Abstract

Interracial relationships and marriages have caused much controversy in the United States. In 1967, the Supreme Court ruling of Loving v. Virginia banned the anti-miscegenation laws and made interracial marriages legal. While still a very low percentage of relationships and marriages in the United States are interracial, the marriage rate has continued to rise since the 1967 ruling. This paper looks at how interracial marriages are perceived by individuals in the United States. It takes into consideration how interracial relationships are viewed in the media. It also looks at interracial marriages and the continuing trends and stability compared to a same-ethnicity marriage, as well as, the similarities and differences between interracial children and same-ethnicity children. This paper also considers the dynamic goal theory of marital satisfaction, which argues married couples achieve three main goals; personal goals, companionship goals, and instrumental goals. These goals create the foundation of marriage and need to be achieved to have marital satisfaction, along with a higher quality of marriage. These marital goals will eventually influence their children’s goals.

Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction

According to Li and Fung, marriage is more voluntary in nature and is symbolized by the couple’s love for each other and desire to be together (2011, p. 246). Their marital satisfaction is the main factor that influences the dynamic goal theory of marital satisfaction, which looks at the marital quality and the emotional aspect of the marriage (Li & Fung, 2011). The theory argues that marital goals are the core foundation of the marriage and need to be achieved to reach marital satisfaction.

The theory argues that there are three types of marital goals to be achieved. Personal growth goals are based on the improvement and development of oneself with the help of the
spouse within the marriage. When these goals are met, a feeling of accomplishment helps the spouse to feel capable of future challenges. Marital goals should be accentuated by young adults who have a future waiting for them (Li & Fung, 2011). Companionship goals show the bonding and emotional meaningful goals that a spouse needs with the other spouse, while the instrumental goals focus on the tasks that occur throughout life that include using the spouse’s physical and mental resources (Li & Fung, 2011). The nature of marriage is known as the instrumental goals and is often applied as a division of household effort and responsibilities. Instrumental support from the spouse can help to improve marital quality; however unequal division of effort and responsibilities can lead to marital conflict (Li & Fung, 2011).

The dynamic goal theory of marital satisfaction argues that a couple’s vulnerability and stressful events within their environment, help them to modify their life to the environmental changes that interact and combine together influencing the couple’s marital stability (Li & Fung, 2011). Other research suggests that wives, regardless of their ethnicity, feel that their marriage relationship is unfair (Forry, Leslie & Letiecq, 2007). Forry, Leslie and Letiecq (2007) studied 76 African American and White couples to determine the couples’ marital quality, sex role ideology, and perceived unfairness. The couples who participated had either attended college or were college graduates, an average marriage of nine years, an average income of $63,350, and an average of two children living in their household. The study’s results showed that the perception of the marital relationship and the poor quality of the marital relationship was the same in both interracial marriages and same-ethnicity marriages (Forry, Leslie & Letiecq, 2007). The difference noted in this study was that marrying interracially can have a significant effect on the racial identity of the non-White spouse and the White spouse. White individuals in an interracial relationship do experience racial discrimination towards themselves or their partners.
Nonetheless, a marriage will take place when the total value of two individuals being married surpasses the total of their value from being single (Fryer, 2007). Thus, interracial couples and same-ethnicity couples have the same marital relationship, but interracial couples experience discrimination for not staying pure to their ethnicity.

Dynamic changes occur throughout adulthood and the importance of the marital goals does likewise. Marital goals are impacted by the society’s and the couple’s norms. Prioritizing goals in marriage can affect interaction patterns in a marriage to simplify the success of marital satisfaction. Today’s society has helped simplify the success of interracial marriages by continuing to accept interracial marriages and their off-spring. However, society and laws have not always been accepting of interracial marriages.

References


