

Sunita George and Denise Chau (Psychology)

“Perceptions of Interracial Dating: Exploring the IAT and Ethnicity”

(To be presented at the Southwestern Psychological Association Conference April 8-10 in lieu of UST Research Symposium)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Jo Meier-Marquis

Research has suggested that due to the increasing minority population and the integration of various races in social, occupational, and educational institutions, the number of interracial couples has significantly increased in the United States (Gafford, 2001). Although, the number of romantic interracial relationships has increased, along with the level of toleration to these relationships with it, there is still some lingering stigma associated with interracial relationships (Golebiowska, 2003). The purpose of the study is to examine factors related to effective evaluations of interracial couples, specifically implicit racism and race. Pilot study participants were recruited fall 2010 from psychology classes at the University of St. Thomas and via the website [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) through targeted sampling methods. One hundred and sixty-five adults participated in a three-part online survey. Participants completed the Skin-tone Implicit Association Test (IAT), the Attitudes toward Interracial Dating Scale and a set of questions pertaining demographics. Due to the sample size and lack of variability, the results indicated that perceptions of interracial relationships were not affected by a participant’s implicit racism (as measured by the IAT) or the participant’s ethnicity. However, it was found that race and gender had a predictive effect on the IAT result a participant received. Men, in specific, were found that to score higher on the IAT, which means that men had a tendency to be less implicitly racist than women. Race and gender may be an important factor when examining one’s implicit racism. A secondary study was conducted amongst business school students also attending the University of St. Thomas spring 2011. Eighty-seven adult participants participated in the three-part online survey. This sample provided the initial data with more variance. However alone, it was found that ethnicity and gender have a relationship with attitudes towards interracial dating.