Preference or Prejudice?:
Does Phenotype Influence Interracial Dating and Mating Attitudes among African American and Latino college students?

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African Americans and Latinos continue to face prejudice and bias even within their own ethnic groups when selecting a partner to date or marry (Hill, 2002; Hunter, 2007; Landor, 2017).

Skin tone bias originates from the idea that European phenotypic characteristics (e.g., lighter skin, thinner lips, and straighter hair) are more desirable than the other end of the spectrum (darker skin, fuller lips, kinkier hair) (Bany, Feliciano, Robnett, 2014).

Research suggests that European phenotypic characteristics are considered more desirable when selecting a partner (Childs, 2005; Cobas & Qian, 2004; Landor & McNeil Smith, 2019).
* Colorism- a form of unequal treatment or discrimination based on an individual’s skin tone (i.e., lightness or darkness of skin tone)

* Phenotype- all the observable traits of someone such as eye color, hair color, skin tone, and hair texture.

* Prejudice- preconceived notion based on reason and not experience

* Skin Tone- the shade of one’s skin
Examine whether phenotypic characteristics (skin tone, lip thickness, nose width, hair color and texture) of African American and Latino college students play a role in interracial dating and mating attitudes.

Purpose of Study
* A weekly diary study
  ◆ Focused on examining the frequency of multiple forms of discrimination
  ◆ Focused on stressors and well-being

* Participants
  ◆ Visited the HRDC lab for online assessments
  ◆ Completed four weekly online surveys

* Health and Relationships During College Study
* Sample: 145 young adults
  * AA= 91 Latino= 54
  * 20.7 years old; mostly women (69.4%)

* Measures
  * Skin Tone (1 = Very light to 5 = Very dark)
  * Lip thickness
  * Nose width
  * Hair color
  * Hair texture
Section 23: Skin Tone 1

Instructions: Please answer the following questions.

Scale Name:


Scale Responses

Y1SKIN1-Y1SKIN4, Y1SIB1S, Y1SIB2S, Y1SIB3S, Y1SIB4S, Y1SIB5S, Y1SIB6S

1 = Light
2 = Medium light
3 = Medium
4 = Medium dark
5 = Dark

Y1SKIN5-Y1SKIN8
1 = Darker
2 = Lighter

*Measure: Skin Tone*
| PartNose | What best describes the participant’s nose type? | 1 = Narrow  
2 = Medium  
3 = Broad/Wide  
4 = Don’t know |

*Measure: Nose Width*
| PartH_B | What best describes the participant’s hair type/texture? | 0 = No hair/bald or shaved  
1 = Straight  
2 = Wavy  
3 = Curly  
4 = Braids  
5 = Coarse/Kinky  
6 = Don’t know/not visible |

*Measure: Hair Texture*
| PartLips | What best describes the participant’s lips type? | 1 = Thin  
2 = Medium  
3 = Full  
4 = Don’t know |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|

*Measure: Lip Thickness*
| PartH_A | What color is the participant’s hair? | 0 = No hair/bald or shaved  
1 = Black  
2 = Brown  
3 = Blond  
4 = Red  
5 = Grey  
6 = Other |
Hierarchical logistic regression models in SPSS

1. Controls
   * Mom’s & Dad’s Education
   * Mom’s & Dad’s Income

2. Phenotypic Characteristics
   * Skin Tone
   * Hair Color & Texture
   * Lip Thickness
   * Nose Width
AA & Latinos w/darker skin tone
Date interracially (White)
\( \beta = -.39, p < .05 \)

AA & Latinos w/thicker lips
Date or marry interracially (White)
\( \beta = -.21, p < .05; \beta = -.32, p < .01 \)

AA & Latinos w/thicker lips
Have a child interracially (White)
\( \beta = .28, p < .01 \)

AA & Latinos w/lighter hair
Marry or have a child interracially (White)
\( \beta = -.21, p < .01; \beta = -.21, p < .01 \)
AA & Latinos w/ darker skin tone
Date or marry interracially (Asian)
$\beta = -0.61, p < 0.01$; $\beta = -0.68, p < 0.01$

AA & Latinos w/ darker skin tone
Have a child interracially (Asian)
$\beta = -0.68, p < 0.01$

AA & Latinos w/ coarser hair
Marry interracially (Asian)
$\beta = 0.20, p < 0.05$

AA & Latinos w/ coarser hair
Have a child interracially (Asian)
$\beta = 0.20, p < 0.05$
AA > Latinos

Women > Men

Only focused on African American/Latinos attitudes at one college campus

* Limitations
* Overall, study findings show that phenotypic characteristics (skin tone, hair texture, nose width, lip thickness) influence interracial dating and mating attitudes of African American and Latino college students.

* Understanding interracial dating and mating attitudes for African American and Latino college students can provide insight for professionals as to whether these attitudes are based on preference or prejudicial beliefs.

* **Discussion/Implications**


* References