

Alisha Le Beau & Sierra Phelps

ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate cultural values in interracial couples and its impact on sexual satisfaction. Participants will be recruited to volunteer from interracial couple support groups in Washington state. Based on self-report, we will gather demographic information about our participants' gender, race, age, relationship status, identified cultures, and faith background. We predict that the greater the differences between cultural value sets and expectations within an interracial couple, the more communication and potential compromise will be needed in order to achieve sexual satisfaction. Therefore, we hypothesize that increased differences in cultural values will decrease sexual satisfaction within interracial couples.

INTRODUCTION

- Our nation is progressively becoming more ethnically and racially diverse with interracial married-couple households increasing in the U.S. from 7.4 to 10.2 percent from 2000 to 2016 (Rico et al., 2018).
- Individuals' perceptions of self and others are largely influenced by the implicit expectations that various cultures hold for what people should be doing in their lives (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).
- When compared with Euro-Caucasian women, Chinese women report levels of sexual desire, arousability, sexual activity, interest in casual sex, and sexual fantasies that are believed to be tied to cultural attitudes and expectations (Dang et al., 2019).
- Research indicates it is important to identify the factors that promote sexual satisfaction in relationships, as sex is fundamental to maintaining most satisfying long-term relationships such as marriage (Peter et al., 2021).
- It is well known that culture has a profound impact on individuals' perceptions and how people define themselves. However, there is little research on how culture influences our perception of sexual satisfaction within relationships.

PRIMARY AIM AND HYPOTHESES

- RQ1: What is the relationship between cultural differences and sexual satisfaction among interracial couples?
- H1: It is hypothesized that cultural differences will indirectly impact sexual satisfaction within interracial couples.

METHODS

Participants

- The target sample population is interracial couples, ages 18-40 years old, that have been in a relationship together for at least one year.
- Participants will be recruited to volunteer by advertising to interracial couple support groups in Washington state, colleges, and primary care doctors' offices.
- Target sample size: 250 couples, 500 individuals

Procedures

- The participants will be sent a virtual link to individually complete a survey that includes demographics, the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale, and the Singelis Self-Construal Scale. Responses to all surveys completed by participants will be collected online. The demographics and scales will then be analyzed and graphed to identify patterns between cultural values and sexual satisfaction.

MEASURES

Cultural Values

- Cultural values will be measured using the Singelis' (1994) self-construal scale (SCS), a 25-item measure used to evaluate self-construal.
- This scale works from the perspective that people have a sense of themselves as both independent and interdependent, but depending on their cultural backgrounds and values, people tend to emphasize one self-construal more than the other.
- Participants will receive a score for both independent self-construals (generally found more in Western countries) and interdependent self-construals (generally found more in Eastern countries).
- Separate averages will be taken for the independent subscale items and the interdependent subscale items to examine how cultural background is emphasized in one self-construal versus the other.

Sexual Satisfaction

- Sexual satisfaction was measured using the 20-item new sexual satisfaction scale in its short form which is gender, sexual orientation, and relationship status neutral (Milhausen et al., 2011). Participants will receive a score for the ego-centered subscale and the partner and activity-centered subscale.
- This measure is to be completed while thinking about one's sex life during the last six months and rating satisfaction levels for varying aspects of sexual activity.
- The scale uses a five-point Likert scale with options ranging from not at all satisfied (1) to extremely satisfied (5).
- Separate averages will be taken for the ego-centered subscale and the partner and activity-centered subscale to be examined for the difference between self-satisfaction levels compared with sexual satisfaction levels with their partner.
- These will then be compared to the average rating of the independent subscale items and the average rating of the interdependent subscale items from the SCS.

RESULTS

- We expect our results to show that partners with greater differences in cultural values will be correlated with lower sexual satisfaction in their relationships.
- Results will be analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the direction (positive or negative) and strength (closer to 1 representing higher correlation) between cultural values and sexual satisfaction.



DISCUSSION

Implications

- By considering the impact that cultural value differences can have on sexual satisfaction for interracial couples, therapists can note the importance of exploring these aspects as potential presenting problems for relational distress.
- In this study, any sexual orientation partnerships will be included. This can provide support for looking into the influence that culture can have on relationships that are not heterosexual.
- Additionally, through the examination of self-schemas, this research may have implications for the differences between men and women and the importance they place on their self satisfaction versus their perception of their partner's satisfaction levels.

Limitations

- There is the potential for other variables to impact sexual satisfaction that we are not measuring in this study such as mental or physical health concerns or gender roles.

Future Research

- Future research should aim to explore how to screen for potential additional influences on sexual satisfaction that are separate from culture. Additionally, cultural values could be more thoroughly examined to explore the impact gender roles, religion, or parenting expectations can have on relationships and sexual satisfaction, as well.