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The Effects of Transracial Adoption on Adjustment and Identity Development

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

The Effects of Transracial Adoption on Adjustment and Identity Development

by

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MEd, Virginia State University, 2011

BA, Temple University, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

A plethora of studies have focused on transracial adoption. While these studies have looked at identity development and/or adjustment, they lacked the investigation into some possible causes to include feelings of belongingness as well as socioeconomic status. The current study explored the lack of cultural socialization and belongingness of people adopted into an environment culturally dissimilar from their birth culture. The nonexperimental, correlational design study examined the relationship between adjustment and identity development, and the impact of transracial adoption when considering socioeconomic status and skin tone. The New Immigrant Survey Skin Color Scale, Multiethnic Identity Measure, and Measure of Psychosocial Development test were administered to a purposeful sample of 119 adult transracial adoptees who were adopted prior to age 13. The analysis utilized both a linear regression and hierarchical linear regression. The results indicated there was a significant positive relationship between socioeconomic status and ethnic identity; however, socioeconomic status had no significant impact on psychosocial adjustment. The results also indicated that skin tone difference had no significant impact on the relationship between psychosocial adjustment and ethnic identity. This research can impact social change by guiding social services organizations, adoption agencies, and mental health professionals in their handling and process of transracial adoptions through providing resources both pre and post adoption to both the adoptee as well as the adoptive family.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Beverly Dandridge, who has supported me in everything I have done. She has pushed me when I wanted to give up, and motivated me to reach for things I never thought would be in my future. She listened to me complain and remained encouraging even when I took my frustration out on any and every one. This is also dedicated to my Aunt Bootsie who has been a constant supporter for as long as I can remember. She stepped in when my father passed, and whenever I make her proud, I feel like I am making him proud. She remained encouraging and motivating throughout my entire educational career. She provided guidance and a listening ear whenever I needed it. Love you both!

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	1
Problem Statement.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	6
Research Questions and Hypothesis.....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	7
Nature of the Study.....	9
Operational Definitions.....	9
Assumptions.....	11
Scope and Delimitations.....	11
Limitations.....	11
Significance of the Study.....	12
Summary.....	13
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	14
Introduction.....	14
Theoretical Framework.....	15
Symbolic Interactionism.....	15
Stages of Psychosocial Development.....	16
Theories of Identity Development.....	18
Transracial Adoption.....	24
Racial Identity Development in Transracial Adoptees.....	27

Adjustment.....	32
Socialization and Race.....	32
Conclusion	37
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	39
Introduction.....	39
Research Method	40
Design of the Study.....	40
Population and Sample	41
Instrumentation	42
Demographic Survey	42
Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD)	43
Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)	43
Data Collection	43
Validity	44
Data Analysis	45
Protection of Human Subjects	47
Summary.....	47
Chapter 4: Results.....	49
Purpose of Study.....	49
Profile of Sample	49
Test of Hypotheses.....	56
Study Variables: Descriptive Statistics.....	57

Testing of Assumptions	58
Hypothesis Testing: Research Question 2	64
Summary	66
Chapter 5	67
Introduction.....	67
Purpose.....	67
Interpretation of Findings	68
Socio-emotional Adjustment	69
Identity Development.....	70
Limitations and Future Recommendations	72
Implications.....	74
Implication for Social Change	75
Conclusion	75
References.....	77
Appendix A: Instructions on How to Complete the Online Survey	85
Appendix B: Demographics Questionnaire	87
Appendix C: Multiethnic Identity Measure	91
Appendix D: License Agreement for use of MPD.....	92

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant’s Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Age Group, Annual Income, and Met Birth Parents.....	52
Table 2. Participant’s Adoptive Father and Mother Race/Ethnicity.....	53
Table 3. Participant Skin-tone, Adoptive Father Skin-tone, Adoptive Mother Skin-tone, and Average of Adoptive Father and Mother Skin-tones.....	55
Table 4. Number of Persons and Bedrooms in Adoptive Family Childhood Home.....	56
Table 5. Study Variables: Adoptive Family Socioeconomic Status (SES), Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD), Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and Skin-tone Difference.....	58
Table 6. Spearman’s Rho Correlation Coefficients: Participant Gender, Age, Annual Income, Met Birth Parents, Number of Persons per Adoptive Family Household, Number of Bedrooms per Adoptive Family Household, and MPD and MEIM Scales.....	60
Table 7. Linear Regression (LR): Adoptive Family Socioeconomic Status (SES) Predicting Psychosocial Adjustment, as Measured by the MPD.....	62
Table 8. Hierarchical Linear Regression (HMLR): Adoptive Family Socioeconomic Status Predicting Ethnic Identity, as Measured by the MEIM, Controlling for Participant Annual Income.....	63
Table 9. Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression (HMLR): MPD Psychosocial Adjustment, Skin-tone Difference, and MPD Psychosocial Adjustment by Skin-tone Difference Predicting MEIM Ethnic Identity, Controlling for Participant	

Annual Income.....65

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Adoption remains an option for many individuals within the United States who choose to expand their family. There has been an ongoing debate in regards to whether it is appropriate for individuals to adopt transracially as there are concerns regarding the development of the adoptee (Jacobson, Nielsen, & Hardeman , 2012). When considering the development of the adoptee, it is imperative to understand that many aspects affect children including interpretation of information, the evolution of their understanding, and the impact this knowledge will ultimately have on their adjustment and racial identity development (Brodzinsky, 2011). Along with this knowledge, adoptees also begin to define themselves during adolescence as described by Erikson's (1950) stages of development that illustrate identity development as an ongoing process and not predominantly conscious (Hoare, 2013). During this time of attempting to define themselves, adoptees must integrate two families (birth and adopted) into their identity (Brodzinsky, 2011). This process may be exacerbated in a transracially adopted family.

Transracial adoptions in the United States represent at least 40% of all adoptions annually (Baden, Treweeke, & Ahluwalia, 2012; Jacobson et al., 2012). Baden, Treweeke, and Ahluwalia (2012) found that the majority of transracial adoptions are of Asians and African Americans by Caucasian parents. This number is due to a number of things such as the overrepresentation of African Americans in the foster care system (Smith et al., 2011). According to Smith et al. (2011), this overrepresentation was demonstrated in 2006 with 15% of African Americans representing the national child

population and 32% of all children in the foster care system. The child welfare system in the United States has sought to address this overrepresentation through the increasing transracial adoption numbers (Malott & Schmidt, 2012). Malott and Schmidt (2012) highlighted the growth of this trend stating that the National Adoption Clearinghouse noted a growth of 10.8%, or 20,000, in 1995 to 15%, or 50,000, in 2001 of transracial adoptions. Intercountry adoption has contributed significantly to this trend as the Child Welfare Information Gateway (formerly the National Adoption Clearinghouse) in 2007 found a total of 19,569 children were adopted from another country and in 2008 that number was 17,416. In 2015 there were 5,647 total intercountry adoptions to the United States (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2011).

Problem Statement

Transracial adoptees often struggle with issues that include racial isolation, discrimination, and identity confusion, which may increase distress (Gordon, Green, & Ramsey, 2014; Patel, 2007; Samuels, 2009). This also leads to transracial adoptees seeking to gain a better understanding of their birth identity and cultural community (Gordon et al., 2014). On the other hand, there is evidence that transracial adoptees can develop a healthy racial identity if they are raised by culturally sensitive individuals in a multicultural environment (Malott & Schmidt, 2012).

The adoption of transracially adopted children is often by upper to middle class Caucasian families who reside in predominantly Caucasian communities (Smith, Juarez, & Jacobson, 2011). The 2014 census identifies the median household income in the United States as \$53,657 (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2015). Comparably, Stellar et al.

(2012) identify socioeconomic status in terms of class as lower class (\$50,000 and below), middle class (\$50,001 to \$75,000), and upper class (\$75,001 and above) due to socioeconomic status being defined in terms of income as well as education level. This is a paradoxical position as explained by Smith, Juarez, and Jacobson (2011) because while these families often come from a societal view of White privilege, they are raising children who will encounter racism either directly or indirectly leaving their parents the individuals responsible with advocating for and helping them to develop a secure and healthy racial identity. The aspect of cultural socialization is very much lifelong and arms the individual to adapt in a cultural milieu, and this cultural socialization in a transracial adoption experience often involves minimal direct practices and declines over time (Smith et al., 2011). This decline leads to a lack of socialization that can create negative feelings of self and racial differences (Smith et al., 2011).

Yet there remains an inadequacy of information in regards to the social context of identity development and how transracial adoptees negotiate the communities and groups to which they perceive association (Miville et al., 2005). Additionally, there remains the need to examine the ability of transracial adoptees to successfully maneuver situations that present an overwhelming population of the birth culture (Padilla, Vargas, and Chavez, 2010). In other words, a transracial adoptee's ability to adapt to environments that consist mainly of their birth culture remains unexplored. This aspect speaks to the adoptee's adjustment and sense of belonging. Samuels (2009) explained the sense of belonging as well as the increased need for socialization due to the outward appearance of the adoptee. In that respect, skin tone plays a large role in socialization. Adoptees often

felt more included in the family when their outward appearance made them blend in with the adoptive family member (Samuels, 2009). On the other hand, this would also, at times, lead to conflicting racial identities (Samuels, 2009).

According to Kim, Suyemoto, and Turner (2010), previous studies failed to differentiate between racial identity and ethnic identity. They explained that studies further minimized the importance of exploring the sense of belonging and sense of exclusion and their “psychological influence on the coconstruction of racial and ethnic identities” (Kim, Suyemoto, & Turner, 2010, p.180). Further research that looks at the sense of belonging and exclusion can inform racial identity development. Scherman and Harré (2008) noted certain areas that would benefit from further investigation to include transracial adoptees’ need for a sense of belonging within their adoptive family leading to identification with the adoptive family’s ethnic identity in an effort to not be seen as different. The authors suggested looking at belongingness as a mediator to identity development (Scherman & Harre, 2008). Collisson (2013) described belongingness as one’s motivation to form social bonds. This speaks to an adoptee’s socioemotional adjustment and the need to investigate its relationship with identity development in transracial adoptees.

Lee, Lee, Hu and Kim (2014) explored how ethnic identity, adjustment, and discrimination of transracial adoptees were associated with internalizing and externalizing problems. The results noted that ethnic identity “exacerbated the association between discrimination and acting out behaviors” (Lee et al., 2014, p.160). The research urges professionals to assist the adoptive parents in understanding the *developmental*

trajectory of transracial adoptees (Malott & Schmidt, 2012). The hope remains that through understanding the developmental trajectory, the needs of the adoptee can be addressed to minimize mental health concerns related to transracial adoption.

There is a problem in the lack of cultural socialization and belongingness of individuals adopted into environments culturally dissimilar from their birth culture (Patel, 2007). Despite the efforts of the adoptive parents to appropriately assist their transracial adoptee in learning more about their birth culture, the feeling of not fully belonging to either the birth culture or adoptive culture is occurring. This problem has negatively impacted transracial adoptees because it often leads to poor identity development and self-rejection as suggested by Patel (2007). It is imperative to explore the effects of adoption on self-esteem and identity as these two aspects affect adjustment (Brodzinsky, 2011). The impact of understanding adjustment and identity development amongst adoptees could ultimately assist in treatment as adopted individuals are overrepresented in the mental health field (Brodzinsky, 2011). A possible cause of this problem is the adoptee's inability to blend in with the adoptive family (Samuels, 2009) as well as the adoptive families' socioeconomic status or class (Butler-Sweet, 2011). A study that investigates the relationship between adjustment, in terms of socialization, and racial identity development, in terms of belongingness, in transracial adoptees by quantitative method could benefit the situation. Previous research has investigated the impact of transracial adoption on development in terms of self-esteem, behavioral aspects, and connection with the adoptive family, but has failed to investigate the social aspect of transracial adoption to include the sense of belonging in regards to their own ethnic

identity as well as social adjustment. In saying that, this research sought to address this missing aspect of transracial adoption research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact transracial adoption has on socioemotional adjustment and racial identity development. This study sought to determine whether identity development and adjustment are negatively impacted in transracial adoptees as well as the relationship identity development and adjustment have on each other within transracial adoptees. In addition, this study also investigated factors such as socioeconomic status, skin tone and the impact they have on adjustment and identity development. The results of this study provided insight into the unique identity development and socioemotional development of adopted individuals. These insights can assist in informing mental health professionals who ultimately provide treatment and support to transracial adoptees.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The following research questions and hypotheses were based on theory found in a review of the literature:

RQ 1: Are adjustment and identity development negatively impacted in transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one based on social economic status?

H₀1: The rate of adjustment, as measured by the Measure of Psychosocial Development (MPD), and racial identity development, as measured by the Multiethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), are not lower in transracial adoptees that were adopted prior to

age one by families with a perceived low economic status versus those adopted into families with a perceived high economic status.

H_{a1}: The rate of adjustment, as measured by the MPD, and racial identity development, as measured by the MEIM, are lower in transracial adoptees that were adopted prior to age one by families with a perceived low economic status versus those adopted into families with a perceived high economic status.

RQ2: Is skin tone a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development for transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one?

H₀₂: The closeness in complexion of the adoptee's skin tone, as measured by the NIS skin color scale, in comparison to the adoptive parents' skin tone is not a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development for transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one as assessed by the demographic questionnaire provided through the online survey.

H_{a2}: The closeness in complexion of the adoptee's skin tone, as measured by the NIS skin color scale, in comparison to the adoptive parents' skin tone is a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development such that it leads to a more positive adjustment and racial identity for transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one as assessed by the demographic questionnaire provided through the online survey.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was symbolic interactionism as explained by Reynolds et al. (2012). Symbolic interactionism is the influence that one's

environment and the perceived meaning of the environment have on an individual (Reynolds et al., 2012). Many different types of interactionism introduce a continuous and reciprocal interaction between individuals that may lead to a specific behavior (Reynolds et al., 2012). Social identity is explained within interactionism to mean a sense of belonging that an individual has to their social group and this is coupled with the emotional significance said individual feels due to this belonging (Reynolds et al., 2012). Reynolds et al. (2012) explained that the most important part of symbolic interaction is the human interaction and the perceived meaning behind this interaction. The interactions adopted individuals have with their adopted families, as well as the environment in which they resided prior to adoption, all contribute to the individual's adjustment and identity development based on the perceived meanings of these interactions (Reynolds et al., 2012). It is through the theory of symbolic interactionism that transracial adoptees would build their racial identity. This symbolic interactionism would come from the family, the teachers, and the community of the adoptees.

Through symbolic interactionism an individual accentuates the importance of the arranging of racial groupings held within language, perceptions of communication, and the way in which these racial groupings are continually negotiated within the process of social interaction (Patel, 2007). In developing an understanding of their environment, the adoptee begins to develop healthy or unhealthy adjustment and identity aspects of the self (Patel, 2007). The perception of the environment within the home, combined with the perception and preparedness of encounters with the surrounding environment, also begins to shape one's development (Patel, 2007). The way in which transracial adoptees

perceive their individual experiences can assist in shaping their identity development as well as contribute to their socioemotional adjustment.

Nature of the Study

The investigation of transracial adoptees examined the relationship between transracial adoptee adjustment and identity development. This was done in order to understand the unique adjustment and identity formation of adoptees raised in a culturally dissimilar environments from that of their birth culture. A correlational design was the chosen method for this study in order to analyze the relationship between transracial adoption and socioemotional adjustment and identity development. An ANOVA was conducted utilizing both a linear regression as well as a hierarchical linear regression. A quantitative research design was chosen over qualitative as the study was quantifiable and intended to yield “concise, replicable, and general” results (McLafferty, Slate, and Onwuegbuzie, 2010, p.53). This method was chosen over qualitative for this study due to the specific instruments chosen to measure adjustment and identity and the desire to utilize a representative sample of the target population. There was one independent variable for the study, which was being adopted prior to age one and two dependent variables: adjustment and identity development. There were also moderating variables in this study, which are skin tone and socioeconomic status.

Operational Definitions

Adjustment: refers to the presence of social, intellectual, and emotional problems (Keyes et al., 2008).

High Income: refers to an individual whose income is \$72,126 and above (Pew, 2016).

Identity: refers to an affinity between one's individuality and collectiveness, and social contexts, cultural differences, conveniences, and destitutions (Hoare, 2013).

Intraracial Adoption: refers to adopting within one's race (Baden, Treweeke, & Ahluwalia, 2012).

Low income: refers to an individual whose income is \$24,041 and below (Pew, 2016).

Middle income: refers to an individual whose income is between \$24,042 and \$72,125 (Pew, 2016).

Skin tone: refers to complexion of one's skin (Thompson & McDonald, 2016).

The authors explain that skin tone is often an "ascribed status characteristic that advantages or disadvantages one from birth", and can lead to a bias as, when the color of skin moves from light to dark, "negative inferences" often increase (Thompson & McDonald, 2016, p. 92-93).

Socioeconomic status: refers to a measure comparing individuals, households, and groups using income and education (National Center for Health Statistics, 2012).

Transracial Adoption: refers to the adoption of a child of one race by a family or parent of another race than that of the adopted child's (Baden, Treweeke, & Ahluwalia, 2012).

Assumptions

During this research, I assumed that participants would answer the questions honestly. When considering many of the participants involved in the research study, I assumed that these adoptees were given the information of their birth cultures. I also assumed that the adoptions were legal and that the individuals involved were aware of their race or ethnic background.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study included adults ages 18 and older adopted prior to age one. The adoptees included only those adopted transracially. The study focuses specifically on adjustment and identity development amongst transracial adoptees. The quantitative aspect of the study was completed via the Internet, limiting the scope to adoptees with Internet access. This limitation was due to licensing requirements for use of the MPD, which prevents duplication requiring it to be administered either in person or in a secure, online format.

Limitations

Potential limitations to the study were that it did not account for previous placements prior to the adoptive placement or the impact previous placements may have had on adjustment and identity development. These previous placements could have consisted of foster homes, orphanages, living with other birth relatives, as well as living in a country outside of the United States. Another limitation to the study was that the participant's perception of the socioeconomic class they were adopted into could be incorrect.

Significance of the Study

This project was unique because it researched unique identity needs of transracially adopted individuals. As stated by Ung et al. (2012), this is an area that has received little attention in previous research. Brodzinsky (2011) explained the importance of understanding the effects adoption has on socioemotional adjustment and identity. These two aspects often lead to struggles in adjustment, and because adopted individuals are grossly overrepresented in the mental health field, psychologists are often sought to assist in understanding this unique development (Brodzinsky, 2011). The results of this study may provide insight into the unique identity development and socio-emotional development of adopted individuals by identifying if transracial adoption impacts the two variables and whether this impact is negative or positive. The results may also explain if and how skin tone impacted the relationship between transracial adoption and adjustment and identity development. Insights from this study may assist in informing ways in which to better address the needs of adopted individuals, inform on the outcomes of cross-cultural adoption, and assist in possible interventions to improve upon these outcomes in order to decrease possible behavioral and mental health concerns as a result of the adoption.

Through understanding the impact of being adopted transracially the mental health field will hopefully be more prepared in addressing some concerns prior to adoption and throughout the post adoption phase. The study assisted in informing on socialization practices, specific identity development needs of transracial adoptees,

psychoeducational practices, and educational practices in regards to multicultural counseling.

Summary

Chapter 1 was that of an overview of transracial adoption as it relates to counseling psychology. There continues to be research on this topic as the debate between the appropriateness of transracial adoption remains important with the growing rates of adoption. Even so, there remains a gap in the literature in regards to the way in which transracial adoptees utilize the perception of social context in identity development as well as their ability to maneuver situations regarding their birth culture. The subsequent chapter will examine the current literature on transracial adoption, adjustment, and identity development.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This review of the literature begins with an explanation of the theories used to frame and conceptualize the study. I discuss symbolic interactionism and how it relates to the development of racial identity as well as adjustment. I also explained the theories of racial identity development as well as Erikson's stages of development and Piaget's theory of cognitive development. The second section begins with a history of transracial adoption in the United States. Some debates had in regards to the topic as well as some of the legislation written in an effort to either assist or prevent transracial adoptions are also discussed. The third section will provide a definition of adjustment to include providing an overview of what adjustment is as well as some of the concerns present in regards to adopted individuals. The fourth section will seek to explain the development of racial identity as it relates to adoption. The concluding section will discuss some recommendations to assist in affecting changes in the adoption process.

The review of the literature includes articles obtained through databases to include PsychInfo, ERIC, PsychArticles, SocInfo, Sage Journals, as well as the reference lists of peer reviewed articles. Other articles were obtained through Internet searches using Google Scholar. Search terms used to locate articles include *transracial adoption*, *adjustment*, *mental health*, *socialization*, *racial identity development*, *identity development*, *social interactionism*, and *Erik Erikson*.

Theoretical Framework

Symbolic Interactionism.

The idea of interactionism in a social context is described as being all inclusive (Reynolds et al., 2010). In other words, an individual is not looked at as part of a whole, but is more so seen within the whole. This means that emergent psychological processes such as social norms, values, influences, and goals are a product of one's social system (Reynolds et al., 2010). It is through such social interactions that one's mental functioning begins to develop. According to Aldiabat and LeNavenec (2011), the psychosocial processes can be understood simply by understanding the behaviors and meanings an individual attributes to their experiences in life. The authors compared interactionism to the role in which individuals play around others (Aldiabat & LeNavenec, 2011). An individual often portrays him or herself to others in a way they believe others perceive them (Aldiabat & LeNavenec, 2011). For example, if one believes that others perceive them as friendly, energetic, and outgoing, one may begin to take on the persona of someone fitting that role in order to fit in with those in their social groups (Aldiabat & LeNavenec, 2011).

When considering symbolic interactionism from a transracial adoption perspective, Patel (2007) explained that the idea of identity development can be seen as fluid due to the socially constructed nature of identity. In other words, though one may be born into one race and adopted into another, their interactions in the home and in the community help to develop that identity and may also allow them to accept multiple identities so as not to exclude anything. Understanding that one's interactions include

racial categorizations found in language, meanings, and symbols can increase one's understanding of how racial identity can be formed through symbolic interactions (Patel, 2007). This is likely due to the idea of in-group association. Reynolds et al. (2010) explained that by associating with a particular group, individuals begin to internalize their norms and values and take these on as their own. When one is encapsulated so succinctly into a particular group, they intrinsically behave in a way that mimics the identity of said group (Reynolds et al., 2010).

Stages of Psychosocial Development.

Development of identity remains a continuous process into adulthood based on the research presented by Erikson (1950). Identity is something that is not specific, but made of several different experiences and concepts that allow one to portray themselves to others while continuing to demonstrate different roles daily (Pittman, Keiley, Kerpelman, & Vaughn, 2011). The aspect of identity development as explained by Erikson validates the relation to symbolic interactionism. Hoare (2013) explained that the development is unconscious and relies heavily on social influences presented by those with which one mainly associates. Erikson identified the eight stages of development to be (a) trust versus mistrust, (b) autonomy versus shame and doubt, (c) initiative versus guilt, (d) industry versus inferiority, (e) identity versus role confusion, (f) intimacy and solidarity versus isolation, (g) generativity versus self-absorption, and (h) integrity versus despair. While all eight stages are important, for the purposes of identity development the first four stages are especially critical and help to formulate one's identity (Erikson, 1950). The identity begins to stand out in the fifth stage of identity versus role confusion

as well as the sixth stage of intimacy and solidarity versus isolation (Erikson, 1950).

These stages are those that would typically emerge in adolescence and early adulthood (Pittman et al., 2011).

The initial stage of trust versus mistrust begins in infancy, but continues based on the relationships with others. Pittman et al. (2011) explained that there are primary and secondary relationships to include parents and expanding to neighbors, teachers, and other influential beings in a person's life. By allowing one the opportunity to socialize and explore the world in which they live, they are given the opportunity to have different experiences and through the experiences and feedback provided, are given self-relevant information (Pittman et al., 2011). Some of the information comes in the form of self-descriptions prescribed by others and contribute to one's identity.

According to Pittman et al. (2011), it was necessary for the identity versus role confusion stage to occur in adolescence as it allows the individual to reach all levels of maturity. This stage is where the childhood phase connects with the adolescent phase through joining the person with the ideological images of the parent in order to begin forming their cultural identities (Pittman et al., 2011). The stages presented by Erikson are what individuals utilize to begin defining who they are in life.

While Erikson (1950) suggested that identity formation is continuous, there are some who believe the formation of identity can be recognized based on certain outcomes. These outcomes include achieved, foreclosed, in moratorium, and diffused (Phinney, 1989). In the achieved stage, one has made the decision of one's identity (Phinney, 1989). In other words, they have completed their exploration and have committed to who they

perceive themselves to be. During the foreclosed stage, an individual has made a decision about their identity and who they perceive themselves to be, but has done so without any exploration of themselves and/or the culture (Phinney, 1989). In other words, a transracial adoptee developing in a home chooses the racial identity of the parents in said home without exploring their birth culture or vice versa. In moratorium is a process of finding one's self (Phinney, 1989). This individual continues to explore identities but is struggling to make a decision (Phinney, 1989). This is the individual who may be conflicted between choosing one specific identity. Finally, an individual in the diffused stage has neither explored nor made a commitment to an identity (Phinney, 1989). This individual could be in denial or could likely be in the beginning stages of development as defined by Erikson where identity has not yet become consciously relevant to the individual (Phinney, 1989). Hoare (2013) also spoke of the unconscious time period that include external influences such as parents who have the ability to help build upon the child's identity as well as fragment their identity development through constant comparisons and likings to negative individuals. Berzonsky (1992), however, stated that there are different cognitive processes of exploring identity to include the information style, the normative style, and diffuse or avoidant style. While there may be different ways in which to explore identity, the different theorists agree that this exploration is done through interactions and experiences.

Theories of Identity Development.

In speaking of racial identity development, there has been an array of theories and theoretical perspectives presented in order to shape how one comes to develop their

identity. One individual who contributed to the views of racial identity was Cross (1971). His theory of nigrescence is shaped by the view of African Americans overcoming racism by beginning to accept themselves through a series of stages (as cited by Ung, O'Connor, & Pillidge, 2012). The idea was to transition from self-hatred, perpetuated by a racist society, to self-love and acceptance (Ung, O'Connor, & Pillidge, 2012). These five stages included pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (Cross, 1971).

The pre-encounter stage is when one remains in a naïve state to believe race is irrelevant until the encounter stage forces one to be receptive to interpretations of their racial identity through a traumatic or prejudiced experience (French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006). Cross (1971) explained that it is this experience that forces one to begin their exploration into what it means to be African American through immersion, and then emerges into their internalization of their Black culture to become proud to be African American. The final stage of internalization-commitment is one in which the individual takes pride in their culture and attempts to provide positive views of African Americans while attempting to eliminate racism in their community.

Ung, O'Connor, and Pillidge (2012) provided information in regards to identity development and the specifics as it relates to transracially adopted individuals. While the authors did not conduct a study, they did use ecology theory as a conceptual framework to consider how one's identity formation is reliant on reciprocal relationships and interactions (Ung et al., 2012). The authors proposed a different view of identity development to include a five construct model that includes the individual, the family,

racial identity, community, and society (Ung et al., 2012). Ung, O'Connor, and Pillidge (2012) suggested that the importance of diversity and how one's identity is formed based on their interactions with all five constructs at any given point in their life. This framework of identity formation based on interaction discouraged the need for congruence between thoughts or feelings and what one sees or experiences, and encourages the freedom associated with incongruence and allowing the transracially adopted individual to work through their identity with acceptance and without the pressures of having to choose between their birth and adopted cultures or identities (Ung et al., 2012). The authors explain that the framework is meant to allow fluidity based on one's interactions with the different constructs at different points in their life (Ung et al., 2012). In other words, these authors look at the identity development of transracial individuals as a fluid concept (Ung et al., 2012). The concept of fluidity aligns with Erikson's belief that identity formation is continuous.

Another theorist, Phinney (1989), determined there to be a three-stage process in developing identity. This process was not one that was specific to African Americans, but focused more on chronological age and the development (Phinney, 1989). The first stage being diffusion/foreclosure where children become influenced by the proclivities of society and begin recognizing prejudice and discrimination (Phinney, 1989). The second stage of moratorium is one that allows an individual the ability and courage to begin exploring their racial or ethnic identity due to recognition formed in the first stage (Phinney, 1989). The final stage of an achieved ethnic identity is one in which the

individual begins to internalize aspects of their culture and traditions, and incorporate these cultures and traditions into their own identity (Phinney, 1989).

Another theorist worth mentioning is Helms (1984) and the theory of the white racial identity model that involves the connections between the perceptions and the evaluations of both Caucasian and African American individuals. This model is comprised of six stages that include contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy (Helms, 1984). During the first stage, individuals do not identify with race and remain naïve in their views that only minorities identify with a particular (Helms, 1984). The second stage is one in which the individual's worldview is crushed and the realization that racism exists brings about feelings of guilt and anxiety surrounding the treatment of African Americans (Helms, 1984). In this stage, the individual begins to have internal conflicts of whether to conform to societal views (Helms, 1984). The third stage is one of hostility and anger toward African Americans where individuals begin to accept stereotypes and minimize any similarities (Helms, 1984). In this stage, the individuals will distance themselves and minimize any situations that may require cross-racial interactions (Helms, 1984). Helms (1984) stated that some individuals remain locked in this stage until forced into a situation of cross-racial interactions. Stage four of the model allows the individual to intellectualize racism and explore their beliefs of whether African Americans are truly inferior (Helms, 1984). During this stage, the individual begins to engage in more cross-racial interactions, but this remains limited to individuals who appear similar to include African American professionals (Helms, 1984). The stage of immersion/emersion, is

where the individual becomes more comfortable with what it means to be Caucasian and begins to explore the history of their group and become more involved in activism (Helms, 1984). The final stage of autonomy is where one becomes more secure in their culture, and tends to “develop a diverse cultural identity” that allows them to be more accepting of multiple races and oppose any stances that perpetuate racism (Helms, 1984, p. 163).

The final model of identity development is that of Poston’s (1990) biracial identity development model. Poston’s model was developed due to the lack in the other racial/ethnic identity development models. Poston (1990) maintained that the ability to integrate multiple group identities was missing from previous identity development models. Some other prominent differences in the previous models include the acceptance of the parent culture, which has the possibility to be absent from the biracial model due to the higher rates of victimization from parent cultures (Poston, 1990). It is important to note that Poston was not the first to attempt to explore biracial identity development model. This task was undertaken by Stonequist (1937), who suggested that the identity development of biracial individuals was considered marginal, which denigrates the individual by implying that they are not fully a member of any cultural group. The model consists of five stages to include personal identity, choice of group categorization, enmeshment/denial, appreciation, and integration (Poston, 1990). During personal identity the child’s sense of self is separate and unrelated to that of their ethnic background, and is instead developed and influenced by the family through self-esteem and self-worth (Poston, 1990). The choice of group categorization is when the individual

is faced with the choice of choosing a multicultural view or choosing one parent's culture over the other parent's culture (Poston, 1990). The third stage is one of confusion and conflict over attempts to choose one identity (Poston, 1990). This stage often involves feelings of guilt and a lack of acceptance due to an inability to identify with both parents (Poston, 1990). This is the stage that support is most important. The appreciation stage is where the individual finally begins to incorporate and include multiple identities and learn their cultures (Poston, 1990). Though they may still identify with one culture, they begin to broaden their views of group orientation (Poston, 1990). The final stage of integration is when the individual finally integrates their identity and feels whole through the acceptance of both cultures (Poston, 1990). This stage will also include the individual identifying as multicultural (Poston, 1990).

It is through these models that one begins to understand the complex development of racial identity in transracial adoptees. While research suggests that there are many factors in developing a healthy racial identity, like biracial individuals initially, there are no true models of identity development for transracial adoptees. The process of navigating their personal identity development is often influenced by many factors.

While all of these theories in some way relate to the development of an individual. For purposes of this research, symbolic interactionism was chosen as the theoretical framework due to its fundamental idea that one's development is based on the perceived interactions had with others and within their environment. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, each of the other theories listed in some way refer back to a form of interaction that influenced a person's development. The research leaned heavily

on identity development and Erikson's stages of development through the lens of symbolic interactionism.

Transracial Adoption

Adoption is an option for many individuals and families wanting to expand their families. According to Jacobson, Nielsen, and Hardeman (2012), 39 percent of adoptees have at least one parent that is of a different ethnic background than the adoptees birth ethnicity. According to Barn (2013), transracial adoption began in the 50s and 60s with Japanese and Korean children, and was followed by Vietnamese children and later Native American and African American children. Jacobson, Nielsen, and Hardeman (2012) utilized the National Survey of Adoptive Parents (NSAP) to identify that more than 54% of transracial adoptions are international while 25% are from foster care and 20% are private adoptions. The authors note that the adoption of African American children into White families has occurred since the 1960s, but has remained controversial since the beginning due to the concerns of whether White families are able to provide the needed socialization and developmental education of children from different racial backgrounds (Jacobson, Nielsen, & Hardeman, 2012).

One of the more vocal organizations against transracial adoption has been the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW). In 1972 at the Fourth Annual Conference for NABSW, the organization submitted a statement entitled "Position Statement on Transracial Adoption" (NABSW, 1972). This statement began with a substantial stance on transracial adoption, and went into the reasons why they felt it would be inappropriate to place children in homes outside of their race. The NABSW

(1972) stated “We affirm the inviolable position of Black children in Black families where they belong physically, psychologically, and culturally in order that they receive the total sense of themselves and develop a sound projection of their future”. The organization maintained that the most important aspect of identity development is a process occurring within one’s home over the span of one’s life, and is not something that can occur for a Black child in a White home as the “cultivated psychological perspectives” have come from the educational and political systems of White America with the inability to teach a Black child about their race or cultural background as the teachings are incongruent with the realities of being Black (NABSW, 1972). The NABSW (1972) also explain the aspect of the inability to properly adjust as the child will lack the ability to develop healthy and appropriate coping strategies to stand strong in a racist society. The view of the NABSW was updated in 1994 and again in 2003 with a position paper entitled “Preserving Families of African Ancestry”. These updates continued to support the position the African American children should be placed within African American families in order to preserve the Black family (NABSW, 2003).

While the NABSW had their views on transracial adoption, the federal government maintained that it was better to place children in an adoptive placement of another ethnicity than to leave children in the foster care system. The Multiethnic Placement Act of (1994) maintained that while agencies should diligently search for families within the race of the child, no child should be denied a family on the basis of race, culture, or national origin. The Child Welfare League of America originally agreed with parts of the statement made by NABSW, but later changed their views to support

transracial adoption stating that there are communities and families that have the ability to support children outside of their race (CWLA, 1968).

While the NABSW has focused mainly on the adoption of African American children by White parents, there has been an overwhelming majority of transracial adoptions into the United States through international means (Jacobson, Nielsen, & Hardeman, 2012). Countries who have contributed to the adoption of transracial individuals into the United States include China, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Russia, and South Korea (Jacobson, Nielsen, & Hardeman, 2012). Jacobson et al. (2012) go on to state the 2000 US Census shows that while three quarters of all adoptions were by White Americans, over one third of the adoptees were Asian, almost one third were Hispanic, and only eleven percent were African American. According to the 2000 US Census, one in five adopted individuals live in minority households and 4.5% live in interracial households (Jacobson, Nielsen, & Hardeman, 2012). Between the years 1999 and 2010, over 224,000 children were adopted internationally into the United States adding to transracial adoptee population (Younes & Klein, 2014). Of the children adopted in 2010 alone, the majority were between ages one and two, but more than 21% were younger than age one (Younes & Klein, 2016).

There continues to be a number of transracial adoptions occurring both internationally and domestic within the United States. While there remains a continued disagreement of whether one should be allowed to adopt outside of their race, there is no doubt that it remains a better option than to allow a child to remain in the foster care system. Unfortunately, there remains a concern as to the services needed both pre- and

post adoption to assist in a healthy development of the transracially adopted child. There have been ongoing debates as to whether a child adopted transracially can form a healthy racial identity and what that looks like.

Racial Identity Development in Transracial Adoptees

A study conducted by Butler-Sweet (2011b) compared individuals adopted into monoracial households, biracial households, and transracial households. The findings suggested that individuals, whether monoracial, biracial, or transracial, identified race as secondary in self-descriptions (Butler-Sweet, 2011b). However, transracially adopted individuals were “acutely aware” of the importance others’ placed on their race with regards to how they’re perceived due to family structure (Butler-Sweet, 2011b, p.762). This study, however, is not congruent with the findings of Walton’s (2015) study, which suggested race was not a secondary descriptor as most adoptees struggled to identify themselves within a racial group. This is likely due to the perceptions of society to assign one’s identity based on race making it challenging to subjectively view one’s identity (Walton, 2015). Through the qualitative interviews conducted, Walton (2015) highlighted the lived ambiguity transracial adoptees experience in regards to racial identity development. These adoptees experience a process of being and becoming where they both are and are not their birth identity and are simultaneously not their adoptive racial identity (Walton, 2015). Walton (2015) also noted that many transracial adoptees felt increasingly excluded in their social interactions with others of their birth race when they had to explain that they weren’t familiar with their culture nor did they speak the language though their outward appearance suggested otherwise.

Statistically, African American children are overrepresented in the foster care system, and while many individuals agree that it is better to be adopted into a family of a different race than to remain in the system, there remains a concern that these adoptions would inhibit the racial identity development of the adopted child (Padilla, Vargas, & Chavez, 2010). According to Ung, O'Connor, and Pillidge (2012), there are five dimensions of racial identity that are involved in helping one to develop their identity. These dimensions include genetic racial identity, imposed racial identity, cognitive racial identity, visual racial identity, and feeling racial identity (Ung et al., 2012). These authors attempted to provide a baseline of understanding specifically for transracial adoptees to incorporate those influences and experiences of said adoptee (Ung et al., 2012). This baseline must include the internal experiences of the transracial adoptee as well as the impact the environment will have on one's identity and sense of self as related to race (Ung et al., 2012).

The genetic racial identity is one in which the individual takes on the physical characteristics of their biological parents to include skin color, hair texture, size, and other characteristics (Ung et al., 2012). Due to the idea that much of one's adoption history is unknown or secret, this aspect of identity is considered a building block because it connects the past, present, and future (Ung et al., 2012). The imposed racial identity is one prescribed to the adopted individual by the larger society during their process through the system of "relinquishment, placement, and adoption", and can be an inaccurate perception of one's genetic racial identity further confusing the transracial adoptee (Ung et al., 2012). During cognitive racial identity, the adoptee often

intellectualizes their experiences and feelings to help one infuse the genetic racial identity with the imposed racial identity (Ung et al., 2012). Visual racial identity is an aspect of identity development in which the individual sees their skin to be a specific color, and may not be consistent with the person's actual race (Ung et al., 2012). During this phase, the adoptee often pulls on parental influences as well as societal influences to include the lack of racial mirroring and racial oppression within the community (Ung et al., 2012). Finally, the feeling racial identity is a subjective experience of the values, beliefs, and language one perceives in the traditions related to the internalized sense of self, and is highly influenced by the social community in which the transracial adoptee is surrounded (Ung et al., 2012). Therefore, while one may genetically be African American, their feeling racial identity may be White based on their social community and the traditions they have internalized (Ung, O'Connor, & Pillidge, 2012).

These five concepts of racial identity as they relate to the transracial adoptee present many questions in regards to the effects of transracial adoption on racial identity development. Smith, Juarez, and Jacobson (2011) explained that transracial adoptees must learn to navigate a world in which their race is stigmatized though this learning is coming from parents whose race is not stigmatized. The authors posit that in these families, the parents often explain race and racial differences in a color-blind or race-neutral way that can be in direct opposition to the experiences had by transracial adoptees (Smith et al, 2011).

According to Baden, Treweeke, and Ahluwalia (2012), it is between the ages of four and five that individuals first begin to notice racial differences, and approximately

two thirds of transracial adoptees never identify with their genetic racial identity. The authors go on to explain that many transracial adoptees believe they are or identify with being White, which leaves one to reflect on the other theories of racial identity development (Baden et al., 2012). It is not until later in life that transracial adoptees are believed to have the desire to reclaim their birth cultures. Baden et al. (2012) term this to be a process called reculturation, but it also acknowledges stages of racial identity development held in Cross's (1971) model to include the immersion/emersion stage. Butler-Sweet (2011a) presented the conflict in the literature by reviewing literature that states the negative effects of transracial adoptions on racial identity development to include confusion with their racial identity that led to behavior problems and psychological distress. In contrast, Butler-Sweet (2011a) also identified literature that explained transracial adoptees do not struggle with developing a positive racial identity, though they are slower in developing racial awareness. Baden, Treweeke, and Ahluwalia's (2012) stance of progression for transracial adoptees included the five concepts of racial identity development for transracial adoptees to include aspects of the white racial identity model, then a progression to certain stages of the minority racial identity models, and finally to aspects of the bicultural racial identity models. In other words, it would appear that in some phase of their lives, transracial adoptees move through specific stages or phases of the different identity models while working through the five concepts of transracial adoptee identity development at the same time (Baden et al., 2012). Alvarado, Rho, and Lambert (2014) utilize case studies to demonstrate the identity struggles had within transracial adoptees. These authors identify two major

struggles transracial adoptees have including searching for a sense of self without knowing those genetic characteristics that could confirm or negate their identity development (Alvarado et al., 2014). The other struggle is accepting the history shared with their adoptive family (Alvarado et al., 2014). Alvarado et al. (2014) also explain the conflict of coexistent and opposite identities and the struggle of loyalty to either the birth or adoptive family.

Godon, Green and Ramsey (2014) suggested that due to the aspect of many transracial adoptees being African American and growing up in all Caucasian communities, these adoptees often seek their birth families in order to find someone racially similar who can serve as a role model and someone from whom they can gain information to contribute to their personal racial identity development. These authors also highlighted some of the contributing reasons for seeking the birth family to include sociocultural norms in an effort to feel included within their ethnic communities, normative processes in an effort to learn about one's birth culture and find a way in which to merge both identities into the developmental process, and psychopathology to help with struggles to adjust to the adoption process due to "racial isolation, discrimination, and identity conflicts" (Godon, Green, & Ramsey, 2014, p3).

Padilla et al. (2010) introduced the aspect of multiple placement and cultural environments prior to adoption impacting the identity development of the adopted individual. The results of a study conducted by Padilla et al (2010) demonstrated that most children placed in a transracial adoptive home are younger than age 12. The authors found that 90% of transracial adoptions occur prior to the identity development stage,

which plays a large role on ethnic identity formation (Padilla et al., 2010). The authors suggest that due to the young age at which most transracial adoptions occur, an increase in cultural socialization should be encouraged amongst adoptive parents in order to assist the child in navigating their culture and decrease feelings of marginality that may arise due to increased cultural awareness as they develop (Padilla et al., 2010).

Adjustment

Socialization and Race.

The idea of racial identity development often relies heavily on the socialization practices by the family and the individual. Vonk, Lee, and Crolley-Simic (2010) explained that through socialization, transracial adoptees can form healthy and positive racial identities. Vonk et al., (2010) explained that through socialization practices, the adoptive family can assist in bridging the gap between the transracial adoptees birth culture and adoptive culture. The family must be sure not to isolate one culture or make the child feel that they must choose between the two (Vonk et al., 2010). This will require that the family begin to build their cultural awareness even before the adopted child enters the family. Younes and Klein (2014) explained the concept of bicultural socialization when considering transracial adoptees from another country. This refers to, not only attempting to acculturate to the dominant culture and society, but also attempting to learn about one's birth culture (Younes & Klein, 2014).

The findings of a study conducted by Samuels (2009) identified the lack of racial socialization as having a negative impact on the transracial adoptees. The findings pointed out that the adoptees inability to blend in was difficult, and placed emphasis on

the importance of and need to provide opportunities for racial socialization (Samuels, 2009). The findings noted the promotion of colorblindness by the adoptive parents, which often left the participants ill equipped to handle instances of racism as it was not discussed until after an incident had occurred (Samuels, 2009). The adoptees noted that they were often raised in a mirroring of how their adoptive parents were raised, and encouraged the need to increase socialization of the adoptee with their birth culture (Samuels, 2009). The amount of socialization often relies heavily on socioeconomic status, but often included non-contact with the culture in ways such as reading books, music, meals specific to the culture, and learning the language (Vonk, Lee, and Crolley-Simic, 2010).

Adjustment and socialization varied in a study conducted by Langrehr et al., (2015). This study identified differing experiences for the individual participants. Some struggled in their adjustment following their socialization with their birth race and culture while others' adjustment improved (Langrehr et al., 2015). The authors also noted that their adjustment was also dependent on the impact the socialization with their birth race and birth family had on their adoptive family (Langrehr et al., 2015). Other influences of adjustment included age at adoption and whether the adoptee remembered pre-adoption experiences as well as experiences once the adoptee began school. Langrehr et al. (2015), explained that many transracial adoptees would minimize situations that would draw attention to racial differences, and would instead attempt to overcompensate in an effort to be accepted.

Vonk et al. (2010) provided information in regards to cultural competence, and the need for adoptive parents to assist in helping adopted individuals to gain knowledge of and appropriate socialization with their birth cultures. The authors conducted a study of adoptive households to look at socialization practices and the adoptive parents' feelings of closeness to the adoptee (Vonk et al., 2010). The findings of the study conducted pointed out the adoptive parents' increased desire to socialize their transracially adopted children depended on the child's race (Vonk et al., 2010). The study found that the more the child's appearance differed from that of the adoptive family, the more willing the parents were to increase their socialization practices through books, videos, foods, etc (Vonk et al., 2010). The study also noted that parents were least likely to use the socialization practice of living in a more diverse neighborhood to increase social interactions (Vonk et al., 2010). The study did note, however, that most all transracial adoptive parents attempted some form of socialization (Vonk et al., 2010).

A study conducted by Smith and Juarez (2015) looked at socialization through the lessons taught by the adoptive parents of transracial adoptees. This study outlined ways in which the adoptive parents would socialize their children, specifically focusing on lessons taught regarding race (Smith & Juarez, 2015). The authors found that while the parents would understand the role race played in the lives of their children, their ability to translate these lived experiences of their children was lacking due to their missing frame of reference (Smith & Juarez, 2015). The authors explain that the lessons were reflective of a more current time of "race neutrality and the multicultural celebration of race where racial difference is defined as a harmless and interesting cultural variation found in the

racial ‘other’” (Smith & Juarez, 2015, p.126). Unfortunately, promoting lessons in this manner was to ignore the inequity present in racial differences within society that transracial adoptees would encounter.

While some researchers posit that many individuals who are adopted appear to demonstrate a healthy socioemotional adjustment, there are many individuals who fail to take into account the pre-adoption environment and the effects this may have on said transracial adoptees Bruce et al. (2009). Many researchers such as Bruce et al. (2009) and Camras et al. (2006) have begun to explain the importance of considering the pre-adoption environment as it begins the socialization process that is abruptly disrupted once adopted into a transracial environment. These researchers suggested that individuals who were institutionalized prior to adoption are the individuals who display atypical social behavior as well as disparate processing of said socioemotional interactions, which can lead to poor social skills and an increased risk of bullying behaviors by other peers (Bruce et al, 2009). Institutionalization is often involved when the child welfare system is the method of adoption and this is ever increasing in the United States.

Butler-Sweet (2011a) also introduced the many different facets of identity develop such as class, social status, ethnicity, and culture. The author conducted a qualitative research of monoracial, biracial, and transracial individuals based on socioeconomic class to portray ways in which African American adults learn and negotiate racial identity (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). By introducing social class into the research, the author sought to explore the differences in racial identity development based on class (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). The findings of this study demonstrated the different

ways in which parents of adopted children attempted to socialize the adoptees in order to build a healthy racial identity and explore how class played a role (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). Monoracial, middle class families attempted to enroll their children in prestigious black organizations to both educate and socialize their children with the upper class African American families, while biracial, middle class families often attempted to use more of the urban, hip hop culture as a way to socialize and develop identity (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). The transracial families were split in that of the nine transracial respondents, only five of them reported their family attempting to socialize them with their birth culture, and it was often done through outsourcing or finding a black adult mentor to ask questions of (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). Roman (2013) conducted a study which spoke about transracial adoptees not only being moved to another family, but also having their social class and ethnic group shift with the adoption. The author infers that there is often a contradiction between the adoptees identification with the culture they were socialized with and their outward or physical appearance (Roman, 2013).

The adoption of transracially adopted children is often by upper to middle class Caucasian families who reside in predominantly Caucasian communities (Smith, Juarez, & Jacobson, 2011). This is a paradoxical position as explained by Smith, Juarez, and Jacobson (2011) because while these families often come from a societal view of White privilege, they are raising children who will encounter racism either directly or indirectly leaving their parents the individuals responsible with advocating for and helping them to develop a secure and healthy racial identity. The aspect of cultural socialization is very much life long and arms the individual to adapt in a cultural milieu, and this cultural

socialization in a transracial adoption experience often involves minimal direct practices and declines over time (Smith, Juarez, & Jacobson, 2011). This decline leads to a lack of socialization that can breed negative feelings of self and racial differences.

Conclusion

The aspect of racial identity development and adjustment as it relates to transracial adoptees can often be confusing with the many different viewpoints presented in the literature over the years. Society continues to struggle with whether it is appropriate to allow children to be adopted transracially, though the overall consensus is that this remains better than the alternative of remaining in the foster care system. The debate as to whether one develops a healthy racial identity in a transracially adopted environment is one that remains unanswered in the scheme of things. There are many questions to include whether the family can effectively help the child gain a healthy identity to the birth culture as well as what practices of socialization remain most effective. Another question is how the child develops their racial identity as the models present remain unique to specific cultures and environments. In a transracially adopted environment, the individual is exposed to one race though they are biologically a different race, and are forced into a decision of accepting both races, denying both races, or denying one race. This level of acceptance or denial can ultimately affect one's adjustment in regards to socializing within their accepted and/or denied culture.

Researchers have begun to identify the different influences of being adopted transracially and the effects this may have on the individual in question. These researchers have identified external influences such as the pre-adoption environment and

how this can play a large role once placed into the adoptive environment of a different race, class, and culture Baden, Treweeke, and Ahluwalia (2012). The debate remains as to whether transracial adoption is healthy for the adopted individual, but all researchers agree that it is, in fact, healthier than the alternative of remaining in the child welfare system (NABSW, 2003). Internal influences include socialization and how the family of the transracial adoptee chooses to socialize the child, and whether they are able to help the child defend against racial comments and questions that will arise in the future (Leslie et al., 2013). Leslie, Smith, and Hrapczynski (2013) explained that racial minorities growing up in Caucasian families may lead to struggles of successfully coping with discrimination. These authors went on to explain the importance of racial socialization in order to promote racial pride as well as the ability to cope with discrimination (Leslie et al., 2013). This study aimed to determine how the prescribed variables of race, socialization, and class influenced the transracially adopted individual's socio-emotional adjustment and racial identity development.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The first two chapters illustrated the constant debate present on the topic of transracial adoption. While one side of the argument maintains that adopting a child outside of one's race leads to poor identity development and adjustment (NABSW, 1972), the other side of the argument suggests that this may not be the case (Vonk et al., 2010). The goal for this study was to gain insight into this topic. To this end, this study examined two specific aspects of transracial adoption to include racial identity development and socioemotional adjustment. The study sought to determine if being adopted and raised in a transracial home ultimately had a negative impact on adoptees' socioemotional adjustment and racial identity by answering two specific questions: (a) Are adjustment and identity development negatively impacted in transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one based on social economic status? (b) Is skin tone a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development in transracial adoptees? The results assisted in providing more developmental information to the professionals in the field who may work with transracial adoptees. For purposes of this study, the individual must have been adopted prior to age one. The phase of identity versus role confusion was the factor that was studied in this research. Along with identity versus role confusion, the initial phase of trust versus mistrust was also important to the study as it speaks to the impact of social interactions. If an individual were adopted later in life, there is possibility that the results could be invalid as the identity phase of development could be influenced significantly based on pre-adoption environments and

experiences. This chapter discusses the research design, the rationale for the research, the methodology, which includes the population, sampling procedures, data collection, and instruments. The chapter closes with a discussion of any threats to validity and ethical issues.

Research Method

A nonexperimental, correlational design was the chosen method for this study in order to explore the effects of transracial adoption on socioemotional adjustment and identity development. A quantitative research design was chosen over qualitative because the data to be collected are numerical in nature. There was one independent variable for the study, which was being adopted prior to age one, and there were two dependent variables: adjustment and identity development. There were also two moderating variables in this study, which are skin tone and socioeconomic status.

Design of the Study

This study was designed to determine the relationship between transracial adoption and adjustment and identity development. In examining the relationship, any mediating effects of skin tone and socioeconomic status were also explored. One of the instruments used in this study was MPD. The MPD was used to measure the participant's socioemotional adjustment based on Erikson's stages of development. Another instrument was the MEIM, used to examine identity development. The last instrument to be used was a demographic survey, which was used to collect any mediating variable data to include socioeconomic status and skin tone. Included in the demographic survey

was the NIS skin color scale. These instruments were administered in an online platform through QuestionPro.

The steps followed after planning the study, defining the population, and identifying the sample included identifying the instruments, administering the survey, and analyzing the data. QuestionPro was used to collect the data online as well as convert responses for analysis. All questions were mandatory to answer. The informed consent was determined by participants choosing to agree to participate after reading the informed consent. Participants were also given the opportunity to withdraw from the survey at any time without penalty. The responses remained anonymous as no identifiable information was collected aside from current age, age at adoption, and race. While QuestionPro received information in order to provide participants the stipend for completion of the survey, they alone hold this information, and I only received the data connected to an assigned participant number.

Population and Sample

A purposeful sampling approach of transracial adoptees was used. Palinkas et al. (2013) explained that purposeful sampling involves selecting individuals especially knowledgeable and/or experienced in a specific topic. This type of sampling is necessary for the online study as it focuses on a specific phenomenon. The participants in this research were comprised of male and females at least 18 years of age who were adopted into a transracial environment prior to age one. The population for this research was recruited through the use of a paid survey panel network of prescreened and qualified candidates provided through QuestionPro, an online survey and panel platform. The

researcher paid to use the service and in return, each study participant received between \$11 and \$13 for participating in this study. According to the power analysis tool, GPower, for a medium effect size, (power = .80 and alpha = .05), the minimum sample size is 119. The traditional response rate for an online survey is 15% to 30% (Dillman, 2008). Therefore, an oversampling approach was used to make certain the minimum sample size was met given the unique background of the population.

Instrumentation

Demographic Survey

A demographic survey was utilized to gain information regarding socioeconomic status as well as race of adoptee and adoptive parents. This survey was also used to gain information regarding complexion. The survey was 17 questions and was a combination of multiple choice as well as fill in the blank. Demographic information collected were race, socioeconomic status, current age, age at adoption, race of biological parents, and race of adopting parents. Included within the demographic survey was the NIS Skin Color Scale developed by Massey and Martin (2003) to measure the skin color of the individuals interviewed. The scale was an 11-point scale ranging from 0-10 with zero representing albinism, or the absence of color, and 10 being the darkest possible skin (Massey & Martin, 2003). The representations were presented in the format of identical hands ranging in skin complexion. The creators of this scale gave permission for use, and simply requested notification of use be emailed to them.

Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD)

The MPD is a 112-item, self-report measure of the eight developmental stages outlined by Erikson (Hawley, 1988). This scale was used to measure the socioemotional adjustment of participants based on their reported levels of distress. The items of the scale are rated on 5-point scale ranging from “very much like me” to “not at all like me”. In regards to reliability, Hawley (1988) maintained that all scales demonstrate Cronbach’s coefficients ranging from .65 to .84 and test-retest reliability approaching or exceeding .80.

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM)

The MEIM is a 12-item, self-report measure of an individual’s racial, religious, and national sense of ethnic identity (Roberts et al., 1999). This measurement uses a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5 with “1” being strongly disagree, “2” being disagree, “3” being neutral, “4” being agree, and “5” being strongly agree. Higher scores are indicative of greater aspects of the ethnic identity being in question (Roberts et al., 1999). Internal consistency for this measure states that Cronbach’s alpha ranges from .74 to .96. Permission for use of this instrument in the context of research and educational purposes is given without seeking written permission.

Data Collection

Data collection was accomplished through a five-step process. The first step was to obtain permission from Walden University’s Internal Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study. The next step was to upload the two surveys to be used, MPD and MEIM, to the QuestionPro website along with the demographic questionnaire. Next, I had emails

sent out to identified transracial adoptees through the use of QuestionPro's professional recruiting. This email invited them to voluntarily participate in the study, explained the reason for the study as well as expectations, and provided any incentive information associated with participation. The invitation also included a link to the secure website that hosted the survey. The fourth step was to collect the survey data. The participants were required to indicate their consent prior to beginning the survey. The individuals were unable to proceed to the survey without acknowledging they had read and consented to participate. If an individual declined to consent to participation, they were redirected to a page thanking them for their consideration. Those who consented were informed of their ability to withdraw that consent and leave the survey at any time without consequence. The survey remained open until enough completed surveys were collected. Following the closing of access to the website, I downloaded the data, transferred it into a spreadsheet, and uploaded it to a statistical analysis program (SPSS) for statistical processing. In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, no identifiable information was collected and access to the data remains restricted. The information collected will also be destroyed in accordance with Walden University's guidelines.

Validity

To ensure internal validity, wording throughout this study remained consistent. Research used in an effort to support the need for the study was solely of resources related to transracial adoption. Due to the nature of responses being self-reported, it was possible that bias could be present in response style as well as perception. Participants were being asked to respond in a way that reflects their perceptions of themselves. In an

effort to maintain construct validity, the use of an established questionnaire as well as an established assessment instrument was administered with the consent of the author and publishing company. These tools are both supported by validity and reliability.

In regards to threats to external validity, this was minimized through the use of purposeful sampling. The sampling was intended to represent transracial adoptees as a whole, but was not generalizable to adoptees after age one. Threats to statistical validity were minimized by ensuring that there is a power level of at least 0.80 and a 95% confidence level.

Data Analysis

The primary questions answered were (a) how racial identity development and socio-emotional adjustment are impacted in transracial adoptees, and (b) whether social economic status and skin tone influence the pattern of responses in regards to racial identity development and socio-emotional adjustment. This was answered using correlational statistical tests.

The first hypothesis was tested through analyzing the impact of socioeconomic status. This variable was of the ratio scale while the second hypothesis examining adjustment and identity development were ordinal scales. A linear regression was used to analyze this data. The final hypothesis was tested through examining skin tone, and this variable was also an ordinal scale. I used a hierarchical linear regression to analyze this data. The results were interpreted using SPSS software, which I used to clean the data for this study following its collection via the QuestionPro platform. Data to be cleaned included incomplete data, such as data from individuals who have opted-out of

participating after beginning the survey and without completing the survey through to the end. The results of the completed data used a confidence interval of .95.

The research questions and study hypothesis for this research were:

RQ 1: Are adjustment and identity development negatively impacted in transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one based on social economic status?

H₀1: The rate of adjustment, as measured by the MPD, and racial identity development, as measured by the MEIM, are not lower in transracial adoptees that were adopted prior to age one by families with a perceived low economic status versus those adopted into families with a perceived high economic status.

H_a1: The rate of adjustment, as measured by the MPD, and racial identity development, as measured by the MEIM, are lower in transracial adoptees that were adopted prior to age one by families with a perceived low economic status versus those adopted into families with a perceived high economic status.

RQ 2: Is skin tone a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development for transracial adoptees?

H₀2: The closeness in complexion of the adoptee's skin tone in comparison to the adoptive parents' skin tone is not a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development for transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one as assessed by the demographic questionnaire provided through the online survey.

H_a2: The closeness in complexion of the adoptee's skin tone in comparison to the adoptive parents' skin tone is a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development such that it leads to a more positive adjustment and racial

identity for transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one as assessed by the demographic questionnaire provided through the online survey.

Protection of Human Subjects

The informed consent form clearly explained that no harm would occur as a result of participation in the study. In the informed consent, participants were informed of the benefits to participating in the survey. QuestionPro used their server to send out invitations for participation.

The participants were required to complete the informed consent form prior to continuing in the study. Participants were informed that participation was completely voluntary, and agreeing to participate could be withdrawn without any consequence. This informed consent explained the purpose of the study, the estimated length of time to complete, and contact information for any questions. The informed consent was presented on the first page of the QuestionPro website. In order to begin the survey, each participant was required to indicate their agreement.

The study remained anonymous and surveys were identifiable through randomly selected numbers. Along with the security provided through QuestionPro's site, the data was stored in a separate password-protected device. All data will be kept for a total of 5 years in keeping with Walden's standards.

Summary

This chapter presented both the research design and the methodology that was chosen to address the two research questions regarding the relationship between transracial adoption and adjustment and identity development. The research design and

methodology also examined any mediating effects of skin tone and socioeconomic status on adjustment and identity development. A nonexperimental research design was used, and data was collected from a demographic survey and two self-report measures: MPD and MEIM. Participants completed these instruments by using the secure website of QuestionPro. I analyzed the data through SPSS online using correlational statistics.

Chapter 4: Results

Purpose of Study

This quantitative study was conducted to investigate the impact that transracial adoption has on the socio-emotional adjustment and racial identity development. Two hypotheses were tested and regression analysis was used to analyze the results. This chapter provides an overview of respondents' demographic information, the analytical techniques I used, the statistical findings, and a summary of the results.

Profile of Sample

Study data were collected online, using the QuestionPro online survey platform. Five hundred and one individuals accessed and viewed the survey. Of the 501 individuals who viewed the survey, 448 (89.42%) started the survey, and 252 (50.30%) answered all survey questions. A review of the data from the 252 individuals revealed that 160 (63.49%) met the study criteria of transracial adoption – that is, being of a different ethnicity than the ethnicity(ies) of the adoptive mother and father. However, 41 of these 160 individuals did not meet the study criteria of being adopted before age one. The removal of these 41 individuals resulted in a final study sample of 119 participants who met all study criteria.

Study participants represented all four regions of the United States (i.e., North, South, Midwest, and West). An equal number of participants ($n = 36$, 30.3%, respectively) lived in Northern and Southern states, while 26 (21.8%) made their homes in Midwest states and 21 (17.6%) resided in states in the American West. Geographical

information indicated that participants resided in 35 different states and Washington, DC. The largest number of participants resided in California ($n = 15$, 12.6%), Florida ($n = 12$, 10.1%), New York ($n = 10$, 8.4%), Illinois ($n = 7$, 5.9%), Pennsylvania ($n = 7$, 5.9%), and Texas ($n = 7$, 5.9%).

Table 1 provides information on the gender, ethnicity, age group, annual income, and if met birth parents' data of the 119 study participants. Of the 119 participants 74 (62.2%) were female and 45 (37.8%) were male. A relatively equal number/percentage of participants identified as African American/Black ($n = 30$, 25.2%) or Caucasian/White ($n = 28$, 23.5%). Fewer participants reported their ethnicity as Asian ($n = 21$, 17.6%), Hispanic ($n = 13$, 10.9%), or Native American ($n = 5$, 4.2%). Twenty-two (18.5%) participants identified as being of two or more races.

The ages of participants ranged from 18 to 70 years of age. An almost equal number/percentage of study participants reported being between the ages of 21 and 30 ($n = 44$, 37.0%) or 31 and 40 ($n = 46$, 38.7%). In addition, an almost equal number/percentage of participants were between the ages of 18 and 20 ($n = 14$, 11.8%) or 41 and 70 ($n = 15$, 12.5%).

As seen in Table 1, the largest number/percentage of participants ($n = 25$, 21.0%) reported an annual income of between \$45,000 and \$59,999 and the smallest number/percentage of participants ($n = 9$, 7.6%) reported an annual income of between \$0 and \$14,999.

Of the 119 participants, a minority ($n = 37$, 31.1%) reported that they had met their birth parents. The average age at which these 37 individuals met their birth parents

was 16.27 years ($SD = 8.56$ years), with participants' ages ranging from infancy to 36 years.

Table 1

*Participant's Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Age Group, Annual Income, and Met Birth Parents
(N = 119)*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Female	74	62.2
Male	45	37.8
Race/Ethnicity		
African American/Black	30	25.2
Caucasian/White	28	23.5
Asian	21	17.6
Hispanic	13	10.9
Native American	5	4.2
Of Two or More Ethnicities	22	18.5
Age Group		
18-20 years	14	11.8
21-30 years	44	37.0
31-40 years	46	38.7
41-50 years	11	9.2
51-60 years	3	2.5
61-70 years	1	0.8
Annual Income		
\$0-\$14,999	9	7.6
\$15,000-\$29,999	12	10.1
\$30,000-\$44,999	15	12.6
\$45,000-\$59,999	25	21.0
\$60,000-\$74,999	21	17.6
\$75,000-\$99,999	18	15.1
\$100,000 or more	19	16.0
Met Birth Parents		
No	82	68.9
Yes	37	31.1

Participants provided information on the ethnicity of their adoptive father and mother. Results are presented in Table 2. The predominant ethnicity for both adoptive fathers ($n = 68, 57.1\%$) and mothers ($n = 67, 56.3\%$) was Caucasian/White. Fourteen (11.8%) adoptive fathers and 13 (10.9%) adoptive mothers were African American/Black, while 13 (10.9%) adoptive fathers and 14 (11.8%) adoptive mothers were Asian. There were almost twice as many adoptive fathers who were Native American ($n = 9, 7.6\%$) than there were adoptive mothers who were Native American ($n = 5, 4.2\%$). In contrast, fewer adoptive fathers were Hispanic ($n = 8, 6.7\%$) than were adoptive mothers who were Hispanic ($n = 13, 10.9\%$). An equal number/percentage, $n = 7, 5.9\%$, respectively, of adoptive fathers and mothers were of two or more ethnicities.

Table 2

Participant's Adoptive Father and Mother Race/Ethnicity (N = 119)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Race/Ethnicity of Adoptive Father		
Caucasian/White	68	57.1
African American/Black	14	11.8
Asian	13	10.9
Native American	9	7.6
Hispanic	8	6.7
Of Two or More Ethnicities	7	5.9
Race/Ethnicity of Adoptive Mother		
Caucasian/White	67	56.3
African American/Black	13	10.9
Asian	14	11.8
Native American	5	4.2
Hispanic	13	10.9
Of Two or More Ethnicities	7	5.9

Participants answered questions regarding the tone of their skin as well as the tone of the skin of their adoptive father and mother. The skin-tones of the adoptive father and mother were also averaged. Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of the results. The average skin-tone of participants was 3.94 ($SD = 1.92$), with skin-tone values ranging from 1.00 (lightest) to 9.00 (darkest). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences between participants of different ethnicities, $F(5,113) = 18.61, p < .001$. Caucasian/White participants had significantly lighter and African American/Black participants had significantly darker skin-tones in comparison to participants who were Native American, Asian, Hispanic, or of two or more ethnicities. However, participants who were Native American, Asian, Hispanic, or of two or more ethnicities did not significantly differ from each other regarding skin-tone.

The average skin-tone of participants' adoptive mothers was 2.70 ($SD = 2.06$), with adoptive mothers' skin-tones ranging from 1.00 (lightest) to 9.00 (darkest). The average skin-tone of adoptive fathers was slightly higher, $M = 2.97 (SD = 2.25)$. The range of adoptive father's skin-tones was 1.00 (lightest) to 9.00 (darkest). The averaged skin-tone of adoptive parents was 2.84 ($SD = 2.00$), and averaged skin-tones ranged from 1.00 (lightest) to 9.00 (darkest).

Table 3

Participant Skin-tone, Adoptive Father Skin-tone, Adoptive Mother Skin-tone, and Average of Adoptive Father and Mother Skin-tones (N = 119)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Participant Skin-tone	3.94	1.92	1.00	9.00
Caucasian/White	2.44 ^a	1.54	1.00	8.00
African American/Black	5.83 ^b	1.39	3.00	9.00
Native American	3.60	1.34	2.00	5.00
Asian	3.57	1.25	2.00	6.00
Hispanic	3.92	1.26	2.00	6.00
Of Two or More Ethnicities	4.50	1.79	2.00	8.00
Adoptive Father Skin-tone	2.97	2.25	1.00	9.00
Adoptive Mother Skin-tone	2.70	2.06	1.00	9.00
Average Adoptive Parents' Skin-tones	2.84	2.00	1.00	9.00

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum value; Max = maximum value. ^aCaucasian/White participants had significantly lighter skin-tones in comparison to participants of all other race/ethnicity. ^bAfrican American/Black participants had significantly darker skin-tones in comparison to participants of all other ethnicities.

Two variables, number of persons and bedrooms in participants' childhood homes, were included in the study as potential covariates. Table 4 provides information on the number of persons and bedrooms in the study participants' childhood homes. The average number of persons in the participants' childhood home (not including the participant) was 3.95 ($SD = 1.58$), and the number of persons per household ranged from 2 to 13. The average number of bedrooms in the participants' childhood home was 3.50 ($SD = 1.33$); the number of bedrooms per household ranged from 1 to 9.

Table 4

Number of Persons and Bedrooms in Adoptive Family Childhood Home (N = 119)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Number of persons ^a	3.95	1.58	2.00	13.00
Number of bedrooms	3.50	1.33	1.00	9.00

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *Min* = minimum value; *Max* = maximum value.

^a Value does not include participant.

Test of Hypotheses

The study posed two research questions: (a) Are adjustment and identity development negatively impacted in transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one based on social economic status? (b) Is skin tone a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development for transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one?

This section of the chapter is devoted to a review of the findings as they pertain to specific analyses. The first set of analyses are descriptive statistics of the four study variables. Included in this information are findings as they pertain to two assumptions: the assumption of normality, which was tested by computing the skewness of *Z* values, and reliability of measures, which was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alphas for the MPD and MEIM surveys. The second set of analyses concern the testing of covariates. These tests were conducted to determine if specific variables showed significant associations with the study's two dependent variables, psychosocial adjustment and ethnic identity, are thus needed to be included in analyses for hypothesis testing. The final set of analyses are those conducted for hypothesis testing.

Study Variables: Descriptive Statistics

Table 5 presents descriptive statistics for the four study variables. The mean score for the variable of adoptive family socioeconomic status was $M = 1.95$ ($SD = 0.58$), with scores ranging from 1.00 (lower class) to 3 (upper class). The majority of participants reported that their adoptive family was middle class ($n = 79$, 66.4%), while fewer participants reported being adopted into families that were lower class ($n = 23$, 19.3%) or upper class ($n = 17$, 14.3%). This study utilized the MPD as a measure of psychosocial adjustment. The MPD mean score was 3.10 ($SD = 0.70$), which can be interpreted as “somewhat” like the participant, and MPD scale scores ranged from 1.00 to 5.00.

The MEIM, an assessment of ethnic identity, had a mean of 3.70 ($SD = 0.60$), which could be interpreted as “agree.” The range of MEIM scale scores was 2.00 to 5.00, indicating that no participants reported very low levels of ethnic identity. The skin-tone difference variable was calculated by first averaging the adoptive father’s and mother’s skin-tones, and then subtracting this value from participants’ skin-tones scores. Negative values were removed. The higher the score, the higher the degree of difference between participants and adoptive parents’ skin-tones. The skin-tone difference mean was 2.50 ($SD = 1.80$), and skin-tone difference values ranged from 1.00 to 8.00.

Table 5

Study Variables: Adoptive Family Socioeconomic Status (SES), Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD), Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and Skin-tone Difference (N = 119)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Z_{sk}</i>	<i>A</i>
Adoptive Family SES	1.95	0.58	1.00	3.00	0.01	N/A
Lower Class <i>n</i> = 23 (19.3%)						
Middle Class <i>n</i> = 79 (66.4%)						
Upper Class <i>n</i> = 17 (14.3%)						
MPD	3.10	0.70	1.00	5.00	-1.15	.97
MEIM	3.70	0.60	2.00	5.00	-1.31	.89
Skin-tone Difference	2.50	1.80	0.00	8.00	1.68	N/A

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum value; Max = maximum value. $Z_{sk} = Z$ skewness value (skewness/skewness standard error); α = Cronbach's alpha.

Testing of Assumptions

The first assumption tested was that of variable normality, that is, that the study variables showed normality in the dispersion of scores from the mean. Normality was determined by computing the skewness of Z values. Dividing the skewness value of a variable by the skewness standard error value provides the skewness of Z value (Kim, 2013). A variable displays normality if its skewness of Z value is less than 1.96 (Kim, 2013). As seen in Table 4, all four study variables had the skewness of Z values that were less than the critical value of 1.96. The assumption of normality was met for the study variables.

The second assumption tested was reliable measurement. The inter-item reliability of the MPD and MEIM scales was determined by calculating Cronbach's alphas. Alphas

that are between .70 and .79 indicate good inter-item reliability, alphas between .80 and .89 indicate very good inter-item reliability, and alphas greater than .90 indicate excellent inter-item reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The MPD had a Cronbach's alpha of .97, excellent inter-item reliability, and the Cronbach's alpha for the MEIM was .89, indicative of very good inter-item reliability. The second assumption of reliable measurement was met in this study.

Testing of Covariates

Covariate testing entailed conducting a series of Spearman's rho correlations between the potential covariates of participant gender, met birth parents, participant age, participant annual income, number of persons per adoptive family household, and number of bedrooms per adoptive family household and the dependent variables of psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD, and ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM.

Results from the Spearman's rho correlation coefficient analyses, as seen in Table 6, yielded one significant finding, which concerned the measurement of ethnic identity. Participant annual income was significantly associated with ethnic identity, $r_s(119) = .35$, $p < .001$. As participants' annual income increased, so did their degree of ethnic identity.

Table 6

Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficients: Participant Gender, Age, Annual Income, Met Birth Parents, Number of Persons per Adoptive Family Household, Number of Bedrooms per Adoptive Family Household, and MPD and MEIM Scales (N = 119)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>MPD</i>	<i>MEIM</i>
Participant Gender	.08	-.07
Participant Age	.07	.08
Participant Annual Income	.13	.35***
Met Birth Parents	.10	-.17
Number of Persons per Household	-.01	-.12
Number of Bedrooms per Household	.07	.07

Note. *** $p < .001$

Covariate testing also included two one-way ANOVAs, which were conducted to determine whether MPD and MEIM scores differed across participant ethnicity categories. Results yielded no significant MPD score differences across participant ethnicity groups, $F(5,113) = 0.84, p = .523$, nor were there significant ethnic identity score differences across participant ethnicity groups, $F(5,113) = 0.57, p = .721$.

Based on the results from covariate testing, only one variable, participant annual income, emerged as a covariate. Moreover, participant annual income was significantly associated with ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM; it was not significantly associated with psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD. Statistical analyses conducted for hypothesis testing included the covariate of participant annual income, but only when such analyses focused on ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM.

Hypothesis Testing: Research Question 1

The first research question posed in this study was, “Are adjustment and identity development negatively impacted in transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one based on social economic status?” The null hypothesis was, “The rate of adjustment, as measured by the Measure of Psychosocial Development (MPD), and racial identity development, as measured by the Multiethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), are not lower in transracial adoptees that were adopted prior to age one by families with a perceived low economic status versus those adopted into families with a perceived high economic status.” As this question included two dependent variables, psychosocial adjustment and ethnic identity, two sets of statistical analyses were conducted.

The first analysis was a linear regression, in which adoptive family socioeconomic status (SES) predicted psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD. Results from this analysis are presented in Table 7. Adoptive family socioeconomic status did not significantly predict psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD, $F(1,117) = 3.21, p = .076, R^2 = .027$. That is, there was no significant relationship between the socioeconomic status level of participants’ adoptive families and the participants’ sense of psychosocial adjustment.

Table 7

Linear Regression (LR): Adoptive Family Socioeconomic Status (SES) Predicting Psychosocial Adjustment, as Measured by the MPD (N = 119)

		<i>Model 1</i>		
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>β</i>
Adoptive Family SES		.194	.108	.163
Model <i>F</i>	3.21			
<i>R</i> ²	.027			
Sig (<i>p</i>)	.076			

The second analysis was a hierarchical linear regression (HLR): the covariate of participant annual income was entered on the first model of the linear regression, followed by the predictor of adoptive family socioeconomic status on the second model of the linear regression. Ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM, was the dependent variable. Results from the HLR analysis are presented in Table 7. Model 1 was significant, $F(1,117) = 16.74, p < .001$: as participants' annual income increased, so did their sense of ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM, $\beta(119) = .354, p < .001$. Based on the R^2 of .125, participants' annual income explained 12.5% of the variance in ethnic identity.

Model 2, in which adoptive family socioeconomic status was entered as a predictor of ethnic identity, was also significant, $F(1,116) = 4.57, p = .035$: as participants' adoptive family socioeconomic status (SES) increased, so did participants' sense of ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM, $\beta(119) = .195, p = .035$. Based on the R^2_{change} of .033, adoptive family socioeconomic status as reported by study participants

explained an additional 3.3% of the variance in participants' ethnic identity, over the 12.5% explained by participants' annual income. Participants' annual income remained a significant predictor of ethnic identity in the second model of the hierarchical linear regression.

Table 8

Hierarchical Linear Regression (HMLR): Adoptive Family Socioeconomic Status Predicting Ethnic Identity, as Measured by the MEIM, Controlling for Participant Annual Income (N = 119)

	<i>Model 1</i>			<i>Model 2</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Participant annual income	.126	.031	.354***	.101	.033	.284**
Adoptive family SES				.218	.102	.195*
Model <i>F</i>	16.74			4.57		
R^2 / R^2_{change}	.125			.033		
Sig (<i>p</i>)	<.001			.035		

Note. * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

To summarize, linear regression findings did not show significance for the relationship between adoptive family socioeconomic status and participants' psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD. In contrast, hierarchical linear regression results, controlling for participant annual income, did show a significant relationship between adoptive family socioeconomic status and participants' ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis was partially rejected and the alternative hypothesis was partially retained for the first research question. Therefore,

hypothesis 1 was partially supported and socioeconomic status was found to be related to a more positive ethnic identity.

Hypothesis Testing: Research Question 2

The second research question was, “Is skin tone a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development for transracial adoptees?” The null hypothesis for this research question was, “The closeness in complexion of the adoptee’s skin tone in comparison to the adoptive parents’ skin tone is not a moderator on the relationship between adjustment and racial identity development for transracial adoptees adopted prior to age one as assessed by the demographic questionnaire provided through the online survey.” A hierarchical multiple linear regression (HMLR) for moderation was conducted addressed the second research question. In the first model, the covariate of annual income, and the predictors of MPD and skin-tone difference were entered as predictors of ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM. In the second model, the interaction term of MPD by skin-tone difference, the variable used for moderation, was entered as a predictor of ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM.

Results from the HMLR for moderation are presented in Table 9. The first HMLR model was significant, $F(3,115) = 7.29, p < .001, R^2 = .160$, a medium-to-large effect size. Two variables made this model significant: participant annual income, $\beta(119) = .333, p < .001$, and psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD, $\beta(119) = .188, p = .032$. As participants’ annual income and degree of psychosocial adjustment increased, so did their sense of ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM. The second HMLR model, in which the MPD by skin-tone difference moderator variable was entered, was not

significant, $F(1,114) = 0.27, p = .605, R^2 = .002$. Skin-tone difference did not significantly moderate the relationship between psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD, and ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM. In the second model, participant annual income remained a significant predictor of ethnic identity, as measured by the MEIM, $\beta(119) = .343, p < .001$, as did psychosocial adjustment, as measured by the MPD, $\beta(119) = .185, p = .036$. Due to the lack of significant findings as they pertained to the moderating variable of skin-tone difference, the null hypothesis was retained and the alternative hypothesis was rejected for the second research question. Therefore, hypothesis two was not supported.

Table 9

Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression (HMLR): MPD Psychosocial Adjustment, Skin-tone Difference, and MPD Psychosocial Adjustment by Skin-tone Difference Predicting MEIM Ethnic Identity, Controlling for Participant Annual Income (N = 119)

	<i>Model 1</i>			<i>Model 2</i>		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Annual Income	.119	.031	.333***	.122	.032	.343***
MPD Adjustment	.177	.082	.188*	.174	.082	.185*
Skin-tone Difference	-	.030	-.007	-.003	.030	-.008
MPD by Skin-tone Difference	.002			.032	.062	.046
Model <i>F</i>	7.29		0.27			
R^2/R^2 change	.160		.002			
Sig (<i>p</i>)	<.001		.605			

Note. * $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

Summary

The results of the study demonstrated the impact of socioeconomic status on ethnic identity development. Based on the results of the study, respondents acknowledged an improved ethnic identity the higher their socioeconomic status. Though socioeconomic status had no significant impact on socio-emotional development, the responses also demonstrated that a higher economic status in conjunction with an improved socio-emotional adjustment led to an even greater ethnic identity development. These results suggest that that the financial ability to access resources assists in improving the ethnic identity of a transracial adoptee. The results also noted that while there was an array of skin complexions, the differences did not have any significant impact on neither socio-emotional adjustment nor ethnic identity development. This also suggests that the transracial adoptee's ability to blend in is of less importance than the family's ability to access resources to assist in ethnic identity development.

Chapter 5

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the purpose of the study as well as the gap in the literature that this study attempts to fill. The chapter will then review the findings to include a brief review of demographics, procedure, and results. These results will be examined against current research to assist in providing context, and limitations of the study will be discussed as well as recommendations for future studies. Lastly, implications of the study will be discussed to include the impact on social change.

Purpose

This study was conducted in effort to examine the impact of transracial adoption on adjustment and identity development. Although previous research investigated transracial adoption in terms of behavior, connection with adoptive family, and development in terms of self-esteem, it failed to account for the social aspect to include belongingness and social adjustment. This research study addressed this gap in the literature by examining whether adjustment and identity development were negatively impacted based on social economic status. The research also examined whether skin tone impacted the relationship between adjustment and identity development. It was anticipated that adjustment and identity development would be negatively impacted by individuals with a perceived low economic status versus those with a high economic status. It was also anticipated that the closeness in complexion of skin tone would positively impact adjustment and identity development.

Interpretation of Findings

The results of the study remained consistent with Butler-Sweet's (2011a) idea that socioeconomic status influences identity development. However, contrary to Samuels' (2009) supposition that the inability to blend in causes problems in a transracial adoptee's adjustment and identity development, the results of this study suggest skin complexion does not significantly impact development. These findings suggest that the higher the perceived economic class of the adoptive family, the more likely one is to have a more positive sense of identity development. While there was some impact, the findings also suggest that closeness in complexion does not significantly impact an individual's identity development or socioemotional adjustment. The results of the study appear to be contrary to much of the present research, however, its one consistency with the literature centers on socioeconomic status and the role it has on one's adjustment and identity development.

The study conducted by Butler-Sweet (2011a) explored transracial adoption in terms of socioeconomic status and the impact. This study found that within middle to upper class families, adoptees were more culturally socialized in effort to build a healthy racial identity (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). This was done through enrollment in organizations and educational programs with individuals of the same culture as the adoptee. My study found that the higher the socioeconomic status and degree of socioemotional adjustment, the more positive the sense of ethnic identity in the adoptee. In considering the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, it would appear that the results of my study shows

reinforcement of positive interactions in the home as well as the community that assisted in developing a healthy identity development.

Socioemotional Adjustment

An adoptees' socioemotional adjustment relies on many things, but the research reflects back on socialization practices and the impact it has on the adoptee. Researchers such as Vonk, Lee, and Crolley-Simic (2010) explained that socialization can assist in forming healthy and positive racial identities for transracial adoptees. This healthy and positive socialization assists in bridging the gap that is so often present in the internal conflicts present in all stages of psychosocial development. The researchers continued to explain the importance of socioeconomic status on socialization practices used in effort to assist in a healthy socioemotional adjustment (Vonk, Lee, & Crolley-Simic, 2010).

While it could be assumed that the participants of my study were able to adjust without any assistance from their adoptive families, this study noted that the majority of participants were adopted into families whose perceived socioeconomic class was either middle or upper class. This study also identified that the participants' income currently places the majority of them in either the middle or upper class. Research has shown that a higher economic status leads to an increased ability for adoptive families to expose their adoptive children to multiple cultural socialization practices (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). What this study was unable to demonstrate was that solely a lower economic status resulted in a negative impact on socioemotional adjustment. This study was, however, able to identify the impact that both a higher economic status as well as a higher socioemotional adjustment resulted in a healthier, or more positive, identity development.

Another assumption that could be drawn from the results is that the adoptive parents of the participants were more willing to increase the socialization due to the difference in skin tone. Vonk et al. (2010) explained the importance of appearance and the increased desire of adoptive families to socialize their adoptive children due to the difference in skin tone. My study identified that the relationship between identity development and adjustment was not negatively impacted due to skin tone.

Overall, the rate of socioemotional adjustment was not significantly impacted by either socioeconomic status or closeness in skin complexion of the adoptive parents. However, it is important to identify some of the possible variables present in the study that could have led to a healthier adjustment. As stated in previous research, age at adoption as well as the preadoption environment largely impacts one's psychosocial adjustment (Bruce et al., 2009). This study took into account these variables by excluding those adopted after age one in effort to minimize such external variables. A middle or upper economic status often historically led to increased socialization practices. Through identifying perceived socioeconomic status, attempting to gain a truer understanding of socioeconomic status through the asking of persons in the home and number of bedrooms, and current economic status, the study was able to identify that most of the participants fell within the middle to upper socioeconomic class.

Identity Development

As identified by numerous researchers, racial or ethnic identity development is often fluid and continuous based on the adoptees' socialization practices (Ung et al., 2012). Padilla (2010) noted that most transracial adoptions occur prior to the identity

development stage, which largely impacts their identity formation. While identity development can and typically does go through multiple stages prior to reaching some type of resolution, the influences for transracial adoptees are increased due to the unique racial living environment in which they are raised (Butler-Sweet, 2011a). Godon, Green, and Ramsey (2014) even stated that transracial adoptees seek their birth family for socialization and gaining an increased sense of identity. As previously stated, socioeconomic status plays a large role in socialization practices as well.

While some of the participants of my study reported meeting their birth parents at some point in their life, the overwhelming majority (69%) reported never having met their birth parents. The results of this study did, however, identify the impact of socioeconomic status on racial identity development. According to the results of the study, roughly 66% of participants reported a perceived socioeconomic status of middle class while 14% reported a perceived socioeconomic status of being upper class. In regards to present income, 83 of the 119, or roughly 70% of the participants reported an income of between \$45,000 and \$59,999 or more. The results outlined that in both areas researched, a higher socioeconomic status significantly led to an increased healthier and positive identity development.

The relationship between adjustment and identity development was also made evident in the study. While alone neither socioeconomic status nor skin tone had a significant impact on adjustment, it was found that an increased socioeconomic status in connection with an increased socioemotional adjustment resulted in an increased sense of ethnic identity. Due to the results, one could further postulate that the difference in skin

complexion between the adoptive parents and the transracial adoptee does not play as large a role in identity development as suggested by Samuels (2009). While belongingness remains an important aspect in order to develop a healthy racial identity as well as a healthy socioemotional adjustment, one could assume that socialization might play a larger role. This assumption would be consistent with the theory of symbolic interactionism. In essence, the interactions and experiences of the transracial adoptees had a larger influence on their healthy adjustment and identity development than did skin tone or their ability to blend in. The socioeconomic status and greater ability to access the resources and experiences further assisted in developing a healthy identity development.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

There was one primary limitation surrounding socialization to the research design. Socialization patterns and habits have long been researched in regards to transracial adoptees. While I assumed that some form of socialization was present for the participants, this was not specifically addressed in the study to determine the exact type of socialization practice. Cultural socialization comes in all forms to include non-contact such as books, music, cultural foods, and language (Vonk, Lee, and Crolley-Simic, 2010). My study did not take into account the types of socialization practices of the adoptees, nor did it take into account the frequency of socialization practices. Another aspect of socialization not taken into account was the neighborhood in which the adoptee was reared. While my study did account for socioeconomic status, it did not consider the cultural make up of the external environments of the participants. These external

environments include the neighborhood as well as the schools attended and community activities.

While my study was completely anonymous, it is always possible that the participants were not completely honest in their responses. Their own struggles with adjustment and/or identity development could have led participants to respond in a manner that appears more socially acceptable or in a manner that presents them in a more favorable light. Future studies could utilize interviews along with instruments that include truthfulness scales to either minimize less than honest respondents or account for and document the less than honest respondents.

In effort to enhance validity of the results, future studies could inquire more into the socialization practices to understand their impact. This could be done through the use of interviews to gain a better understanding of the practices in place and the way in which socioeconomic status played a role. Although the findings of my study furthered present research regarding development from a socio-emotional adjustment standpoint as well as identity development, future researchers should seek to consider the impact of specific practices and the frequency. While my study accounted for a specific gap in research regarding pre-adoption environment by controlling for age at adoption, future studies should also consider the impact meeting the biological parents may have on socio-emotional adjustment and ethnic identity measure. In my study, 37 of the participants reported having met their birth parents at an average age of roughly 16 years old.

Implications

When considering the research as a whole, one could posit that the impact of socioeconomic status greatly influences the adoptees' socio-emotional adjustment as well as ethnic identity development. Socio-emotional adjustment did not appear to be significantly impacted by socioeconomic status, which leads one to consider the other influences that could have impacted a transracial adoptee's adjustment. Research has identified a number of struggles transracial adoptees experience including low self-esteem, poor social skills, and the inability to develop the needed coping skills to address racial conflicts (NABSW, 1972). This stance has been part of the ongoing dialogue as to whether a transracial adoptee can develop a healthy racial identity.

The results of my study provide further information in regards to an individual's ability to develop a healthy racial identity even when raised in a transracial environment. The results highlight the role socioeconomic status or class has on the formation of such a healthy ethnic identity. Another aspect to note is the lack of role skin tone or an individual's ability to blend in has on identity development and adjustment. Much of the research opposing transracial adoption speaks to the adoptee's inability to formulate a healthy racial identity due to the outward appearance and not looking like anyone they are around (Samuels, 2009). What the current findings ultimately express is that as economic status as well as socio-emotional adjustment increases, the transracial adoptee's sense of ethnic identity increases. This essentially implies that it is less important to focus on appearance, and more important to focus on the resources and experiences available to the adoptee.

Implication for Social Change

Considering the role that race plays in society today, it is extremely important to understand ethnic identity development in all individuals. The history of race relations in the United States has been tempestuous at best. It remains vitally important for individuals to understand who they are in order to assimilate their identity in regards to how they're raised. In doing so, the individual then has a better chance at successfully navigating and developing in society.

My study's implications for social change revolve completely around an individual's ability to healthily navigate racial instances that are likely to be encountered in society. In order to do so, the professionals present in the lives of these transracial adoptees must understand the needs in order to provide appropriate resources. There are a number of ways this study can assist in providing insight into developing a healthy identity and socio-emotional adjustment. The first is by having the adoptive agencies understand the need for socialization practices and provide resources for all families to include those who may not have the financial ability to obtain the needed resources on their own. This could include programs for the adoptees to attend or mentoring programs. Additional resources could be made available to the adoptive families to assist in understanding or learning the culture in effort to assist in socialization practices.

Conclusion

Identity development and socio-emotional adjustment is not something that is unique to transracial adoptees. However, unlike transracial adoptees, most individuals only have to contend with their biological ethnic identity when developing from child to

adult. While there may be an internal conflict present within the identity formation, this conflict is two-fold for transracial adoptees due to the dueling natures of having to both resolve the biological ethnic identity as well as the adoptive ethnic identity. This is attributable to the fact that both identities are components of the same individual.

My study investigated the impact of transracial adoption on adjustment and identity development by considering the role of socioeconomic status as well as skin tone. Socioeconomic status was taken into account due to the important aspect of socialization as well as access to such resources. Skin tone was taken into account due to the need to belong or blend in as suggested by the research. While there has been much debate over the issue of transracial adoption, my study ascertained that a healthy ethnic identity and socio-emotional adjustment is very much possible. The results indicated that socioeconomic status has a positive impact of identity development the higher the adoptive family's socioeconomic status. The results also indicated that skin tone did not have an impact on identity nor adjustment. These results are important because they provide insight to the professionals assisting with transracial adoptive placements as well as families seeking to adopt. More importantly, they support the continuation of finding forever families for the many children in need of a home regardless of race.

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Appendix A: Instructions on How to Complete the Online Survey

To complete the online survey, use any computer device with Internet and browser capabilities. You will be asked to read the informed consent form and acknowledge your understanding and acceptance of participation by clicking the link to begin the survey. Once clicking this link a series of questions will follow.

Part 1: Demographic Information

Please provide your gender, age, race, race of both biological parents, race of both adoptive parents, age at adoption, income, socioeconomic status of adoptive parents, and skin tone with which you identify. There are approximately 17 questions in this section. Click the “next” button to continue.

Part 2: Multiethnic Identity Measure and Measure of Psychosocial Development

In this section, you will be asked to fill in which race you consider yourself to be. You will then be asked to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statements provided. There are approximately 12 questions you will be asked to answer in this section. Upon completion, you will be asked to click the “next” button to continue.

Part 3: Select the best response

In this section, you will be asked to indicate how much the statements written are “like you”. In this section, the statements are rated from “very much like me” to “not at all like me”. There are approximately 112 questions you will be asked to answer in this section. You will be able to view your progress to completion.

Finished

There are a total of three sections to complete. When all sections have been completed, there will be a button labeled “finished” that you can click to take you to the final screen. The final screen will display that “The survey was successfully completed and submitted. Thanks for your participation”.

Appendix B: Demographics Questionnaire

- 1) Were you adopted before the age of one?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
- 2) Are your adopted parents the same race or ethnicity as you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know
- 3) I am
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
- 4) What race do you identify as? (select all that apply)
 - a. Caucasian/White
 - b. Black/African American
 - c. Native American
 - d. Asian
 - e. Hispanic or Latino
- 5) Have you met your birth parents?

If yes, at what age did you meet them?
- 6) What is the race of your biological mother? (select all that apply)
 - a. Caucasian/White

- b. Black/African American
- c. Native American
- d. Asian
- e. Hispanic or Latino
- f. Don't Know

7) What is the race of your biological father? (select all that apply)

- a. Caucasian/White
- b. Black/African American
- c. Native American
- d. Asian
- e. Hispanic or Latino
- f. Don't Know

8) What is the race of your adoptive mother? (select all that apply)

- a. Caucasian/White
- b. Black/African American
- c. Native American
- d. Asian
- e. Hispanic or Latino

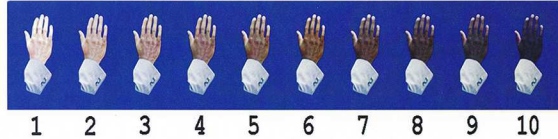
9) What is the race of your adoptive father? (select all that apply)

- a. Caucasian/White
- b. Black/African American
- c. Native American

- d. Asian
 - e. Hispanic or Latino
- 10) How old are you?
- a. 18-20
 - b. 21-30
 - c. 31-40
 - d. 41-50
 - e. 51-60
 - f. 61-70
 - g. 71+
- 11) What do you believe your adoptive family's SES was?
- a. Lower Class
 - b. Middle Class
 - c. Upper Class
- 12) What is your annual income?
- a. \$0-\$14,999
 - b. \$15,000-\$29,999
 - c. \$30,000-\$44,999
 - d. \$45,000-\$59,999
 - e. \$60,000-\$74,999
 - f. \$75,000-\$99,999
 - g. \$100,000+

- 13) How many individuals resided in your home during your childhood?
- 14) How many bedrooms did your home have?
- 15) Which skin complexion do you most identify with?

Scale of Skin Color Darkness



- 16) Using the above scale, which complexion most matches your adoptive mother?
- 17) Using the above scale, which complexion most matches your adoptive father?

Appendix C: Multiethnic Identity Measure

These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it.

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

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

(5) Strongly agree (4) Agree (3) Neutral (2) Disagree (1) Strongly disagree

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

Appendix D: License Agreement for use of MPD



Creating Connections. Changing Lives.

16204 N. FLORIDA AVENUE • LUTZ, FLORIDA 33549
Telephone: 813.968.3003 • Fax: 813.968.2598 • Web: www.parinc.com

LICENSE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT, made this January 16, 2017, by and between Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc., a Florida Corporation, with its principal offices located at 16204 North Florida Avenue, Lutz, Florida 33549, hereinafter referred to as PAR, and Krystle Dandridge, with her principal offices located at 3514 E. Richmond Rd., Unit 7, Richmond, VA 23223, hereinafter referred to as Licensee.

1) RECITALS

PAR has developed and holds all copyrights and distribution rights to certain psychological tests and related materials as listed in Schedule A, hereinafter called "Test". The Test consists of PAR's items, scoring keys, scales, profiles, standard-score conversion tables, norms tables, interpretive information, and related materials created, prepared, devised, and combined by PAR for the administration, scoring, reporting, and analysis of the Test, and includes the words, symbols, numbers, and letters used to represent the Test. Licensee desires to develop automated procedures for the secure and encrypted administration of the Test through Licensee's secure internet assessment website utilizing QuestionPro. The access to Licensee's website will be by invitation only in connection with Licensee's research titled, *The effects of transracial adoption on adjustment and identity development* and to subjects for this research purpose only (the "Limited Purpose(s)"). Unless permitted to do so by a separate license agreement, Licensee only has the right to use the Test for the Limited Purpose described above.

In consideration of the mutual covenants and promises expressed herein and other good and valuable considerations, it is agreed as follows:

2) LICENSE

PAR hereby grants to Licensee, subject to the terms of this Agreement, a non-transferable, non-refundable, non-exclusive license to place the Test on Licensee's Website for the Limited Purpose described in Section 1 above. Licensee agrees to hold secure and treat as proprietary all information transferred to it from PAR. Licensee shall carefully control the use of the Test for the Limited Purpose described in this Agreement. Licensee's use of the Test will be under the supervision or in consultation with a qualified psychologist or other qualified individual and consistent

with the then current edition of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing published by the American Psychological Association.

3) TERMS AND TERMINATION

The initial term of this Agreement shall extend from January 16, 2017 through June 30, 2017, and may be extended only by mutual agreement of the parties. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Agreement, this Agreement may be terminated if any of the following events occur:

- (a) Termination is mutually agreed to by the parties.
- (b) Licensee defaults in the performance of any of its duties hereunder.

On the effective date of expiration or termination of this Agreement pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) above, all rights in this Agreement revert to PAR. Computer software programs written by or for Licensee remain the property of Licensee. Licensee warrants that upon expiration or termination of this Agreement under subsections (a) and (b) above, and except as set forth in any separate license agreement relating thereto, all portions of the Test licensed hereunder shall be removed from Licensee's Website. Failure to cease all uses of the Test shall constitute copyright infringement.

4) TERMINATION RIGHTS

In the event of termination pursuant to paragraph 3 above for any reason, PAR shall not be liable to Licensee for compensation, reimbursement or damages for any purpose, on account of any expenditures, investments, leases or commitments made or for any other reason whatsoever based upon or growing out of this Agreement.

5) CONDITIONS OF USE

PAR shall have the right to review, test, and approve that portion of Licensee's Website which includes the Test. Following PAR's approval of that portion of Licensee's Website containing the Test, the manner in which the Test appears on such Website shall not be changed in any material way without prior approval of PAR.

The computer programs developed by Licensee and used in any phase of administration and scoring of the Test shall be fully tested by Licensee and shall be encrypted and reasonably protected from access, intrusion and changes by persons who are not authorized agents of Licensee. In addition to the foregoing, Licensee shall exert all reasonable commercial efforts to prevent the Programs, and any accompanying code for the administration of the Test from being accessed, viewed or copied by others. Licensee warrants the accuracy of such scoring and reporting.

6) PROPRIETARY RIGHTS

PAR is the owner of all right, title and interest in the Test. Licensee shall acquire no right or interest in the Test, by virtue of this Agreement or by virtue of the use of the Test, except the right to use the Test in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement. Licensee shall not modify or revise the Test in any manner without written approval by PAR. All uses of the Test by Licensee shall inure to the benefit of PAR. Licensee agrees not to challenge or otherwise interfere with the validity of the Test or PAR's ownership of them.

7) ROYALTIES

Licensee agrees to pay PAR a royalty fee for use of the Test and copyrighted materials contained therein, at the rate of \$2.28 per each test administration of the Test. Licensee will also provide PAR with an itemized accounting of all administrations of each Test administered by Licensee during the term of this agreement. Licensee shall pay to PAR Three Hundred and Forty-Two US Dollars (\$342.00) as an initial license fee (\$2.28 per administration for 150 administrations), which is due and payable upon the signing of this License Agreement. Licensee shall also pay PAR \$2.28 per each test administered for any tests administered above 150 by July 15, 2017. This fee includes a 40% student discount.

8) ACCOUNTING

Licensee shall develop secure computerized accounting methods acceptable to PAR. Such accounting methods must include an electronic counting mechanism which will accurately record the number of administrations of each Test used. Licensee will keep accurate financial records of all transactions relating to the use of the Test, and PAR shall

have the right to examine the software and records of Licensee pertaining to the use of the Test. Licensee will make such software and records accessible to PAR or its nominee during normal working hours upon not less than five (5) business days' prior written notice. Licensee shall retain such software and records for at least one year from the date this Agreement expires or the effective termination date.

The Website shall contain the following copyright notice:

"Adapted and reproduced by special permission of the Publisher, Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc. (PAR), 16204 North Florida Avenue, Lutz, Florida 33549 from the Measures of Psychosocial Development by Gwen A. Hawley, PhD, Copyright 1980, 1984, 1988 by PAR. Further reproduction is prohibited without permission of PAR."

9) INDEMNITY

Licensee agrees to indemnify PAR and hold PAR harmless against any claim or demand or against any recovery in any suit (including taxes of any kind, reasonable attorney's fees, litigation costs, and other related expenses) that may be:

- (a) brought by or against PAR, arising or alleged to have arisen out of the use of the Test by Licensee;
- (b) sustained or incurred by PAR, arising or alleged to have arisen in any way from the breach of any of Licensee's obligations hereunder; or
- (c) incurred by PAR in any litigation to enforce this Agreement, including litigation against Licensee.

10) ASSIGNMENT

Licensee shall not assign this Agreement or any license, power, privilege, right, or immunity, or delegate any duty, responsibility, or obligation

hereunder, without the prior written consent of PAR. Any assignment by PAR of its rights in the Test shall be made subject to this Agreement.

11) GOVERNING LAW

This Agreement shall be construed according to the laws of the State of Florida of the United States of America. Venue for any legal action relative to this Agreement shall be in the appropriate state court in Hillsborough County, Florida, or in the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa division. Licensee agrees that, in any action relating to this Agreement, the Circuit Court in Hillsborough County, Florida or the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division, has personal jurisdiction over Licensee, and that Licensee waives any argument it may otherwise have against the exercise of those courts' personal jurisdiction over Licensee.

12) SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Agreement shall, to any extent, be invalid and unenforceable such provision shall be deemed not to be part of this Agreement, and the parties agree to remain bound by all remaining provisions.

13) EQUITABLE RELIEF

Licensee acknowledges that irreparable damage would result from unauthorized use of the Test and further agrees that PAR would have no adequate remedy at law to redress such a breach. Therefore, Licensee agrees that, in the event of such a breach, specific performance and/or injunctive relief, without the necessity of a bond, shall be awarded by a Court of competent jurisdiction.

14) ENTIRE AGREEMENT OF THE PARTIES

This instrument embodies the whole Agreement of the parties. There are no promises, terms, conditions, or obligations for the Test licensed hereunder other than those contained herein; and this Agreement shall supersede all previous communications, representations, or agreements, either written or verbal, between the parties hereto, with the exception of any prior agreements that have not previously been terminated by written

consent of both parties or by one party if the terms of the agreement allow. This Agreement may be changed only by an agreement in writing signed by both parties.

15) NOTICES AND MODIFICATIONS

Any notice required or permitted to be given under this Agreement shall be sufficient if in writing and if sent by certified or registered mail postage prepaid to the addresses first herein above written or to such addresses as either party may from time to time amend in writing. No letter, telegram, or communication passing between the parties hereto covering any matter during this contract, or periods thereafter, shall be deemed a part of this Agreement unless it is distinctly stated in such letter, telegram, or communication that it is to constitute a part of this Agreement and is to be attached as a right to this Agreement and is signed by both parties hereto.

16) SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS

Subject to the limitations on assignments as provided in Section 10, this Agreement shall be binding on the successors and assigns of the parties hereto.

17) PARAGRAPH HEADINGS

The paragraph headings contained in this Agreement are inserted only for convenience and they are not to be construed as part of this Agreement.

18) AUTHORIZATION AND REPRESENTATION

Each party represents to the others that it has been authorized to execute and deliver this Agreement through the persons signing on its behalf.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement in duplicate on the date first herein above written.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

BY: [Signature]

BY: [Signature]

KRYSTLE DANDRIDGE

R. BOB SMITH III, PH.D.

Title: Doctoral Candidate

Title: CHAIRMAN AND CEO

DATE: 1/16/17

DATE: 2-3-2017

PAYMENT RECEIVED: VISA
PAR CUSTOMER No.: 161503

SIGNATURE OF PROFESSOR REQUIRED:

I hereby agree to supervise this student's use of these materials. I also certify that I am qualified to use and interpret the results of these tests as recommended in the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, and I assume full responsibility for the proper use of all materials used per this Agreement.

BY: [Signature]

Printed Name: 2/1/2017 Dr. Kizzy Dominguez, PhD

SCHEDULE A

The Test licensed to Licensee pursuant to the above license consist of PAR's items, scoring keys, scales, profiles, standard-score conversion tables, norms tables, and related materials created, prepared, devised, and combined by PAR for the administration, scoring, reporting, and analysis of the Test, and include the words, symbols, numbers, and letters used to represent the Test. However, PAR and Licensee acknowledge and agree that Licensee may use only the PAR items and scoring information for the Test as appropriate for the Limited Purpose. The Test referred to in the body of this Agreement is defined as follows:

- 1) Measures of Psychosocial Development (MPD)
 - Item Booklet
 - Answer Sheet
 - Profile Form

Permission is also granted for you to include up to a total of three (3) sample items from the MPD in your dissertation, any further publication in a Journal (or otherwise) will require additional permission.