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An Examination of Perceived Discrimination and Stress in Interracial Relationships

Sharon Sirmons Conger
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Walden University
2014

Abstract

An Examination of Perceived Discrimination and Stress
in Interracial Relationships

by

Sharon Sirmons Conger

MS, Troy University, Florida Campus, 2006

BA, Baptist College of Florida, 2003

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

General Psychology

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Abstract

There is a potential increase in stress for White women in interracial relationships with Black men due to perceived racial discrimination that may not have been previously experienced. The purpose of this quantitative study was to measure stress before and after the relationship due to perceived racial discrimination for these women. Guided by the status exchange theory and the stress process model, it was hypothesized that White women in interracial relationships with Black men would not experience stress due to racial discrimination prior to the relationship but would experience stress once in the relationship. Paired-sample *t* tests were used to measure the statistical significance between the mean scores from the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale (GED, before the relationship) to the corresponding questions on the GED-Revised (after involvement in the relationship) and the level of stress experienced due to perceived racial discrimination among a sample of 39 White women. A standard multiple regression was used to examine whether the perpetrator (family, friends, or strangers) of the perceived discrimination affected the amount of total stress experienced. The results indicate that the participants experienced an increase in perceived racial discrimination after their involvement in an interracial relationship in most areas identified in the study with a significant increase in stress; family was the most stressful. The results of the study could be used by members of interracial relationships and by counselors who work with them to facilitate social change by offering more effective coping skills on how perceived racial discrimination affects stress for White women in interracial relationships.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background and Orientation

When a White woman and a Black man become an interracial couple, there is a potential increase in stress for the woman due to perceived racial discrimination, which she may not have experienced previously. The purpose of this cross-sectional, quantitative study was to measure any increase in stress due to perceived racial discrimination experienced by White women in these relationships. With a significant increase of interracial relationships in recent years, the effects of perceived racial discrimination on interracial couples are not fully understood (Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Burrow, 2009). A relatively small number of qualitative studies have shown that interracial couples' social and personal experiences are related to the public's discrimination and stigma toward the couple (Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt et al., 1995). Based on these studies and using a theoretical framework consisting of status exchange theory and the stress process model, it is hypothesized that White women in interracial relationships with Black men did not experience stress due to racial discrimination prior to the relationship. This can be a problem because lack of experience with racial discrimination and an inability to quickly develop coping strategies to deal with stress resulting from it could lead to an increase in physiological and psychological problems.

Interracial Relationships

Interracial couples are a growing population in the United States (Killian, 2002; Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). The U.S. Census Bureau reported an increase from

approximately 65,000 married interracial couples in 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1970) to over 422,000 interracial marriages in 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In 2002, there were 395,000 self-reported Black and White couples counted, of which 279,000 consisted of a Black husband and a White wife and 116,000 consisted of a White husband and Black wife (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Prior to 1970, interracial marriages were not a category for the Census Bureau because the union of Whites with non-Whites was illegal in most states until 1967 (Zhang & Van Hook, 2009).

The research studies conducted on interracial marriages have been mostly qualitative and limited by geographic location, and these studies have tended to have small sample sizes (e.g., Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995). Rosenblatt et al. (1995) used a sample of 21 couples from the Minneapolis-St. Paul area to examine experiences with racism encountered by Black and White couples. Killian (2002, 2003) conducted research on how 10 couples (nine Black man-White woman and one White man-Black woman) in New York State reacted to perceptions of race and racism outside and inside their relationships. Both studies lacked a national perspective. The results of the Rosenblatt et al. (1995) and Killian (2002, 2003) studies indicated difficulties that interracial couples face, such as societal racism and discrimination from others. One important element that these qualitative studies seemed to miss was a measurement of the level of stress that the couple experienced from discrimination and possible negative social and interpersonal interactions with family, friends, and community.

Racism

Racism continues to evolve with society. With one definition as “a failure to give consideration based on the fact of the race alone” (Fugazza, 2003, p. 507), racism is thought to be an indicator of some health issues and stress noted in people of color (Brondolo, Rieppi, Kelly, & Gerin, 2003). Experiences with racism have been linked to physical and mental health issues, such as hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, anxiety, and depression (Landrine, Klonoff, Corral, Fernandez, & Roesch, 2006).

Discrimination

By definition, discrimination is differential treatment from a dominant group that has negative impacts on or disqualifies members of a subordinate group (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006; Feagin & Eckberg, 1980; Ong et al., 2009). There are many types of discrimination, such as discrimination based on race, gender, employment, religion, and sexual preference (Bamberger, Kohn, & Nahum-Shani, 2008; Pedrioli, 2011).

Discrimination affects any person who would be considered a member of a subordinate group (Ong et al., 2009).

Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination has a long history in the United States and has been studied extensively (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Dovidio et al., 2002). Issues with racial discrimination affect members of most every race, culture, and ethnic group, whether they are targets of discrimination, executors of overt or covert racial attitudes, or bystanders observing racial inequalities (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006; Killian, 2003). Racial discrimination affects people of color in most every aspect of their lives, such as

work (Bamberger, Kohn, & Nahum-Shani, 2008; Krings & Olivares, 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2006), school (Neblett, White, Ford, Philip, Nguyen, & Sellers, 2008; Seaton, 2009; Stephan, 2008), and in the public (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006). In recent years, news stories have indicated inflammatory racial attitudes in the American public by reporting events such as a riot related to “society’s racial injustice” (Bulwa, Buress, Stannard, & Kuruvila, 2009); a White justice of the peace refusing to marry an interracial couple (Simone, 2009); and, in 2007, a member of the media making blatant discriminatory remarks about Black athletes, calling them “nappy-headed hos” (MediaMatters, 2007).

Racial discrimination is

any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life. (Fugazza, 2003, p. 507)

Killian (2003) stated,

Racist actions range from denial of goods and services, to psychological intimidation, to verbal and/or physical assault, to murder. Racial discrimination may be defined as concrete actions that adversely affect the personal safety, security, or social and economic opportunities of persons whose skin color or ethnic heritage differs from that of the perpetrator. Racism and discrimination are

manifested in the attitudes and behaviors of individuals as well as in the actions of larger societal institutions. (Killian, 2003, pp. 5-6)

In one study by Klonoff, Landrine, and Ullman (1999), almost all (98%) of the sampled group of Black men and women self-reported that they had experienced “some type of racial discrimination in the past year” (p. 330). The majority of these reported discrimination experiences were from store clerks, restaurant servers, and health professionals. Half of the sample group reported being called racist names, as well as being physically threatened.

In another study by Ong, Fuller-Rowell, and Burrow (2009), constant exposure to racial discrimination predicted increased daily psychological distress. Similarly, Sue and his colleagues (2007, 2009) reported racial microaggressions, seen as the manifestations of racism, which can be identified by casual insults, such as verbal comments, nonverbal gestures, and/or glares. These “casual insults” can be observed in most all areas of interactions between Whites and people of color, such as the workplace, retail stores, educational institutions, and/or places of service.

Racial discrimination has been linked to physical and mental health issues (Brondolo, Rieppe, Kelly, & Gerin, 2003; De Marco, 2000; Mabry & Kiecolt, 2005). Hypertension, cardiovascular disease, depression, anxiety, and anger have been shown to result from experiences with racial discrimination (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine et al., 2006). The physical and mental health concerns connected to discrimination are ultimately due to the ability or inability to cope with the stress of the discriminatory acts toward the victim. The extent and repetitiveness

of the stressor influence the person's ability to cope with or resist the effects of the stressor. Another factor that impacts the person's experience with stress is the appraisal of the stressor (Ong et al., 2009; Pearlin, Menaghan, Lieberman, & Mullan, 1981; Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004). When a person has not learned coping strategies to manage stressful events in an irrelevant or benign appraisal, the outcome can lead to physiological and/or psychological problems (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Slavin, Rainer, McCreary, & Gowda, 1991).

Theoretical Perspectives

Status Exchange Theory

Status exchange theory (Gullickson & Fu, 2010; Mills, 2006) addresses how individuals often make exchanges in their social status when they make decisions about their partner. For example, the theory suggests that men of high status "should marry women of great physical beauty" (Rosenfeld, 2005, p. 1284). There are other times when individuals break the social exchange theory rules by marrying outside of the social norm. Status exchange theory is helpful when examining marrying interracially, as there is not only an exchange in socioeconomic status but also an exchange in racial status. For example, White women who "marry outside of their race" may be searching for a form of social compensation for exchanging their earlier proscribed social status. Social theorists have described the American racial hierarchy with Whites on top and Blacks on the bottom and Asian Americans and Latinos in the middle (Ho, Sidanius, Levin, & Banaji, 2011; Song, 2004).

When a White woman chooses to marry a Black man, this theory indicates that she is essentially moving down the hierarchical social ladder (Gullickson & Fu, 2010; Mills, 2006). In a similar vein, status exchange theory suggests that if a White woman marries interracially, she will choose someone of a higher socioeconomic status, such as a Black man who is at a higher economic or educational status, thus moving up the socioeconomic ladder (Mills, 2006). In studying interracial couples' experience with discrimination, status exchange theory suggests that the stigma White women may experience is related to relinquishing social status to be intimately involved with Black men. Twine and Steinbugler (2006) asserted that White women in interracial relationships sometimes experience an increase in anxiety and stress when they become more cognizant of negative racial attitudes that their partners encounter.

Stress Process Model

Studies of stress and its effects on the human body have been well documented over the last half century. Since the mid to late 1900s, theorists and researchers such as Selye, Lazarus, and Folkman; Pearlin and colleagues; and others have provided extensive information on how the human body reacts to a "situation of stress" (Selye, 1950, p. 234). Stress and how people adapt to it affect physical and mental health (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Selye, 1950, 1955).

The stress process model indicates that stress happens during exchanges between an individual and his or her surroundings (i.e., society; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin, Menaghan, Lieberman, & Mullan, 1981). Once an exchange occurs, the individual appraises the event and initiates coping mechanisms to manage the situation.

The recall of past eventful experiences helps the person put effective or ineffective coping skills into action. A person's ability to effectively cope with stressful events is dependent on the person's knowledge and use of effective coping skills and the significance of the stressor (Pearlin et al., 1981).

Both discrete and continuous stressors can affect a person's ability to maintain and manage healthy techniques to confront stress. The cumulative factor of stress can create chronic strain (Selye, 1950). Long-term chronic stressors or strains deplete a person's ability to use effective coping strategies. For instance, daily occurrences of racial discrimination have been characterized as chronic stress and daily hassles for victims (Ong et al., 2009). A healthy stress process might be seen in a person who quickly adapts to situations and initiates effective coping skills. This, in turn, leads to feelings of less stress and a healthier physical and mental life (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Pearlin et al., 1981).

Theoretical Synthesis

Status exchange theory indicates that the change in status that White women in interracial relationships with Black men experience may cause increased stress due to the awareness of racial attitudes and racial discrimination (Twine & Steinbugler, 2006). The stress process model depicts how a person appraises a perceived stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If the person has previously experienced a similar, current stressor and developed adequate coping mechanisms, then the stressor is quickly dismissed. However, if the perceived stressor is a new experience, coping skills will need to be learned. If the coping skills are not adequately developed, the long-term effects can be negative

(Klonoff & Landrine, 2000). The stress process model was used to help in understanding the new experiences of stress that White women undergo with the awareness of their new social exchange status (Mills, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

When a White woman and a Black man are in an interracial relationship, the woman may experience an increase in stress due to perceived racial discrimination, which she may have never experienced prior to her involvement with a Black man. In this case, the White woman may not have developed any effective coping strategies for the perceived stress. The purpose of this cross-sectional, quantitative dissertation study was to measure any increase in stress from perceived racial discrimination experienced by White women in interracial relationships with Black men. Racial discrimination continues to be a reported problem in the United States (Dovidio et al., 2002; Feather & McKee, 2008; Krumm & Corning, 2008; Leach & Spears, 2008; Prentice & Miller, 2002). This problem could have negative effects not only on Black people, who have a history of experiences with discrimination, but also on their White partners (Killian, 2002, 2003).

Research has linked racial discrimination to issues such as physical health problems (e.g., hypertension and cardiovascular diseases); mental health problems (e.g., depression, anxiety, and anger); inequalities in job promotion, education, and public services; and a lower ability to cope with chronic stressors arising from experiences with discrimination (Bamberger, Kohn, & Nahum-Shani, 2008; De Marco, 2000; Tomaskovic-Devey et al, 2006).

Given the abundance of research on stress and its causes and effects, as well as research on racial discrimination, there were very limited empirical studies on stress involving interracial couples, and no studies were found about how stress from discrimination affects members of the White population when they engage in intimate interracial relationships (Killian, 2002, 2003). With discrimination being linked to physical and mental health issues, it would seem there would be more empirical research to study the effects of stress of discrimination that these couples experience (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine et al., 2006.)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a cross-sectional, quantitative, nonprobability survey (Wretman, 2010) to examine the problem of potential stress experienced by White women when faced with perceived discrimination because of social perceptions about their interracial relationship. Because the problem of racial discrimination has such negative effects on people of color (Brondolo et al., 2003; Neblett et al., 2008), it is reasonable to assume that discrimination may have similar effects on the White population when intimately involved with people of color.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on a theoretical framework consisting of status exchange theory and the stress process model, the following questions were examined:

1. Have White women experienced perceived racial discrimination before or after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship?

2. If White women have experienced perceived racial discrimination after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship, is the stress experienced significant?
3. Do the perpetrators of the perceived racial discrimination (i.e. family, friends, or strangers) affect the level of stress experienced?

Status exchange theory suggests that when White women become involved in an intimate relationship with a Black man, they potentially make changes in their racial hierarchy as well as their socioeconomic status. It was assumed that they experience changes they have not previously experienced. Therefore, it was hypothesized that White women in interracial relationships with Black men had not experienced stress from perceived racial discrimination prior to the relationship. According to the stress process model, lack of experience with racial discrimination and an inability to quickly develop coping strategies in response to stress associated with perceived racial discrimination (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Ong et al., 2009) for White women in interracial relationships with Black men could lead to an increase in physiological and psychological problems (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine et al., 2006).

Hypothesis 1: There is a mean difference between the perceived racial discrimination that White women experience prior to and after their involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man.

Hypothesis 2: There is statistical significance in reported stress from perceived racial discrimination experienced by White women after their involvement with Black men.

Hypothesis 3: If White women have experiences of stress from perceived racial discrimination after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man, the perpetrators of the discrimination (i.e., family, friends, or strangers) will affect the level of stress.

The measure that was used to test these hypotheses was the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale (GED). It was compared to the same measure with slight revisions (General Ethnic Discrimination Scale—Revised; GED-R), which asked participants to answer the same questions but with consideration of differences since they had been in an intimate relationship with a Black man (Landrine et al., 2006). The GED Scale measured the mean differences to determine whether White women experienced stress from racial discrimination “prior to” involvement in an interracial relationship. The GED-R was used to measure White women’s experiences with stress from racial discrimination “after” involvement in an interracial relationship. The mean scores from the GED and the GED-R were compared to measure any statistical significance.

Results from a paired-sample *t* test indicated statistical significance between the mean scores from the GED Scale to the GED-R (Hypothesis 1). The comparison between the reported stresses experienced on the GED Scale (prior) to the GED-R (after) indicated that White women had a significant increase in stress that was experienced after their involvement with Black men (Hypothesis 2). (See Chapter 4 for more details.)

Hypothesis 3 posited that the level of stress experienced in relation to perceived racial discrimination in White women involved in an intimate interracial relationship is dependent on the perpetrator. It was projected that stress experienced after involvement in an interracial relationship and the perpetrator of the perceived discrimination, whether family, friends, or the strangers, would affect the level of stress reported. A standard multiple regression was employed to determine which perpetrator elicits higher reported levels of stress—family (Item 10-GED-R), friends (Item 9-GED-R), or strangers (Item 4-GED-R). A multiple regression determines the most accurate prediction of the variable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). By using the multiple regression, Hypothesis 3 (the level of stress experienced is dependent on the perpetrator) was addressed.

Definition of Theoretical Constructs and Key Terms

Discrimination: Discrimination is differential treatment from a dominant group that has negative impacts or disqualifies members of a subordinate group (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006; Feagin & Eckberg, 1980; Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Burrow, 2009). There are many different types of discrimination, such as discrimination based on race, gender, employment, religion, and sexual preference (Bamberger, Kohn, & Nahum-Shani, 2008; Pedrioli, 2011).

Interracial relationship: Interracial relationships consist of partners who identify themselves to be from different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995). This research is primarily concerned with White women and Black men.

Intimate interracial relationship: *Intimate interracial relationship* was used in this study to characterize the closeness of the relationship between the couple and to identify the couple as sharing more than a friendship. The subjects in this study identified themselves as having a close, intimate relationship with their partners but were not necessarily married to their partners. This study did not concentrate on marital stress; rather, its focus was stress from outside sources.

Racial discrimination: There are many definitions and ideas of racial discrimination (e.g., Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006; Dovidio et al., 2002; Ong et al., 2009). One explanation indicates that racial discrimination is

any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life. (Fugazza, 2003, p. 507)

Racial microaggressions: In recent years, Sue and his colleagues have expounded on the definition of racial microaggressions. The term is understood to mean the “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271).

Racism: “A complex ideology composed of beliefs in racial superiority and inferiority ... enacted through individual behaviors and institutional and societal policies and practices” (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008, p. 329).

Status exchange theory: Status exchange theory (Gullickson & Fu, 2010; Mills, 2006) suggests that individuals typically marry within their own socioeconomic status. An exception to this can be seen when an individual marries someone of a different race in exchange for a higher racial hierarchical status.

Stigma: Stigma is defined as “negative beliefs, attitudes, and conceptions ... held by the general population, which lead to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against individuals” (Brown et al., 2010, p. 352). Originating from a Greek term, stigma implies something different and something to be avoided from those stigmatized (Goffman, 1968, as cited in Howarth, 2006).

Stress: An operational definition for “nonspecific stress” is “the interaction between a force and the resistance opposed to it” (Selye, 1955, p. 253). When an individual experiences tension or pressure, the human body reacts with a stress response, beginning the “general adaptation syndrome” (GAS; Selye, 1950). The first stage of the GAS is the alarm reaction, followed by the stage of resistance and then the stage of exhaustion. Long-term stress can lead to physiological and psychological damage and distress (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Selye, 1950, 1955).

Stressor: “A situation or event *appraised* as being aversive in that it elicits a stress response which taxes a person’s physiological or psychological resources as well as possibly provokes a subjective state of physical or mental tension” (Anisman & Merali, 1999, p. 241).

Stress process: The *stress process* explains how stress happens during exchanges between an individual and his or her surroundings (i.e., society; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin et al., 1981). Once an exchange occurs, the individual appraises the event and initiates coping mechanisms to manage the situation.

Assumptions

An assumption that directed this research was that White women in interracial relationships with Black men had little experience, if any, with racial discrimination prior to an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man. If they had experiences with racial discrimination prior to an interracial relationship, as was determined by the GED Scale, those participants were included in the study, and differences in stress levels prior to and after involvement in an interracial relationship were compared. After White women become involved in an intimate interracial relationship, it was assumed that they had some new experiences with racial discrimination (Killian, 2002, 2003). It was also assumed that this new experience with racial discrimination would be similar to discrimination that people of color experience on a frequent basis (Ong et al., 2009). Therefore, the White women's experiences with perceived racial discrimination could elicit feelings of stress.

Another assumption that guided this research was that the source of racial discrimination affects the level of stress White women experience. A primary resource for coping with stress is the use of a support system (Pearlin et al., 1981). It was assumed that if a White woman is experiencing racial discrimination from her support network

(e.g., family and friends), her reported stress level will be more significant than if the racial discrimination is primarily from the public.

A final assumption that dictated the purpose of this research was that racial discrimination continues to be a problem in the United States (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006; Dovidio et al., 2002; Ong et al., 2009). Klonoff et al. (1999) reported that almost all (98%) of a sampled group of Black men and women self-reported that they had experienced “some type of racial discrimination in the past year” (p. 330). Additionally, Ong, Fuller-Rowell, and Burrow (2009) stated that constant exposure to racial discrimination predicted increases in daily psychological distress. Therefore, it was assumed that racial discrimination continues to be a problem for those who experience it.

Scope

Racial discrimination reaches across most races and ethnic groups (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2002; Feather & McKee, 2008; Krumm & Corning, 2008; Leach & Spears, 2008; Prentice & Miller, 2002); people encounter experiences with stress almost on a daily basis (Ong et al., 2009; Serido et al., 2004; Slavin et al., 1991); marriages and relationships have many conflicts and stressors throughout the life of the relationship (Karney, Story, & Bradbury, 2004; Story & Repetti, 2006). However, this research was intended to be confined to examining the specific area of stress experienced by White women due to racial discrimination related to involvement in intimate interracial relationships with Black men.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that the research used a nonprobability sample. A nonprobability sample limits the ability to measure any bias or sampling error, and one can only conclude that the results represent the sample used instead of predicting for an entire population (Matthews, n.d.; Wretman, 2010). However, using a nonprobability survey reduced the complexity and follow-up required by a probability sample.

Another limitation to this research was that the surveys were based on self-reports. Self-report surveys may not be answered honestly (Northrup, 1996). Therefore, the results could be biased. With the use of a social desirability scale (M-C Scale, 1964), the expectation was to identify if the participant was attempting to cover or distort any bias.

This study also reflected my recognition that it specified a particular population: White women in intimate interracial relationships with Black men. It was understood that members of other groups who are in interracial couples also experience stress from discrimination because of their involvement with another race. However, for the purposes of this research, the said population was studied. Some general inferences can be made from the results of this study concerning other populations.

Significance of the Study

When a White woman and a Black man have an intimate interracial relationship, the White woman may experience an increase in stress due to racial discrimination, which she may not have experienced prior to the relationship (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin et al., 1981). The purpose of this cross-sectional, quantitative dissertation study

was to measure perceived stress levels related to White women who were involved in interracial relationships with Black men (Killian, 2002, 2003). With a significant increase in interracial relationships, the effects of racial discrimination on interracial couples are not fully understood (Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Burrow, 2009). The results of the study indicated significant mean differences in the levels of stress White women experienced due to racial discrimination before and after involvement in interracial relationships with Black men. This research, by raising awareness of stress related to racial discrimination, may help in educating White women on effective coping skills to reduce potential health issues arising from this stress (Killian, 2002, 2003). Further, the study identified which perpetrators of perceived racial discrimination—family, friends, or the public—caused the most feelings of stress.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The findings of this research can be used to help in understanding the effectiveness of the victim's stress process following experiences with racial discrimination (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin et al., 1981). Understanding how racial discrimination affects the stress process and the well-being of interracial relationships could initiate exploration of more effective coping strategies for interracial couples (Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995). When victims have an understanding of stress related to discrimination, they are better able to make quick appraisals of stressful events. Events can be processed in a manner that reduces the level of stress; for instance, the appraisal of an event might be shifted from stressful to irrelevant or benign (Ong et al., 2009; Pearlin et al., 1981). Then, coping strategies can be

implemented, lowering the threat of harmful physiological and psychological effects and increasing the quality of life for the interracial couple (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine et al., 2006).

Summary

Racial discrimination and its effects on people of color have been researched and studied for decades (Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995). The physiological and psychological effects of racial discrimination include hypertension, cardiovascular disease, depression, anxiety, and anger (Brondolo et al., 2003; De Marco, 2000; Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine et al., 2006; Mabry & Kiecolt, 2005). Many of the physical and mental health issues that have been linked to experiences of racial discrimination are results of the victim's perception of the stressor (Ong et al., 2009; Pearlin et al., 1981; Serido et al., 2004).

According to its definition, racial discrimination involves indifferent treatment of people of color (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006; Dovidio et al., 2002; Fugazza, 2003; Ong et al., 2009). However, when White women are intimately involved with Black men, it was hypothesized that they, too, experience a form of racial discrimination—including stressors that may not have been experienced prior to the relationship. Little is known about the effects of stress on the members of the White population who are intimately involved with minority partners. The stress from racial discrimination that White women experience could lead to similar physiological and psychological effects that people of color may experience throughout their lives (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine et al., 2006; Selye, 1950, 1955). While research

continues to address racial discrimination and its effects on people of color, the results from this study are intended to introduce the potential harm racial discrimination has for White women involved in intimate interracial relationships. Thus, the purpose of this research was to explore the stress experienced by White women when faced with racial discrimination because of social perceptions about their interracial relationship.

The following chapters address the process of researching this problem. The literature review, Chapter 2, clarifies the concepts introduced in this chapter. Chapter 3 contains descriptions of the research design and methods used to gather and analyze the data. Chapter 4 contains a report of the results. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a summary and interpretation of the findings.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In interracial couples involving White women and Black men, White women may experience an increase in stress due to perceived racial discrimination, which these women may not have experienced previously. The purpose of this cross-sectional, quantitative study was to measure the stress levels of White women who were involved in interracial relationships with Black men. It was hypothesized that White women in interracial relationships with Black did not experience stress from racial discrimination prior to the relationship. Lack of experience with racial discrimination and an inability to quickly develop coping strategies to deal with resulting stress could lead to an increase in physiological and psychological problems.

Problems with racism, such as racial discrimination, racist attitudes, and racial microaggressions, continue to plague American society (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Feather & McKee, 2008; Krumm & Corning, 2008; Leach & Spears, 2008; Prentice & Miller, 2002; Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008; Sue, Nadal, et al., 2007). With a significant increase in interracial relationships, the effects of racism on interracial couples are not fully understood (Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Burrow, 2009). A relatively small number of qualitative studies have shown that interracial couples' social and personal experiences are related to the public's discrimination and stigma toward the couple (Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt et al., 1995). The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine stress that White women experience due to perceived racial discrimination because of social perceptions about their interracial relationship.

Ongoing problems of racial discrimination exist in the United States and throughout the world (e.g., Feather & McKee, 2008; Prentice & Miller, 2002). Individuals involved in interracial relationships experience differing types of racial discrimination (Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995). In this chapter, an explanatory concept of how racial discrimination can contribute to stress and how this stress can be a delimiting factor in the well-being of victims of discrimination is presented. A look at the increase in interracial relationships in the United States and society's interactions with the interracial couple is given. The literature review is concluded with an explanation of using quantitative measures to study how White women in interracial relationships with Black men experience discrimination and its associated stress.

The literature search was conducted by searching for peer-reviewed journal articles using various keywords, such as *racial discrimination*, *interracial relationships/couples*, *stress*, *racism*, *racial microaggressions*, *discrimination*, *status exchange theory*, *social desirability scales*, and *nonprobability surveys*. Searches were conducted through multiple data sources, including Academic Search Premier, American Psychological Association, American Counseling Association, PsycCRITIQUES, PsycEXTRA, PsycBOOKS, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, SocINDEX with Full Text, ERIC, CINHL Plus, Business Source Complete, Education Research Complete, Mental Measurements Yearbook, and ProQuest Central. In addition, a few Internet searches and media were used to provide information to support news stories to further explain the

problem of racial discrimination, which included Bulwa, Buress, Stannard, and Kuruvila (2009); Gray (2009); MediaMatters for America (2007); and Simone (2009).

Gap in the Literature

Given the abundance of research on stress and its causes and effects as well as research on racial discrimination, empirical studies on stress involving interracial couples have been very limited, and no studies were found concerning how stress arising from racial discrimination affects members of the White population when they engage in intimate interracial relationships. The 2005 Census Bureau reported an approximate 422,000 married interracial couples in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). This is a large increase from approximately 65,000 couples in 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1970). With this type of growth, it would seem there would be more empirical research to study the effects of stress from discrimination that these couples experience. With racial discrimination being linked to physical and mental health issues, understanding these dynamics could be useful to future research. This could lead to exploring and implementing better coping strategies to reduce stress for interracial couples.

Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination has been proven to be a continuing problem in the United States (e.g., Dovidio et al., 2002). Its results affect people of color in a multitude of ways, such as physiological and psychological problems (Brondolo, Rieppe, Kelly, & Gerin, 2003; Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine, Klonoff, Corral, Fernandez, & Roesch, 2006). Racial discrimination can be seen in places of employment (e.g., Bamberger, Kohn, & Nahum-Shani, 2008; Tomaskovic-Devey et al.,

2006); schools (e.g., Neblett et al., 2008; Seaton, 2009); places of service, such as restaurants and retail stores (Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Burrow, 2009); and in the general public (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006). Racial discrimination and its effects on people of color have been studied for decades, but with few solutions for American society.

Research has shown that racial discrimination can be linked to problems with physical and mental health (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine et al., 2006). Whether an individual has issues with physical or mental health, the underlying root of the effects of racial discrimination on people of color seems to lie in the stress process (Ong et al., 2009; Pearlin, Menaghan, Lieberman, & Mullan, 1981; Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004). Research has associated stress with physical health issues such as hypertension (Brondolo et al., 2003; Landrine et al., 2006), cardiovascular disease, and other health-related problems (Clark, 2009), as well as mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (De Marco, 2000; Klonoff et al., 1999) and anger issues (Mabry & Kiecolt, 2005).

Problems With Racial Discrimination

Even at the beginning of the 21st century, problems with racism, such as racial discrimination, racist attitudes, and racial microaggressions, still seem to plague American society (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008; Sue et al., 2007). Despite the claim that racial discrimination “has apparently declined over the decades” (Crandall, Eshleman, & O’Brien, 2002, p. 359), recent research demonstrates otherwise (Feather & McKee, 2008; Krumm & Corning, 2008; Leach & Spears, 2008; Prentice & Miller, 2002). Shapiro and Neuberg (2008) demonstrated one example in that some individuals in their study

displayed signs of discrimination toward perceived victims of stigmatization differently when in public versus when in private. In other words, a minority man may behave in a harsher manner to another perceived victim of stigmatization when in public than he would if he were in a private setting with the other stigmatized individual.

Feather and McKee (2008) suggested that personal values, such as power and security, are related to the ongoing problem of discrimination. For example, some majority group members continue to discriminate against minority group members due to a fear that the majority group will lose its power and security of superiority. While Krumm and Corning (2008) showed that individuals who engage in discriminatory behaviors often use alternative explanations to cover derogatory statements or behaviors, such as giving the excuse for not inviting a coworker to a function because they thought the coworker was busy.

Leach and Spears (2008) posited that inferior in-groups experience *Schadenfreude* (a German word that describes how an emotion of pleasure can be experienced by people witnessing the misery or misfortune of another) toward superior out-groups, such as the emotion of pleasure when the superior out-group is unsuccessful in an achievement. The emotion of *Schadenfreude* is not race oriented. However, *Schadenfreude* can be observed when inferior in-groups (e.g., Black employees) feel satisfaction or pleasure when superior out-groups (e.g., White supervisors) have a downfall.

Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, and Rivera (2009) stated that some people in authority positions, such as educators, are not aware of when racial microaggressions occur, such as “hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights” (Sue, Capodilupo, et al.,

2007, p. 273). Subtle prejudices are often unintentional but can be seen in indirect ways, such as in hiring decisions (Dovidio et al., 2002). The research conducted in an attempt to explain and find reasons for continued racial discrimination seems endless. Racial discrimination may appear to have declined over the years, but there remain signs of contention that lead to unfair treatment, injustice, and damaging societal behaviors (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006; Crandall et al., 2002; Sue, Lin, Torino et al., 2009).

Discrimination not only affects racial minorities, but also can have damaging effects on the elderly and persons with disabilities. It is often gender-biased. Gender discrimination is more often experienced by females, regardless of age (Case, Fishbein, & Ritchey, 2008; Keskinoglu et al., 2007). *Ageism* is defined as discrimination due to a person's age (Nemmers, 2004). The "aging process does not distinguish between race, color, creed, sexuality, educational status, or economic status. It is, therefore, likely that anyone who lives long enough may encounter ageism, and experience its deleterious effects" (Nemmers, 2004, p. 12).

Despite the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (U.S. Department of Justice, 1990), persons with various disabilities continue to be underrepresented in the workplace (Snyder, Carmichael, Blackwell, Cleveland, & Thornton, 2010). Of those individuals with disabilities who do work, many experience negative effects from discrimination, such as lower pay, unfair treatment, less opportunities for promotion, and social/relationship barriers.

Other factors that can lead to experiences with discrimination that is set apart from race or ethnicity are education (Landrine et al., 2006), socioeconomic status

(Crandall, Eshleman, & O'Brien, 2002), and sexual preference (Case, Fishbein, & Ritchey, 2008), to name a few. Regardless of its reasons, discrimination can have adverse effects on the recipient's stress levels, physical and mental wellbeing, and overall quality of life (Keskinoglu et al., 2007; Nemmers, 2004; Snyder et al., 2010).

Descriptions of Racial Discrimination Concepts

Racism. Racism continues to evolve with society. With one definition as “a failure to give consideration based on the fact of the race alone” (Fugazza, 2003, p. 507), racism is thought to be an indicator of some health issues and stress noted in people of color (Brondolo, Rieppi, Kelly, & Gerin, 2003). Experiences with racism have been linked to physical and mental health issues, such as hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, anxiety, and depression (Landrine et al., 2006).

Racism can be classified into three general categories (Dovidio et al., 2002; Gomez & Wilson, 2006; Sears & Kinder, 1971). The spectrum of racism continues to evolve from “old-fashioned biological” racism to symbolic racism, and then to the most inconspicuous form, aversive racism. “Old-fashioned biological” racism, even though declining, can be witnessed and identified in blatant, overt expressions of racial hatred, such as those of racial hate groups (e.g., Klu Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, etc.).

Symbolic racism is seen as a more subtle form of racism than the “old-fashioned,” “Jim Crow era” racism, but it is still a form of intolerance (Gomez & Wilson, 2006). Originally proposed by Sears and Kinder (1971), symbolic racism is based on a theory that is more political by definition. In opposition to “old-fashioned” racism, symbolic racism is often concealed from public observation. Within this racist view, people of

color, in particular Blacks, “violate traditional American values” (Gomez & Wilson, 2006, p. 612); this perception is often made clear by feelings and acts of resentment.

Similarly, aversive racism continues to have negative effects on its victims (Dovidio et al., 2002). Aversive racism is defined as an even subtler form of racism, often unintentional. A major concern in aversive racism is lack of awareness of the unconscious belief the perpetrator is holding. Unconscious beliefs are implicit attitudes rooted in a person’s inherited memory. When confronted with negative implicit attitudes, a well-intentioned perpetrator may attempt to change the negative implicit attitudes to positive explicit actions (Dovidio et al., 2002). This conflict produces aversive racism. While all types of racism are detrimental to victims, this more subtle, covert racism can also leave long-lasting harmful effects.

Racial discrimination. Racial discrimination is described as “unfair, differential treatment on the basis of race” (Ong et al., 2009, p. 1259). The “unfair, differential treatment” threatens well-being, security, and/or opportunities for advancement in society and employment for the victim of discrimination (Killian, 2003). Discrimination is displayed through the attitudes and behaviors of the perpetrator, and typically has been studied in terms of the White person as perpetrator and the Black person as victim.

Actual discrimination can be understood as overt behaviors experienced due to skin color or ethnicity (Ong et al., 2009), whereas perceived discrimination can be seen as covert attitudes identified as threats due to race or ethnicity. Actual discrimination can be recognized by acts that are intended to be derogatory or harmful. Perceived discrimination occurs when the target identifies an act or behavior as derogatory.

Racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions can be seen as the manifestations of racism (Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggressions are defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 271). Racial microaggressions can be identified by casual insults, such as verbal comments, nonverbal gestures, and/or glares. These gestures can be observed in most all areas of interaction between Whites and people of color, such as the workplace, retail stores, educational institutions, and/or places of service (i.e., mental health services, medical services, etc.).

Sue et al. (2007) proposed three forms of microaggression: (a) microassaults, (b) microinsults, and (c) microinvalidations. Similar to the “old-fashioned” racism, *microassault* is characterized as a “verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). *Microinsults* are often unintentional but seen by victims as insensitive remarks or snubs intended to derogate the person’s racial identity. A *microinvalidation* is experienced when a person of color is made to feel that he or she “does not belong” due to his or her race.

An important aspect of racial microaggressions that makes them different from other forms of racism is the perception of the recipient (Sue et al., 2007). Because microaggressions are often said to be unintentional, the recipient is often left with self-questioning and invalidation as to whether the attack was real. This, like racial

discrimination and racism, can lead to further physical and mental health issues if coping strategies are insufficient.

The Effects of Racial Discrimination

The United States has a long history of turbulence relating to social injustice, bias, and discrimination. As recently as January 2009, a riot broke out in Oakland, California after an unarmed Black man was shot and killed by police (Bulwa, Buress, Stannard, & Kuruvila, 2009). The protest was due to what was seen as “society’s racial injustice” (Bulwa et al., 2009, p. A-1) as it related to what was described as a “modern day lynching.”

Similarly, a 1992 Los Angeles riot after the beating of Rodney King led to a reported 53 people dead and over \$1 billion worth of damage (Gray, 2009). The riot was seen as a demonstration by Black protestors of their disagreement with what appeared to be social injustice and racial discrimination. Incidents such as the ones in California and personal encounters with the scrutiny of law enforcement and the general public, especially among African Americans, have led to feelings of anger, frustration, and fear (Birzer & Smith-Mahdi, 2006).

In addition to public displays of discrimination, often at the hands of law enforcement officials, desegregation in the public school system was the subject of a heated debate and resulted in many protests during the 1960s and 1970s (Giles, Gatlin, & Cataldo, 1976). Even in the present day and with integrated school systems, within-school segregation continues to be a problem (Stephan, 2008). According to Stephan

(2008), many school districts are more segregated now than they were three decades ago, and exposure to people of different races remains limited.

Mental health effects of racial discrimination. Racial discrimination appears to affect youth's psychological well-being, as with adults (Neblett et al., 2008; Seaton, 2009). Discrimination at school can be linked to behavior, academic, social, and psychological issues in African American youth. In fact, when youth of color begin to socialize outside of their home environment, such as in malls and restaurants, they are more susceptible to encounter racial discrimination. The youth's ability to cope with these stressors, if taught by their primary caregiver, will affect their psychological outcomes.

Perceived racial discrimination at school was found to be potential threats to youth's self-esteem, academic drive, and psychological health (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Seaton (2009) suggested that the ability for youth of color to identify with other youth of color contributes to one's ability to effectively manage the stress from discriminatory acts and, thus, affecting psychological and behavioral outcomes.

The concerns about racial integration in the school systems also exist in the workplace. From 1965 to 1980, there was a reported decline in Black-White segregation in the work industry (Tomaskovic-Devey et al., 2006). However, since 1980 this decline has leveled out and equal opportunity stalling with African Americans mostly filling lower income positions and continuing to experience signs of racial discrimination.

When "lawsuits for racial discrimination" was searched on the internet, there were well over 200,000 results. Many of these results appeared to be legal in nature: lawsuits

have been filed for acts of racial discrimination in the work place. Many large corporations have been sued for unwanted, unwelcomed, and unfair behavior to an individual(s) of racial/ethnic minority (Bamberger et al., 2008). Some would argue that racial discrimination is only the perception by the target, that discrimination is not the issue for low-economic and status groups, and that reasons for a lack of advancement is related to the person of color's unwillingness to work hard (Henry & Sears, 2002). Although, when it can be proven in a court of law that one group is receiving benefits over another racial discrimination could then be considered as a real and continual problem (Bergman et al., 2007; Harrick & Sullivan, 1995).

Physical health effects of racial discrimination. An abundance of literature demonstrates the effects of racial discrimination to many different ethnic groups (Awad, 2010; Vasquez-Leon, 2009; Yoo & Lee, 2009). Issues such as health problems, psychological problems—including depression and anxiety, behavior problems, and stress can be linked to experiences with racial discrimination (Brondolo et al., 2003; Clark, 2009; Landrine et al., 2006). Experiences with racial discrimination have been linked to issues with physical and mental health in minority populations (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Clark, 2009; Contrada et al., 2001; Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000).

For the African American population, discrimination due to skin color has been suggested as a possible cause for hypertension (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000). Some theorists propose that darker-skinned Blacks may be the higher contributors to the prevalence of hypertension in the African American population, given the frequency and

severity of discrimination encountered. Klonoff and Landrine (2000) found that dark-skinned Blacks experienced “more frequent and more stressful” discrimination than light-skinned Blacks (p. 336). This association insinuates some relationship between racial discrimination and hypertension. In addition to concerns with hypertension, cigarette smoking, chosen for its ability to predict discrimination more so than psychological variables, was shown to be higher in African Americans who reported frequent discrimination (Landrine et al., 2006). These and other contributors to physical health problems relating to racial discrimination continue.

Clearly extant health research appears to connect the effects of racial discrimination to victim’s health. Much of the literature on discrimination and health suggests health problems are associated with one’s ability to cope with the stressful situation of the discrimination experienced (Ong et al., 2009). A decreased ability to cope with discrimination can ultimately lead to psychological symptoms (Serido et al., 2004). Klonoff, Landrine, and Ullman (1999) found that experiences with racial discrimination, instead of factors such as social class, education, age, and gender, is a strong predictor of psychiatric symptoms and psychological distress for people of color. Klonoff et al. also imply that racism and racial discrimination is a common reason for reports of anger, depression, and anxiety in African Americans when seeking psychotherapy.

Racial discrimination is clearly still an issue in American society (Dovidio et al., 2002). Despite research studies and theories, which attempt to give reasons and solutions to improve racial relations, the problem continues (Barrera, 1980; Conyers, 2002).

Continual explorations through research will assist in providing ideas and understandings to reduce the negative effects of racism and discrimination.

Stress in Relationships

Stress can have harmful physical and psychological effects for an individual (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin et al., 1981). However, as Karney, Story, and Bradbury (2004) state, “stress [also] has adverse consequences for relationships” (p. 15). External stress affects each person in the relationship individually. Each person experiences life’s daily hassles, as well as, individual chronic stress outside of the relationship, such as with job related stress. Within the relationship lie many additional stressors, such as socioeconomic status, health, job demands, and family/children (Story & Repetti, 2006). The appraisal of stress each partner experiences within the relationship is dependent on that individual’s stress coping strategies. As with individual stressors, relationship stressors can be chronic or acute. While both chronic and acute stressors can have negative effects on the relationship, chronic, long-term stressors seem to be the most debilitating to the relationship. Karney et al. reported that marriages with higher chronic stress have lower marital satisfaction relates. Likewise, acute stressors have a negative outcome on marital satisfaction. However dissatisfaction associated with acute stressors is related to the increase of chronic stressors.

Additional marital stress has been reported in Black marriages (Marks et al., 2006). Marks et al. studied stressors in Black marriages to conclude that married Black couples experience stressors common to White married couples (i.e., job-related stress, demands from balancing work and family, and family relations). One difference,

however, that Black couples reported is the stress from racism at work. The couples in Marks et al. research explained the requests from extended family and friends were cause for significant marital stress.

Some stress in marriage is to be expected (Karney et al., 2005; Marks et al., 2006; Story & Repetti, 2006). Both individuals in the relationship bring external stressors into the marriage, such as work related issues. The couple shares many internal stressors within the home, such as finances, children, and life decisions (i.e., careers, relocations, retirement). Research has suggested a perhaps higher stress levels for Black couples. This, therefore, leads to the question of stress in interracial marriages. It would stand to reason that interracial couples would experience the same stressors as most other marriages, but do they encounter different and unique types of stress?

Interracial Couples

Black and White unions have a long history of opposition and violence in the United States (Firmin & Firebaugh, 2008; Perry & Sutton, 2008). In early United States history, laws restricted marriage, or even cohabitation, of mixed races (to include Blacks/Whites, Asians/Whites, etc.) These laws were initiated “to Preserve the Integrity of the White Race”—a bill enacted by the state of Virginia in 1924 (Perry & Sutton, 2008). Despite efforts to outlaw interracial relations, men and women of different races have continued to engage in these “forbidden” involvements.

Since laws that prohibited interracial marriages have been lifted, the legal marriage of Black-White couples has rapidly increased (Rosenfeld & Kim, 2005). Regardless of statistics that demonstrate most Americans continue to engage in same-race

marriages, the number of Americans engaging in intimate interracial relationships has quickly climbed (Childs, 2005). According to a national study, it was reported that 64% of the population says they accept interracial relationships. However, mixed race couples continue to report experiences with discrimination (Killian, 2003).

In mostly qualitative studies, interracial couples report developing various reactions to actual and perceived discrimination from their families, friends, and the general public (Killian, 2002, 2003; Kreager, 2008; Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995). Killian (2003) purports that the negative reactions experienced by interracial couples are related to the interactions with people who continue to hold racist and prejudice views. For example, even though the laws prohibiting interracial marriage have been overturned, on October 17, 2009, CNN reported that an interracial couple was denied a marriage license by a Louisiana justice of the peace (Simone, 2009). In Killian's study (2003), one or both partners of the 12 couples reported negative encounters, such as stares, condemning expressions, and persecution with the public in restaurants, malls, walking down the street, or at work. The frequencies of the negative encounters were experienced from one time a week up to five times a week. Killian suggests the type of reactions interracial couple's go through comes from a large portion of society that views the interracial couple with "fear and loathing" (p. 14).

In addition to negative reactions aimed at interracial couples in the general public and work place, research further implies discrimination to the couple from relatives and close friends (Killian, 2002). Couples have reported friend's objections to their relationship, such as encouraging them to not marry (Killian, 2002). The individual

families of the couple may or may not accept the opposite race partner, holding to racial formations (pre-established ideals of race, racism, prejudices, and biases) that have been taught and passed down through racial generations. The negative experiences with families seem to derive from both the Black and White partner's family.

It was reported that families did not object to the couple because of racial constructs, but would identify other causes to their opposition. For example, the family may say the partner is "not a good fit" for their family member. White families recurrently used excuses of status for not accepting the interracial relationship, despite the Black partner's education and success (Killian, 2002; Krumm & Corning, 2008). Black families who rejected the union expressed a history of problems with Whites and were expecting the relationship to be problematic. Both Black and White families expressed a concern for what the children conceived in the interracial union would have to experience (Killian, 2002; Rosenblatt et al., 1995).

To add to the issues presented for the interracial couple from family, friends, and the general public, research reveals issues stemming from discrimination within the relationship (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2003). Many participants in research studies refer to the difficulties for the couple to talk about the Black partner's previous experiences with racism and racial discrimination; as well as, talking about the White partner's family views of racism (Childs, 2005). Despite the extensive research to explain racial discrimination, it is difficult for the White population to fully understand the complete dynamics of racism and racial discrimination and could give cause for strife and stress within the relationship (Killian 2002, 2003).

Theoretical Perspectives

Status Exchange Theory

Status exchange theory (Gullickson & Fu, 2010; Mills, 2006) examines how individuals often make exchanges in their social status when they make decisions about their partner. For example, the theory suggests that men of high status “should marry women of great physical beauty” (Rosenfeld, 2005, p. 1284). There are other times when individuals break the social exchange theory rules by marrying outside of the social norm.

Status exchange theory is helpful when examining marrying interracially since there is not only an exchange in socioeconomic status but also an exchange in racial status. For example, White women who “marry outside of their race” may be searching for a form of social compensation for exchanging their earlier proscribed social status. Social theorists have described the American racial hierarchy with Whites on top and Blacks on bottom and Asian Americans and Latinos in the middle (Ho, Sidanius, Levin, & Banaji, 2011; Song, 2004). When a White woman chooses to marry a Black man, this theory asserts that she is essentially moving down the hierarchical social ladder (Gullickson & Fu, 2010; Mills, 2006). In a similar vein, status exchange theory suggests that if a White woman marries interracially, she will choose someone in a higher socioeconomic status—such as to a Black man who is at a higher economic or educational status thus moving up the socioeconomic ladder (Mills, 2006). In contrast, a Black woman will marry into a lower socioeconomic status (moving down the

socioeconomic ladder and moving up the hierarchical ladder) if she chooses to marry a White man.

When studying interracial couple's experience with discrimination, the status exchange theory suggests that the stigma White women may experience is related to her relinquishing her social status to be intimately involved with a Black man. Twine and Steinbugler (2006) assert that White women in interracial relationships sometimes experience an increase in anxiety and stress when they become more cognizant of negative racial attitudes that their partners encounter.

In 1988, Peggy McIntosh described the idea of "White privilege" as an "invisible knapsack" (McIntosh, 1988). She talked about the many details in everyday life in which a White person is privileged to have without having to be mindful that many of those privileges that are accorded to her are due to white skin-color. Some examples of these privileges, according to McIntosh, include "I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented;" and "If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race" (McIntosh, 1988, p. 189-190).

White privilege, also viewed as a form of preferred social status, is a concept that often goes without thought for a White person. Ancis and Szymanski (2001) conducted a qualitative study to analyze White students' reactions to McIntosh's list. Three themes were recognized with increased awareness of White privilege to where participants reported denial of White privilege, recognized White privilege but did not want to change anything, or recognized White privilege and wanted to make proactive changes in

eliminating privileges. Some White people may not think about or become aware of privileges given to them; but once they are, some become more cognizant on how they see themselves and others (Ancis & Szymanski, 2001). When White women become involved with Black men and change their hierarchical status, they may lose some of their “White privileges” (Rothenberg, 2004) and experience similar levels of racial discrimination encountered by their Black partners.

Stress Process Model

Research conducted has suggested the effects of racial discrimination and its links to physiological and psychological problems are dependent on the target’s ability or inability to cope with the feeling of stress from discrimination (Ong et al., 2009; Serido et al., 2004). One definition for stress states it is “the interaction between a force and the resistance opposed to it” (Selye, 1955, 243). When an individual experiences tension or pressure, the human body reacts with a stress response.

The stress response begins the “general adaptation syndrome” (G-A-S; Selye, 1950). The theory on the general adaptation syndrome explains the hormone process during times of stress and the outcome of bodily reactions. It elucidates to the idea for the body to create homeostasis during and after a stressful situation. Selye (1950, 1955) explains the effects of the brain and hormone reactions to stress during the G-A-S happen in three stages. The first is the alarm reaction, where functional changes can range from excitement to shock. In this stage, adaptation has not been reached. It is during this stage where physiological and psychological damages begin. When the stress is intense, the stimulation to the autonomic nerves, and particularly the adrenergic system, are

increased. The second stage is the stage of resistance. The previous functional changes mostly disappear due to the resistance, but with an increase in potential risks for later maladaptations. In the last stage, the stage of exhaustion, the functional changes are returned to those of the alarm reaction stage, such as, tension, excitement, depression, or shock. It is in this stage that lasting system damage (i.e., arteriosclerosis) is noted.

The system reactions to stress through G-A-S show long-term damage and distress. In addition to physical damage, maladaptations to stress have defined some neuropsychiatric disturbances, such as neuroses, psychosomatic derangements, and depression (Selye, 1950). The cumulative factor of stress, also, leads to quicker and premature senility (Selye, 1955). The theory of G-A-S and its long-term effects to the human body validate the effects of stress to people who may not have quick adaptations to particular or previously non-experienced stressors, and the collective effects of stress.

The stress process model explains stress happens during exchanges between an individual and his or her surrounds, namely society (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin et al., 1981). Once an exchange occurs, the individual appraises the event and initiates coping mechanisms to manage the situation. The recall of past eventful experiences will help the person put effective or ineffective coping skills into action. A person's ability to effectively cope with stressful events is dependent on the person's knowledge and use of effective coping skills, and the significance of the stressor (Pearlin et al., 1981). Pearlin explains:

The intensity of stress that people exhibit cannot be adequately predicted solely from the intensity of its sources whether the sources be life events, chronic role

strains, the diminishment of self, or all three. Instead, people typically confront stress-provoking conditions with a variety of behaviors perceptions, and cognitions that are often capable of altering the difficult conditions or mediating their impact. (Pearlin et al., 1981, p. 340)

As mentioned previously, the cumulative factor of stress can create a concept of chronic strain. Long term chronic stressors or strains deplete a person's ability to utilize effective coping strategies. For instance, daily occurrences with racial discrimination have been characterized as chronic stress and daily hassles encountered by its victims (Ong et al., 2009). An example of a healthy stress process would be a person who quickly adapts to situations and initiates effective coping skills. This, in turn, would lead to feelings of less stress and a healthier physical and mental life (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Pearlin et al., 1981).

The feeling of stress is dependent on how the individual appraises and then copes with the event. The appraisal of the event can be seen as (a) insignificant or irrelevant; (b) benign or constructive; or (c) stressful (Slavin et al., 1991). With internal and external resources, such as the individual's social support or intelligence, the individual can use adequate coping responses to handle the stressor. If the target of discrimination perceives (appraises) the discriminatory act as harmful or threatening and lacks the coping resources to reduce the heightened stress response, the target is subjected to long-term effects such as physical and mental health problems.

Slavin et al. (1991) proposed an extension to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress process model by suggesting a person's culture can affect the stress appraisal. Slavin et

al. explained that when a person is aware of a notable difference from a majority, the mindset of the person has a preconceived awareness of the “heightened visibility and lack of anonymity” (p. 158). Many minority group members also have experienced regular discriminatory acts; as well as, a lower socio-economic status and lower political power. A person’s cultural customs and beliefs alone may be cause for stressful appraisals. The person’s internal resources draw on the cultural framework to cope with the stressor. In other words, the minority group member relies on cultural beliefs and traditions to appraise the event. The stronger the person is in his/her cultural beliefs, the more effective the person’s ability to cope with the stressor will be by relying on the culture’s coping strategies.

The stress process can be classified into two general categories: discrete and continuous stressors (Pearlin et al., 1981; Serido et al., 2004). Discrete stressors are observed and objective life events, such as death or job loss. Continuous stressors are the common, everyday life interactions experienced. Continuous stressors can be sorted as chronic stressors and daily hassles. Chronic stressors can be defined as those experiences with constant or frequent problems in life. Chronic stress can arise from many areas of life: maintaining responsibilities of various roles like demands of work, conflict with family, or writing a dissertation can be cause for stress. When these stressors are continuous, they become recognized as chronic. The ambiguous nature of the stressor aggravates and antagonizes the individual’s ability to reduce the level of stress. Furthermore, the feeling of not being able to have control over when the stressor starts or ends influences the severity of the stress.

Daily hassles are different than chronic stress in that these are the everyday events that confront individuals, such as an unexpected work assignment/deadline or a sick child. The stress felt from daily hassles is expected to dissipate in a few days. However, if the intensity of daily hassles increase, they can deplete an individual's resources to cope with the stressor creating the same harmful effects as chronic stress.

Serido et al. (2004) offer a three model explanation to the chronic stress and daily hassles have on psychological distress. The first model demonstrates that while chronic stress and daily hassles have common causes, they have different effects on psychological distress. The second model explains that chronic stress may be dependent on daily hassles. In other words, the causes of the chronic stress may increase exposure to daily hassles. The third model suggests the existence of chronic stress can increase the negative appraisal to daily hassles as it relates to psychological distress. Even though chronic stressors and daily hassles have differing causes, they combine to produce harmful psychological distress.

Theoretical Synthesis

Status exchange theory explained that the change in status White women in interracial relationships with Black men experience may cause increased stress due to the awareness of racial attitudes and racial discrimination (Twine & Steinbugler, 2006). The stress process model explains how a person appraises a perceived stressor. If the person has previously experienced a similar, current stressor and developed adequate coping mechanisms, then the stressor is quickly dismissed. However, if the perceived stressor is a new experience, coping skills will need to be learned. If the coping skills are not

adequately developed, the long-term effects can be negative (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000). The stress process model will help with understanding the new experiences with stress White women experience with the awareness of their new social exchange status (Mills, 2006).

Alternative Approaches Considered

Since the problem of racial discrimination has such negative effects on people of color (Brondolo et al., 2003; Neblett et al., 2008), it is reasonable to assume discrimination may have similar effects on the White population when intimately involved with people of color. Do White women in intimate interracial relationships with Black men experience feelings of stress when faced with racial discrimination? Do family, friends, and the public have a factor on the level of stress? To answer these questions, data can be gathered with the help of questionnaires and surveys via internet access without restrictions from demographic locations.

Quantitative Versus Qualitative Method

While previous studies on interracial couples have primarily used qualitative methods (Killian, 2002, 2003); the information needed to answer the above questions can be completed in a less invasive manner. Qualitative methods are remarkable for collecting and reporting subjective facts and experiences interracial couple's voice, but they are limited by demographic constraints, consisting mostly of couples in a general location of the researcher (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

Quantitative studies consist of objective information "to determine aggregate differences between groups or classes of subjects" (Rudestam & Newton, 2001, p. 28).

Both racial discrimination and stress have been studied with the use of quantitative research (Ong et al., 2009). Thus, using a quantitative method to examine racial discrimination and the level of stress elicited on the White population who choose to engage in intimate interracial relationships would be warranted.

Nonprobability Sample

This study relies on a sample where participants are self-selected, as response to the invitation from pre-selected internet websites (i.e., APA, ACA, eHarmony, etc.). The participants are asked to meet sampling criteria, such as White females who are intimately involved with Black men and over 18-years-old. However, since the invitation to participate is ultimately undefined and biases cannot be filtered, the study will use a non-probability sample (Wretman, 2010).

Cross-Sectional Surveys

A set of cross-sectional surveys was selected for this quantitative study. Cross-sectional surveys are considered a reasonable approach, as evidenced by its use in other studies of this nature (Wu et al., 2010). A cross-sectional survey measures the samples data from a specific point in time, such as the time prior to the participant's interracial relationship (Babbie, 1973). It will also collect data from the sample in the time after the involvement in an interracial relationship. Demographic questions (age, geographic location, type of neighborhood, economic status, education level, marital status, and satisfaction in current relationship) and three scales will be used to gather data needed to complete statistical tests—General Ethnic Discrimination Scale (Landrine et al., 2006),

General Ethnic Discrimination Scale- Revised (Landrine et al., 2006), and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Northrup, 1996).

Summary

This literature review surveyed previous research on the problem and effects of racial discrimination to people of color. Racial discrimination was defined as the unfair treatment on the basis of race (Ong et al., 2009). Racial discrimination can be understood as explicit, actual behaviors or more subtle covert attitudes (Brondolo et al., 2003). The stress related to racism and racial discrimination can lead to multiple physical and mental health issues (Landrine et al., 2006). The general adaptation syndrome explains how stress begins the process of physiological and psychological damage (Selye, 1950, 1955). The stress process explains how individuals appraise and cope with stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Pearlin et al., 1981).

The frequent, daily encounters with racial discrimination can be classified as a chronic stressor (Serido et al., 2004). With interracial relationships on the rise, it is projected racial discrimination has been experienced by the White population engaging in mixed marriages (Foeman & Nance, 2002; Killian, 2002, 2003). If White women are experiencing an increase in stress then the effects of that stress may be similar to the effects of racial discrimination experienced by the Black population. The cross-sectional quantitative study examined the stress due to racial discrimination felt by White women in the interracial relationship and determined which perpetrator(s) was a factor in the level of stress experienced.

The following chapter, Chapter 3, describes the research design and methods to gather and analyze the data. Chapter 4 reports the results from the analyses of the data collected. Chapter 5 explains and summarizes these results.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Introduction to the Research Methods

In interracial couples involving White women and Black men, women may experience an increase in stress due to perceived racial discrimination, which these women may not have experienced before entering an interracial relationship. It was hypothesized that White women in interracial relationships with Black men did not experience stress due to racial discrimination prior to the relationship. Lack of experience with racial discrimination and an inability to quickly develop coping strategies to deal with stress arising from racial discrimination could lead to an increase in physiological and psychological problems. The purpose of this cross-sectional, quantitative study was to measure the stress levels of White women involved in interracial relationships with Black men.

Problems with racism, such as racial discrimination, racist attitudes, and racial microaggressions, continue to plague American society (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Feather & McKee, 2008; Krumm & Corning, 2008; Leach & Spears, 2008; Prentice & Miller, 2002; Shapiro & Neuberg, 2008; Sue, Nadal, et al., 2007). With a significant increase in interracial relationships, the effects of racism on interracial couples are not fully understood (Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Burrow, 2009). A relatively small number of qualitative studies have shown that interracial couples' social and personal experiences are related to the public's discrimination and stigma toward the couple (Killian, 2002, 2003; Rosenblatt et al., 1995). The purpose of this quantitative

study was to examine White women's level of stress due to experiences with perceived racial discrimination because of social perceptions about their interracial relationships.

This chapter addresses the methods that were employed to conduct this research. A description of the research design and how the study was approached is presented (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Information is provided that describes the reasoning for the setting used for data gathering. The sample size is logically explained (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). Instruments and materials that were used for this study are identified and presented in detail (Landrine, Klonoff, Corral, Fernandex, & Roesch, 2006; Ray, 1984). The scales for variables are clearly defined. Measures to protect participants' rights and confidentiality are discussed.

Design of the Study

Quantitative studies consist of objective information "to determine aggregate differences between groups or classes of subjects" (Rudestam & Newton, 2001, p. 28). Both racial discrimination and stress have been studied with the use of quantitative research (Ong et al., 2009). Thus, using a quantitative method to measure the level of stress experienced due to perceived racial discrimination in members of the White population who choose to engage in intimate interracial relationships is warranted. The research design that was used first was a correlational method. The correlational method was used to determine if there was an association between two or more of the variables (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). The purpose for using this method was to identify any relationships between such variables as age, geographic location, economic background, and education and the participant's stress related to experiences with racial discrimination

as measured by the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale (GED; Landrine et al., 2006). The correlational method was used to determine if any of the variables showed a direction or magnitude as they related to the hypotheses. Because this study used a within-subject design, carry-over effects could have been an issue (Price & Oswald, 2006). To help reduce carry-over effects, a counterbalance in the order of the surveys was implemented. When the survey sample had reached 18 completed surveys, the beginning order (GED first, then GED-R) was changed (GED-R first, then GED).

The design used a cross-sectional survey method to assess participants' experiences with perceptions of racial discrimination (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007; Wu, Chi, Chen, Wang, & Jin, 2010). A number of survey instruments were included, as described in a later section of this chapter. The reason for choosing this design was to compare the mean differences of reported perceived racial discrimination before and after participants' involvement in an intimate interracial relationship.

A second objective of this study was to compare the mean differences of reported stress before and after participants' involvement in an intimate interracial relationship. It was assumed that the significance of the level of stress is indicative of the perpetrator. Therefore, the study was also intended to predict which perpetrators—family, friends, or strangers—elicited an increase in levels of reported stress (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005).

Approach to the Study

With an approach reflecting the theoretical perspectives of the stress process model, as proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Pearlin and colleagues (1981), with further explorations from Serido et al. (2004) and Slavin et al. (1991), the stated

hypotheses were tested to measure mean differences and predict any significance of stress White women in intimate interracial relationships experienced due to encounters with perceived racial discrimination. To establish whether White women experienced any feelings of stress from perceived racial discrimination prior to involvement in an intimate interracial relationship, as indicated by the participant's responses on the GED scale that asked the participant to think about experiences from childhood to the onset of the interracial relationship, a paired-sample *t* test was used. The paired-sample *t* test indicated the reported statistical significance between the mean scores from the GED Scale to the GED-R (Hypothesis 1). The comparison of the reported stresses experienced on the GED Scale (prior) to the GED-R (after) indicated that White women had a significant increase in stress experienced after their involvement with Black men (Hypothesis 2). See Chapter 4 for a complete explanation of the results.

A standard multiple regression was employed to predict which perpetrators elicited the highest reported levels of stress—family (Item 10-GED-R), friends (Item 9-GED-R), or general public (Item 4-GED-R). The multiple regression determined the most accurate prediction of the variable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). By using the multiple regression, hypothesis 3 (the level of stress experienced is dependent on the perpetrator) was addressed.

Setting and Sample

Participants

The target population for this study was White females currently in intimate interracial relationships with Black males. Interracial couples are located throughout the

United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). For a sample to represent the population, participants from multiple locations across the United States were included. Participants were required to be at least 18 years of age and able to categorize themselves in one of the age ranges in the questionnaire.

The participant sample was obtained by soliciting individuals who met the study's criteria from popular websites frequented by culturally diverse and interracial couples, such as those listed in the following section. Individuals were asked to voluntarily participate in the self-administered/self-reported survey. Participants were encouraged to solicit any other qualifying White females (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

Setting

A reasonable means to involve participants from various geographical locations entails the use of Internet technology. A nonprobability sample was collected by submitting an open invitation to participate on popular websites for interracial couples. These included Black Planet, Facebook, InterracialPeopleMeet, and MySpace. Additional solicitation methods for participants were added to the proposed sources due to a low participant sample. The survey link was placed in the Walden University Participant Pool after IRB approval. Another solicitation method involved creating a snowball effect by returning to the original sources to encourage potential participants to ask other possible eligible participants to complete the survey. The recruitment flyer and details can be viewed in Appendix E. Individuals interested in participating in the study were directed to a pre-established research packet located at www.surveymonkey.com. There was no correspondence with participants.

Sample

A sample should be a representation of the population (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). The larger the sample is, the closer it will come to being an accurate representation of the population. “A power analysis, using GPower3 software, was conducted to determine the appropriate sample size for the study. An a priori power analysis, assuming” (Bryson, 2010, p. 53) a medium effect size ($f = .25$), $\alpha = .05$, indicated that a minimum sample size of 34 participants was required to achieve a power of .80 for a two-tailed, paired-sample t test. If the sample size were increased to 54, the power would increase to .95.

An a priori analysis was conducted to determine the necessary sample size for a correlation method. For a medium effect ($f = .3$), $\alpha = .05$, the minimum sample size would be 111 participants for a power of .95 (64 participants would be needed for a power of .80). Additionally, an a priori power analysis was conducted, assuming a medium effect size ($f = .15$), $\alpha = .05$, indicating a sample of 119 participants for a power of .95 (77 participants were needed for a power of .80) with three predictors when carrying out an multiple regression method. The desired sample size for this research was between 77 and 119 participants. However, after the inclusion of additional solicitation methods due to a low response, a total of 39 participants completed the survey whose responses were used for the results.

Data Collection and Procedures

A survey packet with a consent form was posted and located on an Internet site, www.surveymonkey.com. SurveyMonkey is an online survey tool (SurveyMonkey,

2012). It allows customers to create and post surveys for a targeted audience to complete. Customers are able to design, collect, and analyze data from the created surveys for research needs. SurveyMonkey is a safe and secure cite for collecting and retrieving data. The Internet was used to help eliminate geographic location barriers. Instruments were designed so that they could be completed on the website and be retrieved by me.

Surveys included a number of questions that were answered with Likert scales (Edwards & Kenney, 1946) for numerical coding. Because all information gathered was numerically analyzed, a quantitative study was warranted (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). Questionnaires included participant's demographic data, such as age, geographic location, economic status, education, marital status, and number of and length of interracial relationships. Discrimination relating to participants' race was measured by using the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale (GED; Landrine et al., 2006), and discrimination relating to participants' involvement in interracial relationships as well as participants' experiences with stress due to the relationships was measured with a modified version of the GED, the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale—Revised (GED-R). The GED was modified by changing a portion of each question by asking if experiences were due to the interracial relationship instead of race or ethnicity. Modifications to an instrument are not uncommon in order to adapt the instrument to the current use (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

Materials and Measures

Materials

The electronic survey packet was generated and included the following documents:

1. A consent form (Appendix A),
2. A demographic questionnaire (Appendix B),
3. Two survey instruments (Appendices C and D),
4. Social desirability scale (Appendix E).

Participants were asked to first read and agree to the consent form. Participants' agreement to the consent form was their confirmation that they were White females intimately involved in relationships with Black males. Participants were instructed to direct questions to my school e-mail address (sharon.conger@waldenu.edu) if they were unclear about the consent. There were no emails received for clarification. Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire and surveys truthfully and without reserve. A short social desirability scale was included to address participants' truthfulness (Ray, 1984).

Measures

Demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix B) was used to collect data to identify the participants' general information and provide data for the correlational measures (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Ong et al., 2009). The purpose of using the demographic questionnaire was to identify any relationships between the variables retrieved to the participants' stress related to experiences with racial

discrimination as measured by the GED and GED-R (Landrine et al., 2006). This information was used to help determine whether any of the variables showed any correlation related to the hypotheses. Information gathered included participant's age, geographic location, type of neighborhood, economic status, education level, marital status, satisfaction in current relationship, number of interracial relationships including the current relationship, and average number of years involved in interracial relationships.

Participants were asked to state their age. Age was coded into seven groups: 1. 18-25; 2. 26-33; 3. 34-41; 4. 42-49; 5. 50-57; 6. 58-65; and 7. 66 and above. Each age group spanned 7 years in order to have a narrow range to analyze the data for correlations. Geographic location was identified by participants reporting the state in which they currently resided. Geographic information also included the participant's identified state where the majority of her childhood was located. The participant's geographical location during childhood may have had a relationship to the discrimination the participant experienced in the current location, in that some geographic locations are considered to have higher racial discrimination reports (Hunt, Wise, Jipguep, Cozier, & Rosenberg, 2007). Geographic information was coded as Northeast, Southeast, South Central, Southwest, Northwest, Midwest, North Central, and Pacific including Hawaii and Alaska. Participants' current type of neighborhood and the type of neighborhood they primarily resided in as a child were coded as rural (not clearly defined as a city or town), small town (population under 20,000 but defined as a city or town), large town (population between 20,000 and 100,000), city (population between 100,000 and

250,000), or large city (population over 250,000). Again, knowing participants' current and past neighborhood could show correlations in the data. Economic status was coded into seven groups, ranging from < \$15,000 to > \$80,000. Education level was coded as six groups, with a range from *did not graduate high school* to *doctorate or equivalent*. Marital status was coded into five groups: single, never married; committed relationship; married; widowed; and separated or divorced. Satisfaction in participant's current relationship was coded into five groups: very satisfied, mostly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, little satisfied, and not satisfied. This was able to help control for stress within the relationship rather than stress due to discrimination outside the relationship. The average number of years involved in an interracial relationship was coded into four groups: less than 2 years; 2-5 years; 5-10 years; more than 10 years. Demographic data were analyzed to observe any distinguished relationships.

General Ethnic Discrimination Scale. The General Ethnic Discrimination (GED) Scale (Appendix C) is an 18-item scale used to measure perceived ethnic discrimination (Landrine et al., 2006). It is a replica with slight modifications of the Schedule of Racist Events (SRE), which is a scale of perceived discrimination created to measure discrimination experiences by Blacks. The GED Scale was modified from the SRE to include all ethnic groups. Each of the 18 items on the Landrine et al. GED Scale has three answers: to measure experiences in the past year, entire life, and stress level. For its current use, the GED scale was slightly modified so that each of the 18 items had two answers: one to measure discrimination in the participant's life prior to involvement in an interracial relationship, and one to measure the level of stress. This scale was used

to determine whether participants had experienced stress from racial discrimination “prior” to their involvement in an intimate interracial relationship. The two questions in an item that measured for discrimination were scored using a 6-point Likert scale from *never to almost all the time*. The question in an item that measured the level of stress was scored using a 6-point Likert scale from *not at all stressful to extremely stressful*. The reported time to complete this scale was 10 minutes with a 5.4 grade reading level. In the Landrine et al. (2006) presentation of the GED Scale, it was reported that the scale demonstrated “high internal-consistency reliability and low standard errors” (split-half reliability r for each subscale = 0.91; Landrine et al., p. 84). Table 1 reports the scales’ reliability and descriptive statistics from their research results. The Landrine et al. modifications of the GED consisted of three responses for each item. The response for “How often in the past year?” was not warranted, as this scale was used to seek experiences prior to involvement in the interracial relationship.

Table 1

GED Scale Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

GED subscale	# of items	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error	Cronbach’s alpha	Possible range; range obtained
Lifetime discrimination	18	31.79	13.00	0.342	.942	18–108; 18–106
Recent discrimination	18	27.34	11.18	0.289	.936	18–108; 18–102
Appraised discrimination	17	31.61	16.38	0.442	.945	17–102; 17–102

Note. Split-half reliability r for each subscale = 0.91.

The GED Scale was used in the current research to determine a baseline for experiences with perceived racial discrimination and the level of stress for the participants prior to the interracial relationship. It was hypothesized that White American women have experienced little to no racial discrimination due to their race or ethnicity

alone (determined by the GED Scale), but have experienced a level of stress from perceived racial discrimination for their choice of an interracial relationship (as determined by the *General Ethnic Discrimination Scale- Revised*).

General Ethnic Discrimination Scale—Revised. The General Ethnic Discrimination Scale- Revised (Appendix D) was used to measure stress experienced from the perceived racial discrimination “after” involvement in an intimate interracial relationship. The GED-R is a modification of the GED scale (Landrine et al., 2006). The GED scale was modified by changing a portion of each question by asking if experiences are due to the interracial relationship instead of race or ethnicity alone. Modifications to an instrument are not uncommon in order to facilitate the instrument to the current use (Rudestam & Newton, 2001).

With modifications of the *General Ethnic Discrimination Scale*, the *General Ethnic Discrimination Scale- Revised* (GED-R) the scale still consisted of the same 18-item measure with one additional item that included a question about discrimination from family members (Item 10). This item only asked about experiences after the involvement of the interracial relationship since it was assumed there was no perceived racial discrimination prior to the involvement. The changes to the scale consisted of asking participants if their experiences with racial discrimination were due to their interracial relationship. In addition to the similar areas of the GED Scale, for items 1-12 participants were also asked if the perpetrator of the discrimination was aware of the interracial relationship. The awareness, or unawareness, of an interracial relationship could alter the experience with racial discrimination. The estimated time to complete this scale was 10

minutes with a 5.4 grade reading level. Since this scale has only slight moderations from Landine et al. (2006) presentation of the GED, similar reliability, validity, and Cronbach's alpha was assumed.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Shortened). When using self-reported questionnaires, social desirability can be an issue. The shortened Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C Scale, 1964; Appendix E) was used to assess participant's response bias to surveys and scales (Castillo et al., 2006). Statistical analyses were used to control for social desirability biases (van de Mortel, 2008). In order to deal with high scores that indicate social desirability, the researcher was prepared to 1. reject the data from participants with high social desirability scores; 2. identifying the impact of the high social desirability but not controlling for it; or 3. if the number of participants with high social desirability scores is significantly large, data would be analyzed after the use of statistical methods, such as partial correlations or stepwise regression, to identify any relationship between the variables of interest while controlling the partial correlations (van de Mortel, 2008).

The M-C Scale showed internal consistency (reliability, .70) when correlated to the Edwards Social Desirability Scale (Guajardo & Anderson, 2007). The shortened M-C Scale is an eight-item, true-false questionnaire. Items identify whether participants answer questions in order to make themselves look better than others, including their need for social acceptance and approval. The following is an example of a test item: "Have there been occasions when you took advantage of someone?" Items 1, 2, 5, and 6 are "honest" responses and are scored with a 1 for "true" and a 3 for "false." Items 3, 4,

7, and 8 are scored the opposite—a 3 for “true” and a 1 for “false.” A score of 2 would be given if a question was left unanswered. A high score indicates a need for social desirability. The alpha for this short form was .77 (Ray, 1984).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on a theoretical framework consisting of the status exchange theory and the stress process model, the following questions were examined:

1. Have White women experienced perceived racial discrimination before or after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship?
2. If White women have experienced perceived racial discrimination after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship, is the stress experienced significant?
3. Do the perpetrators of the perceived racial discrimination (i.e. family, friends, or strangers) affect the level of stress experienced?

The status exchange theory suggests that when White women become involved in an intimate relationship with a Black man they potentially make changes in their racial hierarchy, as well as their socioeconomic status. It was assumed they experience changes they have not previously experienced. Therefore, it was hypothesized that White women in interracial relationships with Black men had not experienced stress from perceived racial discrimination prior to the relationship. According to the stress process model, the lack of experience with and an inability to quickly develop coping strategies for stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Ong et al., 2009) from perceived racial discrimination for the White women in interracial relationships with Black men could, therefore, lead to an

increase in physiological and psychological problems (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Landrine, Klonoff, Corra et al., 2006).

Hypothesis 1: There is a mean difference between the perceived racial discrimination that White women have experienced prior to and after their involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man.

Hypothesis 2: There is a statistical significance in reported stress from perceived racial discrimination experienced by White women after their involvement with Black men.

Hypothesis 3: If White women have experiences of stress from perceived racial discrimination after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man, the perpetrators of the discrimination (i.e. family, friends, or strangers) will affect the level of stress.

The measure that was used to test these hypotheses was the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale (GED). It was compared to the same measure with slight revisions (General Ethnic Discrimination Scale- Revised; GED-R) that asked participants to answer the same questions but with consideration of differences since they have been in an intimate relationship with a Black man (Landrine et al., 2006). The GED Scale measured the mean differences to determine if White women experienced stress due to perceived racial discrimination “prior to” involvement in an interracial relationship. The GED-R was used to measure White women’s experiences with stress from perceived racial discrimination “after” involvement in an interracial relationship. The mean scores from the GED and the GED-R were compared to identify any statistical significance.

Results from the paired sample *t*-test indicated the statistical significance between the mean scores from the GED Scale to the GED-R (Hypothesis 1). The comparison between the reported stresses experienced on the GED Scale (prior) to the GED-R (after) indicated White women have significant increase in stress experienced after their involvement with Black men (Hypothesis 2).

Hypothesis 3 stated that the level of stress experienced by perceived racial discrimination in White women involved in an intimate interracial relationship would be dependent on the perpetrator. It was projected that stress experienced after involvement in an interracial relationship and the perpetrator of the perceived discrimination, whether family, friends, or strangers, would affect the level of stress reported. A standard multiple regression was employed to predict which perpetrator elicited the highest reported levels of stress—family (Item 10-GED-R), friends (Item 9-GED-R), or strangers (Item 4-GED-R). A multiple regression determines the most accurate prediction of the variable (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007). By using the multiple regression, hypothesis three (the level of stress experienced is dependent on the perpetrator) was addressed.

Data Analyses

The data was analyzed after the surveys were posted to the appropriate website and data collection was completed. To test the first hypothesis that stated there was a mean difference between the perceived racial discrimination that White women experienced prior to and after their involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man, a paired sample *t* test was used to indicate the statistical significance between the mean scores from the GED Scale to the GED-R. To test the second

hypothesis, which stated there was a statistical significance in reported stress from perceived racial discrimination experienced by White women after their involvement with Black men, the mean scores of the paired sample *t* test were compared to measure the level of significance. To tests hypothesis three that stated White women had experiences of stress from perceived racial discrimination after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man, the perpetrators of the discrimination (i.e. family, friends, or strangers) would affect the level of stress, a multiple regression was used to examine the relationship between each perpetrator and the perceived stress reported from that perpetrator.

Data from the instruments was imputed in the latest version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 2005). Statistical analyses were computed. Correlations, *t* tests, and multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine relationships between the demographic variables and stress from racial discrimination experienced; occurrences and significance in mean differences from stress from racial discrimination experienced before and after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship; and the predictability between the level of stress experienced and the perpetrator of the racial discrimination. A Bonferroni adjustment was made to the alpha levels by dividing the standard alpha of .05 by three for the three analyses conducted (Pallant, 2007). A complete data analysis is presented in Chapter 4.

Data Collection and Ethical Concerns

Data collected from the questionnaires and scales are represented in the appropriate tables in Chapter 4 of this study or by request from the researcher. Data

collected has been stored in the private, locked office of the researcher and will be kept for a minimum of five years (APA, 2012). The researcher will continue to be the only investigator in this study. Data will continue to be protected from access by third parties. Electronic media and data are protected by passwords. The computer used to store data is used solely by the researcher. Confidentiality and privacy is confirmed by the researcher and any identifying information is only used for this research purpose only.

Minimal risk was expected to participants. Some of the survey questions may be viewed as uncomfortable or unwanted. The survey questions could have elicited minor discomfort when addressing stress experienced from discrimination. However, the discomfort experienced from the study was expected to be less than that experienced in daily life. Risk management and protection of participants' confidentiality is and will be compliant within the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2012). Approval to conduct this research was obtained from the Institutional Review Board prior to the survey packets being available to participants.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the method of approach and how the hypotheses were analyzed for this study. The statistical design and methods were explained and justified (Rudestam & Newton, 2001). The instruments proposed for use were identified with validity and reliability consistencies (Landrine et al., 2006). Rationalization for the setting and sample that was used was explained with plans for data analyses.

The identified principle for this research was to determine if White women experience stress from perceived racial discrimination and how significant it is. The

results may help to predict whether White women in interracial relationships are able to quickly adapt to the stress experienced (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) from perceived racial discrimination, and essentially the possibility of long-term physiological and psychological health concerns (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000). Chapter 4 explains the results of the data collected and analyzed. Chapter 5 includes an explanation of the findings, summary, and recommendations.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In interracial couples involving White women and Black men, women may experience an increase in stress due to perceived racial discrimination, which they may not have experienced previously. Lack of experience with racial discrimination and an inability to quickly develop coping strategies to deal with stress resulting from it could lead to an increase in physiological and psychological problems. The purpose of this cross-sectional, quantitative study was to measure any increase in stress related to perceived racial discrimination experienced by White women in interracial relationships with Black men. This chapter contains a presentation and summary of the results from the data collection for this study. The participants' demographic information and correlations are explained. The three hypotheses were tested using variations of statistical techniques.

Results

A total of 39 participants completed the online survey and met participant criteria of identifying as a White American woman in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man. The online survey was anonymous. A consent form was placed at the beginning of the survey and stated that the participant's completion of the survey implied her understanding of and consent to the research.

Of the 39 participants, over 89% were identified as being between the ages of 18 and 41; there were no participants in the age bracket of "66 and above." The highest percentages of participants (14, 35.9%) were currently residing in the Midwest region of the United States, followed by the South Central region (9, 23.1%). There was a strong

correlation between the participants' current region of residency and their childhood region of residency ($r = .511, p < .001$). A high percentage of participants reported that they currently lived in either a large town or a city (14, 39.5%; 13, 33.3%, respectively). The correlation between the participants' current neighborhood and their childhood neighborhood also had a strong significance ($r = .806, p < .001$). Participants' income varied throughout each provided category. Participants also had a wide range of educational responses, with 46.2% (18) having completed a BA/BS degree and no responses indicating a completed PhD or higher degree. Participants reported that a high percentage, nearly 72%, attended an "all White" or "mostly White" grade school. Of the 39 participants, 15 (28.5%) reported being in a committed relationship, and 19 participants (48.7%) reported being married. The remaining participants (< 13%) were either single or divorced. Responses concerning relationship satisfaction showed that over 51% of the participants (20) stated that they were "very satisfied" in their relationships, and 23% (9) stated that they were "mostly satisfied." The majority of participants (59%) had only been involved in one or two interracial relationships; while the number of years involved was nearly equally distributed. Participants' demographic frequencies and percentages are presented in detail on Table 2.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages for Participants' Demographics

Demographic	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
18-25	7	17.9
26-33	17	43.6
34-41	11	28.2
42-49	3	7.7
50-57	1	2.6
Current state		
Southeast	5	12.8
Northeast	5	12.8
Midwest	14	35.9
South Central	9	23.1
West	6	15.4
Childhood state		
Southeast	3	7.7
Northeast	10	25.6
Midwest	9	23.1
South Central	9	23.1
West	6	15.4
No Response	2	5.1
Current neighborhood		
Rural	3	7.7
Small	3	7.7
Large town	14	35.9
City	13	33.3
Large city	6	15.4
Childhood neighborhood		
Rural	5	12.8
Small	11	28.2
Large town	10	25.6
City	6	15.4
Large city	6	15.4
No response	1	2.6
Household income		
< \$15K	5	12.8
\$15K-\$25K	3	7.7
\$25K-\$35K	7	17.9
\$35K-\$50K	10	25.6

(table continues)

Demographic	n	%
\$50K-\$65K	3	7.7
\$65K-\$80K	3	7.7
> \$80K	8	20.5
Highest level education		
Graduated HS	5	12.8
Some college	7	17.9
BA/BS degree	18	46.2
MA/MS degree	8	20.5
No response	1	2.6
Grade school race		
All White	5	12.8
Mostly White	23	59.0
Equally mixed	10	25.6
No response	1	2.6
Marital status		
Single	4	10.3
Committed relationship	15	28.5
Married	19	48.7
Divorced	1	2.6
Relationship satisfaction		
Very satisfied	20	51.3
Mostly satisfied	9	23.1
Somewhat satisfied	3	7.7
Little satisfied	3	7.7
Not at all satisfied	3	7.7
No response	1	2.6
No. relationship involved		
1	12	30.8
2	11	28.2
3	8	20.5
4	1	2.6
5	1	2.6
6	4	10.3
7	1	2.6
>8	1	2.6
Years involved		
< 2 years	10	25.6
2-5 years	9	23.1
5-10 years	10	25.6
> 10 years	10	25.6

Instruments. In addition to the demographics, three instruments were used. The General Ethnic Discrimination Scale (GED) was used to measure participants' experience of perceived ethnic discrimination before an interracial relationship (Landrine et al., 2006). The General Ethnic Discrimination Scale-Revised (GED-R) is the same instrument as the GED with a slight modification in terms of survey instructions in order to measure participants' perceived ethnic discrimination after involvement in an interracial relationship. The GED and GED-R also asked participants how stressful the perceived experiences of racial discrimination were before and after involvement in an interracial relationship. For experiences with perceived discrimination after involvement in an interracial relationship, participants were asked if the alleged perpetrator knew about the relationship. Table 3 includes means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis to determine normality for the variables on the GED and GED-R.

Table 3

Normality for GED and GED-

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kur
Education before		1.23	.43	1.33	-.25
	Education after	1.59	.79	.89	-.76
Stress before		1.42	.89	2.2	3.88
	Stress after	1.79	1.17	1.19	-.2
	Knowing from education	1.42	.50		
Work before		1.49	.76	1.58	2.18
	Work after	1.74	.94	.95	-.24
Stress before		1.84	1.26	1.33	.52
	Stress after	2.35	1.7	.91	-.61
	Knowing from work	1.15	.37		
Peers before		1.92	1.22	1.3	1.02
	Peers after	2.21	1.07	.82	.03
Stress before		1.82	1.37	2.34	5.09
	Stress after	2.28	1.3	.82	.02
	Knowing from peers	1.08	.27		
Service workers before		1.62	.81	1.15	.53
	Service workers after	2.49	1.12	-.03	-1.35
Stress before		1.61	1.03	1.36	.30
	Stress after	2.41	1.37	1.01	.27
	Knowing from service worker	1.1	.31		
Strangers before		1.92	.84	.15	-1.57
	Strangers after	2.97	1.20	.43	.42
Stress before		1.72	.97	1.7	3.0
	Stress after	2.79	1.42	.91	.25
	Knowing from strangers	1.05	.22		
Helping profess before		1.21	.58	2.65	5.81
	Helping profess after	1.69	1.00	1.17	.03
Stress before		1.28	.72	2.58	5.9
	Stress after	1.79	1.17	1.86	3.92
	Knowing from helping profess	1.31	.47		
Neighbors before		1.67	1.01	1.54	2.01
	Neighbors after	2.18	1.17	.68	-.61
Stress before		1.79	1.28	1.51	1.67
	Stress after	2.58	1.65	.80	-.52
	Knowing from neighbors	1.08	.27		
Institutions before		1.18	.39	1.74	1.07
	Institutions after	1.46	.79	1.32	-.02
Stress before		1.18	.46	2.55	6.35
	Stress after	1.74	1.37	1.84	2.39

(table continues)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kur
Knowing from institutions	1.45	.50		
Friends before	1.38	.63	1.44	1.03
Friends after	2.15	1.04	.86	.3
Stress before	1.85	1.57	1.79	2.07
Stress after	2.74	1.6	.52	-1.02
Knowing from friends	1.0	.00		
Acc of wrong doing before	1.33	.84	2.97	9.57
Acc of wrong doing after	1.44	.85	1.96	2.94
Stress before	1.5	1.27	2.81	7.45
Stress after	1.95	1.67	1.62	1.17
Misunderstood motives before	1.88	.95	1.04	1.28
Misunderstood motives after	2.38	1.11	.13	-1.33
Stress before	1.72	.89	1.32	1.32
Stress after	2.16	1.33	1.02	-.01
Racist comments before	2.65	1.49	.75	-.11
Racist comments after	3.03	1.61	.31	-.81
Stress before	2.84	1.65	.61	-.74
Stress after	2.95	1.76	.54	-.93
Racist act done before	2.35	1.6	1.19	.37
Racist act done after	3.0	1.64	.49	-.92
Stress before	2.54	1.68	.79	-.60
Stress after	3.33	1.85	.16	-1.38
File grievance before	1.18	.56	3.89	17.26
File grievance after	1.47	.76	1.26	-.02
Stress before	1.22	.96	4.46	19.96
Stress after	2.18	1.96	1.35	.09
Called racist name before	2.3	1.05	.42	-.95
Called racist name after	2.54	1.12	-.16	-1.33
Stress before	2.32	1.42	1.13	.74
Stress after	2.69	1.67	.77	-.40
Argmt for racist done before	2.08	1.22	.98	.01
Argmt for racist done after	2.41	1.27	.46	-.17
Stress before	2.06	1.12	.79	-.19
Stress after	2.87	1.91	.59	-1.11
Bullied before	1.56	.75	.94	-.56
Bullied after	1.9	.85	.47	-.76
Stress before	1.92	1.33	1.29	.60
Stress after	2.58	1.64	.81	-.43
Different life before	1.87	1.21	1.13	-.04
Different life after	2.54	1.31	.79	.09
Family after	3.27	1.68	-.04	-1.24
Stress after	3.66	2.02	-.32	-1.54
Knowing from family	1.03	.16		

The Marlowe-Crown Social Desirability Scale (M-C Scale) was used to assess participant's response bias to surveys and scales (Castillo, Conoley, King, Rollins, Riveria, & Veve, 2006). The M-C Scale showed internal consistency (reliability, .70) when correlated to the Edwards Social Desirability Scale (Guajardo & Anderson, 2007). The Cronbach's alpha for this study was .90. The shortened M-C Scale is an eight-item, true-false questionnaire. Items identify whether participants answer questions in order to make themselves look better than others, including their need for social acceptance and approval. A high score indicates a need for social desirability. A score of 3 would indicate a higher need for social desirability. Table 4 includes means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis to determine normality for the variables for the M-C Scale.

Table 4

Normality for M-C Scale

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skew	Kur
Take advantage of others	1.59	.50	-.38	-1.96
Taken unfair advantage	1.72	.46	-1.01	-1.04
Admit mistake	1.33	.48	.74	-1.54
Quick to admit mistake	1.31	.48	.87	-1.32
Get even	1.74	.45	-1.12	-.79
Resentful	1.31	.47	.87	-1.32
Courteous	1.36	.49	.61	-1.72
Listener	1.36	.49	.61	-1.72

Hypothesis 1. A paired-sample *t* test was conducted to evaluate Hypothesis One, which states there is a mean difference between the scores on how White women have been treated (perceived racial discrimination) prior to and after their involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man. Preliminary analyses were run to

verify no violation of the assumptions of normality. This hypothesis is determining if the participants experienced perceived discrimination after the relationship began compared to prior to the interracial relationship. Each category was analyzed and the results indicated that the mean difference between the scores of perceived racial discrimination before and after an interracial relationship were significantly greater after the relationship than before in 10 of the 17 pairs after a Bonferroni adjustment to the significance level was conducted. A Bonferroni adjustment was made to the alpha levels by dividing the standard alpha of .05 by three for the three analyses conducted (Pallant, 2007). The significant categories are Educational Institutions; with Peers; in places of Service; with Strangers; Helping Professionals; with Neighbors; in Other Institutions such as law firms, Social Services, and unemployment offices; with Friends; having Misunderstood Motives; and Filing a Grievance. Table 3 shows the specifics of the significance levels.

Table 5

Paired-Sample t Test, Before and After an Interracial Relationship

Pair	<i>M</i> difference	<i>SD</i> difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Education	-.36	.63	-3.57	38	.001**
Work	-.26	.68	-2.36	38	.023
Peers	-.3	.66	-2.74	36	.01*
Service	-.87	.8	-6.8	38	< .001**
Strangers	-1.05	.76	-8.6	38	< .001**
Helpers	-.45	.65	-4.28	37	< .001**
Neighbors	-.51	.79	-4.85	38	< .001**
Institutions	-.28	.6	-2.91	38	.006*
Friends	-.77	.84	-5.7	38	< .001**
Accused of wrong doing	-.1	.64	-1.38	38	.324
Misunder- stood motives	-.51	.6	-5.33	38	< .001**
Angry for racist com	-.22	.85	-1.54	36	.132
Angry for racist act	-.49	1.33	-2.23	36	.032
Filed a grievance	-.35	.75	-2.84	36	.007*
Called racist name	-.16	.5	-1.97	36	.057
Argument for racism	-.29	1.18	-1.5	37	.14
Bullied	-.33	.93	-2.25	38	.031

*Bonferroni adjustment $p < .017$. **Bonferroni Adjustment $p < .003$.

After determining which pairs indicated stress experienced before and after the interracial relationship, another paired-sample *t* test was performed on those categories to include the question of whether the perpetrator knew about the relationship in order to determine if the discrimination may or may not be related to the relationship. Based on this analysis, three categories were found to not be significant (Educational Institutions,

Other Institutions, and Accused of Wrong Doing) and were not included in analyzing Hypothesis Two.

Hypothesis 2. A paired-sample t test was conducted to evaluate Hypothesis Two, which states there is a statistical significance in reported stress from perceived racial discrimination experienced by White women after their involvement with Black men. Each category was analyzed and the results indicated that the mean difference between the scores of stress perceived from the racial discrimination experienced before and after an interracial relationship were significantly greater after the relationship in all but one (peers: $p = .021$) analyzed categories after a Bonferroni adjustment to the significance level was conducted. Table 4 presents the results of the t test analysis for Hypothesis Two.

Table 6

Paired-Sample t Test for Stress Experienced Before and After an Interracial Relationship

Pair	M difference	SD difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Work	-.51	1.19	-2.61	36	.013*
Peers	-.37	.94	-2.41	37	.021
Service	-.84	.89	-5.86	37	< .001**
Strangers	-1.08	.93	-7.24	38	< .001**
Helpers	-.51	.72	-4.44	38	< .001**
Neighbors	-.45	.8	-6.28	37	< .001**
Friends	-.9	1.07	-5.23	38	< .001**
Misunder- stood motives	-.45	.89	-3.09	37	.004*
Angry for racist act	-.65	1.25	-3.15	36	.003*
Grievance	-.75	1.5	-3	35	.005*
Bullied	-.74	1.06	-4.3	37	< .001**

*Bonferroni adjustment $p < .017$. **Bonferroni adjustment $p < .003$.

Hypothesis 3. If White women have experiences of perceived racial discrimination after involvement in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black man, the perpetrators of the discrimination (i.e. family, friends, and strangers) will affect the level of stress experienced. To determine if the perpetrator had an influence on the amount of perceived stress experienced and which perpetrator effected the level of stress, a standard multiple regression was performed. For this analysis, a computed dependent variable named “total stress” was added to the data set that included the perceived stress variables for strangers, friends, and family. Table 5 reports descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables included in the multiple regression, along with a standardized beta weight.

Table 7

Means, Standard Deviations, Bivariate Correlations for Variables, and Beta

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Correlation with stress	Sig. (2-tailed)	Beta weight
Total stress	9.03	4.55			
Family	3.24	1.68	.97	<.001**	.800
Friends	2.11	1.01	.87	<.001**	.149
Strangers	2.89	1.11	.81	<.001**	.053

*Bonferroni adjustment $p < .017$. **Bonferroni adjustment $p < .003$.

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the ability of three control measures (perceived racial discrimination from strangers, friends, and family) to predict levels of stress experienced. Preliminary analyses were run to verify no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. The linear combination of perpetrator measures was significantly related to the stress index, adjusted

r squared = .942, $F(3, 34) = 202.92$, $p < .0001$ (see Table 6). Of the three control measures, only one (family) was statistically significant, recording a higher beta value (beta = .80, $p < .001$), supporting the conclusion that the perpetrator family has a stronger effect on the stress experienced.

Table 8

Model Summary for Multiple Regression

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the est.
Model 1	.973	.947	.942	1.09

Note. Predictors: (constant), family, friends, strangers. Dependent variable: total stress.

An additional hierarchical multiple regression was used to measure changes that the three independent variables (family, friends, and strangers) would have on the prediction of the levels of stress after controlling for the influence of social desirability. Social desirability was entered into the equation first to control for any effects it may have on the model (Castillo et al., 2006). Preliminary analyses were run to verify no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. Table 7 presents a summary of the multiple regression when controlling for social desirability. A total of 95% of the variance in total perceived stress by all the predictor variables, adjusted r squared = .943, $F(1, 36) = 36.6$, $p < .0001$, was explained by the model. Social desirability accounted for 5% of the variance in total stress perceived. After controlling for social desirability, the R squared change = .445, $F(3, 33) = 154.82$, $p < .001$, for

family, friends, and strangers, indicating that social desirability does not have an effect on the participants self-reporting.

Table 9

Model Summary for Hierarchical Multiple Regression Controlled for Social Desirability

	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> square	Adjusted <i>R</i> square	Std. error of the est.
Model 1	.710	.504	.490	3.25
Model 2	.974	.949	.943	1.08

Note. Predictors: (constant), family, friends, strangers. Dependent variable: total stress.

Summary

The statistical analyses of this study supported all three hypotheses. The results of the *t* test measuring if the participants experienced a change in perceived racial discrimination prior to their involvement in an interracial relationship and after the involvement was statistically significant in 13 of the 17 areas studied. An additional *t* test indicated the stress perceived from the racial discrimination experienced before and after an interracial relationship were significantly greater after the relationship in the majority of categories. A standard multiple regression predicted a significant increase in stress experienced from perceived discrimination when the family is the perpetrator. The following chapter will provide a summary and conclusions of the study. Social implications, limitations, and future recommendations will be presented.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Research continues to show that the effects of racial discrimination are a problem in the United States for people of color (Keskinoglu et al., 2007; Nemmers, 2004; Snyder et al., 2010). Because the problem of racial discrimination has such negative effects on people of color (Brondolo et al., 2003; Neblett et al., 2008), it is reasonable to study whether discrimination may have similar effects on the White population when intimately involved with people of color. Stress related to racial discrimination for interracial couples involving White women and Black men can be a problem; there is a potential increase in stress due to perceived racial discrimination that the White woman may never have experienced before. This study was conducted to determine whether White women in intimate interracial relationships with Black men experience stress due to perceived racial discrimination. It examined the problem of the potential stress experienced by White women when faced with perceived discrimination because of social perceptions about their interracial relationship.

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

The participants of this study were asked a series of demographic questions, such as questions pertaining to age, marital status, income, and educational status. Participants were also asked demographic questions concerning their childhood experiences in contrast with their adult experiences, such as what region of the United States they grew up in and where they had spent the majority of their adulthood, what type of neighborhood they grew in versus what type of neighborhood they had spent the majority

of their adulthood in, and what the distribution of races in their grade school was. To establish their experiences with interracial relationships, participants were asked how many interracial relationships they had been in, how many years they had been involved in an interracial relationship, and how satisfied they were in their relationship. The demographics were collected to use for correlations if the other analyses had resulted in ambiguous outcomes. The demographics can also be used for future studies.

A social desirability scale (M-C Scale) indicated that there was no effect on the White women who participated in this study in how they answered the questions on the survey. Hypothesis 1 was that there would be a difference in how White women perceived racial discrimination before and after their involvement with Black men. Participants were asked to respond to questions about their experiences of being treated unfairly before they were in an interracial relationship and were then asked the same questions about how they were treated after their interracial relationship.

Participants identified an increase in their perception of being treated unfairly after their involvement in an interracial relationship in 13 of the 17 categories. The four categories where there were no significant differences were being accused of wrong doing, becoming angry due to racist comments, being called a racist name, and being in an argument for a racist action. The lack of statistical difference could be due to similarities in these areas before and after the relationships instead of a lack of experiences. These categories were dismissed from further analysis.

Of the remaining categories, there were indications of strong differences in how participants perceived that they were treated by others. When asked about their treatment

after their involvement in an interracial relationship, participants were asked if a perpetrator of discrimination knew that they were in an interracial relationship. After analysis of this question, two categories were found to not have a significant difference, which indicated that the perpetrator did not know about the relationship. These two categories were dismissed from further analysis.

Hypothesis 2 concerned the stress participants experienced due to perceived discrimination. After each question about how they were treated before and after the relationship was a Likert scale indicating how stressful the situation was. Of the remaining categories that were not excluded from Hypothesis 1, all were found to have a significant increase in stress felt after participants' perception of being treated unfairly due to their interracial relationship. According to this analysis, it can be assumed that White women in intimate interracial relationships with Black men experience a significant increase in stress from perceived racial discrimination after being in the relationship compared to before they were involved in an interracial relationship.

Hypothesis 3 indicated a significant increase in stress experienced due to perceived discrimination when a family member was the perpetrator. The feeling of stress is dependent on how the individual appraises and then copes with the event. Coping strategies often used for reducing feelings of stress include using the individual's support system (Slavin et al., 1991). When the support system is the perpetrator, the previously used coping strategies can be faulty and useless. If the target of discrimination perceives (appraises) the discriminatory act as harmful or threatening and lacks the coping

resources to reduce the heightened stress response, the target is subjected to long-term effects such as physical and mental health problems.

Theoretical Considerations

Status exchange theory indicates that the change in status White women in interracial relationships with Black men experience may cause increased stress due to the awareness of racial attitudes and racial discrimination (Twine & Steinbugler, 2006). The stress process model addresses how a person appraises a perceived stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). If the person has previously experienced a similar, current stressor and developed adequate coping mechanisms, then the stressor is quickly dismissed. However, if the perceived stressor is a new experience, coping skills most likely have not been learned. If the coping skills are not quickly and adequately developed, the long-term effects can be negative (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000). Long-term chronic stressors or strains deplete a person's ability to use effective coping strategies. The results from this study indicate that if these two theories are synthesized, there is indeed an increase in experienced stress from perceived discrimination for White women in interracial relationships with Black men that could be answered by a change in the social exchange status (Mills, 2006).

Implications for Social Change

Stress related to racial discrimination for interracial couples involving White women and Black men is a problem; women in these relationships may experience an increase in stress due to perceived racial discrimination that they had not experienced prior to involvement with a Black man. In this case, the White woman may not have

quickly adapted any effective coping strategies for the stress experienced. This is especially likely because a common coping strategy for stress reduction is the use of a support system such as friends and family. As reported in this research, when a family member is the perpetrator of the perceived racial discrimination, the feelings of stress are more significant. The problem of racial discrimination can have negative effects not only for Black people, but also for their White partners (Killian, 2002, 2003).

Dissemination of the results of this study could help increase awareness of the problem of increased stress for the White women in interracial relationships and for interracial couples. With an increase in awareness of this problem, White women can become more cognizant of how to appraise and quickly apply effective coping strategies when faced with perceived racial discrimination, thereby reducing potential physiological and psychological implications. Additionally, an increase in awareness among helping professionals, such as counselors, could produce more effective coping strategies and educational techniques that can be implemented in the therapeutic process. Awareness of this problem could also lead to greater understanding of the various dynamics the couples could be exposed to and the need for to adapting effective coping strategies.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was that the research used a nonprobability sample. A nonprobability sample limits the ability to measure any bias or sampling error; one can only conclude that the results represent the sample used instead of predicting for the whole population (Matthews, n.d.; Wretman, 2010). However, using a nonprobability survey reduced the complexity and follow-up required by a probability sample.

This study recognized the fact that it specified a particular population: White women in intimate interracial relationships with Black men. It is understood that other interracial couples may also experience stress from discrimination because of their involvement with another race. Some general inferences can be made from the results of this study to other populations. Another limitation to this study was the sample size. Despite utilizing multiple solicitation methods for qualified participants, the sample size did not meet the desired number of respondents. The power analysis used to conduct the appropriate sample size for the study suggested a sample size of 77 to 119 participants. The known solicitation methods were exhausted and only yielded a sample of 39 participants. Despite these limitations, the results indicate a significant change in stress levels for the women who participated in this study.

Future Recommendations

Being one of the first of its kind, the data and information gathered for this study could be used to answer many other questions about this sample of interracial relationships. More analyses could be run to examine how each of the demographic variables would influence the hypotheses. For example, further examination of correlations between age, location, or length of the relationship compared to stress experienced could provide answers about how the demographic variables affect the levels of stress.

Changing methodology could provide different perceptions to the problem. The same surveys used for this study could be used in a mixed methods study or as interview

questions for a qualitative study. Using different approaches and running different analyses could help give a fuller understanding to issues interracial couples are facing.

In addition to running other analyses and using different methods on this data set studying other interracial couples, such as White men and Black women, White women and Hispanic men, or others, could help to examine if there is an increase in stress for other social status exchange couples. Therefore, a future recommendation would be to consider other interracial populations to determine any significance in the perception of discrimination and experienced stress.

Another recommendation for future studies would be to include a way to solicit participants by approaching them face-to-face with information on the study. This approach would help with identifying participants for a mixed-methods study, to help explain the need for awareness of the study, and to increase the chance of a larger sample size. Increasing the awareness of this topic would assist in address the issues for interracial couples.

Conclusions

The data collected for this study was analyzed and supported the assumptions and hypotheses presented in this research. With racial discrimination being a problem for people of color throughout American history, the effects of perceived racial discrimination for White women in intimate interracial relationships with Black men has not previously been a thoroughly studied topic. However, as the results from this research indicate, the participants reported an increase in stress from the perceived racial discrimination they experience from involvement in an interracial relationship. An

increase in and prolonged stress have been shown to increase chances of physiological and psychological health problems, such as heart disease, depression, and anxiety (Klonoff & Landrine, 2000; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Pearlin et al., 1981). With an increase in awareness of this problem, White women can become more conscious of how to appraise and quickly apply effective coping strategies when faced with perceived racial discrimination, therefore reducing the potential physiological and psychological implications and possibly leading to a happier and healthier life for the interracial couple.

The results of this study can also be disseminated to mental health and medical professionals to help increase awareness of the struggles this population face. With an increased awareness, mental health professionals can competently assist these members with exploring and utilizing more effective coping skills. Medical professionals can assist with exploring alternatives to pharmacological remedies of the physical problems of the population when cognizant of the issues that could be induced by the new stressors. With the increase in interracial couples in the US population, finding ways to assist in decreasing and eliminating unnecessary stress and discrimination would seem to be greatly beneficial to American society.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

March 15, 2013

You are invited to take part in a research study of the experiences and effects of racial attitudes toward interracial couples. You were chosen for the study because of your response and involvements in interracial relationships consisting of White women and Black men. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

I am currently a PhD candidate in General Psychology at Walden University under the supervision of Dr. Brian Ragsdale, PhD. I am examining the effects of racial discrimination to interracial couples consisting of White women and Black men. The following explains what would be expected from you if you choose to participate.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to measure and compare the experiences and effects of stress because of racial discrimination experienced by White women involved in interracial relationships with Black men.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey that begins with some general background questions, followed by questions about your experiences before and after your involvement with a Black man. The expected time of participation is approximately 30 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that I will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. If the stress feels overwhelming, please find a professional counselor to speak with. You can find a counselor by calling your local community mental health center. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There will be a potential minimal risk of psychological stress involved by answering sensitive topics. Potential benefits would include explanations of how racial discrimination affects White women’s experiences with stress because of their interracial relationship.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation provided.

Confidentiality:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or any other information that could identify you in any reports of the study.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email: sharon.conger@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 05-10-13-0179568 and it expires on May 9, 2014.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By completing the attached surveys, I am agreeing to the terms described above and confirm that I identify myself as a White American woman involved in an interracial relationship with a Black man, and I am at least 18 years old. You may print or keep a copy of this consent to keep for your records.

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Please provide the following general information about yourself.

1. What age range are you in?

- 18-25
- 26-33
- 34-41
- 42-49
- 50-57
- 58- 65
- 66 and above

2. What state do you currently reside? _____

3. What state do you identify as spending the majority of your childhood?

4. What type of neighborhood do you currently reside?

- Rural (not clearly defined as a city or town)
- Small (population under 20,000 but defined as a city or town)
- Large Town (population between 20, 000 and 100,000)
- City (population between 100,000 and 250,000)
- Large City (population over 250,000)

5. What type of neighborhood would you identify as spending most of your childhood (ages 2-16)?

- Rural (not clearly defined as a city or town)
- Small (population under 20,000 but defined as a city or town)
- Large Town (population between 20, 000 and 100,000)
- City (population between 100,000 and 250,000)
- Large City (population over 250,000)

6. What is your current household income?

- <\$15,000
- \$15,000 - \$25,000
- \$25,000 - \$35,000
- \$35,000 - \$50,000
- \$50,000 - \$65,000
- \$65,000 - \$80,000
- >\$80,000

7. What is your highest level of education?

- Did not graduate high school

- Some college
- Vo-tech college
- BA/BS degree
- MA/MS degree
- PhD or equivalent or higher

8. How would you describe your grade school?

- All White students
- Mostly White students
- Equally mixed with different races
- Mostly minority students
- All minority students

9. What is your marital status?

- Single/Never married
- Committed Relationship
- Married
- Widowed
- Separated or Divorced

10. How satisfied are you in your current relationship?

- Very Satisfied
- Mostly Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Little Satisfied
- Not Satisfied

11. As an adult, how many intimate interracial relationships with a Black man have you been involved in? _____

12. What is the average number of years involved in interracial relationships with Black men?

- Less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

Appendix C: General Ethnic Discrimination (GED) Scale

I am interested in your experiences with racial discrimination **prior to your interracial relationship**. As you answer the questions below, please think about your experiences from when you were a child to the point of being involved in an interracial relationship. For each question, please mark the number with an X that best captures the things that have happened to you. Please answer all parts of each question.

1. How often have you been treated unfairly by **teachers and professors** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

2. How often have you been treated unfairly by your **employers, bosses and supervisors** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

3. How often have you been treated unfairly by **your co-workers, fellow students and colleagues** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

4. How often have you been treated unfairly by **people in service jobs (by store clerks, bartenders, bank tellers and others)** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
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How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

5. How often have you been treated unfairly by **strangers** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

6. How often have you been treated unfairly by **people in helping jobs (by doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, case workers, dentists, school counselors, therapists, social workers, and others)** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

7. How often have you been treated unfairly by **neighbors** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

8. How often have you been treated unfairly by **institutions (schools, universities, law firms, the police, the courts, the Department of Social Service, the Unemployment Office and others)** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		

How stressful was this for you? 1 2 3 4 5 6

9. How often have you been treated unfairly by **people that you thought were your friends** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

10. How often have you been **accused or suspected of doing something wrong (such as stealing, cheating, not doing your share of the work, or breaking the law)** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

11. How often have people **misunderstood your intentions and motives** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

12. How often did you **want to tell someone off for being racist toward you but didn't say anything?**

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

13. How often have you been **really angry about something racist that was done to you?**

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

14. How often have you been **forced to take drastic steps (such as filing a grievance, filing a lawsuit, quitting your job, moving away, and other actions)** to deal with some racist thing that was done to you?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

15. How often have you **been called a racist name?**

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

16. How often have you **gotten into an argument or a fight about something racist that was done to you or done to another member of your race/ethnic group?**

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

17. How often have you been **made fun of, picked on, pushed, shoved, hit, or threatened with harm** because of your race/ethnic group?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often before?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	

How stressful was this for you? 1 2 3 4 5 6

18. How *different* would your life be now if you *HAD NOT BEEN* treated in a racist and unfair way?

How often before?

1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix D: General Ethnic Discrimination Scale—Revised

I am interested in your experiences with racial discrimination due to your interracial relationship(s). As you answer the questions below, please think about **the history of your entire interracial relationships**, from the time of your first relationship to the present. For each question, please mark the number with an X that best captures the things that have happened to you. Please answer all parts of each question.

1. How often have you been treated unfairly by **teachers or professors** because of your interracial relationship?

Were your **teachers or professors** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

2. How often have you been treated unfairly by your **employers, bosses and supervisors** because of your interracial relationship?

Were your **employers, bosses and supervisors** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

3. How often have you been treated unfairly by **your co-workers, fellow students and colleagues** because of your interracial relationship?

Were your **co-workers, fellow students and colleagues** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

4. How often have you been treated unfairly by **people in service jobs (by store clerks, bartenders, bank tellers and others)** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **people in service jobs (by store clerks, bartenders, bank tellers and others)** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

5. How often have you been treated unfairly by **strangers** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **strangers** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

6. How often have you been treated unfairly by **people in helping jobs (by doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, case workers, dentists, school counselors, therapists, social workers, and others)** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **people in helping jobs (by doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, case workers, dentists, school counselors, therapists, social workers, and others)** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

7. How often have you been treated unfairly by **neighbors** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **your neighbors** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Not at all stressful					Extremely stressful
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5		6

8. How often have you been treated unfairly by **institutions (schools, universities, law firms, the police, the courts, the Department of Social Service, the Unemployment Office and others)** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **institutions (schools, universities, law firms, the police, the courts, the Department of Social Service, the Unemployment Office and others)** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Not at all stressful					Extremely stressful
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5		6

9. How often have you been treated unfairly by **people that you thought were your friends** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **people that you thought were your friends** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Not at all stressful					Extremely stressful
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5		6

10. How often have you been treated unfairly by **family members** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **family members** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
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	Not at all stressful					Extremely stressful
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5		6

11. How often have you been **accused or suspected of doing something wrong (such as stealing, cheating, not doing your share of the work, or breaking the law)** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **people who accused you of wrong doing** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

12. How often have people **misunderstood your intentions and motives** because of your interracial relationship?

Were **people who misunderstood your intentions and motives** aware of your interracial relationship? Yes _____ No _____

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

13. How often did you **want to tell someone off for being racist toward you and your partner but didn't say anything?**

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

14. How often have you been **really angry about something racist that was done to you and your partner?**

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful			Extremely stressful		
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

15. How often have you been **forced to take drastic steps (such as filing a grievance, filing a lawsuit, quitting your job, moving away, and other actions)** to deal with some racist thing that was done to you and your partner?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

16. How often have you **been called a racist name** because of your interracial relationship?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

17. How often have you **gotten into an argument or a fight about something racist that was done to you or your partner** because of your interracial relationship?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

18. How often have you been **made fun of, picked on, pushed, shoved, hit, or threatened with harm** because of interracial relationship?

	Never	Once in a while	Sometimes	A lot	Most times	Almost All
How often in after?	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Not at all stressful				Extremely stressful	
How stressful was this for you? 1	2	3	4	5	6	

19. How **different** would your life be now if you **HAD NOT BEEN** treated in a racist and unfair way because of your interracial relationship?

Not at all

Extremely Different

1

2

3

4

5

6

Appendix E: Social Desirability Scale

(D. P. Crowne & D. Marlowe, 1964)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally. It is best to go with your first judgment and not spend too long thinking about any one question.

1. Have there been occasions when you took advantage of someone?
 True
 False
2. Have you sometimes taken unfair advantage of another person?
 True
 False
3. Are you always willing to admit when you make a mistake?
 True
 False
4. Are you quick to admit making a mistake?
 True
 False
5. Do you sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget?
 True
 False
6. Do you sometimes feel resentful when you don't get your own way?
 True
 False
7. Are you always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable?
 True
 False
8. Are you always a good listener, no matter whom you are talking to?
 True
 False

Appendix F: Recruitment Flyer

If you identify yourself as a White American female in an intimate interracial relationship with a Black male, your help is needed.

Your opinion counts.

I am conducting research on experiences with racial discrimination and feelings of stress related to discrimination for interracial couples.

Please locate and complete the surveys and questionnaires at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KNJKCV7>.

The time to complete the surveys should not be longer than 30 minutes.

If you have any questions, you may e-mail me at sharon.conger@waldenu.edu.

Appendix G: Permission to Use and Modify Scale

Original E-mail

From : "Landrine, Hope" [LANDRINEH@ecu.edu]
Date : 04/17/2013 09:22 AM
To : Sharon Conger [sharon.conger@waldenu.edu]
CC : "brian.ragsdale@waldenu.edu" [brian.ragsdale@waldenu.edu]
Subject : RE: Permission to use and modify the GED Scale

Feel free to modify the scale for your project. Hi Brian!

Hope Landrine, Ph.D.
 Director, *Center for Health Disparities*
 Professor of Public Health, Brody School of Medicine
 Professor of Psychology, East Carolina University
 1800 W. 5th Street, Medical Pavilion Suite 6
 Greenville, NC 27858

Phone: [\(252\) 744-5535](tel:(252)744-5535) [begin of the skype highlighting](tel:(252)744-5535) [FREE end of the skype highlighting](tel:(252)744-5535)
 Fax: [\(252\) 744-2634](tel:(252)744-2634)
 Email: landrineh@ecu.edu

From: Sharon Conger [sharon.conger@waldenu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2013 9:49 AM
To: Landrine, Hope; eklonoff@mail.sdsu.edu
Cc: brian.ragsdale@waldenu.edu
Subject: Permission to use and modify the GED Scale

Dr. Landrine and Dr. Klonoff,

I am a Psychology student at Walden University, working on my dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Brian Ragsdale, Chair. I am wishing to study and explore stress experienced from discrimination by White women in interracial relationships with Black men. I would like the use the General Ethnic Discrimination Scale. In your article, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Ethnic Discrimination in Health Research" (2006), you give permission to use this scale. However, I would like to make a few modifications to the scale for it to be more applicable to my study. I also would like to modify the scale even more in order to get a before and after the interracial relationship affect. I have attached a copy of both the scales with the modifications I propose. Please look these over and, if you will, accept my revisions and give permission for the modifications and use of the scales. I have also included the section from my dissertation proposal where I explain the proposed modifications.

If you would like to discuss this further with me or Dr. Ragsdale, you may reach him at the information below.

Brian L. Ragsdale, Ph.D.
School of Psychology, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Walden University
brian.ragsdale@waldenu.edu

Remote: [603-322-3027 begin of the skype highlighting](#) [603-322-3027 FREE end of the skype highlighting](#)

Thank you for your consideration,
Sharon Conger-Rogers, MS, LCPC
Student of General Psychology
Walden University
sharon.conger@waldenu.edu

[785-236-1527 begin of the skype highlighting](#) [785-236-1527 FREE end of the skype highlighting](#)

Curriculum Vitae

Sharon Sirmons Conger, MS, LCPC, LMHC
sharon.conger@waldenu.edu

Education:

PhD, General Psychology (in progress)
Research and Evaluation Emphasis
2015 (Expected Graduation)

Walden University, Minneapolis Minnesota
Dissertation Topic: White Women's Experiences with Stress from
Perceived Discrimination when Involved in an Interracial Relationship
GPA: 4.0

MS, Counseling Psychology
December 2005
Troy University, Troy Alabama (Tyndall AFB Campus)
GPA: 4.0

BA, Christian Counseling
May 2003
The Baptist College of Florida, Graceville Florida
GPA: 3.73

Clinical Experience:

September 17, 2014—Current Program Director, District 2
Florida Therapy Services
Panama City, Florida

- Manages the daily operations of the clinical program offices
- Supervises clinical staff
- Oversees and works directly with administrative office staff
- Coordinates service delivery to ensure that client needs, program goals and contract objectives are effectively met.

July 1, 2010—Current Owner/Clinical Director
New Foundations Mental Health Center
Junction City, Kansas

- Founded private practice outpatient therapy business in 2010; performing all areas of development and maintenance
- Made presentations to community groups and professional organizations regarding services available at New Foundations Mental Health Center
- Currently serves as clinical director, which includes providing over 250 hours of supervision for two clinical license-seeking supervisees, as well as supervising all clinical staff and managing administrative staff, serving over 200 current active clients of which 80% are TriCare/United Behavioral Healthcare beneficiaries
- Has completed in excess of 150 intake evaluations and/or psycho-diagnostic assessments
- Has provided more than 3,500 hours of psychotherapy for children, adolescents, adults, and families, which included military dependents and active-duty military personnel, using evidence-based practices
- Facilitated psycho-therapy groups for 4-8 members covering topics such as Health Boundaries and Inner Child Recovery
- Administers, scores, and interprets psychological assessments to include:
 - Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2)
 - Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory- 3 (SASSI-3)
 - Conners 3rd Edition (Conners 3)
 - NICHQ Vanderbilt Assessment Scale
- Extensive experience with treating Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Mood Disorders, and behavior disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Formulated client treatment plans, with adjustments to treatment plans as needed
- Administers and interprets psychological assessment measures for children, adolescents and adults
- Frequently interfaces with psychiatrists and general practitioners providing medication management services to clients
- Consults with military commanders/senior leaders, as needed
- Engages in crisis management when appropriate
- Preferred provider for most insurance companies, including TriCare/United Behavioral Healthcare, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Preferred Health, maintaining and adhering to required standards
- Maintained record of care in compliance to all credentialed authorities

September 9, 2008—June 30, 2010

Clinical Therapist/Counselor
Pawnee Mental Health Services
Junction City, Kansas

- Outpatient psychotherapist having provided more than 3,500 hours of mental health counseling to children, adolescents, adults, families and couples in a community mental health clinic setting

- Provided intake evaluations, psycho-diagnostic assessments, and psychotherapy for children, adolescents, adults, and families using evidence-based practices
- Provided services to individuals with public and private sources of funding, including TriCare/United Behavioral Healthcare, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Preferred Health
- Maintained record of care in compliance to all credentialed authorities
- Presented cases at multidisciplinary staff meetings
- Interfaced with school systems, the legal system and the Department of Children and Families/Child Protective Services
- Developed and documented treatment plans with clients and completed periodic reports
- Consistently meet or exceeded agency's required productivity standards

April 1, 2006—June 30, 2008

Mental Health Counselor
Florida Therapy Services
Panama City, Florida

- Contracted outpatient counselor having provided more than 4,000 hours of mental health therapy to children, adolescents, adults, and families in home
- Provided intake evaluations and assessments, and psychotherapy for clients
- Formulated client treatment plans, with adjustments to treatment plan as needed
- Maintained record of care in compliance to all Medicaid standards

December, 2006—April, 2008

Assessor and Test Administrator
Marianna Mental Health Center
Marianna, Florida

- Administered more than 100 hours of tests for psychological evaluations
- Scored and interpreted psychological assessments
- Assessments administered, scored, and interpreted include:
 - Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children- IV (WISC-IV)
 - Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale- III (WAIS-III)
 - Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence- III (WPPSI-II)
 - Wechsler Memory Scale- IV (WMS-IV)
 - Woodcock-Johnson III Test of Achievement (WH III ACH)

December 15, 2005—March 31, 2006

Mental Health Counselor
Children's Home Society
Panama City, Florida

- Contracted outpatient counselor having provided more than 3,000 hours of mental health therapy to children, adolescents, adults, and families in home
- Provided intake evaluations and assessments, and psychotherapy for clients

- Formulated client treatment plans, with adjustments to treatment plan as needed
- Maintained record of care in compliance to all Medicaid standards

April 10, 2004—December 15, 2005 Mental Health Targeted Case Manager
 Children's Home Society
 Panama City, Florida

- Contracted targeted case manager having provided more than 3,000 hours of targeted case management to families of children and adolescents
- Provided comprehensive case management services to clients that included intake assessment, benefit assessment, goal setting, long-term and short-term treatment plan development, monitoring progress, advocated and made referrals
- Connected families to needed community resources
- Maintained all required documentation as required by Medicaid

Teaching Experience:

March –May, 2010 Adjunct Teacher for Human Lifespan
 Cloud County Community College- Geary Campus
 Junction City, Kansas

- Instructor of Human Lifespan for a variety of degree-seeking students
- Developed and implemented teaching plan according to school's course objectives
- Maintained records of students attendance and grades
- Prepared and utilized instruments for instruction and interaction
- Encouraged and motivated student participation

Other Experiences:

December, 2009—June, 2010 Crisis On-Call Therapist
 Pawnee Mental Health Service

- Responded to after-hours crises as needed as part of the community mental health response team
- Completed screening assessments in a hospital setting for at-risk suicidal and homicidal clients
- Assisted in preparations and completed necessary documents for in-patient services
- Consulted and interacted with Emergency Room personnel and doctors, as well as psychiatric hospital personnel

- Using the DSM-5 for Revolutionizing Diagnosis and Treatment (M. Teater, MA, LMFT), 2013
- MMPI-2-RF: Basic Overview (Y. S. Ben-Porath, Ph.D.), 2013
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy- DBT (R. K. Nongrad, LMFT), 2013
- Clear and Ethical Boundaries Abbreviated Parts 1-3 (T. Appleton, LCSW), 2012
- It Wasn't Your Fault-Diagnosis and Treatment of Sexual Abuse in Children and Adults (N. Nehls, Ph.D.), 2012
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