

Intercultural romantic relationships aid personal growth, researcher says

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Couples in intercultural romantic relationships benefit from each other's cultural differences, as they are exposed to new perspectives, knowledge and identities, three recent studies conducted by York University

researchers indicate.

"Intercultural romantic relationships are increasingly common and although the obstacles such couples face are well-documented, the factors that facilitate their success are less studied," says Social Psychologist, Professor Amy Muise in the Faculty of Health at York University, who is the senior author of a new paper. "Our current study results show that [personal growth](#) was associated with relationship quality and identity outcomes."

"Growing Together Through our Cultural Differences: Self-expansion in Intercultural Romantic Relationships," published today in *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, is a research paper based on studies using cross-sectional, dyadic, over time, and experimental methods to understand the opportunities for growth through cultural sharing in a relationship.

The studies indicate that personal growth through a partner's culture was uniquely related to identity outcomes, such as a greater cultural awareness, beyond general growth through the relationship. "Also, actively sharing cultures and discussing their differences was linked to more cultural and relational self-expansion, which in turn, differentially predicted partners' relationship quality and cultural identities," points out Muise, who is also the York Research Chair in Relationships and Sexuality.

These studies provide a first look at the role of self-expansion in intercultural relationships—demonstrating that the way couples negotiate their cultures is linked to both relational and personal outcomes.

More information: Alexandria L. West et al, Growing Together Through Our Cultural Differences: Self-Expansion in Intercultural Romantic Relationships, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*

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Provided by York University

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