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The development of racial identity among multiracial adults

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL IDENTITY AMONG

MULTIRACIAL ADULTS

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

---

by

Andrea Louran Bales

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Approved by:

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Dr. Janet Chang,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the identity development process among multiracial adults. In recent years, there have been an increasing number of individuals that identify themselves as multiracial. It is important that professionals have a better understanding of what this population is faced with. Multiracial individuals challenge the current theoretical models of identity development. Consequently, research shows how identity development differs for individuals from multiple racial ethnicities. This research will explore the racial development process for multiracial individuals, as well as how the current identity development process fails to include individuals from multiracial backgrounds. This study discovered that multiracial identity development varies from person to person due to external and internal factors associated with their unique identities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my master's project to my
mother Jacqueline Bales and my brother Matthew Bales. Mom
you never had the opportunity to see me doing anything
good before you left this earth. You were such an
inspiration to me. Thank you for raising me to never quit
or settle for less. I miss you so much, but I know you're
in a better place. I am sure you're proud of me and
you're always with me. Matthew thank you for being a
great brother! Thank you for all the love and support.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one will discuss the challenges that
multiracial individuals face during the identity
development process. As a newly emerging population,
there are some potential problems that can influence
multiracial individuals' identity development in society.
Historically, this population has been forced into
previously constructed racial categories which have
denied these individuals the right to claim multiple
heritages. Since the year 2000 the United States
government has started to acknowledge the pre-existing
racial categories excluded individuals who identify with
two or more races.

Problem Statement

The United States is the most racially and
ethnically diverse country in the world and the results
of this diversification has contributed to the
increasing number of individuals that identify
themselves as being multiracial (Harris, 2006). For this
study, the terms biracial and multiracial will be used
interchangeably to refer to individuals that are mixed

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with two or more races. This emerging population of individuals who come from these diverse backgrounds may experience some potential problems related to their vague identities and positions in society since racial identity has significant influence in the United States (Gibbs, 2003). It is important that people in our society understand the impact race and identity can have on multiracial individuals. Historically, our society has characterized multiracial individuals as people destined to have severe psychological and emotional problems associated with their unusual positions in society which has been linked to identity conflict (Harris, 2006).

For many years, multiracial individuals have been overlooked in our society despite the increase of individuals that have identified themselves as being multiracial. Multiracial individuals continue to challenge society's traditional notions and assumptions about race since they cannot be placed into the pre-existing ethnic categories (Spickard, 1992). Most individuals that are mixed with more than one race have been forced to pick the ethnicity they most identify with or someone else will decide their ethnicity for them

based on their societal image. For instance, if a child is mixed with white and black, society would use the child's skin color or other physical characteristics to determine their ethnicity. On the other hand, a person who is Black, Caucasian, and Native with a darker color complexion may perceive themselves as being Caucasian, since race is determined by the viewer. This predicament challenges the racial identity of individuals and can create identity confusion since their societal image is not phenotypically Caucasian.

Research on the biracial or multiracial identity development process acknowledges the role society plays and how it influences a person's racial preference. For the first time in the year 2000 the United Stated Census added a category to accommodate the individuals that identify themselves as being more than one race (U.S. Census, 2001). This has had a major impact on individuals in our nation because in the year 2000 approximately 6.8 million individuals in the world identified themselves as being of two or more races (Coleman, 2007). According to Coleman (2007), this number may be an underestimate as it does not account for every individual that identifies with one or more racial ethnicity.

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In the United States, racism and racial discrimination has been a long and difficult struggle. Multiracial people have been affected by these struggles in several ways. For example, the "one drop rule" was adopted throughout the United States. The "one-drop rule" states that a single drop of "black blood" makes a person a black (Thernstrom, 2000). This law was created to keep the white race pure and to prevent interracial marriages, however these laws have denied individuals that are mixed with black and white the right to claim their white heritage, even though their parents and relatives are white (Thernstrom, 2000). These Jim Crow Laws often prohibit some multiracial individuals from claiming the heritage from which they most identified. For instance, "The United States is the only country in the world in which a white mother can have a black child but a black mother cannot have a white child" (Thernstrom, 2000, p. 35). Most people questioned why a white mother could have a black child, but a black mother could not give birth to a white child. People fail to acknowledge how laws from 1876-1965 continues to influence society perspective of racial identity. According to Herman (2004) individual mixed with Black are subjected to

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hypodescent. Hypodescent is defined as the practice by which society will assign a multiracial individual to a specific ethnicity based on his/ her social subordinate parent (Herman, 2004). This is in fact discrimination society does not have the right to determine a person's ethnicity. It is important that our society works to understand the problems that come with race and identity for individuals of mixed heritage. This understanding will allow multiracial individuals the opportunity to develop an identity within their diverse heritage.

Our society is not concern about the issues that arise from being multiracial. The history of racism and racial discrimination and the battles to overcome these obstacles are ongoing for these individuals. The increasing number of people that identify themselves as being multiracial will help this special population with some of the problems they deal with as well as shape the additional research that has been conducted to help identify the problems the problems they face. Additionally, this research can help society identify the lack of services, resources, and theoretical models needed to work with these individuals. It is extremely important for society to provide this population with the

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visibility and support needed, so they are given an equal opportunity to construct their own racial identity.

According to Jacobs (1992), racial development begins during childhood. Is a continuous process throughout childhood and early adolescence. During childhood, there are four critical factors in the identity development of biracial children: constancy of color, internalization of biracial label, racial ambivalence, and perceptual distortion in self and family identification (Jacobs, 1992). These factors help children explore and develop their own identity by helping them recognize their physical attributes and their family's uniqueness. Some children may not be aware of their ethnic statues.

In early adolescence the incorporation of two different heritages into a single identity can become challenging because it can sometimes conflict with both ethnic groups as well as cultural values. Oftentimes peers fail to acknowledge multiracial individuals heritage, family environment, family values, background, beliefs, and identity. During adolescence potential difficulties may also be complicated by an age appropriate search for identity. Conversely, biracial

individuals can develop ambiguous feelings towards their ethnic heritage. In some cases, bi-racial children may be denied membership to certain ethnic groups.

Some of the existing research presents several prominent identity development models for biracial and multiracial individuals. Extant research will serve as a guide for research, knowledge, and coping techniques. A majority of the research related to this topic was conducted after the 2000 Census, since there was a better understanding of how many individuals identify as being biracial or multiracial. These studies can offer additional knowledge and insight on different issues that arise as a result of identity confusion. For instance, some multiracial individuals described incidents of feeling alienated and uncertain about racial identification (Root, 1992), and are frustrated with the challenge they are faced with because of their undefined identity. Research also suggest that "these new classifications acknowledge the idea that biracial identity develops as a result of accepting both African American and European-American categories, yet occurs in a context of social interactions that can be validated or invalidated by others" (Coleman & Carter, 2007, p. 104).

This research shows how society can affect an individual's classification in society since most individual's social interaction influences the validation of their individual ethnic identity. However, in some cases the individual's environment and experiences of rejection from other people can create negative feelings such as depression, alienation, and confusion related to their identity development. Even though, society has no right to determine a person's racial identification.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the development of racial identity among multiracial adults. This project will be used to analyze the gaps in the current theoretical models of identity development. Findings of this study will have a major impact on social work since most social workers are required to work with clients who are racially diverse. It is important that social workers and other helping professional remain culturally sensitive to clients that are biracial and multiracial. Also it will create additional awareness of some of complicated issues this population is required to deal with on a daily basis. This research will provide

professionals with additional background knowledge and techniques that can be used to work with this special population, so clients are not subjected to further oppression.

Despite, the lack of understanding of biracial and multiracial identity development individuals in our society are currently working to incorporate these racial categories allowing these individuals more social acceptance. Throughout history this population has been denied the right to claim the heritage they believe belongs to them. In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau showed that biracial and multiracial individuals are their own race. This was proven when the U.S. Census added an additional category. More institutions have modified their ethnic questionnaires to allow individuals to select more than one racial category. Most research available shows the identity development process can have a major impact on the psychological functioning of people that are biracial or multiracial. Additionally, there are a number of external and internal factors that can play a role in a person's identity development. The current theoretical models are a good starting point to understand the identity development of this population,

however additional research is needed to have a better understanding of the effects the identity development process can have on this population, and given that race is such a significant component in our society.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

Multiracial identity development plays a significant role in our society. One of the challenges is the census did not identify individuals that were mixed race in previous years. This has created some additional issues, for example, the "one drop law" continues to influence the identity of individuals that are mixed with African American heritage (Thernstrom, 2000). Individuals who were raised prior to the 1960's were taught that multiracial individuals were biologically inferior and "...they put human race at risk of being extinction, because of their inability to reproduce" (Jackson, 2006, pp. 72-73). Prior to 2000, these individuals have been forced into picking a specific racial category it may be hard to conform to their newly constructed perspective. Additionally, this research may help explore how family members in an interracial family effects the racial identity development process of its members as well as

other factors that have power over identity development. This study will examine other factors, such as peers, environment, experiences, culture, and interactions in society to assess these factors range of influence on racial identity development. In addition, it will also be used to evaluate the external and internal dynamics associated with the formation of multiracial individual's identities.

Multiracial identity development models can benefit social workers in understanding the complexity of issues related to these clients. This will assist social workers in the distinction of issues that are associated with societal factors versus issues related to identity formation and development. It can also provide some addition insight on theoretical models that currently exist and add details that can provide social workers with a better understanding of the issues linked with the identity development formulation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Most of the existing research related to multiracial individuals has served as a guide to identify new research approaches; however, most of the research lacks in-depth knowledge due to issues related to the complexity of this population. This chapter will discuss some of the current and early racial identity developmental models to see if these models can be applied to multiracial individuals.

Literature Review

Currently, there are few studies that show the impact and development of race and identity on multiracial adolescents and their journeys into adulthood. This also influenced the lack of knowledge regarding the challenges, development process, and techniques that can assist with identity development. Also, most of the research on biracial identity is grounded on social identity theory (Bracey, Bamaca, & Umana-Taylor, 2004) or it lacks the in-depth knowledge that is directly related to the issues of identity

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development. Given that, multiracial individual confront society's racial norms, obscuring ethnic and racial boundaries and challenges the existing long standing biological, moral, and societal meanings of race (Root, 1992, p. 3) some of the empirical research that has been reviewed is incorporated into some of the current identity models by Poston (1990).

Poston (1990) identified the following five-stages of identity development: personal identity, choice of group categorization, enmeshment/ denial, appreciation, and integration. Personal identity is the initial stage of Poston biracial identity development model. In this stage, the individual has a sense of "independence" from their race background. Next individuals move into the choice of group categorization, at this stage individual's may feel pushed to pick an identity. Poston (1990) stated, in this stage a biracial individuals will feel forced to select a specific racial group to participate in activities with their peers. This stage can emerge into enmeshment or denial depending on how much support an individual receives. Following this stage, biracial individuals move on to the appreciation stage then integration. At this point, biracial

individuals appreciate their heritage and begin to integrate their values and cultural beliefs. According to Poston (1990), biracial individuals experience some conflict and periods of maladjustment during the racial identity development process. Other models conceptualize biracial identity development are age appropriately based. However, these models can be used as example models to help people have a better understanding, of the racial identity development process.

Current Models of Identity Development

Some of the current models and theories offer additional knowledge and background on the existing theories. However, "the psychological well-being and ethnic identity of biracial adults are largely underrepresented topics in current scholarly literature, despite the growing population of biracial and multiracial individuals in the United States" (Bracey, Bamaca, & Umana-Taylor, 2004, p. 123). This underrepresented topic has very little information on the impact that race has on these individuals, and there is very little follow up information on how this can affect this population as they transition during their lifespan.

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Additional, most research fails to address multiracial individuals who describe experiences of feeling alienated, frustrated, racial uncertainty, adjustment issues, and dynamic that can potential impact racial development formation (Root, 1992). With the lack of research on this topic it is very difficult to assist individuals that experience frustration related to identity confusion. This topic needs more attention and a larger sample population, as well as alternative research techniques to obtain additional data regarding these issues (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008).

According to Pedrotti, Edwards, and Lopez (2008), identity development process differs in multiracial clients when compared to mono-racial individuals. This may be due to the complex issues associated with their unique racial heritage and society's inability to define these individuals in society. In order to begin to understand some of the special issues these individuals face you must understand these multiracial individual's place in our society.

On the other hand, the models that are being currently used are the following models: Poston Model and Kerwin and Ponterotto's Model, which look at the biracial

identity development and it also suggested that age can play a role in the identity development process. For example, in Kich's three-stage model for biracial identity development, he describes how individuals move from one stage to the next. Stages begin at age three and continue until late adolescence or early adulthood. This model describes "incongruent feelings between self-perceptions and external-perceptions, through struggles for social acceptance and self acceptance, until they fully internalize a bicultural and biracial identity" (Milville et al., 2005, p. 509) additionally, there are several additional things that compel an individual to select a racial preference.

According Poston (1990), there are several societal, communal, and parental factors that influences individuals choice of racial identity. Other theories that examined this topic have been limited to the current data available. Giving this growing population more visibility, will create additional resources and theories for the necessary background and knowledge related to this topic. Some theories that need to be taken into consideration are person in environment theory and Erikson identity vs. role confusion, both theories can

have an influence on this research. Piaget cognitive development theory can also be use in the construction of knowledge and insight. This theory helps children recognize and understand patterns of complex information.

Early Models of Identity Development

Additionally, models that are currently being used to work with biracial individuals come from the groundbreaking models of Afro-Americans (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2007). Stonequist was one of the first people to mention multiraciality, which describes racial hybrids as individuals that are of two different ethnic backgrounds or "worlds" who do not fully belong to neither groups," which causes them to experience adjustment and identity issues" (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez 2007, p. 193). Most of the previous research related to this topic is discussed from a negative perspective; as a result, these models challenged identity within the individuals and failed to acknowledge the effects of external factors such as cultural, environmental, interaction with others, and societal pressures (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2007). These

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issues are similar to the problems that multiracial individuals face.

Earlier racial developmental models begin the process of understanding how multiracial individuals different ethnic backgrounds can challenge one another and create identity crisis, individuals may feel as though they are suppose to adapt to both ethnic backgrounds. In adolescence, identity development can create frustration and anger, fear, shame, guilt, disloyalty, and inferiority when children recognize they are different from their peers (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008). Throughout, early adolescence children desire to be accepted, it is often "...difficult for children that feel different from their peers because this necessarities the separation of family and friends, which can lead to feelings of disloyalty" (Crawford, Alaggia, 2008, p. 85), as well as guilt and shame. These factors can contribute to internalized problems, and external factors that are related to conflicts with identity formation. The internalized problems occur when a person feels the need to identify with one specific racial identity, and if a person's family and peers fail to

recognize and support the individual choice can create

additional conflicts.

Bi-Racial Identity Development

The current models used for the racial development

of individuals that are of only two different ethnic

groups. One of the challenges of the biracial identity

development models is the lack of research on the

application of these models to individuals that are mixed

with three or more races. The goal of this study is to

explore the process of racial identity development among

multiracial adults. The purpose of this study is to

examine if the biracial models can be applied to

individuals of several different ethnic backgrounds,

since there are limits on the characteristics of the

current and earlier models. Current research,

(Rockquemore & Brunsma, 2009) suggest that the identity

development among multiracial individuals is not as

clearly defined as the previous models. Most of the

previous models fail to address how ones environment can

play a role on the development of their racial identity,

as well as, how to address the internal and external

dynamics that can influence identity development and how it changes over periods of time.

Rockquemore and Brunsma (2009) have designed a framework of bi-racial identity development based on previous qualitative research. This design identifies four identity outcomes that biracial individuals can choose from: singular identity, border identity, protean identity, and transcendent identity. This model does in fact explore the environmental influence and the factors related to identity validation (Carter & Coleman, 2007). The characteristics of this model can also be used in working with multiracial individuals. How the concepts are used to describe the four biracial categories would challenge multiracial individuals to pick two main identities that they identify with.

Summary

It is obvious that parts of each of these models are used in the development of one's identity; however, each has a slightly different focused in what is thought to be salient or influential to ones identity. The incorporation of a model, that can explore the integration of all the models can recognize and address

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new categories used to describe individuals that are mixed with three or more ethnicities. The incorporation of a new model can assist society in resolving the present and future identity issues, which society refuses to acknowledge as a problem (Root, 1998).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the identity development process among multiracial adults. This study will discuss the study design, sampling method, and sampling process, techniques used collect the data, procedures, and the survey instrument. In addition, it will also discuss how the data was analyzed and the limitation of the study.

Study Design

The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine multiracial identity development process models and to assess whether or not current models can be applied to multiracial adults. For this study, the most appropriate study design is an exploratory design to analyze the racial factors of multiracial identity development process. This approach deemed to be the most logical, since there is no single study that clearly explains the racial identity process for multiracial individuals.

A qualitative research study works best with this exploratory study, because of the in-depth complex

understanding needed to research this topic (Grinnell, 2001). However, some of the demographical data has been interpreted with quantitative methods so that all of the data can be measured in a comprehensive and cohesive way. Interviews were conducted to administer the qualitative survey design was used to question participants about their experience with racial identity development. This was used to investigate how relevant the current racial identity development model is for individuals that are from various backgrounds. It will also address other fundamental factors that are needed to examine multiracial identity development and how these models differ in the identity development process.

Currently, there are several bi-racial identity development models that are used to assist individuals with the identity development processes. It is hypothesized that multiracial individual's identity development differs from person to person; as a result, not all multiracial individual fit the criteria for the bi-racial identity development model. Some of the racial development process is similar; however, multiracial individuals will de-emphasis certain aspects of racial development and race. This will be measured by how much

culture played a role in the identity development process.

Sampling

For this study, ten individuals that identify as coming from multiple ethnic descents were selected to participant in interviews. Participants involved in this study ranged from the ages of 18-54. This sample population size was selected because of the time constraints of this research study. One of the major concerns was the availability of participants. Since this is, such a special and unique population a snowball method was used to find participants.

Data Collection and Instruments

Participants were asked to respond to questions regarding their thoughts, beliefs, culture, upbringing, and development of their own racial identity. These questions were then compared to previous models of bi-racial identity development. This survey gives the participants an opportunity to select all ethnic groups that apply. In this study, the primary focus is related to the identity formation. The identity development process for these individuals is measured by a series of

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interview questions that will assess the participant's upbringing, cultural history, thought, beliefs, interactions with others, experiences, challenges, racial development, and history of how their racial identity was formulated. Participants were also asked about the first time they acknowledged their ethnic identity or racial group of preference. Other questions focused on memories, experiences, hardships, and others response to their racial identity and whether or not these factors had any influence on their identity.

There are several benefits and limitations of the data collection method and instrument that are worth noting. For instance, this study will provide some additional insight on how effective the racial identity development methods are for multiracial individuals. Some of the study identified limitations of self-selection bias, since individuals are being asked to identify themselves. Additionally, some participants may not be willing to disclose certain information. Then again, some participants may not have a clear understanding of their racial identity in society or may lack the personal awareness or understanding of how their racial identity was developed.

The instrument that was used to survey participants has been taken from previous research. This will strengthen the survey. However, some of the limitation may include some of the questions not be applicable to all participants. Additionally, some participants declined to answers question that were related to experiences or felt that certain questions were too personal to answer. This qualitative study was restricted to a manageable sample population, as a result of the studies restrictions on the sample size it cannot be applied to a generalize population (Grinnell, 2001).

Other limitations include the problems of distinguishing causalities among individuals interviewed. Question about participant's truth value can cause issues related to major limitations (Grinnell, 2001). Participants may withhold certain aspects that played an additional role in their identity development process which can influence the overall quality of data.

See Appendix A to view all the interview questions.

Procedures

This sample was gathered using a snowball sampling method. This sample interviewed individuals that

previously revealed to the researcher that they identify themselves as multiracial. Some of the individuals used in this research were student from California State University, San Bernardino and Long Beach, and members of the community. The data collection took place at the universities and Starbucks. It took approximately 20-30 minutes to conduct the interviews with each individual participant. Participants were read the informed consent and then asked to initial the informed consent. Individuals that completed the interviews were asked if they can refer the researcher to other individuals that identify themselves as multiracial. Individuals that participated in the study received a free coffee at the Starbucks.

Protection of Human Subjects

All participants used within this study will remain anonymous. Prior to interview, participants were informed of the purpose of the study and confidentially. To ensure the protection of human subjects the participant were asked to check and initial the inform consent. These steps were used to protect the individual's identity and provide proof that participants were informed of the

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risks that are associated with the study. After the

interviews the participants were given a debrief

statement. The debrief statement provided the

participants with contact information if they need

additional assistance or information regarding this

study. Some interviews were recorded participants were

informed that all recordings and data collected from the

interview will remain confidential and anonymous. All

tapes, interview notes, and informed consent forms will

be placed in a locked boxed in the researcher's home.

Informed consent and debrief statement will be

included in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

The researcher selected the grounded theory (2006)

as the theory used to analysis the data from a

post-positivism theoretical approach. According to Morris

(2006), post-positive uses the positivist paradigm as a

beginning point, and then accepts the worldview.

Post-positivists collect data through qualitative

interviews for a more inductive exploration of identity

development. Its function is associated with grounded

theory, since grounded theories methodologies are referred to as "a way of life".

In grounded theory, a researcher will not start a project with any preconceived assumption, unless their purpose is to extend existing research topic (Morris, 2006). In this study, the primary goal was to extend existing research on the topic of racial identity development formation. Post-positivism constructs of grounded theory looks to discover, develop, collect data, and analyze emerging data that is associated with the social phenomena (Morris, 2006).

For this study, post-positivism methods were selected to search for patterns that emerge in the data collected from interviews. The Researcher has selected the "bottom-up" approach to interpret the data. Morris (2006) stated the bottom-up approach to analyze data is a more inductive process. The bottom-up approach suggests the researcher uses various stages of "synthesis" when interpreting qualitative data this will help increase the complexity of the data. Next, the researcher is going to convert the narrative text from a sequence of terms to theoretical statements which Morris (2006) defines as "regularities in nature". For this theoretical approach

the researcher can decide their purpose and focus. Concepts which emerge from the data will be used by the researcher to develop the theory or to create a new theory.

First the researcher must transfer all the data collected during the interviews into a more manageable format. All data collected will be transcribed and saved on to a disk. Then, the data will be coded using open coding and axial coding.

Open Coding

When open coding data the researcher will begin analyzing the data with an open mind. An open mind will give the researcher an opportunity to examine all data for any possible interpretations this process is done without any preconceived bias. At this time, words, lines, sentences, and paragraphs are selected that identify some type of theme or concepts that are linked.

Axial Coding

Axial coding is described as the process of linking categories and statements which forms some kind of relationship between categories. In chapter four, axial coding will be illustrated in the figures throughout the section.

Selective Coding

After all opening coding and axial coding is completed the researcher begins the selective coding process. Selective coding is the process where categories are refined to develop a theory. First, the researcher will need to identity the main categories. Then, the researcher will connect emerging unified theme from the transcripts and from the open and axial codes.

During the analyzing the researcher is focused on developing concepts, categories, and linking statements that describes the process that goes along with the development of the statement (Morris, 2006). Since the researcher is interesting in looking at how actions, interactions, noted movement, sequences, change, and evolvement influence the racial identity development process for multiracial individuals.

Summary

Chapter three explains the participants selection process used in this study. The steps used to gather data, and interview process. Additionally, this chapter covers the data analysis methods. The researcher interprets the data using Post-Positivist qualitative

data analysis. The researcher has developed concepts of codes and themes from the data collected. This process when identifying concepts uses open coding and responses from the interviews. Open codes are then used to categorize concepts to demonstrate how themes are associated to open codes and axial codes. Lastly the researcher uses selective coding to integrate and cultivate categories for the concepts (Morris, 2006). This is used to build a theory about identity development among multiracial individuals.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was aimed at investigating the racial identity development process among multiracial individuals to determine if the process of multiracial identity development differs from the current models of racial identity development. To achieve this goal, responses to qualitative interviews were analyzed using methods of coding. The methods of coding used were open, axial, and selective. The definitions of these codes were explained and demonstrated in the data analysis section in chapter three. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample's demographic characteristics located in the Appendix. The research used the post positivist theory to interpret the data since the researcher is seeking to discover the differences in the multiracial identity development process. This theory was utilized because the primary focus was to discover patterns identified by the researcher.

Presentation of the Findings

In this study, the researcher used the post-positivist methodology approach to discover patterns in the qualitative data. Grounded theory has been used for data analysis to analyze the data, since interviews were all based on the participant's interpretation of their own identity development (Grinnell, 2001). According to Morris (2006) Post-Positivist data analysis was used to seek new insight on the identity development process for multiracial individuals. Post-positivist theory is a theoretical foundation which emerged from the grounded theoretical model. Grounded theory focuses on the creation of a theory and data that is ground on a specific focus (Morris, 2006). This theory takes a systematic approach to analyze the data. The researcher is continuously comparing the data collected to construct a theory.

Most of the data previously recorded was written in a journal during the actual interviews, so the first step was for the researcher to create interview transcripts of all the data collected. Then the transcripts for all the data collected was analyzed to breakdown the findings in a more comprehensive and cohesive manner. According to

Morris (2006) the bottom-down approach to interpret the qualitative data would be the most appropriate since the researcher is interested in identifying patterns to describe the process of identity development among multiracial individuals.

These narrative interviews were open coded by breaking down interview data into themes. According to Morris (2006) themes are defined as ideas, concepts, and phrases used which are then sorted and labeled by these themes. For this research, the researcher used open coding when identifying words, and fragments of responses that occurred during the interviews. Next, the researcher developed a connection between the different codes this process is called axial coding. Axial coding was processed by identifying commonalities in the interviewee's statements. After selective coding was used to integrate and refine categories, and concepts to develop theory of the identity development process (Morris, 2006) selective codes are located in chapter five.

Open Coding and Axial Coding

The process of open coding is illustrated in the figure on the following pages throughout this chapter.

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Axial coding Morris (2006) states is defined as the relationships between categories or concepts "identified" and "articulated". These relationships that emerge from the collected data are then described with charts that explain it association with the different codes. Charts illustrated on the following pages will explicate the codes and their relationships between codes.

Theme which emerged in this study were the following: perspective of racial identity, upbringing, influence, and challenges and experiences. The themes in this chapter are identified as headings. Open codes which developed themes were the following: time, appearance, chooses, raised, family influence, peers, environment and society, attitudes, behaviors, emotional issues, opinion, possible resources, personal experience, discrimination, conflicts, internal conflicts, and flexible boundaries. All of these open codes are defined in this study as subheadings within this chapter.

Following the discussion the researcher will develop themes and codes. Themes used throughout this study were developed by the researcher. These themes are from the patterns that emerged during the data analysis process. Morris (2006) states that the next step following coding

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is identify the connection between the open codes this procedure is defined as axial coding. Throughout, the chapter the researcher will use illustration to demonstrate the relationships of the axial coding. These charts will demonstrate the dimension of the axial codes. This dimension will show the association between the links and codes. The charts on the following pages will provide the reader with an image of the themes and coded that have been used in this study.

Perspective of Racial Identity

"Perspective of racial identity" refers to how individuals view their racial identity. This theme was selected, because participants were asked to identify the racial identity. Additionally, they were asked if their perspective of their racial identity has ever changed. Open coded which were mostly identified with perspective of racial identity are the following open codes: time, appearance, and choice.

The open codes of time, appearance, and choice describe the things that affected the participant's view of their racial identity. These codes were selected, because several participants mention how these things

influenced the development of their perspective of racial identity. Six interviewees acknowledged that their racial perspective has changed overtime. While four of the participant's interviewed denied any change in their racial identity.

Time

The term "time" refers to how individual's racial identity changed or evolved from birth to their current stage in life. This coded was selected because six interviewees stated that over time their perspective of the racial identity has changed as a result of personal growth and change in perspectives. Four other interviewee's denied that time had any influence on their view of their racial identity. When asked if your racial identity every changed, interviewee #2 stated, that "her racial identity has changed from early childhood till now". The interviewee was asked to elaborate on how time influenced change of her racial perspective she revealed that "her racial identity was influenced by the certain period in life, circumstances, and other factors that impacted her life."

Interviewee #6 contributed to this open code of time when she stated that overtime her perception of her

racial identity changed from childhood to adolescence. She stated that overtime her views of her racial identity has changed because of different things she's experienced over an array of different periods in life. Additionally, data from interviewee #3 stated that his racial identity changes as he got older and was informed of his father's background and introduced to the relatives on his father's side of the family. On the other hand interviewee #8 stated that her perspective of her racial identity has never changed; however, experience over the years has educated her on her cultural history. Furthermore, her positive and negative experiences over time have also help validate her racial identity.

Additionally four of the interviewees reported that the different people, situations, and periods in their lives influence their racial identity. Interviewee #2 stated that her racial identity is still developing, and will continue till she has a better understanding of her racial identity." According to interviewee #10, "her racial identity has continued to evolve throughout her life, and situation, and periods in life have had a major influence on her racial identity. The subsequent axial

coding chart shows the code, "time". Dimensions of the

code, "time", are described within the chart below.

Racial identity changed		Racial identity evolved
	Time	
Experience and education influenced change.		Education on culture furthered development

Figure 1. Time

This chart describes how time has influenced racial

identity as stated by the participants during the

interviews. Some of the interviewees shared that their

perspective of racial identity changed or evolved.

Participates that stated their racial identity has changed

because of influence, time and education. Other

participants interviewed said that time had no influence

on their racial identity; however, education over time was

something that helped develop a better understanding of

their culture. The illustration demonstrates which aspects of time had the most influence on the interviewee's thoughts about their racial identity.
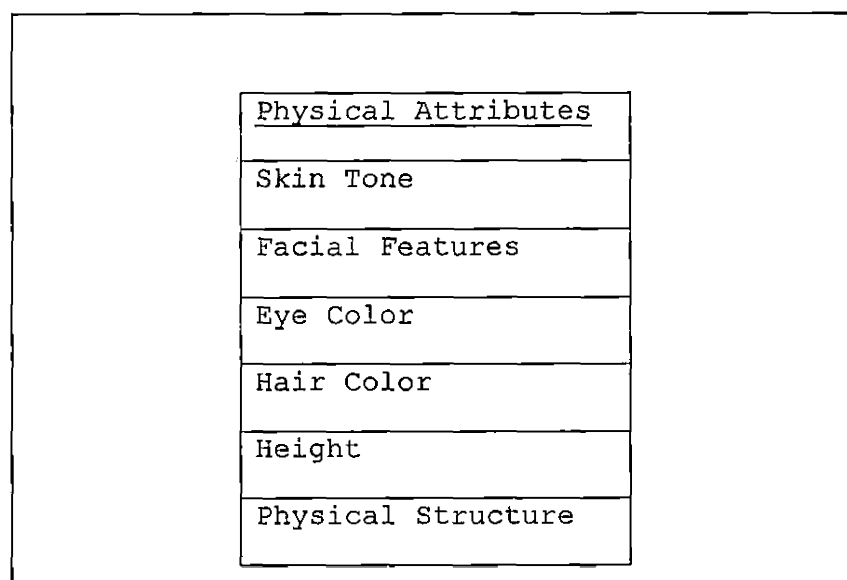
Appearance

"Appearance" refers to the question in the interview, where the researcher asked about the ethnicity they most identified with. Some interviewees said their physical attributes influence their view of their racial identity and how society views them. This code was selected, because participant #4 stated that she "looks more Hispanic" and her features "influences others view of her ethnic as well as her own".

The data was also supported when, interviewee #5 contributed by saying "she never thinks about the fact that her skin is dark"; in spite of the fact that, "people always assume that she's Mexican, Black, Brazilian, Italian, or Samoan and get genuinely confused when she tells people she's part Dutch due to the way she looks." Interviewee #6 said that she "identifies mostly as Hispanic, but her physical features are associated with Caucasian." conversely, Interviewee #3 said that since his "physical features are European and his sibling are different he identifies his self as Italian." Another

example is, Interviewee #10 she acknowledged all of her

ethnicities, "because of her unique appearance and skin

tone."

The table demonstrated below explains which physical

attributes have had an impact on these individual's

identity development. The chart illustrates the physical

traits which have had a major influence on participant's

view of their racial identity.

Physical Attributes
Skin Tone
Facial Features
Eye Color
Hair Color
Height
Physical Structure

Figure 2. Appearance

This chart illustrates the factors related to

appearance, which influences an individual's racial

identity as stated by the participants during the

interviews. Some of the interviewees shared that their

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appearances influence their perspective of racial identity. Participants stated their physical attributes, such as: skin tone, facial features, eye color, hair color, height, and physical structure influences the way individuals view themselves, as well as other in society. Most of the participant's stated that their physical attributes contribute to their perceptions of their identity and the way people treat them in society.

Choose

The term "choose" was picked because several interviewees revealed that they will either identify their self based on the comfort of the situation, and individuals there around. However, some interviewees at times did not feel like justifying their racial identity, so it is easier to say "mixed" or to identify with one specific racial group.

Interviewee participant #1 said that "sometimes he will tell people that he's mixed or just black, because he does not like explaining that he is mixed." Additionally, Interviewee #2 stated that her "racial identity varies by who she's around, situations, and time". She added to the research by saying the thing she likes about being multiracial is the fact that she can

"choose the culture that she mostly identifies with and she's never restricted to one racial category." Another example is Interviewee participant #6, she also stated that "she feels more comfortable identifying herself as Hispanic." "Since she feel like she can relate more with Hispanic cultures and values". Four of the participants stated that they prefer to say that they are mixed. In fact, Interviewee #9 said that she dislikes when people assume she's a specific race. "She identifies herself as mixed or other and that's how individuals should refer to her ethnicity."


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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  ┌───────────────┐        ┌───────────────────┐      │
│  │ Participant   │        │ Participant does  │      │
│  │ choose to     │        │ not choose to     │      │
│  │ discuss       │        │ reveal/ discuss   │      │
│  │ ethnicity     │        │ ethnicity.        │      │
│  └───────────────┘        └───────────────────┘      │
│          ┌──────────────────────┐                    │
│          │      Choose          │                    │
│          └──────────────────────┘                    │
│  ┌───────────────┐        ┌───────────────────┐      │
│  │ Participant   │        │ Participants      │      │
│  │ identifies with│       │ stated they are   │      │
│  │ specific      │        │ mixed             │      │
│  │ ethnicities   │        │                   │      │
│  └───────────────┘        └───────────────────┘      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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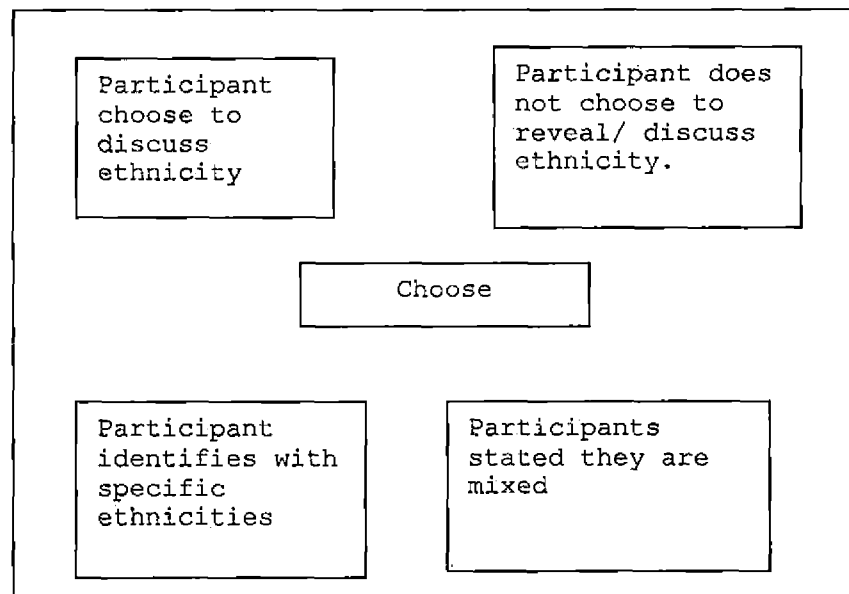
Figure 3. Choose

This chart shows the coding for the dimensions of the code "choose". Individuals that participated in this study were asked what they tell people when asked about their racial identity. Some participants stated that they either identify all their ethnicities or choose to say their mixed. However, other participants choose to only identify with a specific racial category.

Upbringing

"Upbringing" is a term that is used to refer to a person childhood and adolescence experience these individual may have had. The following codes appeared with this theme: background, peers, and environment.

Raised

"Raised" is used to refer to the sort of childhood and adolescent experiences which has played a part in the racial identity development process. Raised differs from family influence, because it includes other factors such as an individuals education, training, interactions with others, and other influences while growing up. An example is when Interviewee participant #1 said that "he grew up in a predominately black neighborhood in East Oakland, California." Throughout childhood his family attended a

predominately black church, and he was only exposed to African American individuals and culture", as a result, "he identified himself more as African American, than his other ethnicities."

In addition, Interviewee #8 stated how her upbringing was primarily Muslim she was raised never to eat meat and wear a turban. She was raised in a diverse neighborhood in New York, the African American children would make fun of her lifestyle. The interviewee stated her upbringing influenced her racial identity during her early adolescent. Around the age of sixteen, her religious beliefs and education about her racial background influenced her to have a new perspective of her racial identity. She stated that these factors helped her to not only identify with her Egyptian background she began to identify with her Native American and Irish background as well. Interviewee #10 added to this study by stating that her childhood upbringing affected her view on her racial identity. Additionally, "her family, school and community educated her on race; however, not everyone directly acknowledged her racial identity. She was also taught to be respectful of other cultures and to be open to new things." This helped her develop her

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racial identity because she grew up to become very

diverse. She was given the ability to learn and accepted

her identify of herself without being criticized.

In the following axial chart explains the code,

"raised". The illustration of the code, raised will be

depicted within the chart below.


```
                         High Racial
                         identity
                         association

                                              Low
    High                                      influence
    influence                                 during
    during                                    upbringing
    upbringing

                         Low Racial
                         identity
                         association
```
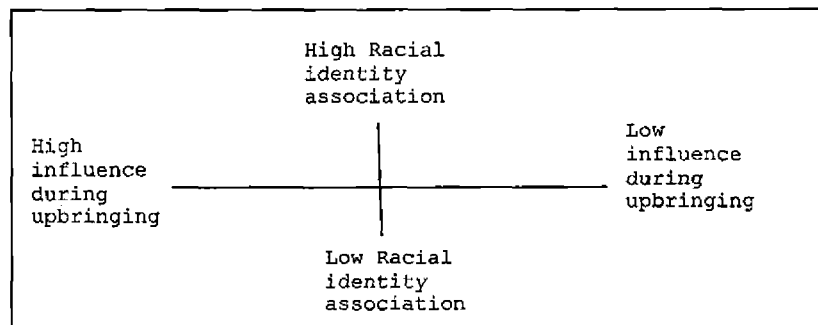
Figure 4. Raised

This chart demonstrates the different dimensions of

the code "raised". Participants in this study were asked

to discuss the way they were raised. The chart displays

how an individual upbringing can influence the

development of certain aspects of their racial identity.

Family Influence

"Family Influence" refers to the way an individual

family beliefs, practices, history, and family's

traditions, family's dynamics, and family structure

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influenced an individual racial identity. "Interviewee #5 added to this by saying her family raised her with both Indonesian and Dutch cultural beliefs. Since she's "first generation American this influenced the way her parent's raised her. Her parent's family practices, family structure, culture, and family history were always a part of her upbringing". She added that her upbringing still influences the way that she identifies with her culture as well as others which has taught her to respect other upbringing and culture". Another example is Interviewee #6; she stated that her upbringing and family practices have played a major role in the way that she identifies with her Hispanic heritage". Interviewee #7, stated that his "upbringing and not being around his father influenced his decision to identify himself as Puerto Rican heritage. He was raised by his mother who was Puerto Rican; as a result most of practices, values, and cultured used during his childhood were associated with Puerto Rican beliefs."

In the following axial chart explains the code, "family influence". The illustration of the code, family influence will be depicted within the chart below.

48
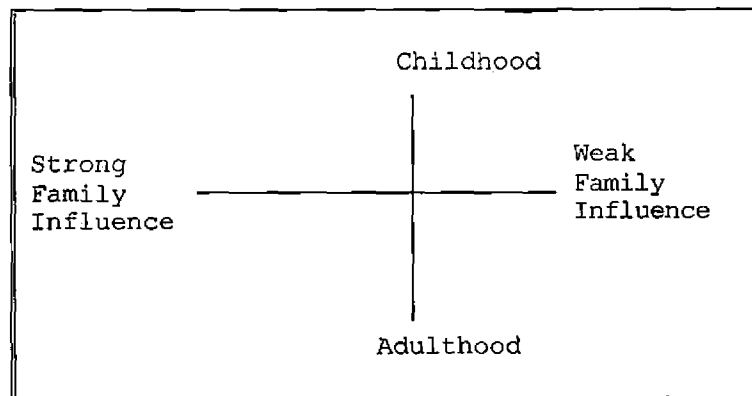
Figure 5. Family Influence

      This diagram shows the dimensions of the coding

"family influence". Individuals that participated in this

study were asked about how their families influenced

their racial identity development. This section revealed

that most of the participant's were strongly influenced

by their families. On the other hand, other participants

stated that their family influence was weak and did not

influence their racial identity.

Peers

      "Peers" refers to how individual's peers influenced

and assisted them with their racial identity development

process. Several of the interviewee's stated that their

peers had some influence on the development of their

racial identity. Interviewee #10 stated,"most of her

peers are also multiracial individuals." Another

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interviewee #2 said that, "she did not feel like she could be herself around her friends of different ethnicities." Interviewee #3 stated, "he does not fitting in with peers that are only one ethnicity." He added, that most mono racial individuals did not acknowledge his Hispanic origins.

Other interviewee's stated that often times their peers would remind them of their differences. For instance, interviewee #5 said, "her Dutch friends would always remind her that she's not only Dutch." Another interviewee #6 contributed when she stated, she was "never invited to her Caucasian peer's events, because she was not like the other kids" and "they would remind her that she looked weird all the time." As a result, she was "reluctant to hang around Caucasian individuals"; however, she always felt more comfortable hanging out with her Hispanic peers, since she identifies her racial identity as Hispanic.

The following axial chart describes the code, "peers". The illustration of the code, peers will be shown within the chart below.
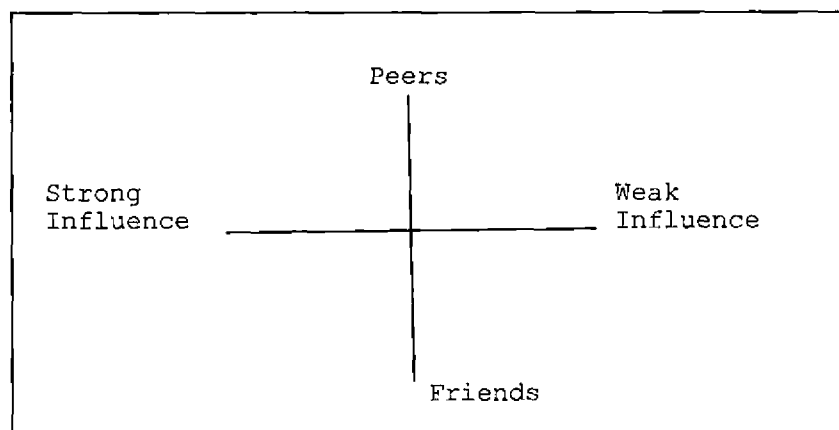
Figure 6. Peers

This chart illustrates the dimensions for the coding "peers". Individuals that participated in this study were asked about how their peers and friends influenced their racial identity development. In this section some participants revealed how peers and friends were a strong influence on their identity formation. Other participants stated that their peers had a weak influence on their racial identity.

Environment and Society

"Environment and society" was used in this open code since it was described to have a major influence on how a person's environment influences the development process. Additionally, it refers to the way society identifies these individuals as well as the way others treat them. According to Interviewee #7, he moved from a

predominately White and Puerto Rican neighborhood to the Ghetto in Connecticut. He stated that his environment and his interaction with others in society had a major impact on the way he identifies with others. Additionally, Interviewee #8 said "she grew up in New York City in a diverse area. She said that her environment helped contribute to her racial identity development, because she was exposed to every culture. "This was supported when Interviewee #2 revealed that her racial identity changed as she transitioned into different environments. In fact, she described feelings of alienation from others other adolescence in the community because of her diverse background.

This code was supported when Interviewee #6 acknowledged that she "grew up in a primarily Latino neighborhood." Then, she stated that her "exposure to Hispanic culture helped her develop a better understanding of her racial identity, since she prefers to identity herself as Hispanic." Interviewee #4 stated that her environment has contributed to her racial identity development, because she was mainly around Latino individuals. She also said that society identifies

her as Hispanic, as a result, of her appearance and cultural values.

Influence

"Influence", refers to other factors that contribute to the development of an individual's identity development. The researcher selected this theme, because most of the interviewee's stated that there were other factors that contributed to their identity development process. This theme includes the following coded: attitudes, behaviors, emotional issues, opinion, and flexible boundaries.

Attitude

"Attitude" refers to attitudes that are related to the development of their racial identity and attitude towards other races which are association with an individual racial identity.

This code was picked because, Interviewee #3 said, "his attitude is more negative around his family", additionally, "he believes that mono-racial individuals look down on multiracial people." Another also contributed (Interviewee #4) by stating that mono-racial individuals believe that they are superior to multiracial

individuals. Five other interviewee's expressed the same believes of mono-racial individuals superior believes. On the other hand, all of the interviewee's stated that they are open to other cultural beliefs and values. Each interviewee stated that "most multiracial individual are more diverse when compared to mono-racial individuals"; however, Interviewee #5 noted that "she's interacted with mult-ethnic people who either have completely disregarded one half of whom they are or who have embraced every aspect of their diverse culture.

Behaviors

"Behaviors" refers to individual's actions and reactions and their relations to others or objects. This coding was selected, since some of the interviewee's stated that others actions influence multiracial individuals reaction and behaviors regarding their racial identity.

Interviewee #6 supported this category when she said, "that she notices that when multiracial are successful mono-racial individuals try to claim that individuals." Additionally, Interviewee #10 stated, "when she attempted to identify with all of her ethnic backgrounds she is denied access to mono-racial groups,

when she attempted to relate to them." Also, Interviewee #9 added by saying "when people assume that she is African American she reacts very negatively since she is not African American", so she only identifies as multiracial. Interviewee #1 stated that his behavior is negative towards mono-racial individuals, because he feels like mono-racial individuals don't allow him to identify with his Caucasian heritage without individuals making fun of him.

Emotional Issues

"Emotional Issues", refers to some of the emotional issues that multiracial individual have experienced, because of problems associated with their identity development process. This was picked as an open code, because several interviewees acknowledged how they experienced alienation and depression as a result of being unsure of their identity. Other revealed that their peers would isolate them and prevent them for participating in events with other individuals.

Several of the interviewee's acknowledged that they have experienced depression and/or alienation because they felt as though they did not fit into a specific racial category. Some of the other's said that they felt

as though they did not fit in with their family because of their different appearance and beliefs. For instance, interviewee #3 said "his family always teased him about being adopted, because he looks different from all his siblings." He stated that he "did experience severe depression and alienation since he looks different from his siblings, family members, and other relatives treated him different from his siblings. Interviewee #2 acknowledged that, "she has experienced both depression and alienation as a result of being unsure of racial identity, not fitting in with others, unable to relate to others, and racial confusion." When she was asked to elaborate she stated her unique appearance and beliefs where part of the reason that others did not relate to her.

Opinion

"Opinion" refers to the way that an individual belief's influences their thoughts about their racial identity. This open coded was selected because several interviewees' expressed their opinions were associated with their racial identity. Also, several interviews reported similar positive and negative opinions that are associated with their racial identity.

A piece of data that supported this code was when, Interviewee #1, reported that "people treat him different, because he looked black." Additionally, he believes that mono-racial individuals have a personal bias against multiracial individuals". Another interviewee #3 stated that "his opinions on has racial identity has had a major influence on the way his family interacts with him. Interviewee #6 said that," she chooses to identify herself as Mexican, because she does not feel connected to her Caucasian or Guatemalan backgrounds." Interviewee #10 stated that "she identifies as multiracial since so many people question her identity."

The following axial chart describes the code, "opinion". The illustration of the code, opinion will be shown within the chart below.

```
                            High association
        ꝺ                     with racial
                                identity

                                    |
                                    |
                                    |
                                    |
    Positive  _____  Negative
    Opinions                        |               Opinions
                                    |
                                    |
                                    |
                                    |

                             Low association
                               with racial
                                 identity
```
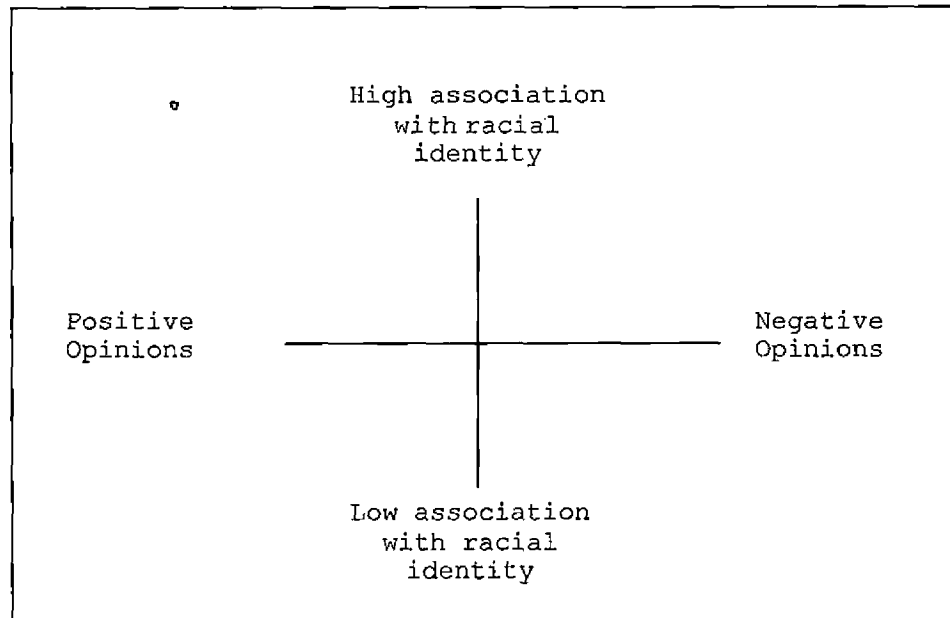
Figure 7. Opinion

This chart is an illustration of the code "opinion".

Several of the interviewees acknowledged their opinions

that are associated with their racial identity. In

addition, participants revealed strong opinions about

mono-racial individuals, beliefs, thoughts, and views of

their racial identity, as well as, opinions about the way

the others treat multiracial individuals. The charts

illustration describes negative and positive opinions

that multiracial individuals revealed in this study and

its association with identity development.

Possible Resources

"Possible Resources" is used to refer to possible services and resources that could benefit this population. Interviewee's were asked during the interview to identify some services or resources that could benefit this population. Participants were asked to identify any additional needs which could possibly benefit multiracial individuals.

The coding was supported when six of the interviewees stated that education on race and culture should be provided to multiracial individuals, as well as mono-racial individuals. Interviewee #5 added by stating "additional books and materials geared to other types of multi-racial groups. Since most of the materials are on Black/Caucasian. She also, believes that society needs to expand their perception of race." Furthermore, five of the interviewee's stated that grants and scholarships should be offered to multiracial individuals. Interviewee #1 stated that "multiracial individuals should have the opportunity to volunteer and be exposed to different cultures." Interviewee #5 and interviewee #10, stated, another thing that would benefit this population is representation. Both interviewees stated that multiracial

individuals should have a representation like other

minority groups. Society would have a better

understanding of challenges, discrimination, and other

issues that emerge, because of how society disregards

this newly emerging population.

Challenges and Experiences

"Challenges and Experience" refers to the challenge

and experiences these individuals are faced with

throughout the identity development process. The open

codes that emerged for this theme are the following:

personal experience, discrimination, conflicts, internal

conflicts, and flexible boundaries.

Personal Experiences

"Personal Experiences" is used to refer to

experiences that each interviewee has personally

experienced which had some type of impact on the

interviewee's racial identity formation. This was added

to open coding, because every interviewee describes some

type of experience during the interview that contributed

to the development of their racial identity. Several of

the individuals identified specific experience which

influenced their racial identity.

For instance, Interviewee #2 said that" her first

day in ninth grade had a significant influence on her

racial identity, because other kids would make fun of

her, because she was different." During, this time she

was having difficulties trying to make friends, because

of her unique appearance and abnormal height." This

category was also supported by Interviewee #9 when she

stated that in the fourth grade she was asked to identify

her racial identity. She stated this experience had a

major impact on her life, since race was never discussed.

Several of the interviewee's identified that most of

their childhood and adolescence school experiences had

some kind of impact on their racial identity. On the

other hand, two interviewees revealed that their family

experiences were the things that truly affected their

racial identity. In fact, Interviewee #3 stated, "when

his mother discussed his father's racial background this

had a major impact on his racial identity, since he

discovered that his father was mixed with Italian". He

said this," helped him have a better understand of his

appearance and his family's attitude towards him".

Discrimination

"Discrimination", refers to the discrimination that individuals experienced sometime during their life. This code was chosen because the researcher believed that most people are faced with some kind of discrimination in life, because of their vague racial identity. In fact, the researcher is curious if discrimination contributes to how an individual decides their racial identity.

This code was selected, since Interviewee #1 "felt like he has always been discriminated against. He believed that Caucasian people are afraid of him, because of his appearance and guarded attitude." He proceeded to say that he believes, "people assume that he has a criminal record and that he's not smart, because of his appearance." Another example of data that supports this code was when, Interviewee #3 stated that people would "judge her based on her surname. Often time teachers would treat her like she was stupid, or slow, because she appeared more Hispanic". Another Interviewee #8 explained, that "it was hard for her to fit in with others in junior high, since she looked different from the other students people would always discriminate again her." On the other hand, African American students would

pick on her and her sister's, for not conforming to African American norms people would assumed her and her sister's were black, because of their darker completion.

Conflicts

"Conflicts" is used to describe encounters multiracial individual's face as a result of the racial identity development. Interviewees were asked to discuss some of the hardship and conflicts that they have experienced as a result of their racial identity.

This coding was supported, when Interviewee #2 stated that she "was tense all throughout school because she looked different from her peers." She also stated that "she experienced some discomfort during discussions with others about race and culture, given that she is not fully aware of her own racial identity." Interviewee #1 supported the data by saying, "his peers looked down on him for acknowledging his Caucasian and Native American heritage". In addition, he stated "during his childhood till early adulthood he was treated more negatively then his peers." When the interviewee was probed for additional information on how he was treated by others he said to the interviewer "most people put him down including his own family, because he was different. He

also stated he experienced feelings of inferiority, because of all the negative attention he received."

Another piece of data that supported this code was when; Interviewee #6 described how "other students would tell her that she was weird, since she was different then the other students." Interviewee #7 also reported this category by saying, "he can't stand when people assume he is Mexican." He pointed out to the researcher that "most people disagree with his logic about Hispanic immigrants, because of his appears." His beliefs create a lot of conflict for him.

Internal Conflict

"Internal Conflict" the code is used to refers to any psychological issues that these individuals have experienced during their identity development process. This category was added to the open coding, because interviewee's were asked if they ever experienced any depression or alienation sometime during the identity development process. That was caused as a result of being unsure of their racial identity.

This data was supported when eight of the interviewee's stated that they have experienced depressions and alienation, as a result, of being unsure

of their racial identity. The other two participants denied any issues with depression and alienation. Interviewee #3 said, "throughout his childhood he experienced a lot of depression and alienation for the several reasons. His family members would always tease him, because he looked different from his peers at times he felt like he did not fit in his family members or peers." Interviewee #6 reported," experiencing a lot of depression and alienation, as a result, of her parents fighting over which race she is suppose to identify with. "She added that she always felt forced to select an ethnicity, which created additional conflicts between her and her siblings."

The following axial chart describes the code, "internal conflict". The illustration of the code, internal conflict will be shown within the chart below.

Internal conflict
influence racial
identity.

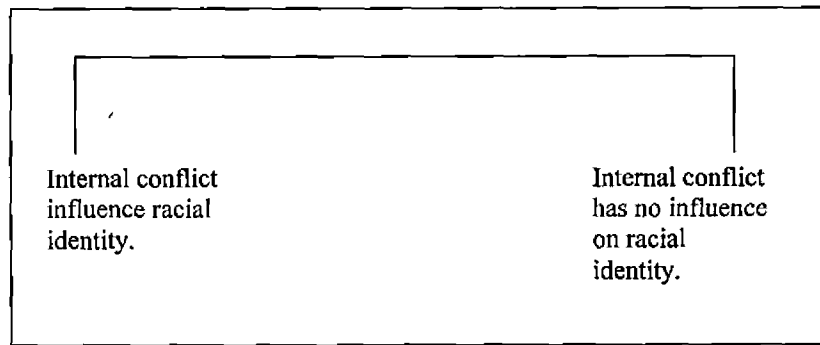Internal conflict
has no influence
on racial
identity.

Figure 8. Internal Conflict

This chart illustrates the code for "Internal

Conflict". Individuals that participated in this study

were asked what they tell people when asked if they have

ever experienced alienation and/or depression as a result

of being unsure of their racial identity. Most of the

participants stated that they have experienced both as a

result of their racial identity; however, two individuals

denied any depression and alienation.

Flexible Boundaries

"Flexible Boundaries" is the term is used to refer

to the vague boundaries that are associated with benefits

of being multiracial, because as a multiracial individual

you are associated with more then one cultural category.

Multiracial boundaries of their racial identity and

cultural norms are vague when compared to mono-racial

individuals. As a result, multiracial individuals have

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the opportunity to be exposed to and experiences

different culture. This open coded was selected, because

interviewee's were asked to acknowledge some of the

things they like about being multiracial.

Several of the interviewees identified benefits to

their unique ethnic identity. One thing all the

participants identified was "diversity". All the

interviewee said that "their diverse heritage allowed

them to be exposed to different cultures and

ethnicities." Many of the participants revealed that they

like the fact that their racial and cultural boundaries

are more flexible then other racial groups, therefore,

they have the opportunity to be exposed to an array of

cultural practices and beliefs.

Interviewee #2 supported this category by saying,

"she likes that she can move anywhere and can pick the

ethnic category she feels that she identifies with. Also,

she enjoys being different then other individuals."

Additionally, interviewee #3 "he said he likes that he

can associated with whoever he wants to without having to

fit into a category. Another interviewee #6 revealed to

the interviewer "that she likes her exotic look. She

pointed out too that she always has the opportunity to

enjoy the best of both worlds. She can create her own cultural traditions, since she's mixed with so many ethnicities. Another interviewee (#9) said, "she likes her uniqueness, beauty, challenging cultural norms, and cultural traditions can be associated with any of her backgrounds."

Summary

In this process the researcher analyzed the data to discover that certain aspects have a significant influence on multiracial individual's identity development. The theory that appeared during this investigation identified that multiracial individual's development process differs from person to person. Several factors contribute to their racial identity development process. However, the participant's experiences, family, peers, societal factors, and internal characteristics all contributed to these individuals racial identity development.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will present the findings and the results from the data collected. It will also discuss the limitations of this study. As well as the recommendations for social work practice, policies, and future research topics.

Discussion

This study was focused on identifying themes directly associated with racial identity development for multiracial adults. In this study, the researcher was able to identify some unique findings that emerged during the data analyzes; however, some of the themes and open codes which emerged are associated with previous models of biracial and multiracial racial identity development. The current study revealed several themes which suggest changes in identity themes, which are associated with development. Miville (2005) stated that changes in identity can be a result of age-related development, interaction, and their social perspective. The four main themes that emerged in this study were the following:

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perspective of racial identity, upbringing, influence,

and challenges and experience. Several subthemes were

also identified within each of the main themes

categories. Subthemes that were identified within this

study focus on the phenotypical characteristics that were

identified as patterns, unusual characteristics, and

unique incidents which appeared (Morris, 2006).

Perspective of Racial Identity

Six of the interviewee's reported how their

perspective of their racial identity had changed over as

a result of the following: time, appearance, and choosing

their identity were identified as common factors. Most of

the interviewee's revealed how "time" had a major impact

on their racial identity. For instance, Kich (1992)

describes this process as the stages of development,

since growth through childhood, adolescents, and into

adult, but he also acknowledges the transitional parts

throughout an individual's lifespan which helps these

individuals continuously develop a better understanding

of their racial identity (p. 305).

On the contrary, four of the interviewee's commented

that their racial perspective has never changed. In fact,

they individuals reported how "time" assisted them on

having a better understand of their racial identity. Most

of the previous models of multiracial identity

development emphasized according to Pedrotti, Edwards,

and Lopez (2004) looked at different times and

experiences in the life of multiracial individuals as

stages, however, the most recent models use "the term

statuses" refer to experience in these statues in a

distinctive sequences. For the interviewee's which report

no change in their perspective of racial identity was a

result of Eriksonian -based models of identity

development, which states that the developmental process

is universal (Spickard, 1992, p. 31). According to

Spickard (1992) everyday life experiences are directly

connected to identity because they felt some level of

acceptance and affiliation with their racial heritage

(p. 32).

Some of the interviewees reported, how their unique

"physical attributes" contributed to their influence on

their racial perspective. For instance, some interviewee

stated that "...skin color, facial features, hair colors

physiques contributed to..." (Johnson, 1992, p. 47) their

identity development. These characteristics have some

specific relevant in individual's relationships with

peer, family, and memberships within racial groups
(Johnson, 1992).

Then again, certain characteristics, in part with
interaction of events can impact racial identity
development for some individuals (Johnson, 1992). As a
result, the racial composition in their school,
communities, churches, etc, because individuals must have
some degree of comfort and security of their own racial
identity when interacting with mono-racial individuals.
If multiracial individuals lacks confidence they feel
constrained to choose a racial category based on their
physical attributes (Spickard, 1992).

Indeed, quite a few interviewees reported that they
"choose" how to racially identify themselves when people
ask about their ethnicity. For example, "multiracial
individuals have...begin to assert their right to choose
their identities - to claim belonging to more than one
group, or to create new identities" (Spickard, 1992,
p. 22). Some individuals revealed during the interviews
that they will either list all there racial heritage,
state they are mixed, or identify with a single category.

On the contrary, in some cases dominant racial
groups will ignore that these individuals have the right

to claim their full heritage. Since race is a

pre-constructed social categories. Racial categories and

ethnic categories are used to identify individuals who

impart have a sense of identity and similar life

experience (Spickard, 1992). Nakashima (1992) points out

how mixed individuals create chaos by challenging the

understanding of race, ethnicity, culture, and

communities, because they directly challenge society's

construction of racial categories (p. 163).

Specific comments on racial identity development

included, "time has changed my perspective of my racial

identity". The individuals that reported no change in

racial perspective stated that "education and expose to

over time helped their racial identity further evolve".

Others remarked, that "development of their physical

attributes impacted how others viewed them, and their

view on the racial category which fit them". All

interviewee's reported, "choosing how to identify

themselves".

Upbringing

All interviewees verified that their upbringing had

some impact on their racial identity. For example, most

interviewee's mentioned the way they were "raised, family

influence, peers, environment, and society had influenced the development of their racial identity" development process. Johnson (1992) stated that several aspects are important during childhood development. For instance, family background, family structure, family dynamics, education, income, occupation, attitudes, and access to cultural values are an inevitably part of shaping children's identity development (Johnson, 1992). All of the above factors are shaped throughout an individual's stages of developmental. These factors also affect an individual's racial identity process, since these experiences, as well as other experience help multiracial individuals interpreted their beliefs about racial identity, culture, values, and attitudes about things.

This data was supported by all of the interviewee's who were asked about their upbringing and the first time they acknowledged their racial identity. Most individuals described specific details about their identity development. In every interview the interviewee acknowledged a specific period within their life which forced them to look at their racial identity. The majority, of interviewee's stated that the acknowledgement of their racial identity occurred in

"elementary school", "junior high school", or "high school". Quintana (2007) suggest that other research has confirmed that development increases multiracial individual's identity exploration.

For the most part, almost all interviewees revealed that their families influence and inspired some factors of their racial identity development. Word such as "traditions," "holidays," "faith," "culture," "values," and "experiences" were common among several interviewees. Johnson (1992) contributed to the finding by stating multiracial individuals preferences of racial identity is influenced by their parent and/or primary cares cultural influences, because they are exposed to their caregivers culture for a longer period during their life span. Additionally, as multiracial individuals increase their understanding of their own identity through school, peers, and community environments, their preference shift (Johnson, 1992) as other factors begin to reinforce their racial identity.

Seven interviewees identified that "friends" and "peers" helped them create their racial identity when the researcher asked the interviewees to identify the individuals who helped them shape their racial identity.

Some interviewee's stated they were reluctant to disclose their racial identity to peers, because this is a form of self-disclosure for some that can result in stigmata from their peers (Sanchez & Bonam, 2009). Other research identified a strong connection between family experience, community experience, and school peers.

However, Pedrotti, Edwards, and Lopez (2008) noted the great emphasis on environment and society, since individuals can validate or invalidate an individual's perception of their racial identity. Some of the participant's disclosed that people reaction to their racial ethnic and appearance either validated or invalidated their perception of their racial identity. In some of the cases, individuals racial labels varied based on their environment and ethnicities of the individuals they were around. Current model of multiracial identity development points out that, "...others in the environment of multiracial individuals may have an influence on the individual's choice of identity..." (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2008, p. 195).

Influence

Every one that participated in this study recognized how their racial identity influences their attitudes,

behaviors, emotional issues, opinions, and possible resources available. When interviewees were asked if they had any attitudes or behaviors which were related to their identity development everyone in the study revealed that they had attitude and behaviors towards mono-racial individuals. For instance, "racially ambiguous features evoke...racist behaviors toward others..., because individuals judge them based self-image and personal identity" (Bradshaw, 1992, p. 86). Bradshaw (1992) stated that "specialness" is based on their uniqueness (p. 83). Additionally, their experiences both positive and negative have a major influence on their attitudes and behaviors towards other ethnicities. Since mono-racial individuals are less likely to experience disconfirmation or disbelief of the personal information regarding their racial background (Bradshaw, 1992, p. 83).

Eight of the interviewees disclosed that they experienced depression and alienation as a result of their racial identity. Some of the words identified were "racial confusion," disregard for others," "vague identity," "depression," "isolation", and "alienation" were noted during the interviews. For instance, Pedrotti, Edwards, and Lopez (2008) describe challenges that

interaction with others can trigger, in addition to feelings of isolation during different situations in life. Furthermore, Stephan (1992) acknowledged that rejection from majority groups can lead to alienation from culture values, as well as, psychological issues (Stephan, 1992, p. 58). Most individuals during the interviews revealed that rejection from other cultures cause some depression and feelings of alienation. Other finding show that most individuals in society view multiracial individuals as awkward, because of societies negative beliefs and stereotypes (Sanchez & Bonam, 2009).

All of the participants expressed some kind of opinions about their racial identity. Additionally, several of the participants disclosed that they have opinion about other racial groups and their view of racial identity. Some opinions expressed were the following: "negative attitudes," "lack of resources," "stereotypes," "bias beliefs," and "lack of representation in society". Martin and Chiodo (2004) presented that multiracial individuals may develop positive, negative, or neutral attitudes about race. This stage is identified as the immersion-emersion stage. An example is how multiracial individuals have multiple

ethnic statues in society, as a result, multiracial individual they may not be perceived as ethnic enough to gain access to privileges that are associated with specific racial groups. Although several of the interviewees acknowledged their negative perception of mono-racial groups, all interviewees expressed cultural sensitivity and a respect for others cultural values.

Challenges and Experience

Throughout this study, participants identified challenges and experiences which assisted them in the formulation of their racial identity. Most of the interviewees identified personal experience, flexible boundaries, discrimination, conflicts, and internal conflicts these individuals have faced at some point during their development. Some multiracial people, in some cases are not aware of their differentness until their teenage year (Bradshaw, 1992, p. 84). At this time, individuals begin to evolve in society and experiences beyond family. Several of the interviewees recognized certain how racism influence their racial perspective. Other individual's racial exploration was triggered as a result of interactions with other, or being asked to identify with a specific racial category. For instance,

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"...encounters with racism triggers identity exploration and movement through different stages of the racial identity development process" (Quintana, 2007, p. 263). Throughout, the different stages of racial identity development it's important to note that external attributes are inconsistent with an individual's racial label and/or internal conflicts (Bradshaw, 1996, p. 81).

Seven of the interviewees identified "racism," "discrimination," "conflicts with others," "internal conflict," and "Diversity". At some point during the interviews the participants were asked if they experiences, challenges, and benefits related to being multiracial. Quintana (2007) reports, how multiracial individuals viewed racial discrimination was internalized; as a result, an individual begins to take pride in their identification with that specific ethnic group. Other conflict's multiracial individuals may experience are regarding their personal choices of identity. Often, an individual's family, peers, community, or extended family may not agree with an individual preference of racial identity, as a result, the individual may feel like their betraying their other ethnicity. For instance, children at some point begin to

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acknowledge that they are different from their peers, as a result, they may exhibit feelings of frustration, anger, inferiority, and they may question their loyal to their parents (Crawford & Alaggia, 2008).

It's important to note that multiracial individuals have vague ethnicities, cultural values, and flexible social boundaries. Multiracial individual's unique ethnic appearance also contributes to their flexible social boundaries. For example, multiracial individuals are often extra exotic looking, in some cases it is very difficulty to designate them to a specific ethnic group (Nakashima, 1996, p. 170). Several conflicts can emerge as a result of a multiracial individual's vague identity in society. For example, individual's families may not understand experiences multiracial people are faced with, as well as the feeling of not belonging to a specific racial group, or family, because of their unique appearance. Three of the interviewees stated, that some of the internal conflicts in their family developed when their parents were trying to force them to side with one racial group. Parent's disagreements on racial identity, upbringing, culture, values, and family dynamics have a major influence on the identity development process for

multiracial individuals. Conflicts between races can defer identity, or cause additional psychological issues for the individuals children.

Limitations

The result of this study contains several limitations that are worth noting. First, the researcher had to keep the sample population to a manageable size, so this sample should not be generalized. For future studies the researcher should attempt to increase the sample size for this study to be beneficial, for this study to develop an improved understanding of multiracial identity development process.

Another limitation was some of participants lack of understanding and insight of own their racial identity development process. During the interview process, the researcher discovered that the studies participants did not have a clear understanding of their racial identity and/or their own evolvement of their racial identity process. Additionally, some of the participants may have not understood some of the terms used during the interview. An example, participants were asked," if they ever experienced feelings of alienation and/or depression

as a result of being unsure of your racial identity" some participants stated that they were unsure of the term alienation.

Since the researcher was faced with time constraints which may have impede the development of additional themes. The time constraints provided the researcher from investigating additional theories that could have emerged in the data. In future studies, the researcher would suggest that future studies would designate an adequate amount of time to conduct the interviews and to thorough analyze data. Further research is suggested on the process of multiracial identity development.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

After, interviewing several individuals about their racial identity development the study showed that clinicians should receive additional training and education of racial development for biracial and multiracial individuals. Additionally, clinics should incorporated some kind of guide for identifying certain aspects and issues that can develop, as a result, of problems related to racial identity development process. It's important that practitioners can assess and identity

problems that are related to racial identity development. Not all clients during the assessment process will acknowledge that they are struggling to identity their racial identity, since most of the time it's difficult to uncover these issues if the clients did not clearly state they have directly experienced racism and/or discrimination.

Furthermore, individuals may experience difficult navigating through the identity development process which can created additional stress resulting in feelings of depression, alienation, low self-esteem, and disloyal to family and/or peers. Also, development among siblings vary within the same environment it's important that society have an understanding of how family structure, dynamics, interaction with others, and how environment plays a role in racial identity development.

In addition, further research is suggested on this topic to further develop clinician practitioners understanding of biracial and multiracial individuals, since identity development varies from individuals to individual. These studies will help the field of social work become more cultural competent when working with a diverse population. This study, suggest that the social

work and field of education advocate for additional resources that can benefit individuals that are from multiple ethnic backgrounds, because most resources are geared to benefits specific racial groups. Another issues, that should be addressed in future research is how the lack of representation can impact bi-racial and multiracial individuals.

Conclusions

In Conclusion, this study seeks to discover the racial identity development process for multiracial individuals. This study suggests that the development process of multiracial individuals differs from other ethnicities and biracial racial identity development. The four themes which play a significant influence on identity development were perspective of racial identity, upbringing, influence, challenges, and experiences.

The data analysis revealed that racial identity development is a self exploration process varies from person to person; however, several things influence an individual's interpretation of their racial identity. However, this study cannot be applied to a generalized population due to the sample size and other limitations,

but the goal of this study was to discover difference in racial identity development and to address how processes may differ. The researcher discovered that current models of racial identity development do incorporate some stages of racial identity development. Further research is needed to explore all levels of multiracial identity development.

It is recommended that future studies examine larger sample populations. In addition, an in-depth view of an individuals upbringing, interactions with others, community, extended family, peers, school, and negative interaction may possibly help researcher have a better understanding of racial identity development.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Check all that apply
   - African American
   - Hispanic/ Latino
   - Caucasian
   - Middle East Decent
   - Pacific Islander
   - Native Hawaiian
   - Native American
   - Asian
   - Other:_____

2. Has your perspective of your racial identity changed?
   - No
   - Yes

3. What do you say when someone asks you what your racial/ethnic background is?

4. Can you tell me a little bit about growing up? What are some of the things you remember about growing up? (Tradition, Holiday's, Family's life, peers, religion, etc. was there specific things that were influenced by culture.)

5. Do you remember a time or incident where you first were aware that you might be somehow different? Differentness related to race and racial identity; did you go through a period of time where you felt you had to decide your race?

6. When was the first time that you acknowledged your racial identity?

7. Do/Did you notice change in behavior or attitudes which are affected by whom you are with or what you are doing? (If you answered No skip to question 8).
   - No
   - Yes

8. How does your behavior and / or attitude affect your thoughts and belief about your racial you identity?

9. Who have been important people that have helped you create your racial identity? Who are you comfortable talk about your race with?
   - Mother
   - Father
   - Sibling
   - Other family members
   - Friend
   - Boyfriend
   - Other_____

10. Do you have attitudes and beliefs or traditions that are linked with your Cultural (Native American, African American, White, Latino, etc...)?
    - Yes (Go on to question 11)
    - NO (skip to question 12)

11. How did you learn these things?

12. What are some of the similarities/difference that you have noticed about multicultural people? Any similarities between self and other?

13. Do/Did every feel as though you did not fit in with one specific racial group due to your diverse background?
    - No
    - Yes

14. What are some things that you have noticed about mono-racial people (people of one race)?

15. What are some of the things you like about being multiracial?

16. What are some of the challenge that you have faced/ experienced being of mixed heritage?

17. Have you ever experienced feeling of alienation and/or depression as a result of being unsure of your racial identity?

18. What are some services or resources that can possible benefit multiracial individuals?

19. What advice do you have for parents of Multiracial Children?

(Miville al et , 2005)

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

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INFORMED CONSENT

This study in which you are being to participate is designed to explore the development of racial identity among multiracial. This study is being conducted by Andrea Bales, a student at California State University, San Bernardino, under the supervision of Dr. Pa Der Vang, Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Department of Social Work Subcommittee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University San Bernardino.

In this study you are asked to participate in an interview that should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. Questions will be asked about their thoughts, beliefs, cultural, upbringing, and development of their own racial identity. Interviews will also be tape on an audio recorder, however, you can request to not be recorded. All of you response will be anonymous. Your name will not be reported to anyone.

Your participation in this study is **totally voluntary.** You don't need to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable and you can withdraw at any time during this study without penalty. When you have completed the survey, you will receive a statement describing the study in more details.

A cup of coffee will be offered to everyone who completed an interview to thank you for your time and participation in this study today. There are no foreseeable risks in the study. If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if, please feel free to contact Dr. Pa Der Vang at (909)537-3775.

By initialing the line below, I acknowledge that I have been informed, and I understand, the nature and purpose of this study, and I freely consent to participate. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Initial _____ () Today's Date: _____

APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debrief Statement

The study you have just completed was designed to explore racial identity development process among multiracial adults. Racial identity development is the process by which you achieve a positive sense of racial identity. Racial identity development begins during childhood and continues on until the individual has the ability to positively identify with a sense of racial/ ethnic identity. We are interested in the racial identity development process among multiracial adults.

Thank you for participating in the interview. If you have any additional questions about the study, please contact Dr. Pa Der Vang at (909) 537-3775.

If you would like obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Dr. Pa Der Vang after July 2009.

APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics (N=10)

Variables	N=Individuals	Percent
Gender		
Male	3	30%
Female	7	70%
Age		
18-25	5	50%
26-38	3	30%
39-54	2	20%
Racial/ Ethnic Origins	Number of individual who identified with each racial identity	
American Indian	6	60%
Asian	1	10%
Black	4	40%
Caucasian	6	60%
East Indian	1	10%
Egyptian	2	20%
Filipino	1	10%
Hispanic	3	30%
Hawaiian	1	10%
Jamaican	1	10%
Puerto Rican	1	10%

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