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ABSTRACT

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ADULT ATTACHMENT AS CORRELATES
OF RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG WHITE,
BLACK, AND INTERRACIAL COUPLES

by

Donalea McIntyre

Chair: Carole Woolford-Hunt

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: ETHNIC IDENTITY AND ADULT ATTACHMENT AS CORRELATES
OF RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG WHITE, BLACK, AND
INTERRACIAL COUPLES

Name of researcher: Donalea McIntyre

Name and degree of faculty chair: Carole Woolford-Hunt, Ph.D.

Date completed: July 2018

Problem

Relationship satisfaction is a broad construct that has been extensively researched. However, there are gaps in the literature pertaining to relationship satisfaction in minority and interracial couples. This present study examines the extent of the relationship between ethnic identity and adult attachment to relationship satisfaction in White, Black, and Interracial couples.

Method

Participants completed surveys that measure a) ethnic identity, b) adult attachment, and c) relationship satisfaction. Several statistical analysis methods were used to answer two research questions. These methods included descriptive statistics,

one-way MANOVA, and Path Analysis. Six hundred and seven adults in the United States general population were studied. Of the participants, 360 were in white same-race relationships, 200 were in black same-race relationships, and 47 were in interracial relationships.

Results

The one-way MANOVA indicated that there were no significant differences between White, Black, and Interracial couples in their experience of ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. Path Analysis indicated that the original model, which features all the subscales of the ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction scales, was not a good fit. The revised model showed the best fit for the data. It suggested that a component of relationship satisfaction, the degree in which couples engage in activities with each other, was influenced by a sense of belonging to their particular ethnic group, an active search into their own ethnic identity, feeling comfortable with being close with their partner, and the degree of perceived emotional affection within the couple dyad. White, Black, and Interracial couples differed on the extent that these variables influenced the degree that couples engaged in activities with each other.

Conclusions

This study shows that ethnic identity and adult attachment are correlated with the degree in which couples engage in activities with each other, but they do not account for all the components of relationship satisfaction. These findings have implications in the fields of counseling and research psychology and add to the understanding of how individuals in White, Black, and Interracial couples relate to each other.

Andrews University

School of Education

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BLACK, AND INTERRACIAL COUPLES

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Donalea McIntyre

July 2018

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Date approved

My life amounts to no more than one drop in a limitless ocean. Yet
what is an ocean, but a multitude of drops?

– David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	x
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Problem	1
Rationale for the Study	3
Statement of the Problem.....	5
The Purpose of the Study.....	6
Research Questions	6
Conceptual Framework.....	6
The Conceptualization of Relationship Satisfaction.....	6
The Conceptualization of Ethnic Identity	7
The Conceptualization of Adult Attachment	8
Conceptualization Applied to Present Study	9
Significance of the Study.....	9
Definition of the Terms.....	11
Limitations	12
Delimitations.....	13
Organization of the Study	14
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	15
Purpose of Literature Review	15
Sources for Material Included in This Literature Review	16
Criteria for Selection of Material.....	16
The Literature Review Findings	17
Historical Overview of Relationship Satisfaction.....	18
Theories of Relationship Satisfaction	20
Historical Overview of Identity	24
Theories of Identity Development	26
Historical Overview of Ethnic Identity	32
Theories of Ethnic Identity Development.....	35

The Relationship Between Ethnic Identity and Relationship Satisfaction in Black, White, and Interracial Couples	41
History of Attachment Theory	44
Theories of Adult Attachment	46
The Relationship Between Adult Attachment and Relationship Satisfaction	48
Summary of Literature Review	51
3. METHODOLOGY	53
Research Questions	53
Hypothesis	54
Research Design	54
Population and Sampling	55
Definition of Variables	56
Independent Variables	56
Dependent Variable	57
Instrumentation	58
Multi Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised	58
Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised	59
Dyadic Adjustment Scale	60
Demographic Questionnaire	61
Procedure	61
Treatment of the Data	62
Summary of Methodology	62
4. RESULTS	64
Introduction	64
Description of Sample	64
Reliability Estimates	68
Dyadic Adjustment Scale	68
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised	69
Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised	69
Results by Question	70
Research Question 1	71
Research Question 2	76
Summary of Findings	89
5. DISCUSSION	91
Introduction	91
Purpose of the Study	91
Summary of the Literature	91
Review of Relationship Satisfaction Literature	92
Review of Ethnic Identity Literature	93
Review of Adult Attachment Literature	94

Summary of Methodology	94
Summary and Discussion of Major Findings.....	95
Demographic Characteristics of Participants.....	95
Research Question 1	96
Research Question 2	99
Limitations	104
Implications of Study.....	105
Implications for Practice	106
Implications for Future Research.....	107
Appendix	
A. APPROVAL LETTER.....	109
B. INFORMED CONSENT	111
C. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE	113
D. SURVEYS	116
REFERENCES	124
VITA	143

LIST OF FIGURES

1.	Hypothesized Relationship Between Ethnic Identity, Adult Attachment and Relationship Satisfaction	10
2.	Path Model—Original	82
3.	Path Model—Re-specified	83
4.	Path Model—White Couples	85
5.	Path Model—Black Couples	87
6.	Path Model—Interracial Couples	88

LIST OF TABLES

1.	Participants' Demographic Statistics	66
2.	Reliability Coefficient Scales	70
3.	Participants' Descriptive Statistics	72
4.	Pillai's Trace for One-Way Between-Subjects Factorial MANOVA.....	76
5.	Zero Correlation Matrix of Variables	77
6.	Path Analysis	80
7.	Standardized Regression Weights for Original Model	81
8.	Squared Multiple Correlations for Original Model	82
9.	Standardized Regression Weights for Re-specified Model	82
10.	Squared Multiple Correlations for Re-specified Model.....	83
11.	Standardized Regression Weights for Model for White Couples.....	85
12.	Squared Multiple Correlations for Model of White Couples.....	85
13.	Standardized Regression Weights for Model for Black Couples	87
14.	Squared Multiple Correlations for Model of Black Couples	87
15.	Standardized Regression Weights for Model for Interracial Couples	89
16.	Squared Multiple Correlations for Model of Interracial Couples.....	89

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFI	Comparative Fit Index
DAS	Dyadic Adjustment Scale
ECR-R	Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
NFI	Normed Fit Index
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
MEIM-R	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

As racial and ethnic demographics change in the United States and Canada, it is important to consider the population growth of interracial couples. Up until around the turn of the 20th century segregation, intolerance, and discrimination were the hallmarks of socialization in North America. Racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities had little opportunities for intercultural socialization, education, and upward economic mobility. As more Europeans immigrated to America, the cultural landscape shifted. Soon differences in education and work opportunities narrowed and residential and language barriers were almost eliminated. After a few generations, ethnic boundaries were reduced, and interethnic marriages became more commonplace for the new European immigrants (Lieberson, 1980; Pagnini & Morgan, 1990).

However, discrimination and segregation in America continued to occur between White and Black racial groups. After a long history of striving for freedom, equality, opportunities, and belonging, schools were desegregated. Black youth were given the opportunity to have similar educational resources to White youth (*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1954). As educational and work opportunities increased, interracial contact became more frequent. The discussion of interracial relationships was more frequent in the 1950s and 1960s, with the increasing roles of African American actors

and movies, like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Kramer & Kramer, 1964), which tackled the idea of interracial relationships. In *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), the U.S. Supreme Court abolished anti-miscegenation laws, which prohibited people from marrying across racial lines. After this ruling, the growth of Black and White interracial marriages increased from 51,000 in 1960 to 395,000 in 2002 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a, 2011b).

Many theorists suggest that the substantial growth of interracial marriages is an indicator of an improvement in ethnic relations in America (Fu & Heaton, 2008; Ono & Berg, 2010; Qian & Lichter, 2007). While racial tolerance is increasing, interracial marriages support the idea that intergroup social distance is declining (Lee & Bean, 2010; Rosenfeld, 2008). As minorities take advantage of education, work, and living opportunities, the social landscape for both minority and majority groups change, allowing for more social interaction. Changing views about individuals from other groups and the modification of relationship preferences increases the possibilities of interracial marriages.

However, upward mobility can separate minority group members from each other. Those who are afforded education and work advancement may become socially, intellectually, and geographically estranged from their counterparts who are not afforded the same opportunities, which will in turn reduce the likelihood of ethnic endogamy (Kalmijn, 1996; Qian & Litchner, 2001).

Separation from their racial group may result in minorities not having the contextual support of the ethno-racial socialization provided by their ethnic group. Individuals may become isolated or withdrawn, allowing less interaction among their

ethnicity of origin. Scholars argue that ethno-racial socialization provides individuals with information to find a sense of orientation, meaning, and belonging in their ethnicity (Hughes et al., 2006; Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009). Without the conceptual anchor ethno-racial socialization provides, progress through Cross's (1971, 1978) Nigrescence model of African American racial identity development may be impacted. Ethnic identity may then in turn impact relationships, particularly relationships that cross ethnic and cultural boundaries.

Since interracial marriages were decriminalized in 1967, the number of interracial couples has increased substantially (Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Root, 2001). Despite these statistics, individuals in interracial relationships face several challenges. Research suggests that the majority of U.S. citizens continue to perceive interracial dating as taboo and homogamous relationships are still the norm (Kalmijn, 1993; Knox, Zusman, Buffington, & Hemphill, 2000; Rosenthal & Starks, 2015). Racism, discrimination, and lack of social support can place stress on relationships and affect the way couples interact (Harris & Kalbfleisch, 2000; Rosenthal & Starks, 2015; Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). Although interracial relationships have been researched, information on relationship satisfaction is inconclusive in the literature (Canlas, Miller, Busby, & Carroll, 2015).

Rationale for the Study

Most research that examines relationship satisfaction and adult attachment does not include ethnic identity. However, relationship satisfaction is often examined in the context of ethnic and cultural groups (Brooks, 2015; Doyle & Molix, 2014; Lavner, Barton, Bryant, & Beach, 2018; Li & Fung, 2011; Perry, 2016; Raley & Sweeney, 2009; Randall & Bodenmann, 2009; Skowronski et al., 2014). Mostly Black and Interracial

couples are examined in comparison to White couples. Relationship results for Black couples often report low quality and high relationship dissolution, while results for Interracial couples are often inconclusive (Canlas et al., 2015).

It appears that many factors influence relationship satisfaction and that these factors vary depending on the ethnic context of the individuals in the couple dyad (Canlas et al., 2015; Givertz et al., 2016; Juhari & Arif, 2016; Li & Fung, 2011; Loscocco & Walzer, 2013; Shiota & Levenson, 2007; Skowronski et al., 2014; Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). Research focused on the interrelationship of adult attachment and relationship satisfaction focuses on how attachments influence relationship conflict, which impacts satisfaction (Allison, Bartholomew, Mayless, & Dutton, 2008; Feeney, 2008; Harma & Sümer, 2016). Ethnic studies on the association between ethnic identity and relationship satisfaction are focused on the risk and resiliency factors for minority relationships (McCullough, 2005; Nicolas, Arntz, Hirsch, & Schmiedigen, 2009; Perry, 2016; Raley & Sweeney, 2009; Wills et al., 2007). However, gaps still remain in the literature pertaining to research analyzing the intersectional relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction among majority, minority, and interracial groups (Bryant et al., 2010; Canlas et al., 2015; Cassidy, 2000; Doyle & Molix, 2014; Fiori, Consedine, & Magai, 2009; Gillath, Hart, Nofle, & Stockdale, 2009; Lavner et al., 2018; Randall & Bodenmann, 2009; Rosenthal & Starks, 2015). Further research in this area can provide information to clinicians, which can guide their work with same-race and interracial couples.

Statement of the Problem

This research investigated ethnic identity and adult attachment as correlates of relationship satisfaction. These constructs were examined across White, Black, and Interracial couples. The study was designed to analyze how aspects identity development and social interaction influence the subjective appraisal of romantic relationships. It was developed in response to the insufficient information in relationship satisfaction literature pertaining to ethnicity and adult attachment.

The literature provides information on ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. However, few studies examine these constructs together. Although ethnicity has been analyzed in connection to relationship satisfaction, there is insufficient information on how ethnic identity development influences relationship satisfaction. The few studies examining ethnic identity and relationship satisfaction focus on ways to improve relationship outcomes for African American couples (Lavner et al., 2018; Perry, 2016; Raley & Sweeney, 2009; Wills et al., 2007; McCullough, 2005;). Although more studies examine adult attachment in conjunction with relationship satisfaction, few analyze these variables in minority populations (Harma & Sümer, 2016; Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013; Li & Chan, 2012; Feeney, 2008; Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan, & Cowan, 2002; Collins & Feeney, 2000; Cohn, Silver, Cowan, Cowan, & Pearson, 1992). In addition, literature contains few studies that distinctly compare White, Black, and Interracial couples (Lavner et al., 2018; Canlas et al., 2015; Rosenthal & Starks, 2015; Doyle & Molix, 2014; Bryant et al., 2010; Fiori, Consedine, & Magai, 2009; Gillath, Hart, Nofle, & Stockdale, 2009; Randall & Bodenmann, 2009; Cassidy, 2000). The present study addresses these problems in order to facilitate an increased

awareness of how ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction are related in couples from White, Black, and Interracial backgrounds.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. In particular, it compared the interrelationship of these variables among White, Black, and Interracial couples.

Research Questions

The present study sought to answer two research questions concerning the relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction in White, Black, and Interracial couples:

1. Are there differences among White, Black, and Interracial couples in ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction?
2. To what extent is relationship satisfaction related to ethnic identity and adult attachment among White, Black, and Interracial couples?

Conceptual Framework

Three areas of psychological literature influenced this study: 1) relationship satisfaction, 2) ethnic identity, and 3) adult attachment. Each area will be discussed individually in the following sections.

The Conceptualization of Relationship Satisfaction

Several relationship researchers have developed theories to conceptualize relationship satisfaction. The Interdependence Theory describes how social rewards and costs influence behaviors and motives in romantic relationships. When in a romantic

relationship, individuals seek to maximize their rewards (i.e., security and companionship) and minimize their costs (i.e., emotional pain and reduction of autonomy). They evaluate relationship satisfaction by mentally calculating the rewards and costs, and then determine if the rewards outweigh the costs or vice versa. How they perceive rewards and costs depends on their general expectations about relationships and their specific expectations about the relationship with their partner (Guerrero et al., 2011; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Building on the Interdependence Theory, the Investment Model suggests that extrinsic and intrinsic resources invested into the relationship increase relational commitment when the investment is perceived as a cost if the relationship dissolves (Beach, Katz, Kim, & Brody, 2003; Juhari & Arif, 2016; Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Shafer, James, & Larson, 2013).

The Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction suggests that the goals couples achieve during the relationship determine satisfaction. Individuals within the couple dyad often create multiple goals for the relationship, tentatively prioritize them (priorities may change throughout adulthood), and attempt to achieve their goals. Satisfaction is determined by whether goals are completed during particular developmental stages. Additional factors impact relationship satisfaction by either facilitating goal achievement or changing the priorities of certain goals (Li & Fung, 2011).

The Conceptualization of Ethnic Identity

Although several theorists worked on developing racial and ethnic identity models for various racial groups, this study is grounded in the theory postulated by Jean S. Phinney. According to Phinney (1990), a person's ethnic identity is defined as: 1) a sense of belonging to his/her ethnic group, 2) the evaluation of that group, 3) the degree of

interest and knowledge about the group, 4) involvement in traditions and activities of the group, and 5) commitment to the group. She postulated that individuals could experience three ethnic developmental stages: the unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search/moratorium, and ethnic identity achievement. However, in later research, she suggested that ethnic exploration and commitment are continuous dimensions (Phinney & Ong, 2007). In order to measure ethnic identity along her theory, she developed the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R), which she designed to examine ethnic identity of adolescents and adults from a variety of ethnic groups.

The Conceptualization of Adult Attachment

Attachment to significant others provides individuals with a sense of security, comfort, and a secure base they can be returned to after an exploration of the environment (Bowlby, 1969). This study focuses on the adult attachment styles, which arise from the childhood attachment styles described by various researchers (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Alexandrov, Cowan, & Cowan, 2005; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Simpson, 1990).

Childhood attachment develops within the context of a nuclear family, which provides a social framework for children to observe and model relational behaviors. In adulthood development, romantic partners usually replace parents and caretakers as the primary attachment figures (Bandura, 1977; Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Sassler, Cunningham, & Lichter, 2009; Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997; Van Poppel, Monden, & Mandemakers, 2008; Welsh, Grello, & Harper, 2003). The three adult attachment styles are: secure, anxious, and avoidant. Individuals who securely attach to significant others tend to have trusting, supportive relationships. Anxiously attached individuals have

negative self-images, excessively seek for external approval, and fear being rejected or abandoned by loved ones. Avoidantly attached individuals tend to have negative images of others, socially withdraw, and have either an excessive need for self-reliance or fear of depending on others (Simpson, 1990).

Conceptualizations Applied to Present Study

The present study explores the association between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. The contribution of ethnic identity and adult attachment to the experience of relationship satisfaction will be explored in White, Black, and Interracial (White-Black) couples. Figure 1 shows the hypothesis on the interrelationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. Ethnic identity is hypothesized to have a reasonable impact on relationship satisfaction, while adult attachment will have a significant impact on relationship satisfaction. It is also postulated that ethnic identity will also have a significant impact on adult attachment. The degree to which these variables are related will depend on the ethnic groups of the couples. For White couples, ethnic identity may have little to no impact on adult attachment and relationship satisfaction. In Black marriages, ethnic identity may have a substantial impact on adult attachment and a moderate impact on relationship satisfaction. In Interracial marriages, ethnic identity may have a moderate to large impact on adult satisfaction and a large impact on relationship satisfaction.

Significance of the Study

The present research contributes to the field of mental health by providing researchers and clinicians with information on the association between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. By understanding the relationship between

Figure 1. Hypothesized relationship between Ethnic Identity, Adult Attachment, and Relationship Satisfaction.

these three variables, clinicians can develop informed treatment plans for minority and interracial couples. In addition, therapists can assess their clients' ethnic identity development and attachment styles and address concerns of identity differences or attachment incompatibility with couples. Researchers will also be able to benefit from this investigation because the outcomes generate inquiries for future research in relationship, ethnic, and attachment literature. For a few years, multicultural literature has been focused on the ethnic identity of minorities as it pertains to resiliency in inner city youth, education, self-esteem, and physical health (Dagadu & Cristie-Mizell, 2014; Decuir-Gunby, Martin, & Cooper, 2012; Hurd, Sellers, Cogburn, Butler-Barnes, & Zimmerman, 2013; Lee & Ahn, 2013; Sanchez, 2013). This research emphasizes the need to further the discussion on how ethnic identity influences relationship satisfaction in minority and interracial couples. It is also important for people in romantic relationships, since it underscores the importance of understanding how individual ethnic identity and attachment style can impact different relational dynamics, which will in turn influence relationship satisfaction. Self-awareness of ethnic identity is not only important for

minority and interracial couples. White couples can also benefit from becoming aware of their own relationship to their ethnicity, since bias and prejudices can potentially arise out of personal insecurities about the self.

Definition of the Terms

The following is a list of terms, along with their definitions, that will be used in this study:

Adult Attachment: A close emotional bond individuals have with others, particularly with romantic partners, in adulthood (Feeney, 2008; Santrock, 2009; Zeifman & Hazan, 2008).

Anxious Attachment: An emotional bond where the individual engages in excessive approval seeking behavior and has a negative self-image and fearful emotions about being rejected or abandoned by his/her partner (Simpson, 1990).

Avoidant Attachment: An emotional bond where the individual has an excessive need for self-reliance, is fearful of depending on others, and has a negative view (Simpson, 1990).

Culture: The sum total ways of living developed by a group of people to meet their biological and psychological needs. It includes values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, folkways, behavior styles, and traditions that accumulate to form an integrated whole that functions to preserve their society (Pinderhughes, 1989).

Ethnic Identity: An individual's sense of belonging to a particular ethnicity (Cross, 1991; Phinney, 1990).

Ethnicity: The connection within a group based on commonalities, such as region and nationality, where specific aspects of culture are shared and transmitted over time to create a common history (Pinderhughes, 1989).

Homogamous Relationship: A union between two people of the same race (Eeckhaut, Lievens, Van de Putte, & Lusyne, 2011; Chun, 2008; *Dictionary.com Unabridged*, n.d.; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2002).

Interracial Relationship: A union between two people of different races (*Dictionary.com Unabridged*, n.d.; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2002).

Parent-child Attachment: A close emotional bond children have with others, particularly with their parents or care-givers (Santrock, 2009).

Race: A biological term that refers to the physical characteristics of various groups (Pinderhughes, 1989).

Relationship Satisfaction: A subjective general evaluation of a person's contentment, fulfillment, and gratification in the relationship (Graham, Diebels, & Barnow, 2011).

Secure Attachment: An emotional bond expressed in having trusting, supportive relationship with a partner (Simpson, 1990).

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study. One limitation is that the population of this investigation will be taken from the user database of the *QuestionPro*, which is an online service that allows researchers to develop and distribute surveys to their target populations. Although the service provides a lot of helpful benefits for obtaining the necessary data, it also limits the pool of participants in the way that it rewards users for

completing surveys. Individuals who complete the survey obtain participation points that they can redeem for gift cards to commercial retail establishments. Due to this arrangement, it is difficult to control for confounding variables related to the types of people that are committed to completing surveys to obtain shopping gift cards.

Another limitation is that the MEIM-R, the measure that assesses ethnic identity, is not able to capture aspects of ethnic identity development that are described by stage theories presented by some researchers (Cross, 1971, 1978; Helms, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Helm's White Racial Identity Model and Cross's Nigrescence Model detail the process in which ethnic identity develops, but the White Racial Identity Attitude Scale and the Black Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Form B) do not allow for comparison of data (Helms, 1993; Helms & Carter, 1990). Although the MEIM-R can measure ethnic identity across a variety of races and ethnicities, it only captures the degree of ethnic exploration and commitment participants have (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Delimitations

The present research focuses on the relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction in White and Black individuals, therefore the couple types are White homogamous couples, Black homogamous couples, and White and Black interracial couples. Although there are homogamous couples of other races and ethnicities and interracial couples of other ethnic mixes, the study will be limited to Black and White individuals because it is believed that there will be a greater number of couples from those backgrounds in the locations where the data will be gathered. In addition, this study will focus on adult relationships, thus only individuals over the age of 18 will be eligible to participate.

Organization of the Study

This research has been organized into five chapters. In this chapter, the present study was introduced and background to the problem was outlined. Chapter 2 describes the literature on relationship satisfaction, ethnic identity, and adult attachment. Chapter 3 will present the methodology of the study, which includes the research questions, research design, instrumentations, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis. Chapter 4 reports the results obtained from the data analysis, which includes statistical analyses and related figures and tables. Chapter 5 will discuss the results in light of the previous research and draw conclusions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purpose of Literature Review

The purpose of this preliminary literature review is to provide an empirical framework for a non-experimental correlational study that will explore the relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment and relationship satisfaction in White, Black, and Interracial relationships. Many 20th century relationship satisfaction studies focused on developing theories to explain satisfaction, commitment, and expectations in marriages. During that time, less than one in 1000 marriages in the United States were marriages between Black and White couples. However, today 15% of new marriages are between individuals of different races and ethnicities and Black and White couples make up 1.7% of new marriages in the U.S. (Passel, Wang, & Taylor, 2010). Although 80% of Americans report that they support interracial marriages, there is little research exploring the dynamics of interracial marriages (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013). Studies exploring ethnic and racial dynamics tend to focus on developing theories of identity development and examine how identity impacts the individual. Additionally, ethnic studies examining individual attachment patterns have mostly focused on comparing minority groups with the White population.

In order to provide the appropriate care for couples and families, clinicians need to be aware of the multicultural issues that affect ethnic identity development, attachment

patterns, and relationship satisfaction. This literature review will examine studies that investigate the histories and theories of relationship satisfaction, ethnic identity development, and attachment.

Sources for Material Included in this Literature Review

The articles that were obtained for this literature review were found through several online databases, which include ERIC, PsychINFO, PsychARTICLES, Psychology Database, ProQuest Psychology Journals, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Wiley Interscience, EBSCOhost, and Dissertations and Theses at Andrews University. The main criteria that were used were ‘identity,’ ‘racial identity,’ ‘interracial couples,’ ‘black couples,’ ‘adult attachment,’ ‘relationship satisfaction,’ and ‘marital satisfaction.’ The literature search was more refined by the use of more specific keywords and descriptors, such as ‘racial identity development,’ ‘ethnic identity,’ ‘ethnic identity development,’ ‘cultural identity development,’ ‘black-white interracial couples,’ and ‘marital expectation.’ The many articles in this survey of literature are presented in an effort to determine realistic boundaries for further research in the area of the correlation between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction.

Criteria for Selection of Material

Although there are a number of articles available on ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction, not every article was valid or had sufficient empirical evidence. The first criterion for article selection was the journal in which the article was published. A brief survey of the literature revealed that most of the articles that were relevant to this study could be obtained from journals like *Cultural Diversity*

and Ethnic Minority Psychology, Family Relations, and Journal of Marriage and Family.

By tracking these journals and others that are similar, relevant primary resources were found.

The second criterion for article selection had to do with the content of the articles. Many articles were excluded from this literature review if they did not have diverse samples, had little to no information on Black participants, and focused on examining specific details pertaining to other minority groups that are not the focus of this study (e.g. Asian, Latinx, or Indigenous couples). Since research on interracial couples often group all types of interracial couples together, studies examining other types of interracial relationships were included if they offered relevant information that could be applied to White-Black Interracial couples.

Lastly, mostly primary sources were used in this literature review. Although many secondary resources provided an essential framework for understanding the constructs, they did not provide any first hand empirical evidence about these topics. However, these resources were useful in the location of primary resources. Some of the primary resources were tracked using the cited resources of the article and searching for these primary articles in databases.

The Literature Review Findings

Many sources were found for this literature review and they were categorized into ten sections: (1) Historical Overview of Relationship Satisfaction, (2) Theories of Relationship Satisfaction, (3) Historical Overview of Identity, (4) Theories of Identity Development, (5) Historical Overview of Ethnic Identity, (6) Theories of Ethnic Identity Development, (7), The Relationship Between Ethnic Identity and Relationship

Satisfaction in Black, White, and Interracial Couples, (8) History of Attachment Theory, (9) Theories of Adult Attachment, and (10) The Relationship Between Adult Attachment and Relationship Satisfaction. These studies also provide insight into where there are gaps of knowledge about certain aspects of ethnic identity development among individuals in interracial relationships and individuals with multiple ethnicities.

Historical Overview of Relationship Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is one of the most widely analyzed variables in the study of romantic relationships. In 1938, Terman et al. published the first study on marriage and the first measure of marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1999). Researchers associate the subjective perceptions partners have about their marital or relationship satisfaction with child rearing and functioning, physical health, and mental health (Gove, Hughes, & Style, 1983; Howes & Markman 1989; Weiss & Aved, 1978). According to Gottman (1999), marital satisfaction is a significant construct, but a weak predictor of divorce. Low marital satisfaction is only the beginning of list of processes that are precursors of divorce. Over the years, marital and relationship satisfaction have often been confounded and used interchangeably with other terms. Some terms are marital/relationship quality, adjustment, and happiness (Cohen, 1985; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994). In order to differentiate between these constructs, Graham et al. (2011) have defined relationship satisfaction as “one’s subjective global evaluation of one’s relationship” (p.39).

Researchers have suggested that there are several factors to consider when investigating marital satisfaction. In a relationship or marriage, individual characteristics, or personality, can affect the level of marital satisfaction each partner may report. Many

researchers have tried to examine whether there was an intersection between personality traits and marital satisfaction and reported mixed results. Using the Big Five Personality Model, a popular five-factor model that describes personality traits in common language descriptors, researchers found that high levels of neuroticism was associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction (Shiota & Levenson, 2007). Longitudinal studies suggest that spouses with high levels of neuroticism tend to report lower levels of marital satisfaction and have a greater likelihood of divorce (Caughlin, Huston, & Houts, 2000; Kelly & Conley, 1987). Other studies suggest that traits of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience have a positive effect on marital satisfaction (Botwin, Buss, & Shakelford, 1997; Gattis, Berns, Simpson, & Christensen, 2004). Some studies suggest that extraversion has negative effect on marital satisfaction, while others assert that there is no significant effect (Gattis et al., 2004; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Lester, Haig, & Monello, 1989). Few studies have explored whether similarities in personality is associated with satisfaction within the relationship. Although most studies found no significant correlation between personality similarity and relationship satisfaction (Glicksohn & Golan, 2001; Russell & Wells, 1991; Watson et al., 2004), Robins, Caspi, and Moffitt (2000) found that a similarity in neuroticism was associated with greater relationship satisfaction. In a study focusing on middle-aged to older couples, Shiota and Levenson (2007) found that personality similarity, especially on the conscientious and extraversion traits, strongly predicted lower levels of marital satisfaction. This suggests that over the course of the marriage the importance of personality similarity changes as partners face different life tasks at different developmental stages. For young adults, the core social issues are emotional intimacy,

partner selection, and the development forming a shared life as couples (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996; Pasch & Bradbury, 1998). Thus, similarities in personality may promote feelings of intimacy and attachment (Kurdek, 1991). However, as partners individually grow relationship qualities that support the changing life stages, external demands outside the marriage may become more important (Baltes, 1997; Erikson, 1959/1980).

Race, ethnicity, and culture can also have impacts on relationships. Race and ethnicity are strongly associated with the likelihood of getting married. Although African and Mexican Americans are just as likely as White Americans to say that they plan to get married, White Americans have a greater likelihood of actually getting married than African Americans. Mexican Americans also have higher rates of divorce than White Americans (Brown, Ojeda, Wyn, & Levan, 2000; Ellwood & Jencks, 2002). Asian couples reported less marital satisfaction than White couples and Asian-White couples, but also reported low rates of marital dissolution (Canlas et al., 2015; Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). Interracial couples had lower relationship commitment, trust, and sexual community when they received stigma from their friends. However, high levels of dyadic coping and egalitarianism produced resiliency against the negative associations that came from the stigma of friends (Rosenthal & Starks, 2015).

Theories of Relationship Satisfaction

Throughout the years, several theories have tried to describe marital or relationship satisfaction. The Interdependence Theory endeavored to describe how social rewards and costs influences behaviors and motives in romantic relationships. Individuals within the couple dyad seek to maximize their rewards (e.g., feelings of security, companionship, or generating offspring) and minimize their costs (e.g., emotional pain,

loss of individual identity, or reduction of autonomy) in a relationship. People evaluate relationship satisfaction by mentally calculating the rewards and costs of the relationships. When there are more rewards than costs in the relationships, individuals evaluate the relationship to have a positive outcome. However, if there are more costs than rewards, individuals deem the outcome negatively.

Relationship satisfaction is not only determined by weighing the rewards and costs. The expectations individuals have before going into the relationships with their partners influence how they view rewards and costs. Relationship expectations also influence the amount of rewards that are necessary to consider the relationship to have a positive outcome (Guerrero et al., 2011; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978, Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Mutual dependence occurs when the motivation of couples transform from self-centered interests to relationship-centered interests. Although there are many rewarding experiences when mutual dependency develops, there is also an increase in vulnerability (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003).

As described in the Interdependence Theory, relationship expectations influence how individuals perceive benefits and drawbacks within the relationship. According to research, relationship or marital expectations are the beliefs each individual partner has about what marriage should be like, which affect how he/she thinks, feels, and behaves in the relationship (Johnson, 2015; Vangelisti & Daly, 1997). These beliefs are shaped by a variety of factors, such as parental relationship, culture, socioeconomic status, romance in the media, and past romantic experiences (Ellwood & Jencks, 2002; Juvva & Bhatti, 2006; Murray et al., 2011; Segrin & Nabi, 2002).

Marital expectations frame the way people perceive their relationship, which

affects how they interact with their partners (Goffman, 1974). These perceptions can impact a number of relational tasks, such as how disagreements should be handled, the amount of time the couple should spend together, and how couples should share their values (Alexander, 2008; Vangelisti & Daly, 1997). Beliefs about what should and should not occur within marriage often develop before individuals enter a relationship (Sager, 1976). They also continue to be created and developed throughout the course of a relationship (Barich & Bielby, 1996). However, expectations about relationships are often engrained and resistant to change, which can make them good predictors of marriages (Goffman, 1974; Sharp & Ganong, 2000).

Relationship satisfaction and expectation are also affected by gender differences. Family and marital researchers note that more women consistently report experiencing marital frustration, dissatisfaction, and negative feelings, which may be the result of gender inequalities in personal relationships and in society as a whole (Bernard, 1972; Connides, 2001). Men gain more advantages than women from marriages, such as health benefits and emotional support (Bernard, 1972; Loscocco & Walzer, 2013; Waite, 1995). Women also traditionally assume most of the responsibility of child rearing and housework (Bernard, 1972; Ferree, 2010; Osmond & Thorne, 1993). The differences between men and women in subjective marital experiences can impact overall marital satisfaction. According to Waller and McLanahan (2005), when either the wife or both partners report distrust for each other, the couple reports having less optimistic views for their marriage. High conflict in the relationship is often reported when both partners distrust each other. On the other hand, women who are older and hold more traditional relational views than their spouse report feeling more optimistic about their marriage. In

addition, couples report more optimism about their relationship when males, or both spouses, report engaging in shared activities.

Relationship or marital commitment is another concept that is associated with relationship satisfaction. Although there are no consistent definitions for commitment in romantic relationships, it is presumed to be the dedication that couples give to maintain the union. High levels of commitment are often associated with satisfaction within the relationship (Givertz et al., 2016). However, there are many unhappy and relationally dissatisfied individuals in committed relationships. Thus, feelings of satisfaction do not necessarily imply that couples will remain in a relationship (Bui, Peplau, & Hill, 1996; Juhari & Arif, 2016). A theory that describes relationship, or marital, commitment is the Investment Model. This model builds on the principles of the Interdependence Theory. According to Rusbult (1980, 1983), relational commitment increases as individuals invest resources in the relationship. Some resources are extrinsic, such as finances or property, while others are intrinsic, such as emotional involvement or spending time together. Commitment to the relationship increases when resources that are poured into the relationship are perceived as costs if the relationship dissolves. Thus, the investment model suggests that relational commitment increases as the individuals of the relationship dyad expend more resources (Beach et al., 2003; Juhari & Arif, 2016; Shafer et al., 2013). According to Stanley and Markman (1992), there are two types of commitment. Dedication commitment is the personal willingness to maintain a relationship, while constraint commitment focused on the external factors that influence maintaining or dissolving a relationship. Dedication commitment was correlated with high levels of marital satisfaction, while constraint commitment was not strongly correlated with

marital satisfaction. In addition, moral commitment was introduced to describe how people's moral beliefs about marriage and divorce influence their dedication to the relationship (Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999).

Relational commitment can also have a reciprocal influence on relationship satisfaction. Couples may express more satisfaction when they invest in shared goals and see them actualized. The Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction (Li & Fung, 2011) suggests that couples achieving the goals that they have established for themselves determine satisfaction within the relationship. The theory suggests four key components: 1) individuals have multiple goals that they want to achieve during marriage, 2) the priority of their goals change throughout adulthood, 3) marital satisfaction is determined by whether marital goals during a particular developmental stage are completed, and 4) other factors impact marital satisfaction by helping to facilitate goal achievement or changing the priorities of certain goals. According to Li and Fung, couples have companionship goals, personal growth goals, and instrumental goals. Companionship goals related to the need people have for a sense of belonging in the relationship. Personal growth goals refer to the desire people have to actualize individual goals within the marriage. Instrumental goals describe the practical objectives, such as sharing household responsibilities, raising children, and managing the family finances.

Historical Overview of Identity

The concept of identity can be traced back to Socrates, who asserted that to truly know something one must understand its essence, or its basic nature and enduring characteristics (Hergenhahn, 2009). In terms of identity, or the self, he suggested, "the life which is unexamined is not worth living" (Jowett, 1988, p. 49). Thus, most theories

about the mind and social interaction were based around the idea that individuals had unique identities that were personal and separate from other people, animals, and objects. However, empirical theorist, David Hume, argued that both the self and mind do not exist. Instead, thoughts and beliefs are just a collection of different perceptions that are connected together through the laws of association and reoccurring experiences. Since the concept of the mind is based on perceptions, the concept of the self can only be understood through perceptions. Without perceptions we do not exist (Flew, 1962; Mossner, 1969).

Early psychologists in the United States based their assumptions of the self on evolutionary theory. Experiments were conducted with animals and humans to understand how mind and behavior interacted when adjusting to an environment. William James suggested that the empirical self is the sum of all that a person can call his/hers. The empirical self can be divided into the material self, social self, and spiritual self. The material self consists of all the things that a person calls his/her own. The social self is all representations of the person that is known by all the individuals who recognize the person. The spiritual self is the person's subjective reality, which consists of their emotions, states of consciousness, and thoughts about themselves. James argues that within the concept of the empirical self is the idea that identity is what the person knows of his/her self and the aspect of the person that engages in the act of knowing (Hergenhahn, 2009).

Modern and postmodern psychological theorists assert that various types of identity can describe people from different perspectives. Biological identity, which can be gleaned from fingerprints, iris scans, and DNA profiles, can identify and describe the

unique, organic aspects of individuals. Personal identity, or personality, focuses on characteristic thought, emotional, and behavioral patterns that develop over time and are relatively enduring throughout the lifespan of individuals (Lorenz, 2010). The psychoanalytic theorist, Carl Jung, asserted that many aspects of personality were unconscious (Hergenhahn, 2009). He suggested that personality is comprised of archetypes that are contained within the collective unconscious. Although he claimed that a large number of archetypes existed, he only elaborated on a few. The persona describes the public image people try to present to others, while the shadow is a dark, immoral aspect of personality that is often suppressed. An archetype, called self, tries to synthesize all the different aspects of personality within the individual.

Other theorists expanded upon William James' concept of the empirical self (Hergenhahn, 2009). The identity theory suggests that the overall self is comprised of many different identities. People reveal specific identities in different situations and social exchanges. Some identities can be defined as role identities, which are internalized set of meanings people attach to themselves while performing a particular role (Burke, 2007). Identity also has a relational quality that connects groups of people together, while separating others. Historical identity is the collective identity of a group of people that is developed through interaction with the environment over time and persists through environmental change and across generations (Lorenz, 2010).

Theories of Identity Development

Several philosophical theories explore how individuals develop their personal identity. Freud (1917) was one of the earliest psychologists to conceptualize the development of personal identity. In his theory of psychosexual stages, Freud describes

how identity is developed from infancy and continues throughout physical development. During the first year of life, individuals are said to be in the *Oral* stage of development, because their focus is oriented around satisfying their oral needs. When caregivers satisfy their children's need for food and basic nurturing, children are able to develop a healthy, adaptive outlook on their environment. If caregivers overindulge or deprive their children, children may become fixated at this stage and develop personality problems, such as greed and mistrust of others.

Children enter the *Anal* stage of psychosexual development during ages one to three. During this time, caregivers and toddlers focus their energy around the task of potty training. When caregivers appropriately train and discipline their toddlers, they learn to become more independent and are able to appropriately express negative emotions. Toddlers also learn how to accept and assert their personal power over their environment. Fixation at this stage may be associated with children developing problems pertaining to control over their personal behavior.

During ages three to six, children enter the *Phallic* stage of psychosexual development. During this stage, Freud suggests that children develop an unconscious incestuous desire for their caregiver of the opposite sex and view their same sex caregiver as a rival. In order to successfully master this stage, children must emulate their same sex caregiver to indirectly win the approval and love of the opposite sex caregiver. Fixation at this stage may be associated with confusion about gender roles, gender identity, and sexual attitudes.

Children enter a *Latency* stage during the ages of six to puberty. During this time sexual interests are repressed, while children focus on broadening their social network

and mastering social and academic activities. The last stage of Freud's psychosexual stages is the *Genital* stage, which starts at puberty and continues into adulthood. During this stage, the sexual themes from the phallic stage reemerge as puberty begins and adolescents seek out romantic and other social relationships.

Several researchers criticized Freud's psychosexual stage theory. One criticism is that his theory was not developed out of applying formal research methods. Freud used anecdotal evidence from his small sample of affluent Viennese patients to validate his theory. In addition, his theory is not very conducive for engaging in the research process. To verify the psychosexual stage theory, researchers would have to rely on the report of children, who have limited vocabulary and introspective skills. Researchers who have tried to conduct formal research on Freud's theories have found little support for his psychosexual stage theory. Furthermore, Freud's anecdotal evidence is unreliable because he did not take careful notes of his therapy sessions and his preoccupation with early sexual experiences and his own childhood experience may have affected his perception of his patients' accounts (Santrock, 2009; Corey, 2008; Davison et al., 2005).

Erikson (1959/1980, 1968) was another major theorist that explored the identity development of individuals. According to his theory of psychosocial stages, individuals fluctuate between connectedness and separation throughout their lifespan. During their first year of life, infants rely on caregivers to provide their basic needs. When their needs are sufficiently provided for, infants establish a secure attachment with their caregivers and develop a sense of trust. However, infants develop insecure attachment styles and learn to mistrust their environment if their caregivers do not reliably provide for their needs.

During the ages of one to three, toddlers move toward separation as they begin to explore their environment and learn how their behavior impacts their surroundings. When caregivers provide sufficient space for toddlers to explore and enforce appropriate restrictions, toddlers begin to develop a sense of autonomy. However, toddlers tend to develop feelings of shame and doubt when caregivers overly restrict or harshly punish children for their mistakes.

From age six to puberty, children attempt to seek mastery over their environment and continue to explore the limits of their surroundings autonomously. Successfully navigating academic and social situations may allow children to develop initiative and feelings of competence in their environment, while inability to make their own decisions increases the likelihood of them developing anxiety and guilt.

During adolescence, teenagers seek connectedness by exploring new social and romantic relationships. They also strive toward breaking off old dependent ties as they seek to assert individual identity. Adolescents are often highly concerned and affected by the evaluation of others. Success at this stage may result in developing a sense of identity, while failure may result in identity role confusion (Santrock, 2009; Snowman & McCowan, 2014).

Unlike Freud's psychosexual stage theory, Erikson's (1959/1980) psychosocial stage theory continues into adulthood. In early adulthood, individuals are concerned with forming intimate relationships. Individuals achieve success at this stage when they are able to form close friendships and romantic relationships. However, failure at this stage results in feelings of social isolation. During middle adulthood, individuals are concerned with generativity. Individuals strive to establish a legacy for upcoming generations

through their careers and/or families. During this stage people examine the discrepancy between their dreams and their accomplishments. Individuals are successful when they feel that they have been able to lead a productive life but feel stagnated when they fail to establish a legacy. The last stage of Erikson's psychosocial stage theory suggests that older adults spend their later days reflecting on the events of their past. Individuals who report feeling that their life was useful and have few regrets may feel a sense of ego integrity, while individuals who report feelings resentment, guilt, and doubt about their past may feel a sense of despair (Santrock, 2009; Snowman & McCowan, 2014).

There are several criticisms of Erikson's psychosocial stage theory. One criticism is that Erikson's stages may not be linear (Santrock, 2009; Snowman, McCowab, & Biehler, 2012). Throughout development, individuals may move through the stages out of sequence or skip some stages entirely. Individuals may also enter the stages earlier or later than the proposed ages. In addition, these stages appear to reflect the personality development of males rather than females (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988). Due to varying gender specific social challenges, the development process of identity for females may be very different from the theory that Erikson proposed. Lastly, Erikson's theory lacks support from scientific evidence. Most of his theory was built upon his own personal observation of children (Shaffer & Kipp, 2010).

Marcia (1966, 1980) expanded on Erikson's work on the development of personal identity. He theorized that during adolescence teenagers go through identity crises, or critical experiences that allows them to explore different alternatives before making decisions. Their adult identity is shaped by how they conceptualize and respond to the

crises in their environment. Whether or not a crisis occurs in a particular area of identity development, adolescents may commit to a particular ideology, approach, or lifestyle.

Marcia (1966, 1980) postulated that adolescent identity development has four statuses, or ways of responding to issues of identity. The *Identity Diffusion* status occurs when adolescents who have not yet experienced a crisis do not make any decisive commitments. Teenagers who were raised in an ethnic and culturally homogenous community may be undecided about how they feel and what they think about people of other ethnicities. They also may show little interest in the social effects of race, ethnicity, and class. The *Identity Foreclosure* status occurs when adolescents who have not yet experienced a crisis make a commitment to a particular ideology. Without interacting with people of other ethnicities, teenagers living in an ethnic and culturally homogenous community may internalize beliefs about race, ethnicity, and class that they heard from their elders and peers. The *Identity Moratorium* status occurs when adolescents experience a crisis, but do not commit to an ideology. Adolescents who encounter an individual from a different ethnicity or culture for the first time may realize that their experience is different from what they learned to expect. These teenagers may forgo making a conclusion about the individual's ethnic background or culture or may put off interacting with the person because they are unsure of how to respond. The *Identity Achievement* status occurs when adolescents experience a crisis and have made a commitment. After interacting with an individual from a different ethnicity or culture for the first time, teenagers may decide to hold on, relinquish, or change the stereotypes they have about the ethnicity or culture and their ethnic and cultural status in relation to the other ethnicity or culture (Santrock, 2009; Snowman & McCowan, 2014).

Historical Overview of Ethnic Identity

Another way individuals can develop their identity is by understanding their place in society. Personal identity is often embedded in historical identity, which has been developed over time through collective group interaction with the environment. In order for collective identities to exist, there must be criteria that provide a basis for group inclusion and exclusion (Lorenz, 2010). Group membership is recognized when two or more people realize that they evaluate and define themselves in the same way, have similar characteristics, and have similar ways of relating to individuals who do not share their attributes (Hogg, 2006). Throughout history, negative bonds rooted in power struggles have existed between collective identities, such as cultures, nationalities, and races (Lorenz, 2010). According to Zelditch (2006), people tend to view power in social interactions as natural, right and proper. Individuals and groups are perceived as powerful when they have control over the allocation of resources and can choose how to distribute rewards and penalties to others. Powerful individuals can choose to give or deny those without power access to valued resources, which will cause those without power to compete against each other (Cook, Cheshire, & Gerbasi, 2006). In order for current group dynamics to endure, both those who hold power and those who do not have power have to buy into the idea that power is allocated properly. However, the structure of authority becomes unstable and may eventually change when those without power stop believing that power and responsibility are properly distributed (Zelditch, 2006).

Although social groups appear to work toward the survival and prosperity of the group as a whole, an individual's collective identity is developed to sustain the self rather than to sustain the group. In social interactions, people reveal certain parts of their overall

identity to others depending on their role in the social interaction, the resources others desire of them, and how they imagine themselves behaving in particular social situations (Stets, 2006). Like personal identities, people can belong to many groups and have many social identities (Hogg, 2006). When a social situation occurs where two identities are in conflict, the individual must compromise and develop strategies to negotiate which identity is appropriate to reveal in a particular situation.

In the late 1960s, activists and legal scholars in the U.S. pushed to continue the change started in the Civil Rights era by exploring racial identity. The Critical Race Theory was developed out of the Critical Legal Studies movement and addressed discrimination in the law (Brainard, 2009; Freeman, 1978). Individuals seeking to advance civil rights for minorities noted that despite affecting social changes, the legal system still sustained and perpetuated racism while overtly claiming to deconstruct racism. One of the ways the legal system aided the majority in evading the collective responsibility of racism was to view discrimination as single, individual acts perpetrated by only a few particular people. By identifying only certain people as racist based on their actions, the majority can ignore the ways in which each individual participates in perpetuating the system and deny the privileges it receives from the system.

After these and other systemic inequalities were exposed, most people in the U.S. started embracing idea of color-blindness and believed that judging people based on race was wrong. However, Lawrence (1987) suggested that negative emotions and opinions about people of color, which precipitates discriminatory behavior, is derived from the history of racial divisions that established a structure of dominance and subordination in society. Due to this shared historical experience across cultural groups, people

intentionally and unintentionally transmitted attitudes, ideas, and beliefs that attach significance to race. Lawrence asserts that a large part of behavior that produces racial discrimination is influenced by unconscious racial motivation, which is inherent to all people, though they are unaware of it. Racist unconsciousness has two functions: 1) to defend the self against discomfort of guilt and 2) to normalize discriminatory thoughts and beliefs. In order to avoid guilty feelings, people with privilege can refuse to acknowledge ideas, beliefs, and desires that conflict with their beliefs about what is good and right. This also allows them to maintain a personal perception that they are good and right. By viewing themselves as color-blind and removing their association with individuals who commit overt discriminatory acts, they can retain their identity and the perception that they are good people. However, racism is so embedded in society that privileged and non-privileged groups believe that it is the natural way of life. Systemic racism continues to be transmitted through the media and social interactions with peers and authority figures. Thus, guilt can be avoided because discriminatory thoughts and beliefs have been normalized (Lawrence, 1987).

In the 1990s and 2000s, Critical Race Theory fractured into many specialized study groups, which focused on specific ethnic groups. Theorists moved toward examining multi-racialism, how the media shaped racial identity and perceptions, intersectionality, and hate speech (Delgado, 2003). Critical race theorists assert that racism is a salient, normalized experience that resides in systems and individuals. It can only be addressed when majority and minority groups both have an interest in opening a dialogue about the problem. Those who are the recipients of racism should have the authoritative voice when describing their experience of racism and these narratives can

empower minorities as they counter the hegemonic stories the majority has been voiced about minorities for generations. Through these stories, the majority has changed the way it racializes minorities over time to suit their social and political needs. However, race is only one aspect of identity. Individuals can belong to more than one demographic group. This aspect of identity is also a social construct, rather than a genetic difference, and self-conscious racial identities can provide individual fulfillment and collective strength with others of similar identity (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Valdes, Culp, & Harris 2002).

Theories of Ethnic Identity Development

A part of developing a sense of self requires individuals to explore how their race and ethnicity impact their lifestyle, social experiences, and personal outlook. Many philosophical theories explore how racial and ethnic identity develops. Helms (1990) developed a model for understanding racial identity development of White Americans, which consists of two phases: abandonment of racism and defining a non-racist identity. White Americans can be described as being one of six identity statuses as they grow in understanding of their racial identity in relation to people of other races.

The first identity status is known as *Contact*, where White people are oblivious to the reality of racism and have minimal experiences with other ethnicities. Although they may profess to be “color-blind,” the stereotypes and power dynamics between races learned from societal influence are unconsciously accepted and integrated in their worldview. Conscious knowledge of stereotypes and power dynamics are not given much critical thought and are considered unimportant to interaction with minority groups.

The second identity status is known as *Disintegration*, where White people become increasingly aware of their “Whiteness” and have conflicted racial dilemmas that

force them to analyze their beliefs about race. For example, a White person may believe that everyone should have equal opportunities, but do not believe that their race should share their rights, privileges, and freedoms with minorities. These dilemmas demand that they choose between own-group loyalty and showing support for minorities.

The third identity is called *Reintegration* and is often characterized by the tendency to idealize the White socioracial group and be intolerant of minority groups. Due to societal expectations and pressure, a more conscious belief in White racial superiority is developed and minorities are blamed for their own problems.

The fourth identity status is called *Pseudo-Independence*, where White people begin making attempts at understanding racial, ethnic, and cultural differences and may even try to reach out to interact with minority group members. Attempts at understanding race are intellectual rather than experiential or affective. Usually people move into this phase after a painful or insightful racial encounter.

When White people are positively reinforced to continue their personal exploration of their racial identity, they enter into the fifth identity status called *Immersion/Emersion*. Individuals start understanding the personal meaning of White privilege and there is more willingness to confront biases, redefine Whiteness, and actively combat racism and oppression.

The last racial identity status is known as *Autonomy*, where individuals are knowledgeable about ethnic and cultural differences and value diversity. In this stage, White people are no longer fearful of minorities and uncomfortable by racial issues, have reduced feelings of “White guilt,” accepted their role in perpetuating racism, and have abandoned White entitlement.

According to Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, and Chavous (1998), two research approaches have been used to understand African American racial identity development. The mainstream approach was derived from the research of early 20th century social identity theorists, such as Gordon Allport. Allport (1954) purported that race was a result of human categorization that included several factors. He suggested that race was not only biologically inherited features, but inherent within community groups like other physiological and temperamental characteristics. In line with evolutionary theory, “pure” races were also thought to exist. Since humans categorize their environment to understand how to safely engage with their surroundings, Allport suggested attributing human differences to perceived hereditary differences was easier than engaging in the time-consuming process of evaluating each individual. Thus, people make prejudgments, or stereotypes, about other races and ethnicities that become prejudicial when they are not changed after accumulating new information that conflicts with the existing belief. Allport (1954) suggested that negative experiences with prejudice and racism in the United States resulted in Black Americans having a damaged self-concept. Researchers that subscribed to the mainstream approach, focused on assessing the common psychological structures that are related to the identity by examining the cognitive and affective processes of each ethnic group (Sellers et al., 1998).

In contrast, the underground approach focused on distinctive cultural and historical experiences as the basis of racial identity. Instead of looking for universal stigmatized characteristics that describe a group of people, the underground approach focused on the experience that Black Americans have with their own race. At the turn of the 20th century, W. E. B. Dubois (as cited in Blueford, 2014) suggested that African

Americans have a “double consciousness,” where they are aware of both their unique personal identity and their social identity from the perspective of white Americans and other ethnicities.

Sellers et al. (1998) synthesized the mainstream and underground approach to highlight the meaning and significance African Americans place on racially defining themselves. According to their Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) model, the researchers defined racial identity for African Americans as “the significance and qualitative meaning that individuals attribute to their membership within the Black racial group within their self-concept” (p. 23). The MMRI has four dimensions: racial salience, racial centrality, racial regard, and ideology. These dimensions are based on the assumptions that 1) identity contains both dynamic situational influences and stable cross-situational properties, 2) people have many different identities that are hierarchically ordered, 3) the perception individuals have of their racial identity can be considered the most valid indicator of their identity, and 4) racial identity should focus on a specific point in time rather than at a particular stage in the development. A major limitation to the MMRI is that it does not provide a definition for what it means to be an African American, nor determines what aspects of Black racial identity are healthy and advantageous to individuals and groups and what other aspects are not (Sellers et al., 1998).

Another model used to understand African American racial identity development is the Nigrescence Model by Cross (1971, 1978). In this model, African American identity development consists of five stages. In the *Pre-encounter* stage, the concept of race has little importance for the Black individual and they may intentionally work to

deny their “Blackness” by aligning themselves with their perception of the White ideal. Individuals enter the *Encounter* stage when they have incongruent negative experiences, such as discrimination, or positive experiences, such as positive cultural messages, that challenges their perception of their own race being inferior to the White race. Many Black people in this stage appear to be confused about their socioracial group and struggle to reconcile the dissonance of their changing perceptions. Individuals who have entered the *Immersion/Emersion* stage are engaged in a high-energy internal identity battle that is characterized by emotional highs and lows. These individuals may take extreme stances on relevant racial topics and behave in ways they perceive afrocentric or opposite White behavior. During the *Internalization* stage, Black individuals may express acceptance of themselves and others of different races and cultures. During this time, other aspects of their identity, such as gender, religion, or social class, may become salient issues for them. Last, the *Internalization-Commitment* stage is characterized by racial acceptance that extends to other groups in a more fluid manner, which is expressed by using their personal identity as a catalyst to advance issues pertaining to social justice (Cross, 1994, 1995; Helm, 1995; Helms & Parham, 1996; Parham & Austin, 1994).

During the 1990s and 2000s, there was a shift in discussion from racial identity to ethnic identity in social psychological literature. Since race was a social construct based on physiological characteristics and perceived hereditary differences, researchers moved toward investigating ethnicity, which can be described as social groups that are based upon similar cultural, national, and religious tradition (Allport, 1954; Robinson-Wood, 2017). Ethnicity is derived from a shared group image that has a common ancestry, language, and political, social, religious, and economic values (Baruth & Manning, 2016;

Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Ethnic identity studies in literature focused on how ethnicity impacts individual and interpersonal psychological processes (Phinney, 2000).

The ethnic identity development model is an approach used to describe the process of individuals, from across different ethnic groups, developing their ethnic identity. According to Phinney (1990), people can experience three stages during their ethnic developmental process. The first stage is the *Unexamined Ethnic Identity*, where individuals have not explored their ethnicity and may not be interested in initiating the exploration process. During this stage, many individuals may not view ethnicity as an issue, which can lead them to either making uninformed judgments or prejudices about particular ethnicities or not making any decisive opinions or conclusions about any ethnicities. Many minorities may accept the attitudes and values of the dominant group, without giving much thought to the perspectives of minority groups.

The second stage is known as *Ethnic Identity Search/Moratorium*, when individuals begin to question their previously accepted views and explore their own ethnic identity. This experimentation phase usually occurs after individuals experience a traumatic or non-traumatic encounter. Traumatic encounters may be as dramatic as an overtly racist incident, while non-traumatic encounters may simply be coming across someone from a different ethnicity for the first time. This stage is usually characterized by intense emotion and people may linger in this stage for a long time.

The last stage is *Ethnic Identity Achievement*, where individuals resolve their ethnic identity conflicts, accept membership to their ethnicity, and are more comfortable and open to other ethnicities. Individuals in this stage can develop healthy, secure ethnic

identities or insecure ethnic identities. Those with secure ethnic identities have a more positive orientation toward the mainstream culture and appear more confident. In more recent revisions of her model and the scale she has developed to assess the constructs, Phinney and Ong (2007) have suggested that the process of ethnic exploration and commitment are continuous. Research has shown that having a healthy ethnic identity is correlated to higher self-esteem, overall psychological functioning, and quality of life (Phinney, 1992; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997; Roberts et al., 1999; Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002).

The Relationship Between Ethnic Identity and Relationship Satisfaction in Black, White, and Interracial Couples

To date, there is little research on how ethnic identity affects relationship or marital satisfaction. In studies focusing on Black couples, it is noted that Black couples report having lower marital quality and higher rates of marital dissolution than white couples (Perry, 2016; Raley & Sweeney, 2009). For African American couples a healthy, mature racial identity has been identified as a protective factor against a variety of stressors (Nicolas et al., 2009; Wills et al., 2007). Bryant et al. (2010) hypothesized that a mature racial identity in African Americans may moderate the relationship between stressors and marital quality. They also hypothesized that low racial identification or being in a relationship with a partner of at different racial identity level will amplify social stressors. A study on Latino Americans indicated that increased levels of self-differentiation, or the process by which people balance individuality and togetherness in relationships, and biculturality, or the ability for individuals to fluidly be involved in two cultures, contributed to relationship satisfaction (McCullough, 2005).

Many ethnic and relationship researchers focused their investigations on the

impact that ethnicity and culture have on constructs related to relationship satisfaction, such as marital quality, outcomes, and expectation. Studies suggest that the racial or ethnic discrimination that minorities experience is negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. Higher frequencies of perceived discrimination were associated with higher levels of relationship instability and lower relationship quality (Doyle & Molix, 2014; Lavner et al., 2018; Randall & Bodenmann, 2009). Daily discriminatory experiences also had a negative impact on romantic relationships among African Americans (Bryan et al., 2010). In low income African American couples, more frequent experiences of discriminations were associated with women reporting increased levels of physical aggression and men reporting increased levels of psychological aggression. Although racial discrimination was not found to be correlated with relationship satisfaction, men that were experiencing high levels of discrimination reported increased levels of relationship instability (Lavner et al., 2018).

Ethnicity and race is also believed to impact relationship satisfaction among interracial couples. According to Skowronski et al. (2014), several factors influence marital satisfaction in intercultural couples. Acculturation with majority culture is considered essential for gaining acceptance and building social support networks with each partner's community. Language and communication styles can also pose issues when couples enter conflicts. It can also highlight the differences in collectivist and individualistic approach each partner may have toward broaching and solving problems. Attitudes toward marriage can often highlight cultural differences. Highly individualistic cultures may view romantic attraction as the basis of marriage, while collectivist cultures may see marriage as a social agreement between two extended families (Li & Fung,

2011; Skowronski et al., 2014). Individual traits influence how each partner perceives and responds to experiences in the relationship. Family lack support and societal attitudes can potentially provide obstacles and strain on the relationship, while daily practical living may be influenced by money management and differences in views surrounding gender roles. Lastly, diversity can be a protective factor in that it enriches the relationship by providing an opportunity for different perspectives to be heard (Inman et al., 2011; Skowronski et al., 2014).

Although several factors may contribute to relationship satisfaction in Interracial couples, many studies reported differing outcomes. Some studies suggest that Interracial couples have less relationship stability and satisfaction, due to cultural dissimilarity, varying values about marriage and family, lack of social and familial support, and different interpersonal styles (Brooks, 2015; Chow, 2007; Heaton, 2002; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998). In a study comparing marital instability between Interracial couples and same-race couples at the 10th year of marriage, it was found that Interracial couples were more vulnerable to divorce (Bratter & King, 2008). This supports Fu, Tora, and Kendall's (2001) study that suggests that Interracial couples have lower levels of marital happiness. The experience of negative reactions from strangers and a decrease in social support from family and friends can negatively impact the marital experience for Interracial couples (Chito Childs, 2005; Dalmage, 2000). The most vulnerable were White females with non-White males (with the exception of Hispanic White males). However, there was an insignificant difference between divorce rates between White males with non-White women and same-race White couples. Conversely, White men with Black women were

found to divorce at a significantly less rate than same-race White couples (Bratter & King, 2008).

However, other studies report that Interracial couples had similar to better outcomes than same-race couples (Brooks, 2015; Canlas et al., 2015). Zhang and Van Hook (2009) reported that Asian-White interracial couples had a lower marital dissolution rate than White couples. In addition, Interracial couples can become more resilient and have a positive relationship quality by implementing conflict resolution techniques (Canlas et al., 2015). In a meta-analysis, Brooks (2015) reported that there were no significant differences in marital satisfaction between same-race and Interracial couples. In light of the Interdependence Theory, interracial relationships were not found to be any less satisfying despite the costs of social opposition and loss of social approval. It was suggested that individuals entering into interracial relationships are already aware of the costs and rewards. Although the costs matter, individuals in Interracial couples may not see them as outweighing the rewards, which may account for why their satisfaction is consistent with same-race couples (Brooks, 2015).

History of Attachment Theory

Individual identity also develops through social interaction. Bowlby's (1969) evolutionary theory of attachment suggests that children are pre-programmed to form attachments as a survival mechanism. From infancy, individuals start forming close bonds with their caregivers. The experience they have with their caregivers allow them to develop internal working models that serve to guide their attitudes, behaviors, and expectations in other relationships throughout life. Both infant and adult attachment figures provide individuals with security, comfort, and a secure base that they can return

to after an exploration of the environment. He suggested that if children lose, or is detached from, their attachment figure, they can experience irreversible long-term psychological consequences.

The process of separation from primary attachment figure is called maternal deprivation. The process consists of three phases. Protest is when children try to stop caregivers from leaving by clinging to them and crying and screaming in protest. Despair is when the children stop protesting but are still upset. Children refuse any offers of comfort from others and appear withdrawn and disinterested in everything. Detachment occurs after separation persists. Children will eventually begin to reengage with others but will reject the initial caregiver in anger if that person returns (Bowlby, 1969, 1973).

In her *Strange Situation* experiment, Ainsworth et al. (1978) suggested that there were three attachment styles that were characteristic of parent-child relationships. The *Secure Attachment* style represented a trusting, supportive relationship between the parent and child. When left alone in a new environment or confronted with new individual without the presence of caregivers, securely attached children were distressed until they were reunited and comforted by their caregivers. Children who had an *Insecure Ambivalent Attachment* with their caregivers appeared to want a close relationship but seemed to not fully trust or receive comfort from their caregivers. In Ainsworth's (1978) experiment, these children were very distressed when left alone and fearful in the presence of a stranger. However, they were not comforted when caregivers returned and even resisted contact with caregivers. Children, who developed an *Insecure Avoidant Attachment* to caregivers, appeared to be independent of caregivers both physically and emotionally. Whether they were left alone or in the presence of a stranger, they did not

show any distress. Also, they showed little interest when caregivers return. Shaver and Mikulincer (2007) suggested that the attachment styles developed in early childhood are related to attachment styles at later stages in life. Securely attached children are more likely to develop healthy, secure attachments with significant others in the future, while insecurely attached children were more likely to have problematic relational patterns with significant others. The stability of attachment styles over time can be attributed to underlying internal working models of the self and the other that affect interpersonal relationships (Cassidy, 2000).

Theories of Adult Attachment

In adulthood, individuals develop and maintain attachment bonds with a wider circle of people. Most individuals can report having emotional ties with at least 10 people and different attachment orientations can develop for different social relationships (Doherty & Feeney, 2004; Ross & Spinner, 2001). Oftentimes romantic partners replace parental figures as the primary attachment figures in adulthood (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Individuals with secure attachments to their romantic partners are more likely to report greater relationship satisfaction than those with insecure attachments (Alexandrov et al., 2005). According to Brennan et al. (1998), problematic adult attachment can be characterized in terms of two dimensions. Individuals with a negative self-image, excessive need for external approval, and fear of rejection or abandonment are most likely to have attachment anxiety. Individuals who develop avoidant attachment are more likely to have a negative image of others, withdraw socially, and have either an excessive need for self-reliance or fear of depending on others. People with insecure attachment styles reported having more negative emotions than positive emotions in their

relationships. Partners of anxiously attached individuals reported less commitment and interdependence in their relationship, while partners of avoidantly attached people reported less relational trust (Simpson, 1990). In addition, couples that reported that they were unsatisfied with their relationship had higher levels of avoidant attachment than couples that were satisfied. Levels of attachment anxiety did not account for a significant difference between couples that reported relationship satisfaction and those that did not (Mondor, McDuff, Lussier, & Wright, 2011).

Gender differences are also evident among the insecure attachment styles. In heterosexual couples, women are more likely to have anxious attachment and report relational conflict than their male counterparts. Conversely, men are more likely to experience avoidant attachment, but tend to report higher relationship satisfaction (Del Giudice, 2011; Harma & Sümer, 2016; Molero, Shaver, Ferrer, Cuadrado, & Alonso-Arbiol, 2011; Pietromonaco, Greenwood, & Feldman Barrett, 2004). High levels of conflict were associated with both partners having anxious attachment styles (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005; Harma & Sümer, 2016). However avoidant attachment styles for one or both partners negatively predicted relationship satisfaction (Harma & Sümer, 2016; Li & Chan, 2012).

Ethnicity and culture can affect attachment styles throughout life. Environment and social factors are influenced by values of the larger culture and different attachment responses are adaptive in different cultural distributions. Culture also strongly influences child-rearing practices and how children perceive parent-child interactions (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013; Leyendecker, Lamb, Scholmerich, & Fricke, 1997; Simpson & Belsky, 2008). Although previous studies suggest that attachment styles remain stable

over time, recent adult attachment measures show that attachment style can vary across time and situations (Cassidy, 2000; Gillath et al., 2009; Gillath & Shaver, 2007). The ongoing development of attachment style across the lifespan suggests that culture influences the attachment patterns of individuals (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013). In a meta-analysis on adult attachment by Van IJzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg (1996), it was suggested that 58% of people worldwide had secure attachment styles. Out of the 42% that had insecure attachment styles, 24% were avoidant and 18% were anxious. Upon closer analysis of ethnic and cultural distribution, attachment styles in several countries portrayed attachment patterns contrary of the global norms. Several factors contribute to the ethnic differences in attachment styles. In the African-American population, variations in relational models and emotional socialization contribute to the differences (Fiori et al., 2009). In comparison to European-Americans, African-Americans tend to have higher rates of avoidant attachment styles (Lopez, Melendez, & Rice, 2000; Magai et al., 2001; Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Zakalik, 2004). Some researchers have suggested lower income and job opportunities lead to lower parental sensitivity and high rates of punitive emotion socialization, such as parents punishing negative emotions by children, which promotes greater emotionally and relationally avoidant responses among African-American children (Bakermans-Kranenburg, Van IJzendoorn, & Kroonenberg, 2004; Montague, Magai, Consedine, & Gillespie, 2003).

The Relationship Between Adult Attachment and Relationship Satisfaction

Unlike ethnic identity, adult attachment has been consistently associated with relationship satisfaction. The strong correlations between attachment styles and relationship satisfaction are evident in both dating relationships and marriages (Cohn et

al., 1992; Feeney, 2008; Mikulincer et al., 2002). In a meta-analysis by Li and Chan (2012), it was found that attachment styles and relationship satisfaction were associated by either the hyperactivation or deactivation strategies. Anxiety attachment activates the hyperactivation strategies, which involve ruminating on negative life events and adopting emotion-focused coping behaviors. Hyperactivation strategies are closely associated with heightened stress levels and decreased relationship satisfaction (Allison et al., 2008; Harma & Sümer, 2016). On the other hand, avoidant attachment activates the deactivation strategies, which involve the tendency to avoid depending on others and fear of closeness. Deactivation strategies are associated with relationship dissatisfaction because highly avoidant people are usually uncomfortable with providing support and care to their partners (Feeney, 2008). Meta-analytic research identified avoidant attachment as the strongest predictor of low relationship quality, which included low levels of relationship satisfaction, constructive interaction, and support (Harma & Sümer, 2016; Li & Chan, 2012).

Anxious and avoidant attachment are associated with negative patterns of relational interaction. Research suggests that individuals with anxiety attachment tend to have a low threat threshold, which leads to feeling more distressed in their relationships and hyper-vigilance about problems (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, 2008). Their sensitivity to rejection may increase their likelihood of perceiving conflict in daily interactions with their partner (Campbell et al., 2005). Individuals with avoidant attachment are less likely to recognize conflicts, due to deactivated attachment related emotions. They are more likely to withdraw when disagreements occur, than to engage with their partner further (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). In contrast, individuals with a secure attachment to their

partner have more positive expectations about their partner's intentions, trustworthiness, and availability. Thus, they feel less threatened by conflicts or disagreements (Feeney, 2008; Harma & Sümer, 2016; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004).

The family environment can have lasting effects on the attachment styles of individuals. The nuclear family provides a social context for individuals to observe, model relational behaviors that will serve as a template for later romantic relationships (Bandura, 1977; Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Sassler et al., 2009; Van Poppel et al., 2008). During adolescence, the parent-child interactive experience can influence how adolescents interact in romantic relationships and interpret the behavior and attitudes of their romantic partners (Welsh et al., 2003). Shulman, Rosenheim, and Knafo (1999) found that adolescents who had close relationships with their parents had marital expectations for the future that closely mirrored their parents' marital expectations. In adolescent relationships, romantic partners help in the transitioning between primary attachment figures (Tracey, Shaver, Albino, & Cooper, 2003). As the adolescent moves away from viewing their parents as their primary attachment figures, they may develop healthy and unhealthy relational patterns. Negative relational patterns that develop in adolescence may persist in adulthood. However, warm family environments with parental structure and emotional availability can promote a healthy, enduring ability for intimacy during adolescence (Collins & Sroufe, 1999).

Longitudinal studies suggest that there can be an intergenerational transmission of marital satisfaction. Parent reports of marital discord can predict marital dissatisfaction reports of their children when they become adults (Amato & Booth, 2001). Parental conflict is associated with an increased anxiety toward personal relationships in the

children, while children of divorced parents are more likely to end their marriages in divorce (Amato & Booth, 2001; Riggio, 2004). Parental divorce also is related to a negative view of relationship quality in daughters, but negative marital behaviors have more association with negative marital quality in sons (Feng, Giarrusso, Bengtson, & Frye, 1999; Mustonen et al., 2011). Jarnecke and South (2013) found parental level of marital satisfaction could affect their children's adult attachment style and in turn affect their children's marital satisfaction. Perception of parents' low marital satisfaction was associated with higher levels of avoidant parent-child and romantic partner attachment in men. In women, the perception of parents' low marital satisfaction was associated with higher levels of avoidant parent-child attachment and anxious romantic partner attachment.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature that has been presented is a survey of research exploring identity, racial identity, attachment, and marital satisfaction. The theoretical framework for this study is based on the notion that there is a relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction, which is the subjective global evaluation of personal contentment in the relationship, has been described by many theories, such as the Interdependence Theory and the Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction (Graham et al., 2011; Johnson, 2015; Li & Fung, 2011; Vangelisti & Daly, 1997). Although studies suggest that adult attachment is associated with relationship satisfaction, not much research exists that links ethnic identity with relationship satisfaction. Ethnic identity can best be described by Phinney's ethnic identity development model, which describes how the individuals from different ethnic

groups develop a sense of belonging to their particular ethnic group. Research suggests that ethnic identity can influence the development of attachment styles across the lifespan (Agishtein & Brumbaugh, 2013; Cassidy, 2000; Gillath et al., 2009). Adult attachment describes the close emotional bond individuals have with their romantic partners (Feeney, 2008; Santrock, 2009; Zeifman & Hazan, 2009). Secure and insecure attachment styles have been linked to the relationship satisfaction because it influences how each partner relates to each other (Allison et al., 2008; Harma & Sümer, 2016).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this research was to examine the impact ethnic identity and adult attachment has on marital satisfaction among White, Black, and Black-White interracial couples. Using a survey research method, this study employed a non-experimental, correlational research design. Couples participating in the study completed surveys that measured their ethnic identity, adult attachment style, and relationship satisfaction. Demographical data (e.g., race, age, and years of marriage) was also collected. Structural educational modeling was used to investigate the proposed model of the relationship between the ethnic identity of participants, their adult attachment, and their relationship satisfaction. The following sections of this chapter detail the methodology for data collection and analysis.

Research Questions

The present study endeavored to answer the following research questions to examine the interrelationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction in White, Black, and Interracial couples:

1. Are there differences among White, Black, and Interracial couples in ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction?
2. To what extent is relationship satisfaction related to ethnic identity and adult attachment among White, Black, and Interracial couples?

Hypothesis

Based on the studies surveyed in the literature review, it was hypothesized that ethnic identity and adult attachment will influence relationship satisfaction in White, Black, and Interracial couples.

Research Design

This study used a non-experimental, correlational research design, which is an especially useful approach for research in psychology. This approach allows researchers to gather information about natural occurring phenomena without manipulating variables in an artificial experimental environment, such as in a lab setting. Correlational research allows researchers to assess relationships between variables and determine variable influence. However, the design is not intended to draw causal inferences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009).

In order to gather data on ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction, a survey was developed using three scales and a demographic questionnaire. This method was chosen because all the variables are subjected to the participants' perception and must be self-reported instead of being observed directly. In addition, surveys are simple to administer and can provide the researcher with comprehensible quantitative data. However, the surveys used have some limitations. Since the data is gathered through self-report in a non-controlled environment, it is difficult to gather information on why participants responded the way they did. Participants may differ greatly in the way they interpret questions. Their responses to questions may also be affected by confounding variables that influence their performance. Some of the variables that may particularly affect surveys responses are environmental variables, such as time

of day and room setting, response bias, where a response to one question may affect a response to another, and social desirability, where participants want to present themselves in a desirable light. Surveys also provide less detailed and nuanced data when compared to other self-report measures, such as interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009).

Population and Sampling

The population of this study was comprised of both legally married adults and adults living in common law relationships. The participants belonged to the White and Black racial groups. To be a part of the study, the participants had to be over the age of 18 and legally married. Participants who were not legally married, but were in common law relationships, had to indicate that they were adults and in committed romantic relationship for 10 or more years. This study commenced on a volunteer basis; thus, there is a chance that participants refused to be a part of the study. As a part of the introduction, participants were given an informed consent. Continuing on with the survey indicated that they were in agreement with the informed consent. Participants were allowed to exit the survey at any time. The research results were kept confidential.

The sample was obtained using convenience sampling by recruiting participants through *QuestionPro*. *QuestionPro* is an online service that allows researchers to create and distribute surveys to their target populations. The site maintains a database of users who have signed up to take surveys. For every completed survey, *QuestionPro* gives users participation points that can later be exchanged for gift cards to commercial retail establishments. Anyone is eligible to sign up to complete surveys, as long as they provide demographic information that will help researchers choose the target demographic for their sample. *QuestionPro* was chosen to distribute the surveys to the target population

because it ensured the anonymity of the couples, allowed the administration of long surveys, and offered a discount to graduate student researchers.

For my research, *QuestionPro* recruited a sample of individuals that included both men and women, who indicated that they were either married or in committed romantic relationship for 10 or more years. Although, it was my intention to match the responses of each partner in the couple dyad, *QuestionPro* had no way of ensuring that both partners completed the survey. In order to ensure that the data would produce enough statistical significance, a sample population of 900 individuals were targeted. However, after the data was collected, a sample of 607 participants met the criteria to be included in the data analysis. Of the 607 participants, 360 participants indicated that they were in White homogamous relationships, 200 participants indicated that they were in Black homogamous relationships, and only 47 participants indicated that they were in White-Black Interracial relationships.

Definition of Variables

This study examined the influence of ethnic identity and adult attachment on relationship satisfaction looked at three main variables: ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. The other variables that was controlled was the race of participants.

Independent Variables

There were two main independent variables in this study: ethnic identity and adult attachment. According to Cross (1991) and Phinney (1990), ethnic identity is described as a sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group. Although it has been theorized that White and Black individuals have different pathways of ethnic development, Phinney and

Ong (2007) suggested that ethnic identity can be compared across different ethnic groups. The comparison of ethnic identity can be ascertained by evaluating people's sense of belonging to their group, their knowledge and evaluation of their group, their involvement in the traditions and activities of the group, and their commitment to the group (Phinney, 1992; Phinney et al., 1997; Roberts et al., 1999; Utsey et al., 2002).

The second independent variable was adult attachment. According to Santrock (2009), attachment is a close emotional bond that individuals have with others. In adulthood, individuals often depend on romantic partners to supply a secure emotional base, where they can obtain security and comfort during stressful times (Feeney, 2008; Zeifman & Hazan, 2008). According to Simpson (1990), there are three adult attachment styles. Individuals with secure attachments to significant others tend to have trusting, supportive relationships. Anxiously attached individuals have negative self-images, excessively seeks for external approval, and fear being rejected or abandoned by loved ones. Avoidantly attached individuals tend to have negative images of others, socially withdraw, and either an excessive need for self-reliance or fear of depending on others. In the present study, Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised (ECR-R) questionnaire measured adult attachment.

The other independent variable that was controlled was the race of participants. The information on these variables will be obtained using the Demographic Questionnaire.

Dependent Variable

There was one dependent variable in this study: relationship satisfaction. According to Graham et al. (2011), relationship satisfaction is a subjective global

evaluation of a person's relationship. My present study defines a relationship in two ways: 1) a marriage, which is a legally recognized union between two people and 2) a common-law union defined as being in committed romantic relationship for 10 or more years. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) measured relationship satisfaction, while the Demographic Questionnaire gathered information on the length of the relationship and how many previous serious relationships the respondent was in.

Instrumentation

The survey, which was comprised of four standardized scales and a form collecting personal demographic information, was distributed for data collection. Each participant received five forms to complete. All participants were given the demographic questionnaire and the scales that assessed ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction.

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised

Ethnic identity was assessed using MEIM-R, which is a popular measure designed to examine ethnic identity of adolescents and adults from a variety of ethnic groups. Phinney and Ong (2007) developed the scale to refine and improve the reliability of the MEIM, which is the original scale. The MEIM-R has six items that evaluates two factors. Three items measure exploration, which is a developmental and cognitive component that is characterized by the active process of searching one's ethnic identity, and three items measure commitment, which is an affective component that is characterized by establishing a sense of belonging and involvement to a particular ethnic group (Marcia, 1960; Phinney, 1990). The items are measured along a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scores for the two subscales and the

overall scale are determined by averaging item values. Higher scores on each of the subscales represent greater ethnic exploration or commitment, while lower score suggest lower ethnic exploration or commitment. The two subscales appeared to measure separate constructs but were highly correlated ($r = 0.74$). Research among college student samples indicated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.76 for exploration and 0.78 for commitment. The overall internal consistency for the scale was 0.81 (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Yoon, 2011). In subsequent multiple-group confirmatory factor analyses that measures invariance across ethnic groups, it was suggested that the MEIM-R could be used to measure and compare ethnic identity across multiple ethnic groups. The Cronbach's alpha for Asian, Black, Hispanic, White, and Multiethnic were all over 0.70 for each subscale and the overall scale (Brown et al., 2014).

Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised

Adult Attachment was evaluated using Fraley, Waller, and Brennan's (2000) ECR-R questionnaire, which measures romantic relationship attachment orientations of participants. It was developed from the Brennan et al.'s (1998) Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) questionnaire and the items were determined using Item Response Theory. The 36-item scale evaluates the individual differences between anxious attachment, which is whether participants are secure or insecure about the responsiveness and availability of their partner. It also evaluates avoidant attachment, which is whether the participants are secure in depending on their partners or uncomfortable with being close to their partners. The anxiety scale (18 items) and avoidant scale (18 items) are measured along a 7-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), which are sum scored. From the mean scores that are calculated, lower

scores on the anxiety scale indicate secure attachment, while higher scores suggest anxious attachment. Similarly, lower scores on the avoidant scale correspond to secure attachment, while higher scores suggest avoidant attachment. The internal reliabilities of both subscales are high, with the anxiety scale having a Cronbach's alpha of 0.95 and the avoidant scale having a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 (Sibley & Liu, 2004).

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Relationship satisfaction was assessed using the DAS, which is the most widely used measure in the assessment of romantic relationships. According to Spanier (1976), the DAS showed adequate construct, content, and criterion validity when given to the standardization sample. The 32-item scale measures four aspects of relational adjustment on Likert scales. The first subscale, Dyadic consensus (13 items), measures the degree to which participants agree with their spouse on important issues. Dyadic satisfaction (10 items) measures the degree in which participants feel happy with their spouse. Dyadic cohesion (five items) evaluates the degree in which couples engage in activities with each other. Last, Affectional expression (four items) measures the degree of perceived emotional affection between the couple. The attained global score is used as an index for relationship satisfaction. The scores range from 0–151, where higher scores reflect greater relationship satisfaction (Jarnecke & South, 2013). For the ease of computing and analyzing the data, zero values were not used during the data analysis of this study. The scores that will be reported for the scale in Chapter 4 will range from 32–183. In a meta-analysis by Graham, Liu, and Jeziorski (2006), the scale showed internal consistency across 91 published studies with 128 samples ($n = 25,035$), with a mean Cronbach's alpha of 0.915. While analyzing, the scores from the DAS were not used in order to

maintain accuracy and reduce complication. Thus, the global score on the DAS for this study ranged from 1–183. This change was not expected to significantly impact the validity or reliability of outcomes.

Demographic Questionnaire

Basic demographic information was obtained using the Demographic Questionnaire. This hand-crafted questionnaire asked participants to report information regarding age, sex, race, race of spouse, length of marriage, educational level, and number of children.

Procedure

To the extent of my knowledge, participating in this study did not harm any participants. Participating in this study was voluntary, anonymous, and thought to produce no psychological harm. Participants were informed of the risks and benefits of taking part in this study and were given the opportunity to discontinue their participation at any time during the process. The sample consisted of 902 participants, who were recruited via *QuestionPro* online database. *QuestionPro* was utilized because it ensured the anonymity of respondents, had a built-in reward system for completing surveys, allowed surveys of varying sizes, and had quick responding personnel that worked to help obtain participants from the target population. The results were gathered within a two-week period.

At the beginning of the survey, participants were introduced to the study and informed about the potential risks and benefits of taking part in this research. By clicking the “Continue” button, participants acknowledge that they had read and understood the introduction and gave their consent to participate in the study. Following the informed

consent, participants were asked to complete a Demographic Questionnaire, which collected information, such as age, years of marriage, the genders of the participants and their partners, and socioeconomic status (SES, see Appendix D). The participants then were asked to complete the MEIM-R, DAS, followed by the ECR-R questionnaire. Participants that completed the survey were thanked for their participation in the brief closing remarks at the end of the survey and informed of the *QuestionPro* points that had been added to their account for completing the survey.

Treatment of the Data

After obtaining conformation from *QuestionPro* that the target number of participants had been reached, the data was downloaded, password-protected, and stored on a private computer. In addition, the backup data was stored on an external hard drive. Only the primary researcher and the dissertation committee members had access to the data. The anonymity of the participants was further protected by *QuestionPro*'s Respondent Anonymity Assurance feature, which assigns each participant a numeric code and removes all identifying information, such as contact information and amount of points they earned. Although *QuestionPro* collected IP address information to ensure that participants do not retake the same survey, they delete this information immediately.

Once the primary researcher received the data, it was analyzed using a variety of statistical procedures, such as descriptive statistics, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), and Path Analysis, which will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

Summary of Methodology

This chapter described the procedures used to analyze the variables in this study. Ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction were described

operationally; the research design was reported. The population and the sample were identified; the methods used to obtain the sample were described. The three scales used in this study were the MEIM-R, which assessed ethnic identity, the ECR-R, which assessed adult attachment styles, and the DAS, which assessed relationship satisfaction. The scales were followed by a Demographic Questionnaire, which was used to obtain additional demographic data. Last, the procedure and the treatment of the data were described, and the method used in data analysis was described. In Chapter 4, the results from the data collected will be presented in detail and in Chapter 5 the implications of the research will be discussed in light of the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. This chapter describes the demographic characteristics of the participants and displays the results for each research question. Descriptive statistics, reliability tests, and one-way MANOVA were used to examine the data. Path Analysis was used to evaluate the specific relationship between components of ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. The level of significance was set at .05.

Description of Sample

A total of 1634 individuals attempted to complete the surveys. However, many cases were excluded from the data analyses because they did not meet the criteria of the study. Only participants who were 18 years or older and were living in the U.S. were targeted for the administration of the survey. In addition, the survey was automatically discontinued for individuals who did not meet the criteria of being either legally married or in a committed romantic relationship for 10 or more years. In total, 902 individuals completed the surveys. No participant exited the survey without finishing it. From this total, 293 cases were excluded from the data analysis because their relationships did not fall into the racial categories of White, Black, or Interracial (White-Black). In an attempt

to control confounding variables, participants were excluded from data analysis if they described themselves (or their partner) as bi/multiracial, non-black Latino, or from a racial group outside of White or Black. After these cases were removed, 607 participants were able to be included in data analysis (see Table 1).

The sample consisted of mostly White participants in homogamous relationships ($n = 360$, 59.3%). There were 200 Black participants in homogamous relationships (32.9%) and only 47 Black-White participants in interracial couples (7.7%). The responses indicated that 311 participants were male (51.2%), 295 participants were female (48.6%), and one participant had a non-binary gender (0.2%). Likewise, the 306 (50.4%) participants reported that their partners were male, 298 (48.6%) reported that they were female, and three (.5%) reported that their partners identified with a non-binary gender.

Most of the participants had a high school diploma ($n = 196$, 32.3%), 166 participants had a Bachelor's degree (27.3%), 99 participants had trade or technical vocational training (16.3%), 69 participants had a Master's degree (11.4%), 27 participants had some high school education (4.4%), 27 participants had a professional degree (4.4%), 15 participants had a doctorate degree (2.5%), four participants had no formal schooling (0.7%), and four had completed middle school (0.7%).

Most of the participants had yearly incomes between \$25,000–49,999 ($n = 132$, 21.7%), 112 participants made yearly incomes between \$50,000–74,999 (18.5%), 87 participants made yearly incomes between \$75,000–99,999 (14.3%), 69 participants made yearly incomes between \$10,000–24,999 (11.4%), 61 participants made yearly incomes between \$100,000–124,999 (10%), 45 participants made yearly incomes

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Statistics

Demographic	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Female	295	48.6
Male	311	51.2
Other	1	.2
Gender of Partner		
Female	298	49.1
Male	306	50.4
Other	3	.5
Ethnicity		
African American	182	30.0
Black Other	11	1.8
Black Latinx American	26	4.3
Black Latinx Other	4	.7
Caucasian American	370	61.0
Caucasian Other	14	2.3
Ethnicity of Partner		
African American	182	30.0
Black Other	11	1.8
Black Latinx American	28	4.6
Black Latinx Other	3	.5
Caucasian American	375	61.8
Caucasian Other	8	1.3
Ethnic Pairings		
Black Couples	200	32.9
White Couples	360	59.3
Interracial Couples	47	7.7
Age		
18-24	37	6.1
25-34	204	33.6
35-45	177	29.2
45-54	106	17.5
55-64	63	10.4
65 +	18	3.0
Missing	2	.3

Table 1—*Continued.*

Demographic	<i>N</i>	%
Years Married		
1-9	169	27.8
10-19	293	48.3
20-29	86	14.2
30-39	43	7.1
40-49	11	1.8
50 +	4	.7
Missing	1	.2
Previous Marriage or Long-Term Relationships		
Yes	178	29.3
No	429	70.7
Highest Level of Schooling		
None	4	.7
Middle school	4	.7
Some high school	27	4.4
High school graduate	196	32.3
Trade/Technical/Vocational Training	99	16.3
Bachelor's Degree	166	27.3
Master's Degree	69	11.4
Professional Degree	27	4.4
Doctorate Degree	15	2.5
Yearly Household Income		
\$0 – \$9 999	32	5.3
\$10 000 – \$24 999	69	11.4
\$25 000 – \$49 999	132	21.7
\$50 000 – \$74 999	112	18.5
\$75 000 – \$99 999	87	14.3
\$100 000 – \$124 999	61	10.0
\$125 000 – \$149 999	45	7.4
\$150 000 – \$174 999	23	3.8
\$175 000 – \$199 000	16	2.6
\$200 000 +	30	4.9
Population of Community		
Urban	205	33.8
Suburban	251	41.4
Rural	141	23.2
Seclusion	10	1.6
Degree of Community Homogeny		
Most People Ethnically Similar to Participant	265	43.7
Even Mixture of Ethnicities	262	43.2
Few People Ethnically Similar to Participant	67	11.0
No One Is Ethnically Similar to Participant	13	2.1

between \$125,000–149,999 (7.4%), 32 participants made \$99,999 or less a year (5.3%), 30 participants made \$200,000 or more a year (4.9%), 23 participants made yearly incomes between \$150,000–174,999 (3.8%), 16 participants made yearly incomes between \$175 000–199,999 (2.6%).

Reliability Estimates

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Marital satisfaction was assessed using the DAS. The global scale consisted of 32 items, which describe overall relationship satisfaction. It appeared highly reliable with a Cronbach α of .906. This suggests that global scale can consistently measure overall relationship satisfaction across situations. The scale consists of four subscales: Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Cohesion, Dyadic Satisfaction, and Affective Expression. The Dyadic Consensus subscale (13 items), which measured the degree to which participants agree with their partners on important issues, appeared highly reliable (Cronbach α .944). This suggests that the Dyadic Consensus subscale has few measurement errors and can measure the participants' degree of agreement with their partners on important issues consistently across situations. The Dyadic Cohesion subscale (five items), which evaluates the degree in which couples engage in activities with each other, also appeared highly reliable (Cronbach α .830). This suggests that the Dyadic Cohesion subscale has few measurement errors and can measure the degree that couples engage in activities with each other consistently across situations. The Dyadic Satisfaction subscale (10 items), which measured the degree in which participants feel happy with their partner, appeared modestly reliable (Cronbach α .794). This suggests that the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale has some measurement errors and can modestly measure the degree that

participants feel happy with their partner consistently across situations. However, the Affectional Expression subscale (four items), which evaluates the degree of perceived emotional affection between the individuals in couple, had very poor reliability (Cronbach α .583). This suggests that the Affective Expression subscale has many measurement errors and is not very good at measuring the degree of perceived emotional affection consistently across situations.

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised

Ethnic identity was assessed using the MEIM-R. The global scale consisted of six items, which assess overall ethnic identity. It appeared highly reliable with a Cronbach α of .914. The scale consists of two subscales: Commitment and Exploration. The Commitment subscale (three items), which was highly reliable with a Cronbach α of .898. The Exploration subscale (three items) was also highly reliable with a Cronbach α of .864. This suggests that the global scale, along with its two subscales, have few measurement errors and can consistently measure ethnic identity and its subcomponents across situations (see Table 2).

Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised

Adult attachment was assessed using the ECR-R. The scale (36 items) consists of two subscales: Anxiety and Avoidant. High scores on the subscales suggest high degree dysfunctional attachment patterns, while low scores on both subscales suggest a secure attachment pattern. The Anxiety subscale (18 items), which assessed insecurity about the partner's responsiveness and availability, appeared highly reliable (Cronbach α .954). The Avoidant subscale (18 items), which assessed discomfort with being close to their partner and lack of dependence on partner, also appeared highly reliable (Cronbach α

Table 2

Reliability Coefficients for Scales

	Subscale	No. of Items	Cronbach's α
MEIM-R	Commitment	3	.898
	Exploration	3	.864
	Global	6	.914
ECR-R	Anxiety Attachment	18	.954
	Avoidant Attachment	18	.916
DAS	Consensus	13	.944
	Cohesion	5	.812
	Satisfaction	10	.794
	Affectional Expression	4	.583
	Global	32	.906

*Cronbach's α coefficient internally reliable at $\geq .7$.

.916). This suggests that both the Anxiety and Avoidant subscales have few measurement errors and can consistently measure Anxious and Avoidant attachment across situations (see Table 2).

Results by Question

In an attempt to answer the research questions, bivariate correlational procedures (Pearson r), one-way between-subjects MANOVA, and Path Analysis were conducted. Bivariate correlations measured the covariance between the independent variables: ethnic identity and adult attachment, and dependent variable: relationship satisfaction. The MANOVA compared the means between White, Black, and Interracial couples along the ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction scales. Since a significant relationship was not found between the means, Path Analysis was used to describe the variability in marital satisfaction across the different ethnic couple groups. The research questions are:

1. Are there differences among White, Black, and Interracial couples in ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction?
2. To what extent is relationship satisfaction related to ethnic identity and adult attachment among White, Black, and Interracial couples?

Research Question 1

Are there differences among White, Black, and Interracial couples in ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction? In this study, participants reported details regarding their relationship satisfaction. The global scale of the DAS indicated that participants had a mean score of 141.52 ($SD = 20.14$) with a skewness of $-.644$. This suggests that participants reported moderately high levels of overall relationship satisfaction. All three groups reported similar scores on the global scale (White: $\bar{x} = 142.47$, $SD = 20.32$; Black: $\bar{x} = 140.48$, $SD = 20.20$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 138.79$, $SD = 18.29$). This indicates there were very few reported differences in how the couple groups experienced their overall sense of relationship satisfaction (see Table 3).

For the DAS Dyadic Consensus subscale, the sample had a mean score of 64.04 ($SD = 10.72$), but it was negatively skewed with a value of -1.72 . This indicates that participants reported moderately high levels of agreement with their partners on important issues. All three groups reported similar scores on the DAS Dyadic Consensus subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 63.94$, $SD = 10.99$; Black: $\bar{x} = 64.31$, $SD = 10.64$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 63.79$, $SD = 18.29$). This suggests there were very few reported differences between the couple groups in the degree of agreement with their partners on important issues (see Table 3).

Table 3

Participants' Descriptive Statistics

			<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	Skewness
MEIM-R	Commitment	White Couples	360	3.43	1.02	1.00	5.00	-.433
		Black Couples	200	3.51	1.19	1.00	5.00	-.633
		Interracial Couples	47	3.38	1.16	1.00	5.00	-.473
		Total	607	3.45	1.09	1.00	5.00	-.508
	Exploration	White Couples	360	3.07	1.05	1.00	5.00	-.140
		Black Couples	200	3.25	1.15	1.00	5.00	-.517
		Interracial Couples	47	3.20	1.18	1.00	5.00	-.199
		Total	607	3.14	1.10	1.00	5.00	-.263
	Global	White Couples	360	3.25	.943	1.00	5.00	-.249
		Black Couples	200	3.38	1.12	1.00	5.00	-.642
		Interracial Couples	47	3.29	1.09	1.00	5.00	-.328
		Total	607	3.30	1.02	1.00	5.00	-.397
ECR-R	Anxiety Attachment	White Couples	360	2.99	1.60	1.00	7.00	.540
		Black Couples	200	3.06	1.62	1.00	6.78	.633
		Interracial Couples	47	3.15	1.63	1.00	6.89	.388
		Total	607	3.03	1.61	1.00	7.00	.557
	Avoidant Attachment	White Couples	360	2.84	1.25	1.00	6.61	.199
		Black Couples	200	3.07	1.39	1.00	6.67	.020
		Interracial Couples	47	3.08	1.32	1.00	6.00	-.031
		Total	607	2.93	1.31	1.00	6.67	.133
DAS	Consensus	White Couples	360	63.94	10.99	13.00	78.00	-1.92
		Black Couples	200	64.32	10.64	13.00	78.00	-1.45
		Interracial Couples	47	63.64	9.09	37.00	78.00	-.959
		Total	607	64.04	10.72	13.00	78.00	-1.72
	Cohesion	White Couples	360	20.28	5.57	5.00	29.00	-.457
		Black Couples	200	20.04	5.83	5.00	29.00	-.413
		Interracial Couples	47	19.38	5.98	8.00	29.00	-.117
		Total	607	20.13	5.68	5.00	29.00	-.415
	Satisfaction	White Couples	360	45.89	8.53	24.00	60.00	-.344
		Black Couples	200	43.98	8.62	20.00	60.00	-.183
		Interracial Couples	47	43.04	8.57	27.00	56.00	-.111
		Total	607	45.04	8.61	20.00	60.00	-.268
	Affectional Expression	White Couples	360	13.04	2.37	4.00	16.00	-1.14
		Black Couples	200	13.02	2.80	5.00	31.00	.531
		Interracial Couples	47	13.51	1.88	9.00	16.00	-.338
		Total	607	13.07	2.48	4.00	31.00	-.366
	Global	White Couples	360	142.47	20.32	60.00	183.00	-.832
		Black Couples	200	140.48	20.20	64.00	184.00	-.352
		Interracial Couples	47	138.79	18.29	91.00	172.00	-.537
		Total	607	141.53	20.14	60.00	184.00	-.644

For the DAS Dyadic Cohesion subscale, the sample had a mean score of 20.13 ($SD = 5.68$) with a value of $-.415$. This suggests that participants reported above average levels of engaging in activities with each other. All three groups reported similar scores on the DAS Dyadic Cohesion subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 20.28$, $SD = 5.37$; Black: $\bar{x} = 20.04$, $SD = 5.83$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 19.38$, $SD = 5.98$). This suggests there were very few reported differences between the couple groups in the degree of agreement with their partners on important issues (see Table 3).

For the DAS Dyadic Satisfaction subscale, the sample had a mean score of 45.04 ($SD = 8.61$) with a skewness of $-.268$. This indicates that participants reported moderately high levels of feeling happy about their partner. All three groups reported similar scores on the DAS Dyadic Satisfaction subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 45.89$, $SD = 8.53$; Black: $\bar{x} = 43.98$, $SD = 8.62$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 43.04$, $SD = 8.57$). This suggests there were very few reported differences in differences between the couple groups in their descriptions of happiness with their partner (see Table 3).

Last, the DAS Affectional Expression subscale, the sample had a mean score of 13.07 ($SD = 2.48$) with a skewness of $-.366$. This suggests that participants had moderately high levels of emotional affection in their relationship (Table 3). All three groups reported similar scores on the DAS Affectional Expression subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 45.89$, $SD = 8.53$; Black: $\bar{x} = 43.98$, $SD = 8.62$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 43.04$, $SD = 8.57$). This suggests that there were very few reported differences between the couple groups in their descriptions of happiness with their partner (see Table 3).

In this study, participants reported details regarding their ethnic identity. The global scale of the MEIM-R indicated that participants had an average score of 3.30 (SD

= 1.02) with a skewness of -.397. This suggests that participants had overall neutral responses to questions of ethnic identity. All three couple groups reported similar scores on the global scale (White: $\bar{x} = 3.25$, $SD = .943$; Black: $\bar{x} = 3.38$, $SD = 1.12$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 3.29$, $SD = 1.09$). This indicates that there was very few reported differences in how the couple groups experienced their overall sense of ethnic identity (see Table 3).

For the MEIM-R Commitment subscale, the participants had a mean score of 3.14 ($SD = 1.10$) with a skewness of -.508, while they had a mean score of 3.45 ($SD = 1.09$) with a skewness of -.263 for the MEIM-R Exploration subscale. This suggests that the participants gave similar responses to questions regarding the involvement and establishment of a sense of belonging within a particular ethnic group and questions regarding the active searching process of ethnic identity. All three groups reported similar scores on the MEIM-R Commitment subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 3.43$, $SD = 1.02$; Black: $\bar{x} = 3.51$, $SD = 1.19$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 3.38$, $SD = 8.57$). This indicates that there were very few reported differences between couple groups in their experience of establishing a sense of belonging and feeling involved in their particular ethnic group. All three groups reported similar scores on the MEIM-R Exploration subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 3.07$, $SD = 1.05$; Black: $\bar{x} = 3.25$, $SD = 1.15$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 3.20$, $SD = 1.18$). This indicates there were very few reported differences between couple groups in their experience of actively searching their ethnic identity (see Table 3).

The participants reported details of adult attachment on the ECR-R. The Anxiety subscale indicated that participants had a mean score of 3.03 ($SD = 1.61$) with a skewness of .557. This suggests that participants reported modestly low levels of insecurity about the responsiveness and availability of their partner. All three couple groups reported

similar experiences on the ECR-R Anxious Attachment subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 2.99$, $SD = 1.60$; Black: $\bar{x} = 3.06$, $SD = 1.62$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 3.15$, $SD = 1.63$). This indicates that White, Black, and Interracial couples reported similar levels of insecurity about the responsiveness of their partner (see Table 3).

For the Avoidant subscale, participants reported a mean score of 2.93 ($SD = 1.31$) with a skewness of .133. This indicates that participants reported moderately low levels of discomfort with being close to partners and lack of dependence on partners. The sample's low mean scores across both subscales indicate that the sample reported moderately high levels of secure attachment, which describes having a trusting and supportive relationship with their partner. All three couple groups reported similar experiences on the ECR-R Avoidant Attachment subscale (White: $\bar{x} = 2.84$, $SD = 1.25$; Black: $\bar{x} = 3.07$, $SD = 1.39$; Interracial: $\bar{x} = 3.08$, $SD = 1.32$). This indicates that White, Black, and Interracial couples reported similar levels of discomfort with being close to their partners (see Table 3).

The one-way between-subjects MANOVA was conducted to further investigate whether there were any differences in how the couple groups perceived ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. A statistically significant Box's M test ($M = 149.53$, $p < .001$) indicated that within-group covariance matrices were not equal across the couple groups. The criteria used to determine the homogeneity of the covariance matrices was $p < .005$. This suggests that the inter-correlation of the subscales, measuring the relationship satisfaction components, were not equal across all the subscales, measuring the ethnic identity and adult attachment components. Since the Box's M violates the MANOVA assumption of homogenous covariance matrices, the Pillai's

Trace criterion was used to compare the means between White, Black, and Interracial couples. The analysis revealed that there were no significant correlations between White, Black, and Interracial couples across the subscales of the MEIM-R, ECR-R, and DAS, $F = 1.61$, $p = .60$, $\eta^2 = .021$. The Partial Eta Squared (η^2) suggests that only 2.1% of the variability in marital satisfaction, as measured across the DAS subscales, is accounted for by the difference between White, Black, and Interracial couples (see Table 4). Thus, there appears to be no significant differences between White and Black couples on how they experience their racial identity, attachment styles, and marital satisfaction.

Table 4

Pillai's Trace for One-Way Between-Subjects Factorial MANOVA

Source	Value	F	p	η^2 (eta)
Intercept	.988	636.17	< .001	.988
Couple Group	.042	1.61	.060	.021

Research Question 2

To what extent is relationship satisfaction related to ethnic identity and adult attachment among White, Black, and Interracial couples? In a measure of covariance, it was shown that the MEIM-R Global scale was positively correlated to global DAS Global scale ($r = .190$). This suggests that an overall increased sense of ethnic identity was associated with a positive appraisal of overall relationship satisfaction (see Table 5).

The MEIM-R Commitment subscale was both positively correlated to the DAS Cohesion Subscale ($r = .377$) and the DAS global scale ($r = .199$) at the significance level

Table 5

Zero-Correlation Matrix of Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MEIMR-C	1									
MEIMR-E	.731**	1								
MEIMR-G	.930**	.931**	1							
ECRR-Ax	.047	.162**	.113**	1						
ECRR-Av	-.167**	-.118**	-.153**	.438**	1					
DAS-Con	.049	.070	.064	-.197**	-.225**	1				
DAS-Coh	.377**	.347**	.389**	-.238**	-.456**	.319**	1			
DAS-Sat	.160*	.046	.110**	-.572**	-.673**	.199**	.515**	1		
DAS-AF	.066	.066	.071	-.329**	-.308**	.692**	.337**	.334**	1	1
DAS-G	.199**	.154**	.190**	-.453**	-.520**	.788**	.700**	.697**	.727**	1
Mean	3.45	3.14	3.30	3.03	2.93	64.04	20.13	45.04	13.07	141.52
SD	1.10	1.10	1.02	1.61	1.31	10.72	5.68	8.61	2.48	20.14

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). MEIMR-C–MEIMR Commitment; MEIMR-E–MEIMR Exploration; MEIMR-G–MEIMR Global; ECRR-Ax–ECRR Anxiety; ECRR-Av–ECRR Avoidant; DAS-Con–DAS Consensus; DAS-Coh–DAS Cohesion; DAS-Sat–DAS Satisfaction; DAS-AF–DAS Affectional Expression; DAS-G–DAS Global.

***DAS scores were calculated with values that did not include 0.

of .01, this indicates that an increased sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group is associated with an increase of engagement in activities with their partner and an increased overall relationship satisfaction. The MEIM-R Commitment subscale was also positively correlated to the DAS Satisfaction subscale ($r = .160$) at the significance level .05, which suggests that an increased sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group is associated with participants reporting an increased sense of contentment with their spouse (see Table 5).

The Exploration subscale of the MEIM-R was positively correlated to both the DAS Cohesion subscale ($r = .347$) and the DAS Global scale ($r = .154$) at the significance level of .01. This indicates that an increased involvement in the ethnic search process is associated with participants reporting an increase of engagement in activities with their partner and an increased overall relationship satisfaction (see Table 5).

It was shown that the Anxious Attachment subscale of the ECR-R was negatively correlated to the DAS Global scale ($r = -.453$) at the significance level of .01. This suggests that participants' increased insecurity about the responsiveness of their partner is associated with a decreased overall relationship satisfaction (Table 4). In addition, the ECR-R Anxious Attachment subscale was negatively correlated to the Consensus ($r = -.197$), Cohesion ($r = -.238$), Satisfaction ($r = -.572$), and Affectional Expression ($r = .329$) subscales of the DAS at the significance level of .01. This indicates that the participants' increased insecurity about the responsiveness of their partner is associated with a decreased agreement with their partner on important issues and less engagement in activities with their partner. It also suggests that higher anxiety about their partner's

responsiveness is related to feeling less content with their partner and a decreased perception of emotional affection within the relationship (see Table 5).

The Avoidant Attachment subscale of the ECR-R was negatively correlated to the DAS Global scale ($r = -.520$) at the significance level of .01. This indicates that more discomfort with being close to their partner is associated with less relationship satisfaction. It was also shown that the ECR-R Avoidant Attachment subscale was negatively correlated to the Consensus ($r = -.225$), Cohesion ($r = -.456$), Satisfaction ($r = -.673$), and Affectional Expression ($r = -.308$) subscales of the DAS at the significance level of .01. This suggests that increased discomfort in being close with their partner is associated with a reduced agreement with their partner on important issues and less engagement in activities with their partner. It also indicated that an increased discomfort with being close is related to feeling less content with their partner and a decreased perception of emotional affection within the relationship (see Table 5).

Last, there appeared to be a significant correlation between the two independent variables. Ethnic identity and anxious attachment were shown to have a positive correlation ($r = .113$), while ethnic identity and avoidant attachment had a negative correlation ($r = -.153$). This suggests a higher anxious attachment style was related to an increased sense of commitment and exploration of ethnic identity, while a higher avoidant attachment style was associated with a decreased sense of commitment and exploration of ethnic identity (see Table 5).

To examine the relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment styles, and marital satisfaction between White, Black, and Interracial couples, Path Analysis was used to examine the subscales of each scale (see Table 6). The criteria that was used to

Table 6

Path Analysis

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	GFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Original	463.820	6	<.001	.859	.766	.766	.355
Re-specified	.643	2	.725	1.000	.999	1.000	<.001
Within Groups							
White Couples	1.080	2	.584	.999	.997	1.000	<.001
Black Couples	.483	2	.785	.999	.999	1.000	<.001
Interracial Couples	3.030	2	.220	.975	.966	.987	.106

determine an acceptable fit for the model was one where the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was $\geq .90$, Normed Fit Index (NFI) was $\geq .95$, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was $\geq .95$, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was $<.07$. According to Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008), the covariances accounted for by the GFI shows how closely the model replicates the observed covariance matrix. Thus, goodness of fit is indicated by a GFI of .90 or more. Incremental fit was examined by the NFI, which compares the Chi-square values of the specific model and its null model and the CFI, which is a revision of the NFI that takes into consideration the sample size. For the model to be considered a good fit, both indices must be .95 or more. Last, the RMSEA examined the absolute fit of the model. The RMSEA describes how well the model would fit the covariance of the optimally chosen parameter estimates of an unknown population and must ideally be under .05 to be considered a good fit. However, some researchers suggest that values less than .07 are adequate (Steiger, 2007). For standard regression weights (see Table 7).

The original model produced a Chi-square of 463.82 ($df = 6$) with a probability of $< .001$. The fit for the original model had the following characteristics: GFI = .859, NFI =

Table 7

Standardized Regression Weights for Original Model

		Path		Estimates
MEIM-R	DAS Consensus	←	MEIM-R Commitment	-.523
	DAS Cohesion	←	MEIM-R Commitment	.185
	DAS Satisfaction	←	MEIM-R Commitment	.132
	DAS Affectional Expression	←	MEIM-R Commitment	-.034
	DAS Consensus	←	MEIM-R Exploration	.114
	DAS Cohesion	←	MEIM-R Exploration	.191
	DAS Satisfaction	←	MEIM-R Exploration	-.054
	DAS Affectional Expression	←	MEIM-R Exploration	.111
ECR-R	DAS Consensus	←	ECR-R Anxiety	-.144
	DAS Cohesion	←	ECR-R Anxiety	-.125
	DAS Satisfaction	←	ECR-R Anxiety	-.348
	DAS Affectional Expression	←	ECR-R Anxiety	-.265
	DAS Consensus	←	ECR-R Avoidant	-.157
	DAS Cohesion	←	ECR-R Avoidant	-.347
	DAS Satisfaction	←	ECR-R Avoidant	-.505
	DAS Affectional Expression	←	ECR-R Avoidant	-.184

.776, CFI = .776, RMSEA = .355 (Table 8). This model, which features all the subscales of the independent and dependent variable scales, is a poor fit for the data (see Figure 2). This was expected since the large sample size makes it more unlikely that the Chi-square would be a non-significant value at the .05 level (Hooper et al., 2008).

The re-specified model had the best fit for the data: GFI = 1.00, NFI = .999, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .001 (see Table 9, Table 10). It produced a Chi-square of .643 ($df = 2$) with a probability of .725 (Figure 3). It features the Commitment and Exploration subscales of the MEIM-R, the Avoidant subscale of the ECR-R, and the Dyadic Cohesion and Affectional Expression subscales of the DAS. According to this model, the two aspects of ethnic identity, Commitment and Exploration, along with a lack of Avoidant

Table 8

Squared Multiple Correlations for Original Model

	Estimate
DAS Consensus	.149
DAS Cohesion	.558
DAS Satisfaction	.325
DAS Affectional Expression	.069

Figure 2. Path Model—Original.

Table 9

Standardized Regression Weights for Re-specified Model

		Path		Estimates
MEIM-R	DAS Cohesion	←	MEIM-R Commitment	.198
	DAS Cohesion	←	MEIM-R Exploration	.149
ECR-R	DAS Cohesion	←	ECR-R Avoidant	-.342
	DAS Affectional Expression	←	ECR-R Avoidant	-.308
DAS	DAS Cohesion	←	DAS Affectional Expression	.210

Table 10

Squared Multiple Correlations for Re-specified Model

	Estimate
DAS Cohesion	.350
DAS Affectional Expression	.095

Figure 3. Path Model—Re-specified.

Attachment can best explain two aspects of marital satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion and Affectional Expression (Figure 3). Cohesion describes the degree in which couples engage in activities with each other and Affectional Expression describes the degree of perceived emotional affection between the couple (Spanier, 1976). The re-specified model reported that Commitment and Exploration described 35% of the variance in Dyadic Cohesion, while a lack of Avoidant Attachment accounted for 34%. The lack Avoidant Attachment also indirectly accounted for some of the variance in Dyadic Cohesion through Affectional Expression. It accounted for 31% of the variance in

Affectional Expression, which in turn accounted for 21% of the variance in Cohesion (Table 9, Table 10).

Next, the re-specified model was analyzed within the context of White, Black, and Interracial couples. As predicted, the subscales of the independent variables appear less correlated to the subscales of marital satisfaction for White couples. The model produced a Chi-square of 1.08 ($df = 2$) with a probability of .584 (see Figure 4), with GFI = .999, NFI = .997, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .001 (see Table 6). The model of best fit explained only 28% of Cohesion and 13% of Affectional Expression. Of the explained variance within the Dyadic Cohesion subscale, a lack of Avoidant Attachment directly explained 30% of the variance. It also accounted for 35% of the variance in Affectional Expression, which in turn accounted for 13% of the variance in Dyadic Cohesion. On the other hand, the subscales of the MEIM-R accounted for little variation in the Dyadic Cohesion subscale. Commitment accounted for 16% and Exploration accounted for 14% of the variance in the Dyadic Cohesion subscale (Table 11, Table 12). This suggests that ethnic identity does not have much influence on White couples spending time and engaging in activities together. As hypothesized, this model suggest that ethnic identity is not a key factor in the overall relationship satisfaction of White couples, since the Commitment and Explorations subscales are not highly correlated to any of the other subscales of the DAS. In addition, secure attachment, particularly one devoid of any avoidant attributes, has some influence on the degree to which White couples spend time engaging in activities with each another. Secure attachment also has an influence on the perceived emotional affection within the relationship, which in turn is also correlated to the degree the couples engage in activities together.

Figure 4. Path Model—White Couples.

Table 11

Standardized Regression Weights for Model for White Couples

		Path	Estimates
MEIM-R	DAS Cohesion	← MEIM-R Commitment	.163
	DAS Cohesion	← MEIM-R Exploration	.145
ECR-R	DAS Cohesion	← ECR-R Avoidant	-.303
	DAS Affectional Expression	← ECR-R Avoidant	-.354
DAS	DAS Cohesion	← DAS Affectional Expression	.215

Table 12

Squared Multiple Correlations for Model for White Couples

	Estimate
DAS Cohesion	.281
DAS Affectional Expression	.125

For Black couples, the model of best fit explained more of the Dyadic Cohesion subscale. The model produced a Chi-square of .483 ($df = 2$) with a probability of .785 (see Figure 3), with GFI = .999, NFI = .999, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .001 (see Table 6). Of the 45% of the Dyadic Cohesion subscale that was explained, the Commitment subscale of the MEIM-R accounted for 24% of variance, while the Exploration subscale of the MEIM-R accounted for 17% of the variance. The lack of Avoidant Attachment directly accounted for 33% of the variance in Cohesion, while it also accounted for 24% of the variation in Affectional Expression. In turn, Affectional Expression accounted for 25% of the variance in Cohesion (Figure 5, Table 13, Table 14). This suggests that ethnic identity has a greater influence on Black couples engaging in activities together than it does for White couples, since together the subscales account for 41% of the variation in the Dyadic Cohesion subscale. Secure attachment, particularly one without any avoidant attributes, also has some influence on the degree that Black couples spend time engaging in activities with one another. Secure attachment also influences the perception of emotional affection within the relationship, which also correlated to the degree the couples engage in activities together.

Interestingly, the model of best fit explained even more of the Dyadic Cohesion subscale for Interracial couples. The model produced a Chi-square of 3.03 ($df = 2$) with a probability of .220 (see Figure 6), with GFI = .975, NFI = .966, CFI = .987, RMSEA = .106 (see Table 6). However, the results of this model should be interpreted with caution since the sample of Interracial couples was only comprised of 47 participants (see Table 1). The model of best fit explained 52% of the Dyadic Cohesion subscale, but only 18% of the Affectional Expression subscale. Unlike Black couples, only 16% of Commitment

Figure 5. Path Model—Black Couples.

Table 13

Standardized Regression Weights for Model for Black Couples

		Path	Estimates
MEIM-R	DAS Cohesion	← MEIM-R Commitment	.242
	DAS Cohesion	← MEIM-R Exploration	.172
ECR-R	DAS Cohesion	← ECR-R Avoidant	-.333
	DAS Affectional Expression	← ECR-R Avoidant	-.237
DAS	DAS Cohesion	← DAS Affectional Expression	.247

Table 14

Squared Multiple Correlations for Model Black Couples

	Estimate
DAS Cohesion	.445
DAS Affectional Expression	.056

Figure 6. Path Model—Interracial Couples.

and 16% of Exploration accounted for variation within the Dyadic Cohesion subscale of the DAS. However, the lack of Avoidant Attachment in the relationship directly accounted for 61% of the variation in Dyadic Cohesion. Although the lack of Avoidant Attachment accounted for 45% of the variance in Affectional Expression, it did not have an indirect effect on Dyadic Cohesion. The lack of Affectional Expression only accounted for an insignificant 2% of the variation in Dyadic Cohesion see (Figure 6, Table 15, Table 16). This suggests that ethnic identity does not have much influence on Interracial couples spending time and engaging in activities together. Since the Commitment and Explorations subscales are not highly correlated to any of the other subscales of the DAS, this model also suggests that ethnic identity is not a key factor in the overall marital satisfaction of Interracial couples. However, secure attachment styles, particularly ones devoid of any avoidant attributes, are more correlated to Interracial couples engaging in activities with each other. Although it is also correlated with the

Table 15

Standardized Regression Weights for Model for Interracial Couples

		Path	Estimates
MEIM-R	DAS Cohesion	←	MEIM-R Commitment .155
	DAS Cohesion	←	MEIM-R Exploration .162
ECR-R	DAS Cohesion	←	ECR-R Avoidant -.609
	DAS Affectional Expression	←	ECR-R Avoidant -.423
DAS	DAS Cohesion	←	DAS Affectional Expression -.016

Table 16

Squared Multiple Correlations for Model Interracial Couples

	Estimate
DAS Cohesion	.524
DAS Affectional Expression	.179

perceived emotional affection within the relationship, the perception of emotional affection does not have a relationship with the degree in which Interracial couples engage in activities with each other.

Summary of the Findings

Based on the studies presented in the literature review, this study hypothesized that ethnic identity and adult attachment would influence relationship satisfaction differently in White, Black, Interracial couples. In this chapter, the characteristics of the sample were described, and then information describing the reliability of the MEIM-R (Phinney & Ong, 2007), ECR-R (Fraley et al., 2000), and DAS (Spainer, 1976) was presented. Next, the results of the methods used to examine the research questions, which

was based on the hypothesis, was presented. Descriptive statistics and measures of covariance (Pearson r) were used to describe the relationship that relationship satisfaction has with ethnic identity and adult attachment. The one-way between-subjects MANOVA was used to examine the differences between the means of the White, Black, and Interracial couples. Last, Path Analysis examined the relationship between the couple groups along the subscales of the MEIM-R, ECR-R, and DAS. In Chapter 5, the implications of the results will be explored in light of the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter the information of the previous chapters will be summarized, discussed, and implications will be made. In order to understand the implications of the study, the purpose of this research will be reviewed, along with an abbreviated literature review. Next, the methodology and a summary of the major findings will be described. Most of this chapter will be devoted to an in-depth discussion of the results in light of the presented literature. Implications for future research will be explored and the limitations of this study will be identified.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. In particular, it compared the interrelationship of these variables among White, Black, and Interracial couples. The data from this study contributed to the literature on racial identity development, adult attachment, and marital satisfaction.

Summary of the Literature

The literature regarding the relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction seemed to show that ethnic identity has some influence on

attachment in adults and there is a correlation between adult attachment and relationship satisfaction. However, literature on the relationship between ethnic identity and relationship satisfaction is very limited. The lack of information was particularly apparent in the limited research on relationship satisfaction in Black-White Interracial couples. Other mitigating factors, such as income or level of education, may be perceived as having more impact on the perception of marital satisfaction.

Review of Relationship Satisfaction Literature

Relationship satisfaction is a subjective general evaluation of a person's contentment, fulfillment, and gratification in the relationship (Graham et al., 2011). Though it is a significant construct, it is a weak predictor of divorce among married couples. Low satisfaction is only one issue on a long list of processes that can be identified as precursors of divorce (Gottman, 1999).

Several factors can influence each partner's perception of relationship satisfaction. One of those factors is relationship, or marital, expectation. Expectation, which is the composite of beliefs that each partner has about what marriage should be like, influences the way people perceive their relationship and impacts how they interact with their partner (Goffman, 1974; Johnson, 2015; Vangelisti & Daly, 1997). According to the Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction, the goals that couples achieve during the relationship will determine satisfaction. Goals that are completed during particular developmental stages impact satisfaction. Additional factors impact relationship satisfaction by either facilitating goal achievement or changing the priorities of certain goals (Li & Fung, 2011).

Ethnic identity can also impact relationship satisfaction. For African-Americans,

it was hypothesized that a healthy and mature racial identity can be protective against relationship stressors and positively impact marital quality. However, low racial identification or being in a relationship with a partner of a different racial identity level can increase the experience of social stressors (Bryant et al., 2010; Nicolas et al., 2009; Wills et al., 2007).

Last, attachment styles influence relationship satisfaction. In a meta-analysis by Li and Chan (2012), it was found that the insecure attachment styles were associated to relationship satisfaction by hyperactivation or deactivation strategies. Anxiety attachment activates the hyperactivation strategies and is closely associated with heightened stress levels and decreased relationship satisfaction (Allison et al., 2008; Harma & Sümer, 2016). Avoidant attachment activates the deactivation strategies and is associated with relationship dissatisfaction because highly avoidant people are usually uncomfortable with providing support and care to their partners (Feeney, 2008). Avoidant attachment is considered a strong predictor of low relationship quality, which included low levels of relationship satisfaction, constructive interaction, and support (Harma & Sümer, 2016; Li & Chan, 2012).

Review of Ethnic Identity Literature

Although many ethnic identity models have been developed, this study was grounded on Phinney's theory on ethnic identity development. According to Phinney (1990), ethnic identity can be described as a sense of belonging to his/her ethnic group, the evaluation of that group, the degree of interest and knowledge about the group, involvement in traditions and activities of the group, and commitment to the group. She postulated that there were three stages during their ethnic developmental process: the

unexamined ethnic identity, ethnic identity search/moratorium, and ethnic identity achievement. In later research, she suggested that ethnic exploration and commitment are continuous dimensions (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Review of Adult Attachment Literature

Individual identity develops through social interaction, which usually begins by developing close bonds with caregivers in infancy. Attachment to significant others provides individuals with a sense of security, comfort, and a secure base that can be returned to after an exploration of the environment (Bowlby, 1969). In adulthood, people develop and maintain bonds with a wide circle of people. Many times romantic partners replace parents as primary attachment figures (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). This study focuses on the three attachment styles in adulthood: secure, anxious, and avoidant. Individuals who securely attach to significant others tend to have trusting, supportive relationships. Anxiously attached individuals have negative self-images, excessively seeks for external approval, and fear being rejected or abandoned by loved ones. Avoidantly attached individuals tend to have negative images of others, socially withdraw, and have either an excessive need for self-reliance or fear of depending on others (Simpson, 1990).

Summary of Methodology

The present study employed a non-experimental, correlation research design. In order to gather information from the participants, a survey was administered. The survey was comprised of three scales and a questionnaire, which measured participants' a) ethnic identity, b) attachment style, c) perception of marital satisfaction, and d) demographic characteristics. The information on ethnic identity was measured using MEIM-R, while

the information on adult attachment was measured using ECR-R (see Appendix D). Relationship satisfaction is the dependent variable and was measured using DAS (see Appendix D) and the demographic information was gathered using the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix C). The data from the surveys were analyzed using several statistical methods, which included descriptive statistics, MANOVA, and Path Analysis. The research sample was obtained using convenience sampling. Participants were recruited using *QuestionPro*, which is an online service that allows researchers to create and distribute surveys to their target populations.

Summary and Discussion of Major Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

A total of 902 individuals completed the surveys. However, 293 cases were excluded from the data analysis because they did not meet the criteria of the study. The final sample was comprised of 607 participants, who met the criteria of being either White or Black, over the age of 18, and legally married. Participants who were in common law relationships were also included in the study, if they indicated that they have been in a committed romantic relationship for 10 years or more. Participants ranged in age from 18–86, with a mean age of 39.46. Most participants reported that they had not been in any previous marriage or long-term relationships (70.7%) and the average years of marriage was 14.39 years, with a range from 1–65 years. Over half of the participants were White (63.2%), while more than a third of the participants were Black (36.8%). Over half of the White participants indicated that they were in relationships with other White people (59.3%), while approximately a third of the Black participants reported that they were in relationships with other Black people (32.9%). Only 7.7% of the participants

reported that they were in Black and White interracial relationships. Although effort was made to obtain comparable sample sizes across the ethnic group of the couples, there were still very few participants that indicated that they were in an Interracial relationship. This had an effect on the results of the study and will be discussed in greater detail in the Limitations section of this chapter.

1. Are there differences among White, Black, and Interracial couples in ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction?
2. To what extent is relationship satisfaction related to ethnic identity and adult attachment among White, Black, and Interracial couples?

Research Question 1

The first research question asked whether there were differences among White, Black, and Interracial couples in ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. It was hypothesized that ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction would be different across the couple groups. However, the MANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences in White, Black, and Interracial couples across all three variables. The DAS reported that participants in White, Black, and Interracial relationships indicated that they experienced moderately high levels of overall relationship satisfaction. When the subscales were examined, it was noted that participants in the three types of relationships reported above average to high levels of agreement with their partners on important issues, engagement in activities with their partners, feeling happy with their partners, and emotional expression with the relationship (see Table 3). On the MEIM-R, participants in White, Black, and Interracial relationships reported experiencing a neutral sense of affiliation to their ethnic identity. Further

examination of the subscales indicated that participants in all three types of relationships reported that they had a neutral sense of belonging to their ethnic group and were moderately engaged in searching their ethnic identity (see Table 3). The ECR-R revealed that participants in White, Black, and Interracial relationships reported low levels of anxiety, which is insecurity about the responsiveness of their partner, and avoidance, which is discomfort with being close to their partners (see Table 3). Low levels of anxiety and avoidance indicate high levels of secure attachment; thus, participants in White, Black, and Interracial relationships report feeling securely attached to their partners (see Table 3).

The lack of significant difference in relationship satisfaction among White, Black, and Interracial couples was somewhat surprising. Though meta-analysis results suggest no differences in relationship satisfaction between White and Interracial couples (Brooks, 2015), other studies suggest that Black couples were more likely to report low relationship satisfaction than other ethnic groups (Bryant et al., 2010; Lavner et al., 2018; St. Vil, 2014). In this sample, participants in Black couple dyads reported moderately high levels of relationship satisfaction, just like participants in White and Interracial couples. A possible reason for this may be due to a reasonable level of relationship commitment. Most participants indicated that they were in a relationship with their current partner for 10–19 years (48.3%). This suggest that they have most likely gone through conflicts and other problems, which have tested their dedication to each other. The extrinsic and intrinsic resources that they have poured into the relationship over the years may be viewed as a detrimental cost if the relationship dissolved (Beach et al., 2003; Juhari & Arif, 2016; Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Shafer et al., 2013). Since commitment

is positively correlated to relationship satisfaction, couples in this sample may have responded based on their level of comfort and dedication to their partners (Givertz et al., 2016).

Similar to relationship satisfaction, it was expected that participants in White, Black, and Interracial relationships would have different ethnic identity experiences. Several studies suggested that individuals from minority ethnic groups viewed ethnicity as being more central to their identity and had higher levels of ethnic exploration than White individuals (Garcia, 2013; Mills & Murray, 2017; Rumbaut, 2008). The present sample's neutral response to ethnic identity items suggests that ethnicity may not play an important role in the conceptualization of personal identity, even for minorities. This was particularly interesting when considering that some of the participants were ethnic minorities in Interracial relationships, in which they were most likely going to confront issues of ethnicity regularly. In looking at Phinney's model of ethnic identity development, the sample's apparent indifference seems to reflect her description of the *Unexamined Ethnic Identity* (Phinney, 1990). Low levels on the MEIM-R would have suggested a low orientation to their ethnicity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). However, their neutral responses seem to suggest a diffused or foreclosed attitude toward their ethnic identity (Marcia, 1966, 1980; Phinney, 1990).

Another factor that could account for the sample's neutral response is that most of the participants reported that they lived in suburban (41.4%) or urban (33.8%) communities where the people around them were ethnically similar to them (43.7%) or there was a relatively even mixture of ethnicities (43.7%; see Table 1). Individuals living in communities where they are a part of the majority or have sufficient representation

may not feel the need to explore their ethnic identity, since experiences with discrimination can often lead minorities to engage in ethnic identity search (Mills & Murray, 2017; Phinney, 1990). Thus, participants in Interracial relationships may not perceive ethnicity as an important factor if they live in communities that shield them from many types of discrimination.

Differences in adult attachment among participants in White, Black, and Interracial relationships were also anticipated. Several studies suggest that African Americans are more likely to have avoidant attachment styles when compared to White Americans (Lopez et al., 2000; Magai et al., 2001; Wei et al., 2004). However, participants across couple groups reported similar levels of secure attachment. A possible reason for this may be that participants that decided to take part in the study did so because they felt confident about their relationship with their partner. The subject matter, which was clearly stated in the title of the study, might have been attractive to participants that felt comfortable and confident in their relationships. Demographic details, such as their stable modest income (21.7% between \$25,000–49,999), suggested that the sample tended to have dependable lifestyle characteristics (see Table 1). Developmental stage may have also influenced the present samples reports of attachment. The majority of the participants were either between the ages of 25–34 years (33.6%) or 35–45 years (29.2%). This establishment and stability may have been reflected in their reports of attachment to the partner (Erikson, 1950, 1968).

Research Question 2

The second research question asked to what extent relationship satisfaction is related to ethnic identity and adult attachment among White, Black, and Interracial

couples. It was hypothesized that ethnic identity and adult attachment would have an influence on relationship satisfaction. Measures of covariance suggested that for White, Black, and Interracial couples, ethnic identity was associated with a positive appraisal of overall relationship satisfaction ($r = .160$). An increased sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group was associated with an increase of engagement in activities with their partner ($r = .377$) and an increased overall relationship satisfaction ($r = .199$).

Additionally, an increased involvement in the ethnic search process was associated with participants reporting an increase of engagement in activities with their partner ($r = .347$) and an increased overall relationship satisfaction ($r = .154$). It was found that when it came to measures of attachment, increased discomfort with being close to their partner was associated with less engagement in activities with their partner ($r = -.456$), decreased perception of emotional affection within the relationship ($r = -.308$), and less relationship satisfaction ($r = -.520$; see Table 5).

Path Analysis was used to explore the relationship between ethnic identity, adult attachment styles, and relationship satisfaction between White, Black, and Interracial couples. The original model, which featured all the subscales on the MEIM-R, ECR-R, and DAS, was not a good fit for the data that was observed (GFI = .859, NFI = .776, CFI = .776, RMSEA = .355) (see Figure 2), but the re-specified model produced a good fit and featured the two ethnic identity subscales on the MEIM-R, the Avoidant Attachment subscale from the ECR-R, and the Cohesion and Affectional Expression subscales from the DAS (GFI = 1.00, NFI = .999, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .001) (see Figure 3). For White couples, the components of ethnic identity and adult attachment were less correlated with the Cohesion and Affectional Expression subscales of the DAS (GFI = .999, NFI = .997,

CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .001) (see Figure 4). For Black couples, forty-five percent of the Cohesion subscale was explained by the reduced presence of avoidant attachment, the components of ethnic identity, and Affectional Expression (GFI = .999, NFI = .999, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA < .001) (see Figure 5). Last, for Interracial couples, 52% of the Cohesion subscale was explained by the reduced presence of avoidant attachment and the components of ethnic identity for Interracial couples (GFI = .975, NFI = .966, CFI = .987, RMSEA = .106) (see Figure 6). However, the impact of the DAS Affectional Expression was negligible.

As expected, ethnic identity is less likely to impact aspects of relationship satisfaction for participants in White homogamous relationships. Instead, engaging in activities with their partner had a higher correlation with a secure attachment, particularly one without traits of avoidance. Since studies linked avoidant attachment to low relationship quality were based on predominately White samples, it was not surprising that this present study showed that avoidant attachment has an association with an aspect of relationship satisfaction for participants in White relationships (Harma, & Sümer, 2016; Li & Chan, 2012). However, these associations were not enough to account for most of the variability in the DAS Cohesion subscale. Since this model only describes 28% of why White participants engage in activities with their partner, it suggested that the majority of the variance could be explained by variables outside of ethnic identity attachment. Additionally, the lack of significant correlation between the MEIM-R and ECR-R subscales with the other DAS subscales, suggested that ethnic identity and adult attachment may not be very important factors in overall relationship satisfaction for White couples.

In comparison to participants in White homogamous relationships, respondents in Black relationships reported that ethnic identity had a much larger influence on them engaging in activities with their partner. The DAS Cohesion subscale was particularly associated to the MEIM-R Commitment subscale, which suggested that bonding through interests, goals, and values were deeply rooted in a sense of affiliation to their ethnicity. For individuals in Black relationships, experiences of prejudice and discrimination may lead them to seek comfort and identity affirmation within the couple dyad. Since the system of racism often devalues the identity and experience of minorities, the couple may often try to reclaim their identities through engaging in ethnocentric activities. This was evident in research that suggested that ethnic identity held more value for minorities (Bryant et. al. 2010; Mills & Murray, 2017; Nicolas et. al, 2009; Wills et. al. 2007).

On the other hand, the lack of importance of ethnic identity among participants in White relationships may be associated to privileges that come with their majority status. Most of the participants in this study reported that they were Caucasian American (61.8%), which suggested that they may not have directly experienced ethnic discrimination, even from a context of being from minority White group (i.e., Italian American, Russian American, or Greek American). Thus, issues of ethnicity may not have been given much thought. If their experience with their ethnicity mirrors Phinney's first ethnic identity stage, the Unexamined Ethnic Identity, the individuals in White relationships are less likely to engage in discussions or activities oriented around ethnicity (Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Without the need for a safe place from discrimination, personal exploration of the impact of ethnicity on their identity can be avoided.

In comparison to participants in Black relationships, ethnic identity did not have much influence on participants in Interracial relationships engaging in activities with their partner. However, the variance was mostly explained by a secure attachment, without traits of avoidance (61%). Although caution should be taken when interpreting this finding (since only 47 participants were included in the Interracial group), the results suggested that attachment was a more important factor for Interracial couples engaging in activities together than ethnic identity. The development of a close trusting bond, with mutual reliance on each other, may be more important to Interracial couples because their union, rather than their identities, often face discrimination (Kalmijin, 1993; Knox et al., 2000; Rosenthal & Starks, 2015; Simpson, 1990). Focusing on building healthy attachments may increase the stability of the relationship when external and internal stressors are placed on the relationship and conflict arises (Feeney, 2008; Harma, & Sümer, 2016; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004).

The contribution of ethnic identity to the couple's engagement in activities was similar for both White and Interracial couples. This was surprising since it was hypothesized that frequent relational interaction would bring to light ethnic differences. The low importance placed on ethnic identity may suggest that bonding was not rooted in sharing interests, goals, and values from the two ethnicities. This may suggest that individuals in Interracial relationships may not discuss their ethnic differences. It is possible that avoidance discussion of ethnic identity may be their ethnic identity level. Participants in Interracial relationships may be experiencing Phinney's Unexamined Ethnic Identity stage. Black individuals in this stage may accept the beliefs and attitudes of the majority, while rejecting alternative views from their ethnicity to assimilate to their

partner's culture. Meanwhile, White individuals may assert color-blindness when relating to their minority partner (Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Ong, 2007). By being in the same ethnic identity developmental stage, the Interracial couple may achieve an equilibrium that allows them to bond without confronting diversity issues (Bryant et al., 2010). Interracial couples that have differing levels of ethnic identity or further along in their developmental process, may refrain from discussing their differences in order to maintain a secure attachment. This may result in the couple bonding over ethnically neutral activities, while engaging in ethnic exploration and confirming their identity in relationships outside of their partnership.

Limitations

This study has a few limitations. The first limitation is that *QuestionPro* was unable to obtain a sample that consisted of matched pairs. It would have further enriched the study if both partners in the couple dyads were able to complete the survey and their data analyzed together. Unfortunately, *QuestionPro* was unable to ensure that couples would take the survey at the same time.

The second limitation regards the age of the couples. Couples were allowed to take part in the study if they were 18 or older and legally married. They were also included in the study if they were a part of a common law marriage that that has been together for at least 10 years. The criteria for the common law marriage was established to differentiate them from couples were just dating. However, this allowed for some confounding variables, since the group that were legally married could be married for less than a year. Couples married for less than a year would most likely conceptualize

relationship satisfaction and adult attachment differently than though who have been in a relationship for more than 10 years.

Another limitation was that participants in Interracial relationships were not further analyzed in the categories of White participants in Interracial relationships and Black participants in Interracial relationships. Since all participants in Interracial relationships were grouped together, differences in ethnic identity and relationship satisfaction could not be compared between the two races.

The fifth limitation was the use of fill-in-the-blank question format in the *QuestionPro* interface. The use of this question format was intended to allow participants to freely answer questions, such as age and number of years together, without being locked into a range that may not apply to the participant. However, it allowed for participants to skip the question or give invalid answers.

The last limitation is the use of the *QuestionPro* database. Since the online service offers points to respondents, which they can then redeem for gift cards and commercial retail establishments, the respondents to the survey may not take the study seriously. They hurry through the survey and not answer the items properly, which could influence the analysis of the data.

Implications of Study

The present study contributes to the field of mental health by providing researchers and clinicians with information on the association between ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction.

Implications for Practice

1. Clinicians can assess their clients' ethnic identity development and attachment styles and address concerns of identity differences or attachment incompatibility with couples. Although it is important to take into consideration the social and cultural systems that impact the clients, many clinicians may still overlook the importance of keeping these systems in mind when working with couples. With the steady increase of interracial couples, it is important for clinicians to assess and broach issues of ethnic identity with clients in couples' therapy.

2. In addition, clinicians can help clients address ethnic identity and attachment style incompatibility with their partner during therapy. Although White, Black, and Interracial couples did not respond much differently from each other in this study, it is important to be aware that ethnic and attachment incompatibility may have an impact on the functioning of a romantic relationship.

3. Since much emphasis was placed on the ethnic identity of minorities, this study hopes to include majority groups in the ethnic identity conversation and application. Theorists suggest that the exclusion of White people from ethnic analysis perpetuates the concept that phenomenological trends found in the White population are the standard, while other groups must be analyzed and compared to that standard (Charmaraman & Grossman, 2008; Helms & Cook, 1999; Hyde, 1995; Knowles & Peng, 2005; McIntosh, 2003). In application, this can help clinicians guide clients from the majority to self-reflective analyses that may help them confront hidden prejudices and biases.

Implication for Future Research

This study emphasized the need for future research in the areas of ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationships satisfaction:

1. Researchers can analyze how income influences relationship satisfaction for Interracial couples. In preliminary data analyses, a correlation was suggested between income and relationship status for Interracial couples. Since income was not the focus of this study, it would be interesting to explore whether income explains more of relationship satisfaction than ethnic identity and adult attachment.

2. In the results of this study, there was a positive correlation between the Anxious Attachment subscale and the MEIM-R Exploration subscale ($r=.113$). According to Mills and Murray (2017), the Exploration Subscale score is a significant predictor for elevated symptoms of general anxiety (Mills & Murray, 2017). Since the Anxious Attachment subscale was not included in the model of best fit for this data, it would be interesting for further research to analyze similar samples of ethnic groups to examine how anxious attachment and ethnic exploration would relate across ethnic groups.

3. Another study could employ a qualitative analysis to examine the experiences of White, Black, and Interracial couples along the dimensions of ethnic identity, adult attachment, and relationship satisfaction. This study mainly assessed the reports participants gave on scales measuring the variables. However, it was unable to describe the complexity of each participant's ethnic identity development, attachment patterns, and journey in their current relationship. A follow-up qualitative study could offer more insight on the present study's quantitative results.

4. The influence of relationship commitment may also give more insight to the present study's results. Since satisfaction is a highly subjective construct, relationship commitment may offer more objective information and reveal additional insight that can complement the information presented in this research.

APPENDIX A
APPROVAL LETTER

September 26, 2017

Donalea McIntyre
Tel. 506-441-1789
Email: donalea@andrews.edu

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
IRB Protocol #17-131 Application Type: Original **Dept.:** Graduate Psychology & Counseling
Review Category: Exempt **Action Taken:** Approved **Advisor:** Carole Wooldford-Hunt
Title: Racial Identity and Adult Attachment in White, Black, and Interracial Couples and its Relationship to Marital Satisfaction.

Your IRB application for approval of research involving human subjects entitled: *"Racial Identity and Adult Attachment in White, Black, and Interracial Couples and its Relationship to Marital"* IRB protocol # 17-131 has been evaluated and determined Exempt from IRB review under regulation 46.101 (b) (2). You may now proceed with your research.

Please note that any future changes (see IRB Handbook pages 11-12) made to the study design and/or informed consent form require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. In case you need to make changes please use the attached report form.

While there appears to be no more than minimum risks with your study, should an incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, (see IRB Handbook pages 12) this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any research-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University Physician, Dr. Katherine, by calling (269) 473-2222.

We ask that you reference the protocol number in any future correspondence regarding this study for easy retrieval of information.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely,

Mordekai Ongo
Research Integrity and Compliance Officer

Institutional Review Board - 4150 Administration Dr Room 322 - Berrien Springs, MI 49104-0355
Tel: (269) 471-6361 Fax: (269) 471-6543 E-mail: irb@andrews.edu

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

Purpose

You are invited to participate in a research project titled Racial Identity and Adult Attachment in White, Black, and Interracial Couples and its Relationship to Marital Satisfaction. The purpose of this research is to determine if racial identity and adult attachment can influence marital satisfaction in same race and mixed-race couples.

Researchers

This research is being conducted by Donalea McIntyre, a PhD student in the department of Graduate Psychology and Counseling at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Dr. Carole Woolford-Hunt, PhD, is supervising this research. Results from this research will be used in Donalea McIntyre's dissertation and may be published in professional journals or presented at conferences.

Procedure

If you choose to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a survey that asks questions about your marriage and yourself. It will take approximately 25-35 minutes to complete the survey.

Participation

In order to participate, you must be over 18 years of age and be currently married. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. You may quit the survey at any time.

Risks, Benefits, and Compensation

There are no foreseeable risks or benefits associated with participating in this project. As with all surveys taken through this company, if you choose to complete this survey you will be awarded points, which are later redeemable for prizes.

Confidentiality

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential.

Contact Information

If you have questions at any time about the survey, your participation in this research, or your rights as a participant, you may contact the principle investigator, Donalea McIntyre at donalea@andrews.edu. You may also contact her research advisor, Dr. Carole Woolford-Hunt at (269) 471-3473 or cwh@andrews.edu.

Consent

Thank you very much for your time and support. Please start the survey by clicking on the Continue button below. By clicking this button, you are giving your consent to participate in the research described above.

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age? _____
2. What gender do you identify with?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
3. Are you currently married or in a relationship for 10 years or more?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. How many years have you been married to your current partner? _____
5. What gender does your partner identify with?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
6. Have you previously been married or relationship for 10 years or more? _____
 - a. If so, how many previous marriages have you had (not including the current one)? _____
7. How many children do you have? _____
8. How many pets do you have? _____
9. Which country were you born in? _____
10. Which of the following ethnic groups do you most identify with?
 - a. African American
 - b. Black Other (please specify: _____)
 - c. Black Latino/a American
 - d. Black Latino/a Other (please specify: _____)
 - e. Non-Black Latino/a American
 - f. Non-Black Latino/a Other (please specify: _____)
 - g. Caucasian American
 - h. Caucasian Other (please specify: _____)
 - i. Bi/Multiracial (please specify: _____)
 - j. Other (please specify: _____)
11. Which of the following ethnic groups does your partner identify with?
 - a. African American
 - b. Black Other (please specify: _____)
 - c. Black Latino/a American
 - d. Black Latino/a Other (please specify: _____)
 - e. Non-Black Latino/a American
 - f. Non-Black Latino/a Other (please specify: _____)
 - g. Caucasian American

- h. Caucasian Other (please specify: _____)
 - i. Bi/Multiracial (please specify: _____)
 - j. Other (please specify: _____)
12. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
- a. No schooling completed
 - b. Middle school
 - c. Some high school, no diploma
 - d. High school graduate
 - e. Trade/technical/ vocational training
 - f. Bachelor's degree
 - g. Master's degree
 - h. Professional degree
 - i. Doctorate degree
13. How much total combined money did your household make last year?
- a. \$0 to \$9,999
 - b. \$10,000 to \$24,999
 - c. \$25,000 to \$49,999
 - d. \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - e. \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - f. \$100,000 to \$124,999
 - g. \$125,000 to \$149,999
 - h. \$150,000 to \$174,999
 - i. \$175,000 to \$199,999
 - j. \$200,000 and up
14. How populous is your community?
- a. I live in an urban community (i.e., in a large metropolitan city).
 - b. I live in a suburban community (i.e., in a town just outside the city).
 - c. I live in a rural community (i.e., in a village or small town).
 - d. I live in seclusion (i.e., deep within the forest, on a houseboat in the ocean).
15. Are there people in your community are within the same/ similar ethnic or cultural group as you?
- a. Yes, most people are from the same/ similar ethnic or cultural group as me.
 - b. Yes, there is an even mixture of people from my ethnic and cultural group with those who are not from my ethnic and cultural group.
 - c. Yes, there are a few people from the same/ similar ethnic or cultural group.
 - d. No, I am the only one from my ethnic or cultural group in my community.

APPENDIX D

SURVEYS

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 _____

Instructions: Check the box to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I have often done things that will help me understand my ethnic background better.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I have often talked to other people in order to learn more about my ethnic group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Handling family finances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Matters of recreation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Religious matters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Demonstration of affection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Sex relations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Conventionality (correct proper behavior)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Philosophy of life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Amount of time spent together	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Making major decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Household tasks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Leisure time interests and activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Career decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	All the Time	Most of the Time	More Often than Not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or termination of your relationship?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. How often do you or your mate leave the	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

house after a fight?

18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
19. Do you confide in your mate?
20. Do you ever regret that you married? (or lived together)
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?
22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?"

Everyday Almost Everyday Occasionally Rarely Never

23. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or termination of your relationship?

All of Them Most of Them Some of Them Very Few of Them None of Them

24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less than Once a Month	Once or Twice a Month	Once or Twice a Week	Once a Day	More Often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. Laugh together	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. Calmly discuss something	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. Work together on a project	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometime disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no)

	Yes	No
29. Being too tired for sex.	☐	☐
30. Not showing love.	☐	☐

31. The circles on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please fill in the circle which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

- ☐ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and *would go to almost any length* to see that it does
- ☐ I want very much for my relationship to succeed and *will do all I can* to see that it does.
- ☐ I want very much for my relationship to succeed and *will do my fair share* to see that it does.
- ☐ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I can't do much more than I am doing now* to help I succeed.
- ☐ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I *refuse to do any more than I am doing now* to keep the relationship going.
- ☐ My relationship can never succeed, and *there is no more that I can do* to keep the relationship going.

The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire

Instructions: The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you *generally* experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by [web: clicking a circle] [paper: circling a number] to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

	1=Strongly Disagree 7=Strongly Agree
1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. I worry a lot about my relationships.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. I tell my partner just about everything.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
31. I talk things over with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
36. My partner really understands me and my needs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Scoring Information: The first 18 items listed below comprise the attachment-related anxiety scale. Items 19–36 comprise the attachment-related avoidance scale. In real research, the order in which these items are presented should be randomized. Each item is rated on a 7-point scale where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. To obtain a score for attachment-related *anxiety*, please average a person’s responses to items 1–18. However, because items 9 and 11 are “reverse keyed” (i.e., high numbers represent low anxiety rather than high anxiety), you’ll need to reverse the answers to those questions before averaging the responses. (If someone answers with a “6” to item 9, you’ll need to re-key it as a 2 before averaging.) To obtain a score for attachment-related *avoidance*, please average a person’s responses to items 19–36. Items 20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 36 will need to be reverse keyed before you compute this average.

Special notes: You may wish to randomize the order of the items when presenting them to research participants. The ordering below is simply a convenient one for illustrating which items belong to which scale. Also, some people have modified the items to refer to “others” rather than “romantic partners.” This seems sensible to us, and in our own research we commonly alter the wording to refer to different individuals. For example, sometimes we reword the items to refer to “others” or “this person” and alter the instructions to say something like “The statements below concern how you generally feel in your relationship with your mother” or “The statements below concern how you generally feel in your relationship with your romantic partner (i.e., a girlfriend, boyfriend, or spouse).”

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