

PERCEPTIONS OF INTERETHNIC COUPLES AS COMPARED TO
ETHNICALLY HOMOGAMOUS COUPLES

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By
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

For my high school sweetheart, Angel, because love doesn't discriminate based on race or ethnicity.

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ABSTRACT

Race and ethnicity can play an important role in assortative mating for some, and less so for others. In the current study, we examined perceptions of interethnic couples. Participants were 801 individuals recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk who each viewed one of four versions of a vignette which described a heterosexual romantic couple. The ethnicity of the individuals in the vignette were each manipulated to be either Caucasian or Hispanic. A main effect of interethnic status was found, with participants indicating they believed ethnically homogamous couples would receive more social support than interethnic couples. There was no interaction between the interethnic status of the couple and the ethnicity of the man in the couple, nor was there a main effect of male ethnicity. Additionally, there were no significant differences found between the ratings of the two interethnic couples. There was no interaction between the interethnic status of the couple and participant gender, however, there was a main effect of participant gender. Overall, men reported higher levels of negative emotions than women. Our results indicate that interethnic couples may be viewed differently than ethnically homogamous couples in some cases and situations, however, the two types of couples were not rated differently overall.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interracial Marriage

Humans tend to choose mates similar to themselves. This is known as assortative mating, which is when individuals with similarities pair more often than would be expected at random. People can assort on a wide variety of traits, from education level, to religion, to race or ethnicity, with levels of homogamy usually rising as the commitment level of a relationship increases (Blackwell & Lichter, 2004). Race and ethnicity are a large aspect of assortative mating, with most marriages in the U.S. being between individuals of similar racial or ethnic backgrounds, though this phenomenon is changing as rates of diversity rise in the U.S. (Bialik, 2017; Passel et al., 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Anti-miscegenation laws, which criminalized marriage between individuals of different racial groups, were banned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967 (*Loving v. Virginia*, 1967). Since then, rates of interracial and interethnic marriages have continued to increase, with 17% of new marriages in the U.S. in 2015 being between individuals who were from different racial and/or ethnic groups (Bialik, 2017). This is up from 14.6% in 2008 (Passel et al., 2010) and much higher than the rate of 3% in 1967 (Bialik, 2017). As of 2015, 10% of all married people in the U.S. were intermarried (Bialik, 2017). Though there are more people marrying out of their racial and ethnic groups now than ever before, there is still a stigma attached to doing so (A. L. Garcia et al., 2012; Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001; Miller et al., 2004).

Race versus Ethnicity

It is important to note that the terms “race” and “ethnicity” are generally not interchangeable, though they are often used in such a way. The American Sociological Association (n.d.) defines race as referring to “physical differences that groups and cultures consider socially significant,” therefore, someone may be labelled as a certain race in one country or society and as a different race in a different area. The ASA (n.d.) defines ethnicity as referring to “shared culture, such as language, ancestry, practices, and beliefs.” These are generally the most socially accepted definitions of the terms.

The U.S. Census Bureau (2017), however, defines race as “a person’s self-identification with one or more social groups.” On the census, individuals can identify as one or more of the following: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or other (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017, 2018). Ethnicity, on the other hand, is described by the U.S. Census Bureau (2017) as relating to whether an individual is of Hispanic origin, with the options of either being Hispanic or Latino, or not. Hispanic and Latino individuals can therefore identify as any race on the Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Socially, these definitions are less commonly accepted. That being said, these definitions are still important to note, as the current study will be examining the ethnic group tracked by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Social Barriers and Preferences for Racial and Ethnic Homogamy

Higher rates of intermarriage may not necessarily be due to an increasing desire for intermarriage, as there can be barriers to selecting partners based on race or ethnicity. Heaton and Jacobson (2000) found that on a college campus, Whites and Asians were less likely to marry out than Blacks and Hispanics. The researchers attributed this finding to some racial and ethnic groups being represented more than others in higher education. They also suggested that higher education may isolate Blacks and Hispanics, making it harder for them to pair based on race or ethnicity as there are generally fewer Black and Hispanic individuals within higher educational settings. This was shown by R. Garcia (2015) to be especially true for women of color, as their sample of college educated women of color reported that it is easier to find educational homogamy with a White man due to a lack of men of color on college campuses. Though many individuals of color report a desire for both educational homogamy and racial homogamy, they tend to choose racial homogamy over educational homogamy (Muro & Martinez, 2016; R. Garcia, 2015).

Muro and Martinez (2016) observed a preference of college-educated Latinas who had attended or graduated from predominantly White institutions to date down in education before they would date out of their racial group. Similarly, R. Garcia (2015) found that Hispanic and Black female college students in the Los Angeles area preferred same-race or other minority partners due to shared experiences of racism, as well as a desire to avoid cultural assimilation. Several of the respondents even reported that they felt men of color with a college education should stay within their

own racial or ethnic groups and that when they instead dated White women, they were engaging in an act of “gendered racism” (R. Garcia, 2015).

Racial homogamy can vary by metropolitan area as well. For example, in Chicago, Asians had the highest rate of interracial pairings for newlyweds, and White individuals also had a higher rate than Black individuals (Pew Research Center, 2017). Additionally, Latinos who lived in the Atlanta area, where there is a higher percentage of Black individuals, were less likely than Latinos in other areas to exclude Blacks from their dating pools (Feliciano et al., 2011). Therefore, racial preferences may be affected by availability and familiarity of certain racial or ethnic groups as well.

When examining individuals from the Los Angeles area, where there is more diversity in ethnic groups than the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), Todd et al. (1992) found that 61% of African American and Caucasian American individuals surveyed were willing to date outside of their racial or ethnic group. This may be due to the individuals surveyed being more comfortable with individuals from other racial and ethnic groups, as Los Angeles County has a smaller percentage of African American and non-Hispanic White individuals (9% and 26.1%, respectively) as compared to the U.S. average of 13.4% African American and 60.4% non-Hispanic White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Interestingly, in California, where the percentage of non-Hispanic White residents is much lower than that of the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), some areas have an intermarriage rate nearly double that of the U.S. average (Pew Research Center, 2017).

When assessing an individual, social cues such as race, sex, and age are used to glean information on one's reproductive status (sex and age) and group membership (race) (Stangor et al., 1992). Therefore, there may be an evolutionary need to encode such things, as coming across an individual from an outgroup may in the past have posed a threat. In modern history, race has been used to form social groups (Kurzban et al., 2001). Kurzban et al. (2001) found that when group membership in a fictional scenario was set up to be based on appearance, participants paid much more attention to others' races. Additionally, Taylor and Moriarty (1987) found that when placed in groups in a competitive environment, White participants showed more ingroup bias when the other group was Black as compared to when they were White, showing that race may amplify the effects of things such as team or group membership. Race and ethnicity can play large roles in how individuals form social groups, especially when examining ethnicity, due to shared culture. Dating and marrying within one's own racial or ethnic group would allow an individual's children to be raised in the same culture, allowing their traditions and values to continue more easily than if two groups or cultures merged. This was seen in the R. Garcia (2015) study, with Hispanic and Black women preferring to date within their own racial or ethnic groups in order to avoid assimilation and stay close to a familiar culture.

Preferences of Men versus Women

The desire to stay around familiar individuals, namely those within one's own racial or ethnic background, may vary between men and women. As rates of

interracial and interethnic dating and marriages are increasing, researchers have investigated differences between men's racial or ethnic preferences and those of women, with women more likely to prefer homogamy than men (Feliciano et al., 2009; Feliciano et al., 2011; Levin et al., 2007). Out of White internet daters, women were less willing to date out, with 64% of White women preferring to exclusively date White individuals, compared to 29% of White men (Feliciano et al., 2009). Latinos, on the other hand, were more willing to date outside of their racial or ethnic group than Whites and Blacks with only 8.5% of Latino men and 12% of Latina women preferring to date within their ethnic group, compared to 17% of White men, 47% of White women, 13% of Black men, and 35% of Black women. (Feliciano et al., 2011). It is important to note that Feliciano et al. (2009, 2011) used convenience sampling in utilizing information in online dating profiles and thus the statistics reported in the two studies may not apply to the general population.

Evolution likely has a role in these preferences, as traditionally, women have had to be more selective when screening potential partners, due to a higher level of responsibility for offspring. Therefore, since women have a higher investment level, they are expected to have stronger preferences for status than men in order to ensure their children are provided for (Buss, 1989; Buss & Barnes, 1986). G. Garcia (2012) found that women showed a preference for a high-status mate over a low-status mate, regardless of race or ethnicity and only found a significant effect of race and ethnicity when the difference in socioeconomic status (SES) was small. SES is not always explicitly stated or known however, therefore race and ethnicity can also be used as a

cue to status by some. Since Whites are typically seen as being at the top of the social structure, with Blacks at the bottom (A. L. Garcia et al., 2012), this may be why White women were the least willing to date out and why Hispanic women were more likely to prefer White men over Black men, with some even preferring White men over those from their own ethnic group (Feliciano et al., 2011).

Perceptions of Interracial/Interethnic Couples

Though rates of interracial and interethnic marriages are increasing, it is still considered taboo for many. Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) investigated this by examining individuals' perceptions of interracial couples. Vignettes were used to describe a fictional couple, with the individuals being described as either European American, African American, or Asian American. They found that interracial couples were viewed as less compatible and less traditional than racially homogamous couples. Participants also reported that they were more comfortable imagining themselves in a racially homogamous relationship than an interracial one. Women in an interracial relationship were rated as less traditional and less psychologically adjusted as compared to women in racially homogamous relationships. Men in interracial relationships were rated as less competent, less traditional, and less likely to be professionally successful than men in racially homogamous relationships (Lewandowski & Jackson, 2001). As of 2015, 39% of those polled by Pew Research Center said increasing rates of intermarriage was a good thing, up from 24% in 2010 (Bialik, 2017), thus perceptions may have changed in a positive direction since the Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) study was conducted.

As Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) examined only interracial pairings, A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) aimed to add a different aspect: interethnic couples. The researchers examined perceptions of couples composed of European American, African American, and Latino American individuals. Another interesting and new aspect of the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study is that they surveyed only participants who self-identified as either Latino(a), Hispanic, or Chicano(a). They found that a couple described as a Latina American woman and an African American man was rated more negatively than a couple described as a Latina American woman and a European American man. Though there was no significant difference between the Latina-Latino and the Latina-Black conditions, the Latina-Latino couple was rated higher overall than the Latina-Black couple, as they had predicted. There was also no difference reported between the Latina-Latino and Latina-White couples. It may be that their total sample size of 136 for the Latina-Latino and Latina-White couples, simply was not large enough to reach significance due to a small effect size, $d = 0.27$. The current study aimed to garner a larger sample to examine couples with a similar dynamic.

Hispanic and Caucasian Pairings

As proposed by A. L. Garcia et al. (2012), Hispanics are in the middle of a social spectrum. Increasing rates of Hispanic and White pairings are seen as evidence of Hispanic assimilation into U.S. culture. The idea of assimilation being linked to intermarriage is shown by Qian and Cobas (2004), who found that Mexican Americans, who have the longest history within the U.S. as compared to other

Hispanic and Latino groups, are the most likely to marry out. This ties into generational status, as those whose families have been in the U.S. for longer, and are therefore more assimilated, are more likely to marry out (Lichter et al., 2011; Qian et al., 2018).

The most prominent pairing of interethnic couples is that of Hispanic and White individuals (Bialik, 2017), with the amount of such couples increasing in 43.2% of U.S. counties between 2000 and 2012-2016 (Rico et al., 2018), with both Latino Whites (Latinos with lighter complexions) and Latino non-Whites (Latinos with darker complexions) being found to marry non-Latino Whites (Qian & Cobas, 2004). This may be due to a perceived similarity in social status, as proposed by A. L. Garcia et al. (2012). Consistent with this idea, Feliciano et al. (2009) found that Whites were least likely to exclude Latinos from their dating pool as compared to any other race or ethnicity, as Latinos were seen as ranking more similarly to Whites. Feliciano et al. (2011) found that Latinos were more likely to prefer to date Whites over Blacks when dating out of their ethnic group. More specifically, 38% of Latino men and 50% of Latina women preferred Whites over Blacks, as compared to 11% of Latino men and 18% of Latina women who preferred Blacks over Whites (Feliciano et al., 2011). Additionally, some individuals actually prefer exogamy, or to pair out of their group. Feliciano et al. (2011) found that 3% of Latino men and 12% of Latina women preferred to date out of their ethnic group.

As indicated by the Qian and Cobas (2004) study, generational status can play a role in intermarriage as well. Lichter et al. (2011) investigated differences in

varying generations of Hispanic-Americans and found that while only 4.6% of first-generation Hispanic-American women and 6.1% of men were married to non-Hispanic Whites, rates increased to 27% of women and 32% of men in the third generation. Levin et al. (2007) also found that Latino participants who had been in the U.S. for a few generations were less likely to date other Latinos as compared to Latinos from newly immigrated families.

Perceptions Based on Couple Composition

Another aspect that has been examined is whether the gender of each individual in an interracial or interethnic relationship makes a difference in the perceptions of a couple. For example, whether the man is White and the woman is non-White, or vice versa. Miller et al. (2004) found that women who had been in an interracial or interethnic relationship reported having experienced more disapproving reactions to their relationship from their friends and family than did men, regardless of the race or ethnicity of the participant. Additionally, non-White men dating White women reported having experienced more prejudicial attitudes from their partners' family and friends than from their own (Miller et al., 2004). Findings such as these are what prompted A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) to set up their study so that the woman in the couple was always Latina. They predicted that changing the ethnicity of only the male would have a greater effect due to "machismo" in Latino men making them less approving of women dating out than men. It is not clear if that was the case, however, as they did not manipulate the ethnicity of the female to examine whether the gender of the Hispanic individual in the couple affected ratings.

Lewandowski and Jackson (2001), on the other hand, manipulated the race of both the man and the woman, ending up with two versions of each interracial couple: one where the woman was White and the man was either Black or Asian, and one where the man was White and the woman was either Black or Asian. Though Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) did not report an analysis having been run on the difference between men and women in comparable interracial relationships, the data of the ratings for each individual in the target couple were reported. A. L. Garcia et al.'s (2012) idea that women who dated out would be viewed more negatively than men who dated out may be supported by Lewandowski and Jackson's (2001) results which showed that interracial couples that included a White woman were rated as less compatible than comparable interracial couples that included a White man. This may tie into A. L. Garcia et al.'s (2012) belief that Whites are seen as being at the top of the social ladder, with Hispanics below them, and Blacks at the bottom, and is consistent with their finding that Latina-Black couples were rated more negatively by Hispanic individuals than Latina-Latino and Latina-White couples. It is generally the social norm in the U.S. for a man to have more status than their female partner, therefore suggesting that a woman who paired "down" racially or ethnically would be viewed more negatively. This may not be the case, however, as Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) also showed that overall, White men in interracial relationships were rated as less professionally successful than their female counterparts. It is unclear whether race and ethnicity act as an indicator of status and whether that can affect

perceptions of interracial and interethnic couples dependent upon their composition thus it must be explored further.

Conclusions to be drawn from this literature review are that as the Hispanic population has continued to rise within the U.S., they are becoming more assimilated into the culture and therefore should be viewed less as outsiders. Also, with rising rates of intermarriage and the most common intermarriage pairing being of Caucasian and Hispanic individuals, perceptions of such pairings should theoretically be viewed less negatively as they are becoming more familiar and “normal.”

Current Study

The current study aims to examine perceptions of Hispanic and Caucasian couples as that is the most common pairing of interethnic couples. There will be two interethnic conditions: Hispanic man/Caucasian woman and Caucasian man/Hispanic woman. There will also be two ethnically homogamous conditions: Hispanic man/Hispanic woman and Caucasian man/Caucasian woman. Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) found that interracial couples were rated as less compatible by White participants as compared to racially homogamous couples, however, A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) found there to be no significant difference between an ethnically homogamous Latino couple and a couple composed of a Latina woman and a European American man as rated by Latino participants. We would like to examine this further as most studies that have examined interracial couples have not examined interethnic couples to include Hispanics. Though the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study did examine Hispanic and Caucasian couples, their sample was limited to Hispanic

participants, whereas the current study had mainly Caucasian participants. We wanted to see if a sample of mainly Caucasian participants would rate Hispanic and Caucasian couples differently than other interracial couples as seen in the Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) study, or if Caucasian participants would rate those couples differently compared to Hispanic participants as seen in the A.L. Garcia et al. (2012) study.

We will also examine the aspect of racial and gender composition further by having two versions of the interethnic couple: one where the woman is Hispanic and the man is Caucasian, and one where the woman is Caucasian and the man is Hispanic. This is similar to how the Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) study was set up, however with different ethnic groups. Lewandowski and Jackson (2001), however, only reported data values for the couples and did not have a hypothesis regarding whether the ethnicity of the man versus the woman made a difference. The current study thus aims to examine this aspect specifically.

Lastly, the current study aims to examine differences in perceptions of interethnic couples coming from men versus women. It has been shown that women hold more negative attitudes of interracial relationships than men (Mills et al., 1995; Todd et al., 1992), however, more recent studies have implied the opposite. A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) reported that Latino men had more negative emotions in response to interethnic couples than did Latina women. Additionally, when examining racial prejudices, Amodio et al. (2004) surveyed only female participants as they were believed to hold less prejudicial attitudes. Lewandowski and Jackson (2001), on the

other hand, found no sex effect on perceptions of interracial couples. We will include an exploratory hypothesis to examine this further as there have not been consistent findings. We predicted the following:

1. Ethnically homogamous couples would be rated more positively overall than interethnic couples.
2. A couple composed of a Caucasian man and a Hispanic woman would be rated more positively than one of a Hispanic man and a Caucasian woman.
3. There would be a difference in how male versus female participants rated interethnic couples.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 801 individuals recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (mTurk). All participants were at least 18 years of age and had IP addresses indicating a location within the U.S. The median age of participants was 34 ($M = 36.70$, $SD = 11.20$, range = 19 to 78 years). The majority of participants were male (57.9%), heterosexual (84.4%), Caucasian/White (75.3%), married (50.8%), and had at least a Bachelor's degree (67.1%). A plurality of participants identified as either being not religious (33.9%), Catholic (33.8%) or Protestant/Other Christian (30%), and as Democratic (43.1%) (see Appendix A). Lastly, a majority of participants indicated that they were or had been in a relationship with an individual of a different racial or ethnic background than themselves (54.5%). Participants were compensated monetarily with \$0.50.

Measures and Materials

Perception Questionnaire

The questions to measure overall relationship quality, perceived level of social support, and overall emotions toward the target couple were created by A. L. Garcia et al. (2012). We did, however, rephrase the statement "They are an attractive couple," to "They are a well-matched couple," as it was believed the original wording was too ambiguous. This measure was used in order to replicate the A. L. Garcia (2012) study, but with a mainly Caucasian sample in order to compare the ratings

given by Hispanic individuals in their study to those of Caucasian individuals from the current study. To measure overall relationship quality, participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert-scale (1 being do not agree at all, and 7 being agree completely) the degree to which they agreed with 5 items designed to measure the stability and longevity of the relationship: “They are a well-matched couple,” “They intend to remain in their relationship,” “These couple members are compatible with one another,” “They are very committed to their relationship,” and “They seem to understand each other,” (see Appendix B). Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .84$). The mean across items was calculated to find an average rating of the overall compatibility of the couple. A higher rating on this scale indicates more positive views of the quality of the relationship.

To measure perceived levels of social support, participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert-scale (1 being do not agree at all, and 7 being agree completely) the degree to which they agreed with two items: “Others are likely to support their relationship,” and “Others are likely to support them if their relationship becomes more serious,” (see Appendix B). Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .80$). The mean across items was calculated to find an average rating of perceived levels of social support for the couple. A higher rating on this scale indicates perceptions of higher levels of social support.

To measure overall emotions, participants were asked the level to which they experienced the emotions angry and annoyed (intended to measure negative emotions) and happy and joyful (intended to measure positive emotions) while

reading about the target couple (see Appendix B). Participants were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert-scale (1 being not at all, and 5 being extremely) the level to which they experienced the four emotions. The two negative emotions were reverse coded so that the scales for the four DVs all went in the same direction, with higher scores indicating a more favorable view of the couple. Internal consistency was high for both positive ($\alpha = .86$) and negative emotions ($\alpha = .89$). The mean across items was calculated to find an average rating of both the positive and negative emotions associated with the couple.

Vignette

The vignette used was created by A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) and was intended to describe a romantic heterosexual couple which is similar on aspects other than ethnicity (see Appendix C). We did change the vignette slightly, by changing the position of the man in the couple from “retail manager” to simply “manager,” as we felt the term “retail” would indicate a lower status. The ethnicity of both the man and the woman were manipulated to be described as either Caucasian or Hispanic, leading to four conditions: one where the man and woman were both Caucasian, one where the man and the woman were both Hispanic, one where the man was Caucasian and the woman was Hispanic, and one where the man was Hispanic and the woman was Caucasian.

Design

This study used a 2x2x2 between-subjects design. The independent variables were the interethnic status of the couple described in the vignette, the ethnicity/status

of the man in the vignette (Caucasian or Hispanic), and participant gender. The dependent variables were compatibility, social support, positive emotions, and negative emotions, which were all continuous scales. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four groups, which were each shown the vignette with one of the four couples (Caucasian man/Caucasian woman, Hispanic man/Hispanic woman, Caucasian man/Hispanic woman, Hispanic man/Caucasian woman).

Procedure

Participants completed the survey online using Qualtrics, to which they were linked from mTurk. They were first presented with an informed consent form (see Appendix D), which provided information regarding the study and informed them that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The participants were asked to click that they agreed with the informed consent form and had the option to print the form for their records. Upon completion of the consent form, participants were then randomly assigned to one of the four conditions and were presented with the vignette and the measures. Once they completed the survey, participants were instructed to complete the demographics questionnaire (see Appendix E), which included questions about their race/ethnicity and gender, as well as other demographic information such as their current relationship status, religion, and political affiliation. At the end of the study they were given the debriefing form (see Appendix F), at which time they were thanked for their participation and the purpose of the study was explained to them.

Data Analysis

In order to determine whether there were differences in participants' overall perceptions of ethnically homogamous and interethnic couples, the perceptions of couples composed of Caucasian males/Hispanic females vs. Hispanic Males/Caucasian females, as well as perceptions of male versus female participants, data was analyzed using a factorial MANOVA. For Hypothesis 1, we examined whether there was a main effect of interethnic status of a couple on perceptions of the couple. If a main effect were found, with the ethnically homogamous couples being rated higher overall as compared to the interethnic couples, the first hypothesis would be supported. For Hypothesis 2, we examined whether there was an interaction between the interethnic status of a couple and the ethnicity of the male. If an interaction were found, with the Caucasian man/Hispanic woman couple being rated higher overall as compared to the Hispanic man/Caucasian woman couple, the second hypothesis would be supported. Additionally, an independent samples *t*-test was used to compare the two interethnic couples directly to determine whether the Caucasian man/Hispanic woman couple was rated more positively overall as compared to the Hispanic man/Caucasian woman couple. Lastly, for Hypothesis 3, we examined whether there was an interaction between the interethnic status of the couple in the vignette and participant gender. If an interaction were found, with the effect of interethnic status differing between male and female participants, the third hypothesis would be supported.

RESULTS

All statistical tests were run on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26).

Hypothesis 1

H1: Ethnically homogamous couples would be rated more positively overall than interethnic couples.

A factorial MANOVA was used to test whether there was a main effect of interethnic status of a couple on perceptions of the couple. The hypothesis was supported. A main effect of interethnic status was found ($\Lambda = .98$, $F(4, 788) = 5.00$, $p = .001$, $\eta_{2\text{parital}} = .03$). Examining each dependent variable separately, the only significant difference between groups was for social support ($F(1, 791) = 7.99$, $p = .005$, $\eta_{2\text{parital}} = .01$), with respondents indicating they believed ethnically homogamous couples would receive more social support than interethnic couples (see Table 1). There was no significant difference between groups for Compatibility ($F(1, 791) = 1.68$, $p = .20$, $\eta_{2\text{parital}} = .002$), Positive Emotions ($F(1, 791) = 1.36$, $p = .24$, $\eta_{2\text{parital}} = .002$), or Negative Emotions ($F(1, 791) = 2.03$, $p = .16$, $\eta_{2\text{parital}} = .003$).

Table 1

Estimated Marginal Means for Interethnic Status

DV	Interethnic Status	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
Compatibility	Homogamous	5.60	.05	[5.50, 5.68]
	Interethnic	5.51	.05	[5.42, 5.60]
Social Support	Homogamous	5.85	.06	[5.74, 5.96]
	Interethnic	5.63	.06	[5.52, 5.74]
Positive Emotions	Homogamous	3.53	.05	[3.43, 3.64]
	Interethnic	3.62	.05	[3.52, 3.73]
Negative Emotions	Homogamous	4.25	.06	[4.14, 4.36]
	Interethnic	4.36	.06	[4.25, 4.47]

Note. Estimated marginal means for each DV based on interethnic status. Higher numbers indicate a more positive rating. As such, a higher number in negative emotions indicates less negative emotions.

Hypothesis 2

H2: A couple composed of a Caucasian man and Hispanic woman would be rated more positively than one of a Hispanic man and a Caucasian woman.

A factorial MANOVA was used to test whether there was an interaction between the interethnic status of a couple and the ethnicity/status of the man in the couple. The hypothesis was not supported. There was no interaction between interethnic status and male ethnicity ($\Lambda = 1.00$, $F(4, 788) = .37$, $p = .83$, $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} =$

.002), nor was there a main effect of male ethnicity ($\Lambda = .99$, $F(4, 788) = 1.51$, $p = .20$, $\eta^2_{\text{parital}} = .01$).

Additionally, an independent samples *t*-test was used to evaluate whether an interethnic couple composed of a Caucasian man and a Hispanic woman would be rated more positively overall as compared to an interethnic couple composed of a Hispanic man and a Caucasian woman. The test was not statistically significant, $t(399) = -1.33$, $p = .19$, $d = 0.13$. Homogeneity of variances was assumed based on Levine's test, $F(1, 399) = 0.01$, $p = .92$. On average, ratings of the interethnic couple composed of a Caucasian man and a Hispanic woman ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 0.74$) did not significantly differ from those of the interethnic couple composed of a Hispanic man and a Caucasian woman ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 0.73$). Breaking it down by DV, there was no significant difference between the two interethnic couples for Compatibility $t(399) = -1.44$, $p = .15$, $d = 0.14$, Social Support $t(399) = -0.95$, $p = .35$, $d = 0.09$, Positive Emotions $t(399) = -1.12$, $p = .27$, $d = 0.11$, or Negative Emotions $t(398) = -0.32$, $p = .75$, $d = 0.03$ (see Table 2).

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Each DV

	Ethnically Homogamous				Interethnic			
	CM/CW		HM/HW		CM/HW		HM/CW	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Compatibility	5.57	0.84	5.60	0.86	5.44	0.92	5.58	0.93
Social Support	5.88	1.02	5.77	1.13	5.58	1.13	5.68	1.08
Pos. Emotions	3.46	1.07	3.58	1.07	3.57	1.07	3.69	1.03
Neg. Emotions	4.24	1.09	4.24	1.15	4.32	1.10	4.36	1.08

Note. CM = Caucasian man, CW = Caucasian woman, HM = Hispanic man, HW = Hispanic Woman. Higher numbers in negative emotions indicate less negative emotions.

Hypothesis 3

H3: There would be a difference in how male versus female participants rated interethnic couples.

A factorial MANOVA was used to test whether there was an interaction between the interethnic status of a couple and participant gender. There was no interaction between interethnic status of a couple and participant gender ($\Lambda = .99$, $F(4, 788) = 1.56$, $p = .18$, $\eta_{2\text{parital}} = .01$). There was, however, a main effect of participant gender ($\Lambda = .99$, $F(4, 788) = 2.49$, $p = .04$, $\eta_{2\text{parital}} = .01$), where men had generally less positive ratings than women (see Table 3). Examining each dependent variable separately revealed that men reported more negative emotions overall as

compared to women ($F(1, 791) = 7.99, p = .005, \eta^2_{\text{parital}} = .01$). There were no other significant findings for Compatibility ($F(1, 791) = .18, p = .67, \eta^2_{\text{parital}} < .001$), Social Support ($F(1, 791) = 2.84, p = .09, \eta^2_{\text{parital}} = .004$), or Positive Emotions ($F(1, 791) = .22, p = .64, \eta^2_{\text{parital}} < .001$).

Table 3

Estimated Marginal Means for Participant Gender

DV	Participant Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI
Compatibility	Male	5.54	.04	[5.46, 5.62]
	Female	5.57	.05	[5.47, 5.66]
Social Support	Male	5.67	.05	[5.57, 5.77]
	Female	5.80	.06	[5.69, 5.92]
Positive Emotions	Male	3.56	.05	[3.46, 3.66]
	Female	3.60	.06	[3.48, 3.71]
Negative Emotions	Male	4.20	.05	[4.10, 4.30]
	Female	4.42	.06	[4.30, 4.54]

Note. Estimated marginal means for each DV based on participant gender. Higher numbers indicate a more positive rating. As such, a higher number in negative emotions indicates less negative emotions.

DISCUSSION

The current study examined perceptions of Caucasian and Hispanic interethnic couples. For the most part, the hypotheses were not supported, however, there were some significant findings.

Hypothesis 1

H1: Ethnically homogamous couples would be rated more positively overall than interethnic couples.

There was a significant difference between how interethnic versus ethnically homogamous couples were rated. Looking more closely, the only significant difference between the interethnic and ethnically homogamous couples was for social support, with participants indicating that they believed ethnically homogamous couples would receive more social support than interethnic couples. This differs from the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study, as they did not find a significant difference in the ratings of social support for an ethnically homogamous Hispanic couple compared to an interethnic Hispanic and Caucasian couple. In regard to the other dependent variables, however, the findings were consistent with the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study in that no significant difference was found between the ethnically homogamous couples and the interethnic couples composed of a Hispanic individual and a Caucasian individual. These findings are inconsistent with the Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) study, as they found interracial couples to be rated more negatively

overall as compared to the same race couples. Lewandowski and Jackson (2001), however, did not include Hispanic individuals in their manipulation.

The lack of a significant difference in ratings of compatibility, positive emotions, and negative emotions could be because Hispanics are becoming more assimilated (Qian & Cobas, 2004), or because interracial and interethnic pairings are becoming increasingly common (Bialik, 2017; Passel et al., 2010), especially those between Caucasian and Hispanic individuals (Bialik, 2017; Rico et al., 2018). Additionally, Feliciano et al. (2011) found that Whites were less likely to exclude Hispanics from their dating pool than other minorities, therefore the mainly Caucasian sample may have been more accepting of the Caucasian and Hispanic interethnic couples than they would have been if additional races were examined. Overall, the lack of results may indicate that rates of stigma towards interethnic couples are decreasing

That being said, the sample consisted of mainly younger, college educated individuals, so it cannot necessarily be applied to the population as whole. The participants indicating that they believe ethnically homogamous couples would receive more social support may show that they do not believe the general population would be as accepting of interethnic couples. The current study's finding of a difference in perceived level of social support, which the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study did not find, may indicate there has been a change in social views since the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study was conducted.

Hypothesis 2

H2: A couple composed of a Caucasian man and a Hispanic woman would be rated more positively than one of a Hispanic man and a Caucasian woman.

There was no interaction between interethnic status of the couple and the ethnicity of the male found, nor was there a main effect of male ethnicity. Participants did not rate an interethnic couple composed of a Caucasian man and a Hispanic woman differently from an interethnic couple composed of a Hispanic man and a Caucasian woman. This finding conflicts with Lewandowski and Jackson's (2001) results, in which interracial couples that included a White woman were rated as less compatible than the comparable couples that included a White man. Though the Lewandowski and Jackson (2001) study did not include Hispanic individuals in their manipulation, the current study's finding may show that Hispanic individuals are viewed as more similar in status by the mainly Caucasian sample, as A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) claimed their Hispanic participants to believe.

The lack of significance for the second hypothesis also conflicts with the Miller et al. (2004) study, as they found women who had been in an interracial or interethnic relationship to have experienced more disapproval from their family and friends. They also found that non-White men who had dated White women experienced more disapproval from their partner's family than their own. Therefore, since the sample was mainly Caucasian, we would have expected the interethnic couple with the Caucasian woman to be rated more negatively than that with the Caucasian man, however, they were not rated differently. This may show an increase

in acceptance of interethnic couples by some Caucasian individuals since the Miller et al. (2004) study. It may also be, however, that the participants in the current study would have different views if they knew the individuals in the couple personally.

Hypothesis 3

H3: There would be a difference in how male versus female participants rated interethnic couples.

There was no interaction found between participant gender and interethnic status of the couple, so the hypothesis was not supported. There was, however, a main effect of participant gender. Examining this more closely, there was a significant effect seen for negative emotions, with men having reported more negative emotions than women, regardless of condition. This is somewhat different from what A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) reported, as they found that men only reported more negative emotions than women for the Latina-Black couple, whereas men and women reported similar levels of negative emotions for the Latina-Latino and Latina-White couples. One difference to note is that the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study sampled only Hispanic/Latino participants, while the current study's sample consisted of mainly Caucasian participants, which may indicate that Caucasian men harbor more negative views of relationships than Hispanic men. It may also be that men and women viewed the scale differently, with women possibly being less willing to rate any couple negatively. The current study's findings are also inconsistent with the Mills et al. (1995) and Todd et al. (1992) studies, which found women to be less accepting of interracial couples than men. This may indicate a shift in views held by men and

women in the past several decades. That being said, it is also possible that there is a difference in how interracial couples are viewed in comparison to interethnic couples, as the current study did not examine interracial couples and there is a lack of literature examining interethnic couples. There was no significant difference between groups for any of the other dependent variables.

Overall, the results from the current study shed a positive light on the younger, more educated population within the U.S. They may indicate, however, that there has been a change in the views of Hispanic individuals in general, possibly due to the eight-year time span between the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study and the current study. Limitations to this study include that the participants were mainly White, college educated, young adults. There are also limitations to the methodology used, in that only a very basic overview of the couples was presented, which A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) reported may have made it difficult for participants to rate the couple as they were rating them on several aspects with only limited information. They also stated that rating couples in a vignette may not transfer to how individuals who react to a couple in a real-life scenario (A. L. Garcia et al., 2012). Follow-up studies therefore could use pictures or videos in conjunction with a vignette, or even possibly do an in-person study with actors as the couples. There are also limitations to the self-report data used in the current study, in that even though they were anonymous, participants may have answered in a way they believed to be socially acceptable.

The current study could be expanded by including different racial or ethnic groups, as well as garnering a more diverse sample. It would also be interesting to see how views continue to change as time goes on and the rates of intermarriage and diversity among the U.S. population continue to rise, along with changes in the political climate. Additionally, future research could examine interactions between race and/or ethnicity and things like socioeconomic status, age, or education level, both that of the participants as well as the fictional individuals being manipulated.

The findings of the current study, as a whole, show that though interethnic couples may be becoming more accepted, there may also have been a step back in acceptance in certain areas. Since the A. L. Garcia et al. (2012) study did not find a difference in perceived levels of social support, which the current study did find, it may show that though the sample was generally accepting of the interethnic couples, their responses indicate that they believed the rest of the general population, or at least those close to the couple, would not be. It may even be that the participants in the current study are accepting of interethnic couples so long as they do not know the individuals, while they may not be supportive of their own family and friends dating out of their ethnic group. Additionally, since a slight majority of the participants in the current study indicated that they were or had been in a relationship with someone outside of their racial or ethnic group, and a majority of them were also White, they seemed to be more willing to date out than what has generally been shown for White individuals (Feliciano et al., 2011), which would likely skew their perceptions of interethnic couples in a positive direction and may have affected the results. So, while

the lack of significant results for some of the aspects of the current study shows a decrease in stigma attached to interethnic couples, it may not show the whole picture, thus the topic still needs to be examined further.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

<i>Participant Demographics</i>			
Characteristic		Full Sample	
		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	464	57.9
	Female	336	41.9
	Other	1	0.1
Race/Ethnicity	Caucasian/White	603	75.3
	Hispanic/Latino	43	5.4
	Black/African American	99	12.4
	Asian	49	6.1
	Other	7	0.9
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	676	75.3
	Gay	16	2.0
	Lesbian	8	1.0
	Bisexual	98	12.2
	Other	3	0.4
Marital Status	Single (never married)	270	33.8
	Married	408	51.1
	Domestic Partnership	78	9.8
	Divorced	37	4.6
	Widowed	6	0.8
Education Level	High School or Less	164	20.5
	Associate's Degree	99	12.4
	Bachelor's Degree	408	51.1
	Master's Degree and Up	128	16.0
Religion	Catholic	270	33.8
	Protestant/Other Christian	223	30.0
	Not Religious	271	33.9
	Other	35	4.4

Participant Demographics

Characteristic	Full Sample	
	<i>n</i>	%
Political Affiliation		
Democratic	344	43.1
Republican	242	30.3
Independent – lean Democrat	120	15.0
Independent – lean Republican	64	8.0
Other	29	3.6

Note. $N = 801$. Participant demographics broken down by characteristic.

APPENDIX B

PERCEPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

On a scale of 1-7, how much do you agree with each statement? (1 being you strongly disagree, 7 being you strongly agree)

1. They are a well-matched couple.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. They intend to remain in their relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. These individuals are compatible with one another.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. They are very committed to their relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. They seem to understand each other.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. Others are likely to support their relationship.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Others are likely to support them if their relationship becomes more serious.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

On a scale of 1-5, to what degree did you feel the following emotions when reading about the couple? (1 being not at all, 5 being extremely)

1. Angry (R)

1 2 3 4 5

2. Annoyed (R)

1 2 3 4 5

3. Happy

1 2 3 4 5

4. Joyful

1 2 3 4 5

Do you think you know what the hypotheses or predictions of this study are?

Yes No

If so, what do you think the hypotheses or predictions were?

APPENDIX C

VIGNETTE

She is a 23-year-old, Caucasian/Hispanic, female teacher for gifted and talented students. She enjoys reading, going for walks, and gardening. Her friends tell her that she is a great listener. He is a 23-year-old Caucasian/Hispanic man who majored in history in college and he now works as a manager. He enjoys playing football with his friends, watching television, and engaging in outdoor activities. His friends tell him that he is easy to get along with. There are both similarities and differences between them. For instance, they both grew up in small nearby towns in the Southwest region, but their high schools were relatively different. They both read the newspaper every weekend. Every Sunday afternoon they go to a local park to exercise. Their neighborhood has a lot of fun things to do.

APPENDIX D
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

1. **Summary:** This research study will examine factors that are related to perceptions of relationships. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to read a description of a romantic couple and rate your feelings toward and impressions of the couple. You will also answer some basic demographic information.
2. **Your right to withdraw/discontinue:** You are free to discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. You may also skip any survey questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Even if you withdraw from the study, you will receive any entitlements that have been promised to you in exchange for your participation.
3. **Benefits:** Participation in this research study does not guarantee any benefits to you. However, possible benefits include the fact that you may learn something about how research studies are conducted and you may learn something about this area of research (i.e., factors that are related to perceptions of relationships). There is no anticipated commercial profit related to this research.
4. **Additional information:** You will be given additional information about the study after your participation is complete.
5. **Costs:** If you agree to participate in the study, it may take up to 15 minutes to complete the survey. There are no costs to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedures listed above.
6. **Guarantee of Confidentiality:** All data from this study will be kept from inappropriate disclosure and will be accessible only to the researcher (Emily A. Westlund) and the faculty supervisor (Dr. Victor X. Luevano). Data collected online will be de-identified for analyses. The researchers are not interested in anyone's individual responses, only the average responses of everyone in the study.

7. **Risks:** The present research is designed to reduce the possibility of any negative experiences as a result of participation. Risks to participants are kept to a minimum. However, if your participation in this study causes you any concerns, anxiety, or distress, please visit <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists> to find a therapist in your area.

8. **Researcher Contact Information:** This research study is being conducted by Emily A. Westlund. The faculty supervisor is Dr. Victor X. Luevano, Professor of Psychology, Department of Psychology and Child Development, California State University, Stanislaus. If you have questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you may contact the researcher, Emily A. Westlund at ewestlund@csustan.edu or Dr. Victor X. Luevano at vluevano@csustan.edu.

9. **Results of the Study:** You may obtain information about the outcome of the study at the end of the academic year in May by contacting the researcher, Emily A. Westlund (ewestlund@csustan.edu) or Dr. Victor X. Luevano (vluevano@csustan.edu).

10. **Psychology Institutional Review Board Contact Information:** If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the Psychology Institutional Review Board of California State University Stanislaus at psychologyIRB@csustan.edu.

11. **Personal Copy of Consent Form:** You may print a blank, unsigned copy of this consent form now.

12. **Verification of Adult Age:** By clicking “I Agree” below, you attest that you are 18 years old or older.

13. **Verification of Informed Consent:** By clicking “I Agree” below, you are indicating that you have read and understand the information above, that all of your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and that you freely consent to participate in this research study.
 - I agree
 - I do not agree

APPENDIX E
DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please try to answer all of the following questions. You may skip items that make you feel uncomfortable.

1. Which gender do you identify with?

Male

Female

Other (please specify) _____

2. What is your age? _____

3. With which race/ethnicity do you most closely identify? (Choose one)

Caucasian/White

Hispanic/Latino

Black/African American

Asian

Other (please specify) _____

4. What is your education level?

Less than a high school diploma

High school diploma or equivalent

Associate's degree (AA)

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate

Other professional degree (please specify) _____

5. What is your marital status?

Single (never married)

Married

In a domestic partnership

Divorced

Widowed

6. If you are currently in a relationship, which of the following races/ethnicities best represents your partner?

Caucasian/White

Hispanic/Latino

Black/African American

Asian

Other (please specify) _____

N/A (not in a relationship currently)

7. Have you ever been in a relationship with an individual of a different racial/ethnic group than yourself?

Yes

No

8. What is your sexual orientation?

Heterosexual

- Gay
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other (please specify) _____

9. What is your religion?

- Catholic
- Mormon
- Protestant/Other Christian
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Not religious
- Other (please specify) _____

10. What is your political party affiliation?

- Democratic
- Republican
- Independent – lean Democrat
- Independent – lean Republican
- Other (please specify) _____

APPENDIX F

DEBRIEFING FORM

The study you have just participated in is in partial fulfillment for a Master's thesis. This study was meant to examine perceptions of interethnic couples. It was hypothesized that White/White and Hispanic/Hispanic couples would be rated more positively overall than White/Hispanic couples. The second hypothesis examined whether there is a difference in ratings of the White/Hispanic couples if the woman is White and the man is Hispanic and vice versa.

All the information collected in today's study will be kept from inappropriate disclosure, and there will be no way of identifying your responses in the data archive. The researcher is not interested in any one individual's responses; rather the researcher wants to examine the general patterns that emerge when the data are averaged together.

Your participation today is greatly appreciated and you will help us learn more about how interethnic couples are viewed in comparison to same ethnicity couples. The researcher asks that you do not discuss the nature of the study with others who may later participate in it, as this could influence the validity of the research conclusions. If you have any questions or concerns, you are welcome to contact Emily A. Westlund (ewestlund@csustan.edu) or Dr. Victor X. Luevano (vluevano@csustan.edu; 209-667-3096) of the Department of Psychology at California State University, Stanislaus. If your participation in this study causes you any concerns, anxiety, or distress, please visit <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists> to find a therapist in your area. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the Psychology Institutional Review Board of California State University Stanislaus at psychologyIRB@csustan.edu.

If you would like to learn more about this research topic, the researcher suggests the following references:

Garcia, A. L., Riggio, H. R., Palavinelu, S., & Culpepper, L. L. (2012). Latinos' perceptions of interethnic couples. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 34(2), 349-362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739986311435974>

Lewandowski, D. A., & Jackson, L. A. (2001). Perceptions of interracial couples: Prejudice at the dyadic level. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 27(3), 288-303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798401027003003>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION