

Marital Struggles Experienced by Interracial Couples: a Content Analysis of Japanese and American Blogs

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Background

▶ Research Question

- How do interracial couples of Japanese women and White American men view their marital struggles in the United States and Japan?
 - What kind of struggles do they face the most?
 - Does the presence of children make a difference?
 - Does the country of residence make a difference?

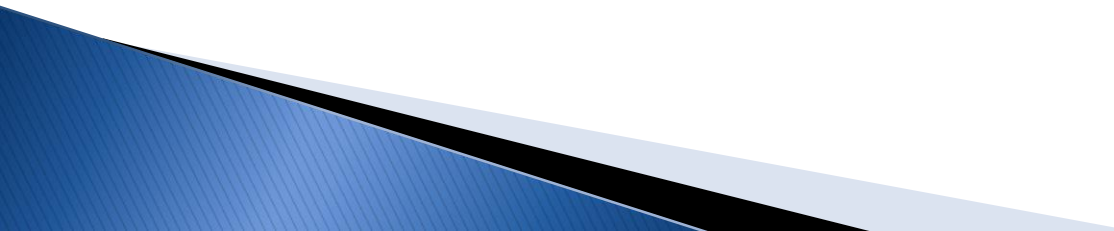
Theory

- ▶ Social Exchange Theory (1958) by George Homans

Literature Review

- ▶ Increase of Interracial Marriage
 - Lee and Yamanaka (1990)
 - Zhang and Van Hook (2009)
- ▶ Fitting into Communities
 - Hibbler (2002)
- ▶ Biracial Children
 - Want (2013)
- ▶ Family Finance
 - Woolley (2003)

Methodology

- ▶ Data collected here include 4 different blogs from Japan and the United States, written by Japanese women
 - ▶ Data was collected on October 12, 2015 – October 29, 2015
 - ▶ 3 key words were used on Yahoo! Japan: interracial marriage, Americans, living in Japan/U.S.
 - ▶ 130 blog posts were coded, resulting in a total sample of 181 entries
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Findings

- ▶ The data from this study shows that, overall, interracial couples comprised of Japanese women and American men, regardless of children and residential country, experience frequent struggles in their marriage.

Table 1

Marital struggle regarding children in interracial couples in Japan and the U.S.

Category	Children	No Children	TOTAL
Social Networking Within Couple	18 (10%)	15 (8.3%)	33 (18%)
House Chores	15 (8%)	7 (3.9%)	22 (12%)
Others	5 (2.8%)	10 (5.5%)	15 (8.5%)
Extended Family Relationships	5 (2.8%)	10 (5.5%)	15 (8.5%)
Language Communication	2 (1%)	11 (6%)	13 (8%)
Free Time	8 (4.5%)	4 (2.2%)	12 (6.5%)
Religion (Holidays)	2 (1%)	9 (5%)	11 (6%)
Raising Biracial Children (Education)	10 (6%)	0 (0%)	10 (5.5%)
Social Networking Outside of Marriage	3 (1.7%)	7 (3.9%)	10 (5.5%)
Isolation in Family	5 (2.8%)	4 (2.2%)	9 (5%)
Family Finance	5 (2.8%)	3 (1.7%)	8 (4.5%)
Isolation in Community	5 (2.8%)	2 (1%)	7 (4%)
Pets	6 (3.1%)	0 (0%)	6 (3%)
Discrimination by Strangers	3 (2%)	1 (.6%)	4 (2%)
Isolation at Work	2 (1%)	1 (.6%)	3 (1.5%)
Raising Biracial Children (Naming)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Religion (Practicing)	0 (0%)	1 (.6%)	1 (.5%)
TOTAL	96 (53%)	85 (47%)	181 (100%)

- ▶ “Ever since we had our son, our relationship changed; more arguments and work, and no free time for the two of us.”

Social Networking within Couple, Japanese woman in the U.S.

- ▶ “My husband never listens to what I told him about our daily chores...I sometimes get really upset.”

House Chores, Japanese woman in the U.S.

- ▶ “It is so hard to teach our kids English because my husband is busy, and even when he teaches English, I feel like I’m forcing them to speak English”

Raising Biracial Children (Education), Japanese woman in Japan

Table 2

Marital struggle regarding countries in interracial couples in Japan and the U.S.

Categories	Japan	United States	TOTAL
Social Networking Within Couple	11 (6.1%)	22 (12%)	33 (18.1%)
House Chores	9 (5%)	13 (7.1%)	22 (12.1%)
Extended Family Relationships	9 (5%)	6 (3.3%)	15 (8.3%)
Raising Biracial Children (Education)	7 (3.9%)	8 (4.4%)	15 (8.3%)
Language Communication (English/Japanese)	11 (6.1%)	2 (1.1%)	13 (7.2%)
Others (Food)	7 (3.9%)	5 (2.7%)	12 (6.6%)
Religion (Holidays)	8 (4.4%)	3 (1.7%)	11 (6.1%)
Social Networking Outside of Marriage	8 (4.4%)	2 (1.1%)	10 (5.5%)
Isolation in Family	5 (2.8%)	4 (2.2%)	9 (5%)
Family Finance	2(1.1%)	6 (3.3%)	8 (4.4%)
Free Time	5 (2.8%)	2 (1.1%)	7 (3.9%)
Isolation in Community	2 (1.1%)	5 (2.7%)	7 (3.8%)
Pets	0 (0%)	6 (3.3%)	6 (3.3%)
Discrimination by Strangers	2 (1.1%)	2 (1.1%)	4 (2.2%)
Isolation at Work	0 (0%)	3 (1.7%)	3 (1.7%)
Others (Customs)	2 (1.1%)	1 (.6%)	3 (1.7%)
Raising Biracial Children (Naming)	1 (.6%)	1 (.6%)	2 (1.2%)
Religion (Practicing)	1 (.6%)	0 (0%)	1 (.6%)
TOTAL	90 (50%)	91 (50%)	181 (100%)

- ▶ “I don’t like my mother-in-law. She makes fun of me a lot, and I just don’t want to be with her at all.”

Extended Family Relationships, Japanese woman in the U.S.

- ▶ “[We argued because] I did not want my kids to watch American shows because they are bad influences”

Raising Biracial Children (Education), Japanese woman in Japan

Discussion

- ▶ Increase of interracial marriage in the U.S.
 - ▶ Religiously diverse environments in Japan and the U.S.
 - ▶ Social class differences
 - ▶ Media portrayals and its images
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