

## AFRICAN-AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS ATTITUDES TOWARDS COMMITTED INTER-RACIAL ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Attitudes towards inter-racial dating and marriage are supported by a significant majority of young Americans. According to the Pew Research Center national sample survey, 93% of people born between 1981-2000, or the millennial generation, support inter-racial marriage. Additionally, 88% of African-Americans within this group hold positive attitudes of inter-racial marriage. Furthermore, inter-racial marriage rates are being reported at an all time high. Recent national marriage studies report that 14.6% of new marriages are inter-racial and 16% of these new inter-racial marriages involve an African-American partner. (Pew & American Community Survey, 2008) However, there are disparities in inter-racial marriage between African-American men and women. 22% of new marriages involving an African-American man were inter-racial, while 9% of new marriages involving and African-American women were inter-racial. Moreover, previous literature and surveys often consist of a small African-American population and the diversity within the African-American population is often under-explored.

The objective of this study is to explore and gather attitudinal data about inter-racial relationships amongst educated, young African-Americans in different college environments. The questions that we answer include: Are there differences in attitudes towards inter-racial marriage among students who attend a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) compared to Predominantly White Institutions (PWI)? Are there discrepancies in attitudes between men and women? What other factors (socio-economic status, attitudes towards marriage, parental influence, perception of partner availability) play significant roles in influencing inter-racial marriage attitudes? We propose that the university setting will be a significant factor in determining inter-racial relationship attitudes, that African-American men will generally hold more positive attitudes than African-American women, and that perception of partner availability will directly correlate with attitudes towards committed inter-racial relationships.

To collect attitudinal data, 400 students from three universities (Howard University, University of Tennessee Chattanooga, Morehouse College) committed and completed online and paper surveys. A convenient sampling method was used.

Preliminary results suggest that university setting does impact one's attitudes towards committed inter-racial relationships, that there are substantial differences in attitudes between men and women, and that attitudes towards inter-racial relationships are generally positive, but slightly below nationally suggested numbers.

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