improvements in interracial relations, perceptions and communication. Research also found favorable results even when not all four conditions are met (Pettigrew, 1998). Although present existing situations in classrooms or social student events are unknown, if people from all ethnicities have the opportunity to participate with perceived equal status, and with support from faculty and university staff, it would promote positive interracial relations. Furthermore, Pettigrew and Tropp (1998) suggested a sequence of affective and cognitive mediators to occur in group processes before a reduction in prejudice can be observed which includes reducing anxiety about other ethnic groups. This would facilitate the ability to empathize with other ethnic groups.

### **Homogamous Tendencies**

In another approach, three general concepts help shape interethnic friendships and dating: personal preferences, consequences, and opportunities. Kalmijn (1998) described personal preferences as one way in which homogamy pervades. He noted that people prefer partners who display similar characteristics to them in status. In his view, endogamy also persists due to consequences and specified opportunities. Consequences were presented as resulting from the influence of third parties (parents, institutions, laws) depending on their approving or disapproving stance on interethnic relationships. Moreover, there appears to be a natural tendency for individuals to choose things that are similar or familiar, even at an early stage of development.

Some studies have looked at infants and preschooler's preferences using visual cues. Kinzler, Shutts, DeJesus, and Spelke (2009) had 5-year-old children look at pictures

of children of different races and had them select those with whom they would be friends. These children chose the faces of children who shared their same race. Kindler and colleagues added a recorded voice that was paired with each picture resulting in the 5-year-old children choosing “shifting” as their preference to the voices that shared their native language even if they were paired with a different race than theirs. This tendency was also studied in 3-month-old infants, who through a visual preference system, showed predilection for the faces of their own race (Kelly et al., 2007). Other studies have suggested infant preferences for their native language (Kinsler, Dupoux, & Spelke, 2007) and for the gender of the primary caregiver in 4-month-old infants (Quinn et al., 2010). Therefore, these studies suggest that from early development there are signs of the ability to discern and categorize in different realms. These skills continue to develop, but perhaps what changes are the values and priorities given to social categories.

### **Racial Hierarchy**

The literature has suggested that some ethnic groups have been attributed negative characteristics based on presumed genetic influences (Kass, 1995). For example, Blacks were thought to be less intelligent than Whites which, confounded with other environmental factors, would place them at a lower social level. Under such premise, these groups would not be held in high regard as dating or marriage candidates. Kang Fu (2001) also discussed partner or spouse preference based on racial group belonging, with Whites being on top of the hierarchy as the most preferred race to marry. Therefore, their consideration as potential dating partners will be skewed, thus placing them in a less preferred position in the racial hierarchy. Consequently, perception of success in

interethnic relationships could be moderated by membership in a determined ethnic group (Blau, Beeker, & Fitzpatrick, 1984).

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory has been applied to different contexts such as gift giving and relations of reciprocity where the principle of returns or exchange of power status are not weighed upon (Emerson, 1976). However, it has also been extended as an attempt to explain the formation of interethnic and interracial relationships. Kalmijn (1998) described opportunities based on the demographic composition of an area. In combination, these opportunities serve to not only reflect society's current trends and structure but also represent the latent pulse of change. Contingent upon the social structure of a given area and context, certain traits become more salient, more valued, and preferred (Blum, 1984). If such factor combination leads to seeking outside of one's group, diverse valued traits come into play. As explained above, contact theory states that the more exposure and contact between the different groups, more favorable views towards out-group members will develop, thus, reducing prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Nevertheless, due to the consequences of prevailing opposition and pervasive view of some races as inferior (Taylor, 2004), people seek to maintain their status. The role of perceived power shift by society in interethnic relations dictates the degree of approval (Gaines & Leaver, 2002). As such, there is an exchange of resources that appear to take place to maintain the balance of prestige and respect; based on this formulation, racial status takes action in mate selection. Resources include, but are not limited to income, education level, occupation, gender, and physical attractiveness.

This is the basic premise of social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976) where race can become another resource of power. It appears that Whites have less motivation to intermarry based on having no anticipated gain of higher SES or prestige (Martin et al., 2003) unless they were less attractive (in which case they would exchange their status for their partner's physical attractiveness; Young, Chuansheng, & Greenberger, 2002) and because they have a greater selection pool within their group (Fiebert et al., 2004). For other ethnic groups; however, the social exchange theory stipulates that a minority person would have to bring prestige, or a high SES, by means of education and or occupation to be able to date or marry a White person. This way, their low racial status is compensated (Kang Fu, 2001).

However, not all ethnic groups appear to fit in this theoretical framework. In the dating scene, Chen and colleagues (2001) found that White college students date Asians far less than other minority groups. Asians' model minority status did not influence dating preferences as social exchange theory would presume.

### **Multiple Social Identities**

The intersection of gender, race, and class is one of the modern racial problems the world facing (Winant, 2003). Being male seems to yield specific benefits than being female in professor-student interactions. In a college setting, males had a stronger relationship between their interactions with their faculty professors and their aspirations than females did (Kim & Sax, 2009). Not only gender, but also students from higher SES demonstrated higher participation in research related activities with their correspondent professors regardless of the professor's gender (Kim & Sax, 2009). Male gender entails

privilege and power in relation to female gender and its higher status appears to transfer to the college setting.

Therefore, taking gender into account as an added possible moderator in perception of success, should the male (higher gender status) have the higher income (high economic status) in addition to being White (high ethnic/racial status), this would reflect an imbalance of resources when paired to a minority (low ethnic/racial status) female (lower gender status) with low income (low economic status). If on the other hand, the female (lower gender status) has the higher income (high economic status), there is less of an imbalance because her high income serves as compensation for her lower gender status. In this case, if she were White (high status), there would be fewer imbalances than if she were a minority (low status). As a minority, the female would have less status traits to offer than a White female. Should there be a combined status hierarchy, the minority female would place on the lower end of the based on the intersection of gender and ethnicity.

Among the characteristics/correlates of interethnic daters are: lower ethnic identity (Levin et al., 2007), males (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995), younger (Firmin & Firebaugh, 2008; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995), previous personal experience (Firmin & Firebaugh, 2008; Knox, Zusman, Buffington, & Hemphill, 2000), cohabitating experience (Knox et al., 2000), parental acceptance (Young et al., 2002), being a person of color, and having parents whose friends were/are ethnically diverse (Clark-Ibanez & Felmler, 2004), educated (Kalmijn, 1998; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1995; Young et al., 2002), and an early study identified perceived rejection from their own

group/rebelliousness (Freeman, 1955). As recent as the 1950s interethnic relationships were questioned and attributed to people who perceived lack of acceptance from their family or ethnic group, and who sought a sense of belonging in other ethnic groups (Freeman, 1955).

### **Summary**

In conclusion, the natural inclination to stay within homogamous and endogamous circles although maintained sometimes, is challenged by demographic and social composition of a given region and time. Sociopolitical and generational characteristics of a time and place also contribute to mold the development of interethnic relationships at a purely friendly or romantic level. According to social exchange theory, when the time comes to select a partner to date or marry within interethnic grounds, the selection process entails an evaluation of effects of available resources on race/ethnicity; resources that are cultural (e.g., opinions, values), economical (SES), and socio-psychological (status in the racial hierarchy). While other theories attempt to elucidate the social structure associated with interethnic relationships, this study focused on social exchange theory and its suggested entanglement to race. Only scenarios with heterosexual couples are used to minimize confounding variables. With a careful review of its design, further studies do merit this exploration. The social exchange theory might be able to explain the invisible forces behind personal decisions made. Wondering how current forces differ from or remain the same as in the past, and wondering how the future might look decades from now, this study sought to unfold whether some of these

forces, sustain or interfere with relationships formation between different ethnic/racial groups.

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to measure the attitudes of college students of all academic levels towards interethnic relationships based of the components of the social exchange theory applied to a racial hierarchy. According to the social exchange theory and the racial hierarchy, factors such race, ethnicity, social status, income, and prestige, play a role in the consideration of an interethnic partner. To test the relationships within the social exchange theory, undergraduate and graduate college students at Utah State University rated the likelihood of success of interethnic couples' relationship in eight different interethnic couple's scenarios. The scenarios described 16 different combinations of income and ethnicity in heterosexual couples and were provided in writing to be rated by the college students on a likert scale. The variables taken in consideration were the degree of exchange that occurs between a couple, which could be low or high, and student's demographic variables, ethnic identity, and racial discrimination traits. The demographic variables included sex, ethnicity, previous dating experience, and age. Two other instruments that measured racism and ethnic identity were administered. The research questions were:

RQ1: How will a couples' likelihood of success be rated by college students in low and high exchange status couples? In other words, are student's responses consistent with the social exchange theory?

RQ 2: Will age and previous dating history predict openness to interethnic dating?

RQ 3: What is the relationship between ethnic identity, modern racism, and

perception of success of interethnic couples?

RQ 4: Does exchange level moderate the relationship between perceived success and these three variables?

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

The study began with a pilot study consisting of 16 scenarios with varying incomes with Latino/a-White heterosexual couples in the Interethnic Couples Resource Exchange Questionnaire (ICREQ). The ICREQ was administered to college students via Internet. Preliminary results from the pilot study indicated ethnicity not being a variable of interest; items in the ICREQ did not cluster. For this reason, a wider range of ethnic combinations were included in the main study ICREQ. In addition to Latino/a-White couple combination, the following were added: Black-White couples, Asian American-White couples, and Native American-White couples. Each couple combination had the 16 scenarios with varying incomes and was also administered to college students through a web program for research surveys.

#### Participants

##### Pilot Participants

The sample consisted of 32 college student participants (see Table 1) all of which were White, born in the US, and primarily female (80%) and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS; 80%). Participants lived in a relatively small conservative region of Northern Utah, which is comprised of 87% White population, 8.7% Latino/Hispanic, 1.9% Asian, and 0.6% Black (city-data.com). The total population of the city is approximately 49,534. Over half of participants were working (56.7%). Participants ranged in age from 20 to 48 years of age ( $M = 30.1$ ,  $SD = 7.39$ ).

Table 1

*Pilot and Main Study Demographics*

Variable	Pilot study		Main study	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Gender				
Female	24	75	101	66
Male	7	22	45	29.4
Ethnicity				
White	32	100	143	93.5
Asian	0	0	3	2
Native	0	0	1	.7
Other	0	0	1	.7
Country of origin				
United States	32	100	92	60.1
International	0	0	3	2
Community setting:				
Rural	13	40.6	30	19.6
Urban	4	12.5	37	24.2
Suburban	14	43.8	85	55.6
Religion				
LDS	24	75	123	80.4
Catholic			5	3.3
Protestant			2	1.3
None			12	7.8
Other	8	25	7	4.6
Year in college				
Senior	12	37.5	13	8.5
Third	8	25	33	21.6
Second	6	19	44	28.8
First	5	16	62	40.5
Graduate			0	0
Grade point average (GPA)				
3.1-4.0	25	78	111	72.5
2.1-3.0	6	19	37	24.2
1.1-2.0	0	0	3	2
Work status				
Yes	18	58	79	56.7
No	13	42	74	48.4
Father's education				
Some high school	1	3	2	1.3
High school graduate	4	13	21	13.7

*(table continues)*

Variable	Pilot study		Main study	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Technical school	4	13	5	3.3
Some college	9	28	27	17.6
College graduate	7	22	50	32.7
Graduate school	6	19	48	31.4
Mother's education				
Some high school	1	3	4	2.6
High school graduate	8	25	16	10.5
Technical school	2	6	9	5.9
Some college	10	31	48	31.4
College graduate	7	22	64	41.8
Graduate school	3	9	12	7.8

*Note.* Some categories may not total 100% due to missing data.

## Main Study

Participants were college students at all academic levels, from first-year students to seniors, and graduate students. Because some students return to school after a prolonged period of time, or enter college later in their lives, and graduate students could be significantly older than undergraduates, student participants allowed range was from 18 years old to 65 years old. Those who participated ranged from 18 to 53 years old ( $M = 21.5$ ). Student participants were recruited at Utah State University (USU), through electronic forums. Since USU is a relatively homogeneous campus, interethnic relationships might be limited by the number of ethnically diverse students relative to the number of White students. This regional sample allowed for a targeted sampling of mostly White college students. Student participants were mainly from students in social sciences, of which its majority tend to be females as is represented in the sample.

The literature did not provide guidance for sample size estimation. Given the pilot nature of this study and feasibility considerations, in consultation with experts the sample

size was set at 120. After modifying the ICREQ and deciding to target other racial/ethnic groups, each group was capped at 38-39 participants, which aimed at a minimum of 120 participants for a representative sample. There were a total of 153 college student participants ( $n = 153$ ). The sample consisted of 93.5% White college students, 3% Asian, 1% American Indian, and 1% other (see Table 1). Four cases were missing data on ethnicity. Sixty-six percent of the sample was female and 29.4% was male. Ages ranged from 18 to 53 with a mean of 21.53. First-year students comprised 40.5% of the sample, 28.8% were in their second year, 21.6% were in their third year, 8.5% were in their fourth year, and 1% were not enrolled. Eighty percent were members of the LDS Church, 3% were Catholic, 1.3% were protestant, 7.8% declared “other,” and 7% claimed no religion.

## **Measures**

### **Demographic Information**

Participants were asked demographic information, their likelihood to date interethnically or engage again in interethnic dating, and they completed two measures, one on ethnic identity, and another on racial attitudes. Demographic information covered gender, age, year in college, grade point average, working status, hours of work per week, religion, ethnicity, nationality, parent’s marital status, parent’s education, parent’s occupation, and their living setting (urban, suburban, rural).

### **Interethnic Couples’ Resource Exchange Questionnaire**

The present study aimed at testing the concepts of the social exchange theory. As

such, a measure of status exchange was needed, as well as demographic variables (ethnicity, economic status, gender) implicated in attitudes towards interethnic dating. Because there was no known measure of status exchange, a measure was created for this study, the Interethnic Couples' Resource Exchange Questionnaire (ICREQ). The questionnaire had four versions: Latino (L), Black (B), Asian (A), and American Indian (I). Each version of the ICREQ has sixteen different interethnic couple's scenarios describing their ethnicity, SES, and gender.

The scenarios were developed to include four scenarios in two categories (i.e., high exchange, low exchange). For example, in the highly balanced exchange scenarios one couple member belonging to the low end of the racial hierarchy (i.e., ethnic minority) had high income to compensate for the low racial status (see Table 2). This way, the couple approximated a balance of equality with their White partner who may or may not have had high income but was at the top of the racial hierarchy. In an unbalanced exchange scenario, for example, there is one couple member who belongs to the low end

Table 2

*Balance and Exchange*

Type of exchange/balance	Combination of resources
Highly balanced exchange	Minority – male – high \$
	White – female – high \$
Slightly balanced exchange	Minority – female – low \$
	Minority – male – low \$
Slightly unbalanced exchange	White – male – high \$
	White – female – low \$
Highly unbalanced exchange	White – male – high \$
	Minority – female – low \$

of the racial hierarchy and has a low income. Therefore, there is no exchange of status, since the low racial status is not brought up to an even level by way of income.

Participants read the scenarios and rated the couples' likelihood of "success" on a 6-point rating scale. Here success was understood as a favorable likelihood of maintaining a stable long lasting relationship that may end in marriage or cohabitation.

To address other factors potentially influencing the perception of success of interethnic couples, two measures were used thus, examining ethnic identity and racism. These measures are described below with their respective constructs. These were: the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure and the Modern Racism Scale—Adapted.

### **Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure**

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) measures personal feelings and perception of one's own ethnic group or ethnicity. MEIM can be used with all ethnic groups and with adolescents and adults. Its reliability for the college sample was of .90 (Phinney, 1992). This measure consists of 20 items and of two subscales that target "ethnic identity" and "other group orientation" (see Appendix B). Reliabilities for this sample are .65 for the identity subscale and .88 for the affirmation subscale. According to Phinney (2006), the validity of the MEIM is indicated by its correlates with constructs of self-esteem and psychological wellbeing. No norms were developed for the MEIM because resulting scores vary across age and ethnic groups.

### **Modern Racism Scale—Adapted**

Originally, the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981) had

14 items that measured the cognitive component of racial attitudes and the endorsement of modern racism traits. The questions on this measure made reference to the Black population. A subsequent adapted version was intended to measure the same constructs (cognitive aspects of racial attitudes and modern racism) with the questions reworded to include a broader ethnic minority perspective. The adaptations were made specifically for this research study (see Appendix C). Reliability tests on this measure yielded an alpha coefficient of .83 (McConahay, 1986). The reliability for this study's sample is .76. The validity for the Modern Racism Scale is reported as difficult to establish in measuring prejudice, particularly with automatic processing tasks. It has been however, a good predictor of controlled processes such as voting patterns and reactions to bussing (Devine, 1989).

Because of the historical context in which interracial and interethnic relations have developed in the US, taking these measures into account can yield valuable information in conjunction with college students' perceived success of interethnic couples within the social exchange theory. Attitudes of racism and ethnic identity are relevant attributes that could play a role in people's opinions and perception of interethnic relations. Knowledge and understanding of these attitudes can be a valuable contribution to multicultural psychologists and to interethnic couples, and to the evolution of society.

### **Procedure**

There were two phases to this research, a pilot and a main study data collection

phase. Prior to beginning either phase, the full study protocol was submitted to the Utah State University Institutional Review Board and approved (Protocol # 2650). This included a letter of information (see Appendix D). In the pilot study, 30 college students were recruited from USU through professors' word-of-mouth. Those 32 participants received a link to a "googledoc" questionnaire and responded on line to the ICREQ. The ICREQ was developed specifically for this research and is explained in detail below. Pilot participants provided no other survey information, and reported on minimal demographic information, specifically, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, year in college, GPA, employment status, urban/rural upbringing, and parental education. Pilot participants were asked to provide a rationale for their ratings and open-ended feedback on the ICREQ. The purpose of the pilot was to examine the feasibility of the measure. Results from the pilot are provided in the results section.

For the main study, the ICREQ was modified into four versions. One hundred fifty-three college students were recruited for voluntary and random participation through professors' class announcement. Professors provided extra credit for those who participated. Questionnaires were available in the USU-SONA system. SONA-system is a web-based software designed in 1997 by Justin Fidler to manage large amounts of data, including research. Each ICREQ version was completed by 38 college students except the Back-White version, which was completed by 39 college students.

Information regarding purpose, procedure, and location of the survey were provided in all recruitment communications. The questionnaire was administered to college students of all ranks (freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate) accessed

via Internet. A section was included to obtain demographic information (e.g., gender, age, ethnic background) as well as other relevant information for the study such as previous dating experiences (see full questionnaire in Appendix A).

The ICREQ described 16 different relationship scenarios that were rated by the students on a scale from 1 through 6 as the most likely to succeed in their relationship based on each couple's respective demographic factors. Additional questions included were: "How likely are you to date someone from a different ethnic group?" "How likely would you be to tell your parents about your interethnic relationship?" Pilot study participants did not fill out any additional questionnaires.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results section will present findings from the pilot phase of the study as well as the main study findings. Pilot findings shaped the way the main study was conducted both in method and form. Changes are documented. The main study findings are presented separately for each question.

#### Pilot Results

The purpose of the pilot was to check the utility of the Interethnic Couples' Resource Exchange Questionnaire. Consistent with the original study intent to study Latino-White interethnic couples, all couples in the scenarios were Latino-White; no other ethnic groupings were piloted. An attempt was made to create scales based on the income by ethnicity status exchange so that all items that had couples with a completely balanced exchange ( $n = 4$ ), slightly imbalanced ( $n = 7$ ) and highly imbalanced ( $n = 4$ ) would each create one scale. Alpha reliabilities for balanced ( $\alpha = 0.28$ ), slightly imbalanced ( $\alpha = 0.44$ ), and highly imbalanced ( $\alpha = 0.36$ ) groupings were unacceptable. A second set of reliability analyses were calculated, forming scales by ethnicity groupings and by income (see Table 3). The ethnicity subscales all had unacceptable reliabilities. The income scales all had acceptable reliabilities ranging from .70 - .86. These findings suggest that participants were making decisions about perceptions of couples' success that were based on income groupings.

To further understand how these income groups were perceived in relation to each

Table 3

*Reliabilities for Ethnicity and Income Scales (n = 4 Items per Subscale)*

Ethnicity	Alpha	Income	Alpha
1 = both min	.01	1 = both low	.86
2 = fem min	.39	2 = fem lo	.70
3 = male min	.56	3 = male lo	.81
4 = both White	.09	4 = both hi	.73

other, we calculated participants' mean ratings for each item. Table 4 shows the mean rating for each item organized from the highest to the lowest mean. A simple visual examination reveals that couples who were both high in income were seen as most likely to succeed by surveyed college students. Males earning more than females were seen as the next most likely couples to succeed. Couples where both members had low income were seen by participating college students as less likely to succeed than the prior two. Couples in which females earned more than males were rated by college students as least likely to succeed.

To understand if perceptions of couples' success across income groupings differed, an analysis of variance was conducted. The ANOVA showed statistically significant between group differences (see Table 5). Posthoc analyses showed significant differences between the following groups: Group 1 (both low income) and Group 2 (female low income / male high income); Group 1 (both low income) and Group 4 (both high income); Group 2 (female low income / male high income) (female low income / male high income) and Group 3 (male low income); and Group 3 (male low income) and Group 4 (both high income).

Table 4

*ICREQ: L Mean Ratings per Item*

Item	Scale	Mean rating
scenario11	4	5.00
scenario12	4	5.00
scenario10	4	4.97
scenario15	2	4.83
scenario4	4	4.80
scenario14	2	4.67
scenario16	2	4.57
scenario6	2	4.27
scenario13	1	4.14
scenario9	1	4.10
scenario8	1	4.07
scenario1	3	3.93
scenario2	1	3.37
scenario3	3	3.37
scenario7	3	3.33
scenario5	3	2.87

Table 5

*ANOVA for Perception of Couple Success Across Income Groupings*

Grouping	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
BTW	3	5.827	1.942	19.793	.000	.8318
W/I	12	1.178	.098			
Tot	15	7.005				

In open-ended questions, participants noted that the couples on the survey were only Latino-White and several of them argued that other ethnic groups could or should be included. One participant said: “Also, why are the questions just about couples that are Latino and White? What about other races?” One participant mentioned that gay and

lesbian couples were not included. Others indicated that age, religion, and level of acculturation were influential factors to consider. On the section allocated for participants in the pilot study to provide their rationale for their ratings, participants stated that having the female earn more money than the male would be less likely for the relationship to succeed. For example, one participant said:

In my opinion, race and ethnicity doesn't play as large a role as income. If the woman makes more monetarily than the man, no matter what race they are, there will be issues of inadequacy and the relationship will not succeed.

Another one said:

I think if the woman is making significantly more, she would easily lose interest in her guy, however, the inverse is opposite. If they make about the same and have the same type of job, even vaguely correlated, I think regardless of race, they would be more likely to stay together.

Participants also talked about the differences in income. They indicated that higher income would be a stable trait for the relationship. As one respondent said, "The higher the income, the higher the success rate of the relationship because they have the security of money. Lower income could stress a relationship."

Having the highest total income was reasoned as a source of security, therefore, rating these couples as the most likely to succeed, regardless of ethnicity. Lower income was seen as a source of stress thus, couples whose income was low, were rated as the least likely to succeed. Gender was a variable of interest in that the female making more money than the male was interpreted as a source of competition and potential loss of interest from the woman towards the man. In this case, the perception of their likelihood of success was compromised as the least likely to succeed. In the four scenarios where

the female was described as having a higher income than the male, 42%, 53%, 57%, and 68% of college students rated the couple in the bottom half of the likert scale for each respective scenario thus representing the ratings closer to “least likely to succeed.”

Ethnicity did not have a significant role in participants’ ratings; it did not appear as a variable of interest in any scenario. The probability/reliability for couples being perceived as successful or not was not influenced by ethnicity. Moreover, there was no significant reliability for the survey based on exchange. Subsequently, uncertain about whether the measure was unacceptable or whether there was not enough variability in the ethnic couples, other interethnic and interracial pairings were included on the ICREQ measure for the main study.

Blacks, American Indians, and Asian Americans were paired up with Whites each in their own respective set of scenarios. Each ethnic combination was grouped in a separate questionnaire with the same scenarios as in the pilot study. In addition, analysis based on balance and exchange was conducted separately. Balance represents the couple’s resource outcome after considering both partners’ resources brought into the relationship by each. This comprises all couple combinations. Exchange represents the specific traits that the minority partner brings into the relationship as a theoretical compensation for their lower racial status. This comprises interethnic couples only.

### **Main Study Results**

For the ICREQs used in the main study, the Latino/White combination became Group 1, the Black/White combination became Group 2, the Asian /White combination

were Group 3, and the American Indian/White were Group 4. All sections were completed by 38 participants except the Black-White couple section, which was completed by 39 participants. Each questionnaire included ethnic couple combination of minority-minority and majority-majority. For example, the Asian American questionnaire included scenarios in which some couples were both Asian Americans and also were both Whites. Based on these changes, results are presented for each research question.

### **Research Question 1**

The first research question was: how will a couples' likelihood of success be rated by college students in low and high exchange status couples? In other words, are student's responses consistent with the social exchange theory?

In order to answer this question, we used the Interethnic Couples Resource Exchange Questionnaire, and we first had to calculate exchange level and balance. According to the social exchange theory, the minority partner brings some type of status to compensate for their low ethnic status. For purposes of the study, the "statuses" to be "exchanged" could be White ethnicity, male gender, and/or high income.

Exchange level was calculated by the number of desirable statuses that the minority partner possessed. Partners could possess one status (e.g., male or high income) or two (i.e., male and high income). In testing the theory, exchange could only be calculated for interethnic couples. It was considered irrelevant for mono-ethnic couples. Mono-ethnic couples would bring no exchange to the relationship the way it was measured because gender and income would cancel each other. However, they would exhibit different balance levels based on income and gender.

Depending on the characteristics of the ethnic minority partner, balance or imbalance was considered to be present. For the present study, we looked at which high statuses each partner possessed and calculated a balance (0), slight imbalance (1), or high imbalance (2, 3). Therefore, balance ratings depended on who carried statuses on ethnicity, gender, and income in its different combinations.

When reliabilities for balance (see Table 6) and exchange (see Table 7) and were calculated, results showed unacceptable reliabilities. The ICREQ's reliabilities for the three scales on balance (even, off by one, and off by two/three) as well as for exchange (zero, one, and three) were unacceptable across the four ethnic group combinations, thus, rendering further analyses impossible. Cronbach alphas on the balance measure (Table 6) showed that the ICREQ is not a good measure when items are grouped according to

Table 6

*Reliabilities for Balance Scales Across Cohorts (n = Items per Subscale)*

Balance	Group 1 - L/W alpha	Group 2 - B/W alpha	Group 3 - As/W alpha	Group 4 - N/W alpha
Even ( $n = 4$ )	.230	.504	.561	.543
Off by one ( $n = 7$ )	.550	.683	.575	.676
Off by two / three ( $n = 5$ )	.591	.626	.744	.741

Table 7

*Reliabilities for Exchange Scales Across Cohorts (n = Items per Subscale)*

Exchange	Group 1 alpha	Group 2 alpha	Group 3 alpha	Group 4 alpha
Zero ( $n = 2$ )	.381	.595	.528	.693
One ( $n = 3$ )	.357	.624	.442	.744
Two ( $n = 3$ )	.174	.502	.691	.599

balance. Only in Group 3 and 4 did it yield alphas of .744 and .741, respectively where balance was off by two or three dimensions. On the exchange measure (Table 7), only Group 4 had an alpha of .744, thus indicating that the ICREQ is not a good measure of exchange. This indicates that the theory of social exchange is not supported the way it was measured across ethnic group combinations. The exchange and balance dimensions of the ICREQ were unreliable.

To explore item groupings in the ICREQ by income and ethnicity, we calculated reliabilities for items that groups on these dimensions into matched and unmatched categories (Tables 8 and 9). As seen on Table 8, Cronbach alpha for ethnicity suggests items on the ICREQ did not form meaningful groupings according to ethnic match or

Table 8

*Reliabilities for Ethnicity Scales Across Cohorts (n = 4 Items per Subscale)*

Ethnicity	Pilot	Group 1 alpha	Group 2 alpha	Group 3 alpha	Group 4 alpha
1 = both min	.01	.504	.527	.533	.576
2 = fem min	.39	.410	.684	.417	.772
3 = male min	.56	.268	.611	.602	.663
4 = both White	.09	.416	.555	.264	.505

Table 9

*Reliabilities for Income Scales Across Cohorts (n = 4 Items per Subscale)*

Income	Pilot	Group 1 alpha	Group 2 alpha	Group 3 alpha	Group 4 alpha
1 = both low	.86	.795	.826	.814	.791
2 = fem lo	.70	.731	.709	.598	.665
3 = male lo	.81	.857	.822	.850	.811
4 = both hi	.73	.666	.627	.701	.727

mismatch. Whether both were of an ethnic minority group or not, or whether the male only or female only were of an ethnic minority group, no grouping of items occurred and therefore, had no adequate reliability. Fifteen of 16 subscales did not have adequate reliability. By contrast in table 9, income based grouping revealed meaningful ICREQ subscales based on income match or mismatch. Only three exceptions suggest that the ICREQ was a fair measure of status exchange based on income. These were seen in Groups 1 and 2 where both male and female had high income and in Group 4 where the female have low income. Group 3 where female has low income yielded an alpha of .598 indicating that these items did not come together to create a reliable scale. All other scales are acceptable as measures of status exchange based on income with alphas ranging from .701 to .857. Because no grouping occurred in either scale of balance and exchange, no association can be established. Hence, with no adequate alpha levels and based on the total results, further analysis with these two scales was deemed as unnecessary.

A visual inspection of income ratings suggest that the ICREQ discriminated the likelihood of success of couples based on income (see Table 10). Specifically, couples whose male partner had low income as well as those in which both partners had low income in all four groups of ethnic combinations were rated similarly by college student participants. Couples with both low incomes were rated as the least likely to succeed which was preceded by male low income. Couples whose both incomes were high were rated as the most likely to succeed by most students in each group of matched ethnic combinations. In this category, scenario 1 varied most in ratings. On scenarios where the

Table 10

*Scenarios' Rating Distribution*

All groups	Success rating		Income	Ethnicity
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
scenario16	4.85	0.91	4	1
scenario13	4.69	0.79	4	4
scenario5	4.61	0.81	4	2
scenario12	4.54	1.03	2	4
scenario15	4.52	0.98	2	1
scenario1	4.51	1.04	4	3
scenario3	4.42	0.78	2	3
scenario7	4.14	0.93	2	2
scenario4	4.05	0.95	1	3
scenario8	3.99	1.02	1	2
scenario10	3.90	0.95	1	4
scenario9	3.78	1.08	1	1
scenario14	3.63	1.06	3	1
scenario6	3.40	0.96	3	2
scenario11	3.37	1.12	3	4
scenario2	3.27	1.08	3	3

male has the high income, ratings indicated that scenario 7 and 12 present the most variation in ratings. However, these category of “male high income” was rated as the second in order as likely to succeed.

Because the ICREQ scales grouped for status exchange based on ethnicity, balance, and exchange, did not yield acceptable reliabilities, there were no further analyses to conduct. However, scales formed by income grouping did yield acceptable reliabilities, thus, additional analyses were conducted.

In summary, in an attempt to answer research question 1, we learned that ethnic matching did not seem to play a role in college student ratings of a couples' perceived

success. Income, however, played an important role. Mean and standard deviations show that college students perceived the greatest probability of a couples' success in couples where both members had high income, followed by couples in which males had higher income than females, then couples who were both low income. The lowest probability of success was observed in couples where females had higher income than males. A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted with the four groups (e.g., White-Latino couples) as the between subjects factor and each of the income groups (e.g., both high income) as the within subjects factor. The test showed a violation of the assumption of sphericity. Results are reported using Greenhouse-Geisser corrections. Results show a significant within group main effect,  $F(2.75, 409.96) = 110.78, p < .001$ . There was no significant between subjects effect,  $F(3, 149) = .263, p = .852$ . Posthoc analyses to understand within group differences reveal all pairing were significantly different at the  $p < .001$  level. The greatest discrepancy observed was between INCbothhi ( $M = 18.60, SD = 2.65$ ) and INCmalelo ( $M = 13.67, SD = 3.46$ ), followed by the discrepancy between INCmalehi ( $M = 17.63, SD = 2.65$ ) and INCmalelo ( $M = 13.67, SD = 3.46$ ). The next sequential difference was between INCbothhi ( $M = 18.60, SD = 2.65$ ) and INCbothlo ( $M = 15.71, SD = 3.18$ ) followed by INCbothlo ( $M = 15.71, SD = 3.18$ ) and INCmalelo ( $M = 13.67, SD = 3.46$ ). The smallest discrepancies were observed between INCmalehi ( $M = 17.63, SD = 2.65$ ) and INCbothlo ( $M = 15.71, SD = 3.18$ ) followed by INCbothhi ( $M = 18.60, SD = 2.65$ ) and INCmalehi ( $M = 17.63, SD = 2.65$ ).

In order to understand if there were differences between perceptions of success broadly in interethnic versus monoethnic couples, ICREQ scale items were grouped by

couple status. Eight items comprised the interethnic scale and eight items comprised the monoethnic couple scales. Both scales showed adequate reliability (.741 and .706 respectively). Means for perceptions of success for each scale are in Table 11. Paired samples *t* test comparing perception of success between interethnic couples ( $M = 32.32$ ,  $SD = 4.59$ ) and monoethnic couples ( $M = 33.28$ ,  $SD = 4.56$ ) revealed a significant difference with higher perceived success in monoethnic than interethnic couples,  $t(152) = -2.88$ ,  $p = .005$ ,  $d = -0.33$ .

## Research Question 2

The second research question asked, “Will age and previous dating history predict openness to interethnic dating”?

Participants rated their openness to interethnic dating on a scale from one to five. The 147 participants who answered the questions on previous dating history (attached at the end of the ICREQ) gave a minimum score of a two (2 = unlikely) and the maximum was a five (yes) indicating no endorsement from a single participant that they would not consider interethnic dating (value of 1 on the scale). Students were open to interethnic dating ( $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). Regardless of having had a previous dating history, 88

Table 11

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Ethnic combination	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Interethnic	153	16.00	48.00	32.3203	4.59498
Monoethnic	153	22.00	48.00	33.2810	4.55588
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	153				

participants (59.9%) indicated less openness to dating interethnically and 59 (40.1%) of them indicated being open to it. Of those that responded to the question ( $n = 151$ ), 60 (39.2%) reported having dated interethnically. A one-way ANOVA to detect differences in response means across groups (i.e., survey targeted to different interethnic combinations) showed no differences in mean openness to interethnic dating,  $F(3,143) = .751, p = .523$ , so all groups were considered in aggregate to answer research question 2.

Specifically, those who had dated interethnically were significantly more likely to be open to dating interethnically in the future. A follow-up  $t$  test showed significant differences across means between those who had prior interethnic dating history ( $M = 4.41, SD = .89$ ) and those who did not ( $M = 3.84, SD = 1.03$ ),  $t(145) = 3.45, p = .001$ . Age was marginally significantly correlated to openness to dating interethnically ( $r = -.158, p = .058$ ; see Table 12). Younger participants had higher openness to date interethnically. When considered together in a regression analysis, the model specifying age, respondent ethnicity, and dating history was significant ( $R = .328, p = .001$ ; see Table 13). Within the model, only previous dating history was statistically significant. Age was marginally significant.

Table 12

*Correlations between previous dating history, age, and openness to dating*

Variables	Age	Have dated interethnically	Openness to dating
1. Age	1	-.058	-.158
2. Have dated interethnically	-.058	1	-.275**
3. Openness to dating	-.158	-.275**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13

*Regression Analysis Summary for Openness to Dating*

Variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>B</i>	SE B	$\beta$		
Age	-.044	.016	-.223	-2.725	.007
Have dated interethnically	-.534	.168	-.257	-3.177	.002
Ethnicity_binary	.322	.445	.059	.723	.471

Note.  $R^2 = .107$ .

**Research Question 3**

The third research question asked: What is the relationship between ethnic identity, modern racism, and perception of success of interethnic couples?

Perception of success was grouped by income combinations based on income being a variable of interest. Income combination groups appeared as the “Both high,” “Both low,” “Male high,” and “Male low.” These four groups were correlated with Modern Racism, MEIM identity, and MEIM affirmation scales.

The correlation analysis revealed a significant negative association between modern racism and all four income combination groups ( $r = -.248, p = .002$ ;  $r = -.244, p = .002$ ;  $r = -.208, p = .010$ ;  $r = -.169, p = .037$ ; see Table 14). The higher the scores on the Modern Racism scale, the lower the ratings on perception of success in all income combinations. Notably, the strength of the correlations was lowest in couples where both persons had high income. Further analyses were carried out to understand these relationships. Ethnic identity, on the other hand, revealed no significant correlations with modern racism. While ethnicity remained in the foreground, modern racism and ethnic

Table 14

*Correlations on Income Grouping with MR and MEIM*

INC- MR- MEIM		modracism	meimidentity	meimaffirm
INCbothlo	Pearson correlation	-.248**	.043	.051
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.601	.532
	<i>N</i>	153	153	153
INCmalehi	Pearson correlation	-.244**	.036	.042
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.659	.603
	<i>N</i>	153	153	153
INCmalelo	Pearson correlation	-.208**	.130	-.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.108	.876
	<i>N</i>	153	153	153
INCbothhi	Pearson correlation	-.169*	-.082	.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.313	.218
	<i>N</i>	153	153	153

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

identity could relate to income as a distinguishing factor of perception of relationship success. In other words, looking at ethnicity yielded no correlations, while looking at income revealed discerning criteria from the student participant's responses. Income may be a defining factor in discriminating for relationship success.

#### **Research Question 4**

The fourth research question asked, "Does exchange level moderate the relationship between perceived success and each of these three variables: Ethnic identity, Ethnic affirmation, and Modern Racism"?

It was not possible to create a meaningful exchange score. For this reason, RQ4 could not be answered. Instead post-hoc analyses were conducted to examine how variables of interest impacted the relationship between modern racism and perceived

success across the four income categories (both high income, both low income, male high income, female high income).

A partial correlation analysis controlling for age revealed no changes in the relationship between income combinations and the modern racism scale. Age was not a moderator. The relationship between modern racism and perceived success remained significant based on income (with both low  $r = -.247, p = .002$ , with male high  $r = -.254, p = .002$ , with male low:  $r = -.212, p = .009$ , with both high:  $r = -.168, p = .040$ ) when controlling for age.

Likewise, previous dating history did not moderate the relationship between perceived success across income pairings. The relationship between modern racism and perceived success also remained significant across three of the four income groups with only the “both high” income combination reflecting marginal significance (with both low:  $r = -.260, p = .001$ , with male high:  $r = -.264, p = .001$ , with male low:  $r = -.211, p = .009$ , with both high:  $r = -.157, p = .054$ ).

Other variables were controlled for (parent’s education, gender, residential region) and showed no association. Partial correlations by gender, residential region, and parents’ education did not reveal any relationship between modern racism and ratings based on income combinations.

A correlation between modern racism, MEIM identity, and MEIM affirmation scales with perceptions of success grouped by interethnic couples and by monoethnic couples revealed a significant negative association between modern racism and both couple combinations, with interethnic couples yielding a slightly stronger association.

The higher the scores on modern racism, the lower the perceptions of success for monoethnic couples ( $r = -.218, p = .007$ ) and for interethnic couples ( $r = -.351, p < .001$ ). There were no significant correlations between the two MEIM subscales and ICREQ for monoethnic and interethnic couples; see Table 15).

A correlation analysis was also conducted to examine demographic variables with the income patterns, the modern racism scale, and MEIM. A negative association was found between father's education and the perception of success for "Both hi" income combination ( $r = -.247, p < .01$ ). The lower the father's education, the higher the students' rating in the perception of success for scenarios where both couple members had high income. Furthermore, father's education correlated positively with the MEIM identity scale ( $r = .199, p < .05$ ). The higher the scores on the MEIM identity scale, the higher the father's education level. Mother's education correlated positively also with MEIM identity. The higher the scores on MEIM identity, the higher was mother's education level ( $r = .226$  at the .01 level). Gender was found to have a positive correlation with modern racism. Males scored higher on the Modern Racism scale ( $r = .170$  at the .05 level; see Table 16).

Table 15

*Correlations of Interethnic and Monoethnic Couples with MR and MEIM*

Variable	Modern racism	MEIM identity	MEIM affirmation
ICREQ 8 items for monoethnic couples	-.218**	.037	.087
ICREQ 8 items for interethnic couples	-.351**	.064	.022

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 16

*Correlations of Demographic Variable with MEIM and MR*

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Income both low	R	1	.393**	.288**	.189*	-.248**	.043	.051
2. Income male high	R	.393**	1	.284**	.410**	-.244**	.036	.042
3. Income male low	R	.288**	.284**	1	.181*	-.208**	.130	-.013
4. Income both high	R	.189*	.410**	.181*	1	-.169*	-.082	.100
5. Modern racism	R	-.248**	-.244**	-.208**	-.169*	1	-.055	.113
6. MEIM identity	R	.043	.036	.130	-.082	-.055	1	.507**
7. MEIM affirmation	R	.051	.042	-.013	.100	.113	.507**	1
8. Father's education	R	-.020	-.006	.032	-.247**	.031	.199*	.061
9. Mother's education	R	.032	.126	-.009	-.035	.094	.226**	.150
10. Employed	R	-.125	.062	.126	-.020	.037	-.070	-.023
11. Years in college	R	.043	-.071	-.011	-.088	-.098	.139	.082
12. Religion	R	.026	.022	.051	.193*	-.059	-.196*	-.157
13. Age	R	.079	-.073	-.094	.035	-.057	.035	.093
14. Gender	R	-.007	.008	-.122	-.162	.170*	-.161	-.018
15. Residential area	R	.141	-.016	.089	.122	.014	.095	.032
16. Dated interethnically	R	-.043	.008	.076	-.099	.107	-.108	.023
17. Parent's marital status	R	.013	.160*	.069	.203*	-.103	-.218**	-.178*

\*  $p < .05$ .\*\*  $p < .01$ .

## **CHAPTER V**

### **DISCUSSION**

This study purported to examine the perception of success of interethnic couples through the lens of the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976). A pilot study and a main study were conducted considering the exchange and balance of the following traits or resources: gender, income, and ethnic combinations. A measure of perception of success was created which consisted of different 16 interethnic couple scenarios (Interethnic Couples Resource Exchange Questionnaire-ICREQ). The purpose of the study was not met based on findings from the pilot study where balance, exchange, and ethnicity did not group together.

#### **The Role of Latino/a Ethnicity**

One possible explanation for not fulfilling the purpose of the study is that the pilot study had scenarios of only Latino-White couples. Thus, the theory was not supported and exchanges between Latino-White couple combinations did not conform to this theory. Findings could be interpreted as disproving the theory. Another explanation is that the way these exchanges were measured did not represent an efficient way to do so. While the scenarios had a different combination of balance and exchange, the fact that these items did not cluster together prevents from measuring effectively against the ICREQ. Therefore, a modified version of the ICREQ was utilized in the main study despite the results from the pilot study.

Latinos as a group, can exhibit very diverse phenotypes. For example, there are

lighter skin Latinos as well as dark Latinos with shades in between included. Because this study did not use images of pictures of the scenarios, there was no way to determine which image would come to mind when participants read the ICREQ. Because the pilot ICREQ was comprised of Latino-White interethnic combination only, it would have been possible to obtain different ratings in perception of success based on ethnicity by including other ethnicities with less variability in their phenotype expression. An alternative to measuring the influence of phenotype on the perception of success in interethnic couples is to use pictures as visual indicators of phenotype. By displaying various physical traits for the Latino/a partner, analysis of ratings could be made taking into account this factor. Utilizing this approach, the possible tendency towards overlooking or dismissing ethnicity may be assessed and potentially minimized.

According to Rytina and colleagues (1988), the degree of salience of certain traits decreases the likelihood of association with others who lack that trait. Thus, the inclusion of other ethnic groups in the study aimed at discerning from consistently salient and nonsalient preset images in participant's minds and thus, in-group preferences. Furthermore, it would have been possible to even measure exchange, balance and income, in addition to ethnicity.

### **Income**

Consequently, four replications of the study took place, which included different ethnic minority groups paired up with the White ethnic group: Latino-White, Black-White, Asian-White, and American Indian-White couple combinations. Given these

adjustments, the findings were similar to those of the pilot study. Balance, exchange, and ethnicity yielded no significant results. Income, however, was the variable which influenced perception of success across all combinations of interethnic couples. It was also significant regardless of other variables except in one occasion in association with gender. Nonetheless, reliabilities were better for Black-White, Asian-White, and Native American-White ethnic group combinations than for Latino-White ethnic group combination. Perhaps this is an indication that social exchange theory is a better fit for non-Latino group combinations.

Access to resources based on economic stability seems to be more important for participants than ensuring similarities based on ethnicity. By having a higher income, couples were perceived to succeed more than those whose income was lower. When gender was added to the equation, traditional values predominated over the liberal stance of a woman making more money than the man. This particular case was seen as least likely to succeed. Consequently, income did not suit the social exchange theory in the way it was measured. Furthermore, balance and exchange were also variables not significant and hence, unable to discuss under the social exchange theory.

### **Conservatism**

This study was conducted in a university that is part of a conservative community. Although the university attracts students from out of state and also international students, most participants' demographic information represented the conservative culture. A major limitation of the study stems from the role that the conservatism and the LDS

doctrine play in the community. Therefore, participants may continue to endorse traditional gender roles and may perceive a female with higher income than the male as a reason for instability in a relationship. Ethnic diversity was not well represented in the sample and the concept of race and ethnicity were explicitly stated in the descriptions of couples' scenarios. Again, a different method in testing the social exchange theory would be to use pictures of couple members even without any mention of their ethnicity in writing. Consequently, these findings are not generalizable.

Income was also rated as a contributing factor for success in those scenarios in which couples shared the same level of income (both high and both low). These scenarios ratings were higher than those whose income had discrepancies, with one couple member having a high income and the other having low income. This finding could be partially explained by the theory of social structure, or structural theory (Blau et al., 1984). The theory states that a population's distribution can intercross social dimensions. It presumes the tendency to have in-group preferences in mate selection, which correlate with other social dimensions (Blau et al., 1984). For this study, the outlook might be that people prefer someone of their same SES, thus, dictating social distributions and encounters, and exposing them to ethnic diversity. Having an in-group preference in the category of SES, and as they come across other group categories, ethnicity then, would become a less salient feature in partner selection. Therefore, these differences in economic class enter into play ever so slightly. Although economic power brings privilege (Dalton, 2002), and could be viewed as a status resource, respondents did not accept it as a feature that would exemplify a successful relationship in the exchange process. Thus, economic status was

understood as needing to be the same to represent a successful relationship.

Consequently, supporting this need for equal economic class, promotes rejection of partners based on SES. Stemming from this principle, it is possible that differences in SES could have guided the ratings for success, thus, favoring similarities. Therefore, participants lower ratings in perception of success when there were income discrepancies, denotes classism in that partners are not selected indiscriminately based on their income level.

With a strong ethnic identity from the MEIM, it would be presumable that individuals would prefer to associate with others from the same group, thus, maintaining homogamy and perhaps displaying high MR scores. A stronger sense of identity with one's own group could be understood as precluding interethnic and interracial relations from developing. When income is included in this premise, the divide could be anticipated to be stronger for those with higher income and whose couple's members have no income discrepancy between them.

Several factors could explain why couples' ethnicity was a variable of no significance. First, the measured population consisted of 93% White participants thus, leaving little variability to examine other perspectives based on participants' ethnicity. This homogenous characteristic, along with their relative young age, may have also limited their interactions with diverse populations at levels which could better inform them of the possible role of ethnicity in dating relationships. Second, the conservative culture to which this population belongs may preclude them from anticipating possible relationship difficulties rooted in differences of cultural origin or in other factors that may

lead to either a successful or unsuccessful relationship.

### **Colorblindness**

The fact that ethnicity did not appear to matter in this study could potentially be due to colorblindness, or the tendency to dismiss the impact of ethnicity as a way to emphasize equality among people (Gushue, 2004). This ideology reached its peak in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement in counter response to overt racism (Ryan, Hunt, Weible, Peterson, & Casas, 2007). As such, it sought to provide a blind eye to ethnic or racial membership when judging individuals. Gallagher (2003) argued that colorblindness does not ignore race or ethnicity, but that it recognizes it while discounting differences in power differential, influential forces, and privilege among different ethnic and racial groups. Colorblindness therefore, teaches that all are equal regardless of skin color or ethnic and racial membership. Through this lens, colorblindness denies the existence of racism in today's forms: institutional racism, covert racism, microaggressions. Endorsing this type of blind equality, disparities in economic and educational opportunities between Whites and some ethnic and racial minorities are judged to be inexcusable and a lack of effort on the part of ethnic and racial minority members (Gallagher, 2003).

The phenomenon of colorblindness appears to be supported by the marketing of cultural symbols. The sale of items from expensive cars (e.g., Jaguars) to televisions, to specific clothing styles (e.g., hip-hop clothing) and music genre (e.g., rap music) may carry ethnic or racial representations although intended for anyone to purchase

(Gallagher, 2003). Moreover, the creation of policies regulating employment and educational opportunities, and images of middle class minorities in the media have contributed to the interpretation that ethnic and racial minorities have the same or even better opportunities than those afforded to Whites. These sociopolitical factors promote the pervasiveness of colorblindness by giving the impression of equal availability of resources to all ethnic and racial groups and consequently, it diverts the focus off of institutional racism and power differentials (Gallagher, 2003).

A competing perspective for colorblindness is that of multiculturalism, where an attempt is made to unite a nation through appreciation of cultural differences (Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). Multiculturalism also acknowledges ethnic and racial groups, with the distinction that it embraces differences among groups and supports social justice and equality efforts. Participants in this study did not take ethnicity into account as a determining variable for couple's success; they did not speak of social justice or appreciation of possible cultural differences in the survey section allocated for them to explain their ratings. On the contrary, college student respondents in general indicated that the greater the differences between couple members, the least likely to succeed the couples would be. Therefore, it is possible that colorblindness and not multiculturalism was the one ideology guiding this sample of college student participants in rating the perception of success of interethnic couples.

### **Religion**

Being a homogeneous population also in religion, concerns about doing what is

right, may have been present. Measured with surveys, when religion was intrinsic in nature in college students' lifestyles, it was found to have a positive correlation with social desirability. The more intrinsically oriented the student was in religious practices, the more the social desirability they would reflect (Batson, Naifeh, & Pate, 1978). The intrinsically oriented student however, correlated negatively with prejudice. Nevertheless, when controlling for social desirability, the correlation between intrinsic religion and prejudice was positive (Batson et al., 1978). While there is no social desirability measure in this study, this tendency may explain why college participants did not discriminate success by ethnicity. Being also mostly Whites, they may have been preoccupied with maintaining a non-racist self-image (Unzueta & Lowery, 2008) thus, ignoring ethnicity as a reason for relationship failure or success.

### **Previous Dating History**

A different explanation for openness to dating is based on participants' previous experience with interethnic dating from which they might have concluded that ethnicity was not the "deal breaker or maker" in determining success in dating relationships. From personal experience, participants may have gathered that ethnicity played no role in the nature of their differences and difficulties or in the nature of what they saw as contributing to a good and stable relationship if that was the case.

Age and previous dating history influenced respondents' attitude towards future interethnic dating. Younger generations appear to consider a wider selection of whom they date. Although this study's population showed a similar pattern with younger

participants being more open to interethnic dating, its significance was marginal perhaps due to the conservative nature of their culture. Given their setting and the “market” from which they most likely will be choosing (primarily White individuals), some would contend that limited options exist for them to date or marry interethnically (Blau et al., 1984; Kalmijn, 1993). In other words, the demographic composition of their region may play a role in how participants projected their openness to interethnic dating. In contrast, previous experience dating interethnically was a significant predictor of openness to interethnically dating perhaps because through personal experience, participants were able to determine the extent of conflict that can ensue on a couple. It appears that because they remain open to interethnically dating in the future, ethnicity was not experienced as a source of distress that would foster relationship failure.

### **Modern Racism and Ethnic Identity**

Looking at perception of success through income, and examining associations of such perception with the measures of modern racism and ethnic identity, it was noted that the higher participants’ scores were on both measures, the lower were the ratings on perception of success in all income group combinations. This analysis was based on the different income combinations and no differences were found between such different groups. The strength was lower however, for the two groups with same income (“Both high,” “Both low”). This outcome may be due to unforeseen variables affecting participants’ perceptions of success. For example, participants may have attributed random factors to the different scenarios as they read through them (e.g., difference in

ages between couple members, differences in values or religion, language barriers).

Another contention is the notion of differences between group and differences within groups. It is known that differences within group are greater than between group. With social exchange theory focusing on differences between groups, it is possible that the theory is too simplistic to capture even any distinction among the four ethnic group combinations.

### **Monoethnic and Interethnic Grouping**

Focusing on couple combinations through monoethnic and interethnic grouping, there were no differences in how each correlated with modern racism. They correlated negatively in that the lower the rating on perception of success, the higher the scores on racism. Because this finding is the same for monoethnic couples, as well as interethnic couples, it would be pertinent to look at whether monoethnic combinations would have differentiated themselves between minority-minority ethnic background and majority-majority. Further, it could also be relevant to compare any possible distinctions between the minority-minority monoethnic groups (Latino-Latino, Black-Black, Asian American-Asian American, and American Indian-American Indian) with respect participant's scores on the Modern Racism scale.

Although no differences were found in monoethnic and interethnic grouping of couples in relation to the modern racism scale, monoethnic couples resulted with higher perception of success than interethnic couples. Moreover, when looking at all the couples, ethnicity was not an influential variable in the interethnic pairings. By doing

additional analysis in looking at mono-ethnic couples separately, the grouping format revealed a tendency to rate monoethnic couples more favorably with a higher perception of success. This finding may be the result of similarities being perceived as strength, therefore attributing an increased likelihood of success to monoethnic couples regardless of minority-minority or majority-majority ethnic combination.

### **Family Descriptors**

Another aspect of demographics found to correlate with variables of interest was father's and mother's education. The higher the father's education, the lower was the rating for the "Both high" income group. Father's education appears to influence perception of success based on income. Perhaps having grown up with a highly educated father, participants may have taken for granted the privilege of living with such advantage. Therefore, they may have attributed stability in marriage to other mechanism in a relationship other than having high financial security. On the other hand, participants could have attributed the lack of stability precisely to the possible financial tribulations that a high income can bring into a relationship.

Father's education, as well as mother's education, also correlated positively with the MEIM scores. The higher the scores on MEIM, the higher were father's and mother's education level. This could indicate that participants whose at least one parent had higher education, were exposed to resources that strengthened their ethnic identity, and to other factors that promote a sense of belonging during their development.

## **Gender**

Looking at gender, males scored higher on the Modern Racism scale. Possible explanations for this finding could include that males and females, should they display some traits of racism, they do so by endorsing different expressive manners. Males may have been expressive on the survey, and females may use other means of expression. Another view would be that they both endorse the same modern racism traits with males simply having stronger feelings on the matter. Further research with male's and female's expression of racism traits is recommended to better understand gender differences socialization patterns in gender roles.

## **Summary**

Ethnicity, income, and gender are characteristics that people take in consideration not only when choosing a partner but also when attributing success to dating relationships. While ethnicity appeared as non-meaningful through the ICREQ, different approaches may have picked up better its indirect influence in how people evaluate relationship's success and partner selection. This influence was better detected in the Modern Racism scale. Another socio-demographic factor was income, which also interplayed with gender. Considering that ethnicity was not a strong influential variable, it seems like there are other rationales for giving low and high ratings to couples' ethnic combinations. Although it is not clear what these rationales are, it can be drawn that income was the main decisive factor in this attribution of failure or success.

Other socio-demographic factors do play a role in partner selection and perception

of success in dating couples. Parent's education, gender, and previous dating history seem to be factors that shape how people view others when considering partner selection and attributing success to dating couples. Invisible to the eye, these factors help define, modify, or perpetuate the social structure from which they derived.

While the social exchange theory was not supported, the tendency to favor similarities was evidenced by higher ratings of perception of success in couple scenarios that exhibited some form of similarity. Monoethnic couples were rated higher than interethnic couples as more likely to succeed. Couples with similar income were rated higher than those who had income discrepancies also as more likely to succeed. This can be an indication of a pervasive natural tendency to be endogamous and to have in-group preferences as suggested by Blau and colleagues (1984), which again is modified by a given social structure.

### **Recommendations**

With the ongoing diversification of certain areas in the US, and with the perceived increase in racial tolerance, it would serve well to examine the predominant role of income across different settings and populations. Perhaps a new theory could take form should the social exchange theory work in only certain contexts. For example, Chen and colleagues (2001) found that White individuals dated Asian Americans the least out of all the minority groups. Their finding does not support the social exchange theory through the racial hierarchy approach, which puts a Latino subgroup (Mexican Americans) at the bottom of the hierarchy. Moreover, this does not support the notion that Blacks are the

group that least interethnically mixes with Whites due to historical residue from the time of slavery and subsequent controversy. Social exchange theory appears not to be a strong frame through which the understanding of interracial and interethnic relations would unfold. Perhaps social exchange is more useful for overall friendship and collegial relationships than for romantic relationships. If for romantic relationships, social exchange could possibly be utilized to explore and explain attraction, and not duration and success.

Since the social exchange theory was not supported, further research is necessary to determine the tendencies and patterns within various contexts and the validity of the theory. For example, studying interethnic dating in a more ethnically diverse region and a more liberal society could yield drastically different results. Given that this study was conducted in a fairly ethnically homogeneous and conservative region, research in a more diverse setting and in one that is more liberal is recommended. When people of different backgrounds are exposed to each other, the search for similarities in a partner may take different angles. The hierarchy of preferences varies depending on the social stratification making certain traits more relevant or salient than others (Blau et al., 1984; Kalmijn, 1993). Therefore, ethnicity, SES, and other demographical variables can rank in different order for different people depending on the context in which they find themselves. Because the role of religion was unclear and not directly measured, studies taking in consideration interfaith relationships in a religiously diverse community would help clarify the role of religion and self-image in the perception of success of interethnic relationships. It would also be beneficial to examine the impact of age within diverse

settings and how increased interactions (possibly dating) and extended exposure to other ethnic groups would affect openness to interethnic dating. Another area for further exploration is due to limiting this study to heterosexual couple scenarios. This limitation leaves a gap of knowledge on the role of homosexual relationships on the aforementioned dynamics between gender, income, and ethnicity with perception of success in interethnic and monoethnic couples. With additional research, we can learn how different contexts affect the interplay of income, gender, age, religion, and ethnicity in the perception of success of interethnic couples regardless of theoretical support. More research in these areas is needed to uncover the mechanics of the social strata in the formation of interethnic relationships and its perception of success.

These findings help create awareness so that clinicians can look at the whole picture when seeing couples in therapy. They should not solely look at ethnicity and cultural differences nor presume that to be the nature of their problems. As a couple, their issues may not always be rooted in racial or cultural differences, it is important to take into account their context, and to remain aware of the potential social forces that exert stress in a relationship, including that of income, among others. It is also noteworthy to reiterate that this study was limited to heterosexual couples. Same-sex couples add another social identity to the structure of their social context of which counselors should be aware. Moreover, because the social exchange theory was not supported, mental health professionals should maintain a fresh stance and make no assumptions regarding the social forces that either facilitated or hindered their pairing as a couple.

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A  
Demographic Form

### Demographic Form

1. *Gender:*     Male         Female
2. *Age:* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *Which category or categories best describe your racial background?* (check all that apply)
- White                       Hispanic/Latino                       Mixed race: \_\_\_\_\_
- African American         American Indian
- Asian                       Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

If you selected more than one category, with which racial background do you most identify?

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your nationality?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. *Religious Affiliation:*
- LDS
- Catholic
- Protestant
- Jewish
- Baptist
- Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
- None

5. *What year in college are you currently in?*

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- I'm not enrolled

6. *Your grade point average (GPA) is approximately:*

- 0-1.0
- 1.1-2.0
- 2.1-3.0
- 3.1-4.0
- over 4.0

7. *Are you currently employed?*

- Yes         No

\*IF YES, how many hours per week?

- 1-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- 31/more

8. *With whom do you live? (check all that apply):*

- Both Parents                       Mother only  
 Father only                          Mother & Stepfather  
 Father & Stepmother              Mother & Boyfriend  
 Father & Girlfriend                Brother(s) / Sister(s)  
 Other adult relatives              Male friend(s)  
 Female friend(s)                  Boyfriend /Girlfriend  
 Non-related adult(s)

9. *How would you describe where you live?*

- Urban (city)  
 Suburban (subdivision)  
 Rural (country)

10. *What is your parents' marital status?*

- Married to each other  
 Divorced or separated from each other\*  
 Never married to each other  
 Widowed  
 Other

\*If divorced or separated, how long have they been divorced? \_\_\_\_\_ yrs.

11. *How far in school did your father go?*

- Some High School  
 High School Graduate  
 Technical School  
 Some College  
 College Graduate  
 Graduate School

12. *How far in school did your mother go?*

- Some High School  
 High School Graduate  
 Technical School  
 Some College  
 College Graduate  
 Graduate School

13. *What does your mother do for a living?*

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14. *What does your father do for a living?*

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## Questionnaire:

The scenarios to be rated are as follows:

1 = the least likely to succeed      6 = most likely to succeed

- 1: Britney, a White female lawyer dating Jorge, a Latino male physician, each making 100K a year. They met during happy hour at a local pub/restaurant. They have been together for two and a half years.  
1      2      3      4      5      6
- 2: Laura, a White female research director at a prestigious university (U of Prestige) dating Alfonso, a Latino male welder. They met at the farmer's market. She makes 120K a year and he makes 25K a year. They have been together for four years.  
1      2      3      4      5      6
- 3: Amanda, a White female bank clerk dating Miguel, a Latino male chemist. They met taking ballroom dance lessons. She makes approximately 20K a year and he makes 80K a year. They have been dating for two years.  
1      2      3      4      5      6
- 4: Tracy, a White female waitress dating Antonio, a Latino male electrician. They each make 20K plus a year. They met at a common friend's BBQ event. They have been together for 18 months.  
1      2      3      4      5      6
- 5: Mayra, a Latino female engineer dating Todd, a White male accountant met through friends and has been together for three years. She makes 70K a year and he makes 80K a year.  
1      2      3      4      5      6
- 6: Yadira, a Latino female architect dating Kenneth, a White male cook. They met at the university cafeteria. They have been together for two years. She makes 90K a year and he makes 30K a year.  
1      2      3      4      5      6
- 7: Isabel, a Latino female student of sociology dating Mark, a White male jeweler. They have been dating for six months. They met at a club. She makes 15K a year and he makes 65K a year.  
1      2      3      4      5      6

- 8: Paola, a Latino nanny dating William, a White male butcher. They met at a community dance. They have been together for five years. She makes 18K a year and he makes 22K a year.

1      2      3      4      5      6

Additional questions:

On the following questions, please respond according to the best of your understanding based on interethnic dating (dating outside of your own ethnic group).

1 = Highly Unlikely

6 = Very Likely

- |   |     |    |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|-----|----|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. I have dated interethnically                       | Yes | No |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would date again                                    | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| <i>If you have NEVER dated interethnically</i>        |     |    |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would date outside of my ethnic group               | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| 2. I have dated interracially                         | Yes | No |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would date again                                    | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| <i>If you have NEVER dated interracially</i>          |     |    |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would date outside of my racial group               | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| 3. I have been married interethnically                | Yes | No |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would marry again interracially                     | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| <i>If you have never been married interethnically</i> |     |    |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would marry outside of my ethnic group              | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| 4. I have been married interracially                  | Yes | No |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would marry again interracially                     | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |
| <i>If you have never been married interracially</i>   |     |    |   |   |   |   |  |
| I would marry outside of my racial group              | 1   | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |  |

On the following questions, please respond according to the best of your understanding if your parents and friends would be accepting of you dating interethnically:

1= Never      6= Always

- 1) I would introduce my (*ethnicity*) boyfriend/girlfriend to my parents. \_\_\_\_
- 2) My parents would approve. \_\_\_\_
- 3) I would introduce my (*ethnicity*) boyfriend/girlfriend to my friends. \_\_\_\_
- 4) My friends would approve. \_\_\_\_

Appendix B

The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

### **The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)**

In this country, people come from many different countries and cultures, and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, Asian American, Chinese, Filipino, American Indian, Mexican American, Caucasian or White, Italian American, and many others. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

Please fill in: In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be \_\_\_\_\_

Use the numbers below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

**(4) Strongly agree (3) Agree (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree**

1. \_\_\_\_ I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.
2. \_\_\_\_ I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.
3. \_\_\_\_ I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.
4. \_\_\_\_ I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.
5. \_\_\_\_ I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.
6. \_\_\_\_ I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.
7. \_\_\_\_ I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.
8. \_\_\_\_ In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.

9. \_\_\_\_ I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.
10. \_\_\_\_ I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
11. \_\_\_\_ I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.
12. \_\_\_\_ I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.
13. My ethnicity is
- (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
  - (2) Black or African American
  - (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
  - (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
  - (5) American Indian/American Indian
  - (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
  - (7) Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_
14. My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above) \_\_\_\_.
- My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above) \_\_\_\_.
15. \_\_\_\_ I don't try to become friends with people from other ethnic groups.
16. \_\_\_\_ I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.
17. \_\_\_\_ I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups.
18. \_\_\_\_ I feel a strong attachment toward my ethnic group.
19. \_\_\_\_ I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own.
20. \_\_\_\_ I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.

## Appendix C

### The Modern Racism Scale

### The Modern Racism Scale

Please answer the following questions using the scale below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree

1. \_\_\_\_ I favor laws that permit ethnic minorities to rent or purchase housing, even when the person offering the property for sale or rent does not wish to rent or sell it to an ethnic minority.
2. \_\_\_\_ Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect to ethnic minorities than they deserve.
3. \_\_\_\_ Generally speaking, I favor full racial integration.
4. \_\_\_\_ It is easy to understand the anger of ethnic minority people in America.
5. \_\_\_\_ I am opposed to open or fair housing laws.
6. \_\_\_\_ Discrimination against ethnic minorities is no longer a problem in the United States.
7. \_\_\_\_ It is a bad idea for ethnic minorities and whites to marry one another.
8. \_\_\_\_ Over the past few years, ethnic minorities have gotten more economically than they deserve.
9. \_\_\_\_ Ethnic minority people are generally not as smart as whites.
10. \_\_\_\_ Ethnic minorities have more influence on school desegregation plans than they ought to have.
11. \_\_\_\_ If an ethnic minority family with about the same income and education as I had moved next door, I would mind it a great deal.
12. \_\_\_\_ Ethnic minorities are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.
13. \_\_\_\_ It was wrong for the United States Supreme Court to outlaw segregation in its 1954 decision.
14. \_\_\_\_ Ethnic minorities should not push themselves where they are not wanted.

Appendix D  
Letter of Information

## Letter of Information

**Introduction/ Purpose:** Elisaida Mendez and Dr. Melanie Domenech-Rodriguez in the Department of Psychology at Utah State University are conducting a study to understand college undergraduate and graduate student's perception of interethnic dating. You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a college or graduate student. We expect approximately 200 participants.

**Procedures:** If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete on-line questionnaires, expressing your opinions about interethnic dating. The survey should take about 20 – 30 minutes.

**Risks:** There are minimal anticipated risks to this study. If you feel uncomfortable answering a question you may skip the question(s) and proceed with the questionnaire. There is minimal risk of being identified as a research participant via your email address.

**Benefits:** There may not be any direct benefits to you from participating in this study; however, the researchers will find out more about college student's perceptions of interethnic dating. This information may lead to new understanding about perceptions of interethnic couples and dating dynamics. These findings may aid in understanding changes that result from social demographical change over time.

**Explanation & offer to answer questions:** If you have any questions, concerns, complaints, or research-related problems, please contact Elisaida Mendez at (435) 757-1654 or by e-mail at [e.mendez@aggiemail.usu.edu](mailto:e.mendez@aggiemail.usu.edu), Melanie Domenech-Rodríguez at (435) 797-3059 or by e-mail at [melanie.domenech@usu.edu](mailto:melanie.domenech@usu.edu).

**Payment/Compensation:** If you choose to submit your email address, you will be entered in to a random drawing for five \$20 gift certificates to Amazon.com. Email addresses will be held in a separate database, and survey responses will not be traceable to specific email addresses. In addition, you can choose to receive a summary of the study results by email, by contacting the student investigator at the email addresses listed above.

**Voluntary nature of participation and right to withdraw without consequence:** Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without consequence.

**Confidentiality:** All survey responses are confidential, and it will not be possible to identify your computer, as the survey software uses a Secure Survey Environment. Research records will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and state regulations. Only the investigators will have access to the data, which will be downloaded from [monkeysurvey.com](http://monkeysurvey.com) and stored on a password protected computer.

**IRB Approval Statement:** The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of

human participants at USU has reviewed and approved this research study. If you have any pertinent questions or concerns about your rights or think the research may have harmed you, you may contact the IRB Administrator at (435) 797-0567 or email [irb@usu.edu](mailto:irb@usu.edu). If you have a concern or complaint about the research and you would like to contact someone other than the research team, you may contact the IRB Administrator to obtain information or to offer input.

**Copy of Consent:** Please print a copy of this informed consent for your files.

**Investigator Statement:** I certify that the research study has been explained to the individual, by me or my research staff, and that the individual understands the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with taking part in this research study. The individual has been given the opportunity to contact me or my research staff to ask any questions pertaining to the study they may have.

Melanie Domemech-Rodriguez, Ph.D.,  
Principal Investigator

Elisaida Méndez, M.Ed.  
Student Researcher

**Participant Consent:** If you have read and understand the above statements, please click on the “CONTINUE” button below. This indicates your consent to participate in this study.

Thank you very much for your participation! Your assistance is truly appreciated.

## VITA

### ELISAIDA MÉNDEZ

#### EDUCATION

- 2004-2013    **Doctoral Program Combined Psychology**  
Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Dissertation title: *Perception of interethnic couples among college students*
- 1994-1996    **Masters of Education in Counseling Psychology**  
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA  
Thesis title: *Exploring characteristics of interethnic romantic relationships*
- 1985-1990    **Bachelor of Arts in Psychology**  
University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez, PR

#### CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

- 2011-2012    **Psychology Internship** Counseling and Psychological Services-University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Co-led group sessions and performed individual therapy, conducted outreach and prevention activities, completed assessments on eating disorders and substance use patterns, membership in clinical committee to enhance quality of service
- 2010 – 2011    **Psychotherapist Assistantship**, Family Institute of Northern Utah , Logan, UT  
Conducted intake sessions, individual and group therapy. Conditions included domestic violence, victims of crime, court-ordered men’s group, and depression
- 2010 - sum    **Student Practicum**, Volunteer at Student Counseling Center-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Managed intake sessions, individual therapy. Conditions included depression, anxiety, relational problems, adjustment problems, and identity issues. Received weekly individual supervision
- 2008-2009    **Student Practicum**, Student Counseling Center-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Performed intake sessions, consultations, individual and couple’s therapy. Conditions included academic stress, adjustment problems, depression, and anxiety. Received weekly and individual supervision
- 2005-2006    **Student Practicum**, Center for Persons with Disabilities-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Carried out intake sessions, assessments, and testing (e.g., WISCIII, WJ-III). Received weekly group and individual supervision

- 2004-2005 **Student Practicum**, Psychology Community Clinic-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Administered intake sessions, individual, and couple therapy. Conditions included personality issues, depression, anxiety, , relational problems, academic stress. Received weekly group and individual supervision
- 2004-2006 **Family Counselor Assistantship**, Head Start-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Rendered clinical services to parents and children. Conducted intake sessions, individual, and family sessions. Provided a series of educational workshops for parents at school settings
- 2003-2004 **Intensive Outpatient Clinical Director**, Northeast Treatment Center, Philadelphia, PA  
Developed and expanded Latino Program, recruited and supervised therapists, networked with community and medical agencies, ensured quality driven services and regulations compliance, revised documentation, delivered individual, group therapy, and psycho-educational sessions.
- 2001-2003 **Director of Outpatient Services**, Wordsworth Academy, Philadelphia, PA  
Started program and supervised staff, supervised written clinical documentation to assess quality of treatment and progress, participated in multidisciplinary meetings, intervened in helping high-risk population, networked with community and social agencies to service severe cases, recruited and supervised therapists; hired psychiatrists, case managers, and clerical staff, trained agency-wide staff on cultural competency, simultaneously served as *Mobile Therapist*, rendered counseling services to multicultural families and their children, granted clinical support in multicultural school setting.
- 2000-2001 **Admissions Clinician/Case Manager**, Wordsworth Academy, Philadelphia, PA  
Coordinated community outreach and clinical assessments , conducted bio-psycho-social evaluations on multicultural population (all ages), collaborated in determining the appropriate level of care, developed individualized treatment plans for each client, participated and facilitated interagency meetings, ensured effective delivery of service at home and/or school.
- 1999-2000 **Drug and Alcohol Counselor (Residential-Forensic)**, Girard Medical Center, Philadelphia, PA  
Administered mental health services and chemical substance education to adult males on early parole from drug related charges, completed bio-psycho-social intake forms, developed treatment plans, initiated case consultation sessions with coworkers and supervisor, conducted group sessions that supported the Twelve Steps of Recovery and encouraged development of insight, contacted families and scheduled family sessions to educate them on addiction issues, met on a weekly basis with residents for individual counseling session, identified triggers, assisted in case management by communicating with parole officers and court case managers, and linking with other services
- 1996-1999 **Mental Health Therapist, Multicultural Services**, John F. Kennedy Mental Health Center, Philadelphia, PA

Provided therapeutic services to children, adolescents, adults, and families, provided individual and play therapy to children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; conducted individual sessions for adults with Major depression, Anxiety Disorder, Bipolar Disorder; provided clinical support to clients as needing additional services in psychiatric nature; initiated case conferences with psychiatrist; worked on a team to develop individualized treatment plans; focused therapy on implementation of established goals

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2011      **Class Instructor**, Developmental Psychology Adolescent -Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Taught class, adapted syllabus, graded objective and subjective evaluations, monitored class atmosphere and discussion
- 2006 - 2008      **Class Instructor**, Multicultural Psychology-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Taught class, adapted syllabus, graded objective and subjective evaluations, monitored class atmosphere and discussion
- 1991-1994      **Multicultural Bilingual Special Education Teacher**, New York City Board of Education, Bronx, NY  
Educated children with special needs in daily living skills, academics, and social  
Taught reading through Whole Language approach to children with mental retardation.  
Instructed reading and math to children with learning disabilities  
Developed curriculums and manipulative tools for children's appropriate motor skills level  
Enhanced educational atmosphere in classroom  
Organized trips to museums, botanical gardens, zoo for students with special needs  
Empowered parents by educating them on community resources and children's conditions  
Attended ongoing continued education workshops in Special Education

### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2011-sum      **Research Assistant**, National Children Study-NIH-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Performed language evaluations to children ages 3-7 years old, collaborated in writing literature reviews, trained evaluators in the use of language assessment protocols
- 2010-2011      **Research Assistant**, Engineering Department-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Contributed to the development of an evaluative research project, conducted semi-structured interviews to program administrators, staff and students, facilitated regional student science competitions
- 2009- 2011      **Research Assistant**, Family, Consumer, and Human Development-Utah State University, Logan, UT

Assisted with writing and discussing findings based on research, conducted interviews to Latino step-families, transcribed and translated interviews from Spanish to English

- 2006-2008 **Research Assistant**, Psychology Department-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Served as interventionist in a parenting class, prepared and organized materials for class, conducted assessments to families (questionnaires, achievement assessment tool), coded family videos and entered data, performed community outreach
- 2007 (sum) **Assistant Director**, Latino Voices Project-Utah State University, Logan, UT  
Recruited, supervised, and trained interviewers in ethical behavior, and cultural skills, recruited interviewees and reviewed completed interviews, scheduled and conducted interviews

### PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- Méndez, E., Skogrand, L., & Higginbotham, B. (November 2010). *A case study of two lesbian receiving stepfamily education*. Paper presented at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.
- Méndez, E. & Domenech-Rodríguez, M. (November, 2010). *College student's perception of interethnic dating*. Paper presented at the National Latina/o Psychological Association Bi Annual Conference, San Antonio, TX.
- Baker, J.M., Frye, A., Méndez, E., Nye, E., & Jordan, K.E. (2009). *Inter-sensory redundancy enhances numerical matching abilities in preschool children*. Poster presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Denver, CO.
- Méndez, E. & Domenech-Rodríguez, M. (November, 2008). *Culturally rotted differences and approaches to negotiation in Latino-White couples*. Paper presented at the National Latina/o Psychological Association Bi Annual Conference, Costa Mesa, CA.
- Méndez, E. (April, 2008). *Exploring characteristics of interethnic romantic relationships*. Poster presented at the Intermountain Graduate Student Research Symposium, Logan, UT.
- Méndez, E. & Domenech-Rodríguez, M. (2006). *Cultural differences in Latino-White couples*. Presented at the National Latina/o Psychological Association Bi Annual Conference, Milwaukee, WI.
- Méndez, E. (2005). *Improving self esteem*. Presented at the Head Start Parent Conference, Logan, UT
- Méndez, E. (2005). *On bilingualism*. Panel participation at the National Association for Multicultural Education, Logan, UT.

### OTHER PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 2010 Multiple Guest Speaker Psychology class-Health Psychology-Motivation
- 2010 Multiple Guest Speaker English class-Latino experience in America

2008	Tanner Symposium Latino Voices Project presentation
2008	Multiple Community workshops (parents/staff)-Cultural Competence
2007	Northern Utah Speaks presentation-Latino Voices Oral History Project
2006, 2007	Community Presentation Literacy
2006, 2007	Guest Speaker Sociology-Social factors, White Privilege
2005-2008	Latino Discussion Panelist-Multicultural Education
2005-2006	Bilingual testing and evaluator-Early Intervention Research Institute, USU
2005	Guest Speaker Psychology class-Eating Disorders
2005	Community lecturer-Couples Relations
2004	Latino Discussion Panelist-Hispanic Student Union

### **MEMBERSHIPS**

American Psychological Association-45, 17  
Psi Alpha Omega, Honor Society for Students of Color

### **SPECIALIZED SKILLS/CERTIFICATIONS**

- Training certification by Utah Domestic Violence Council (2010)
- Bilingual/Bicultural (English and Spanish)
- Knowledge of Mental Health State Regulations; JCAHO, HIPPA
- Certified as Cultural Competency Trainer, PA (2003)