Attitudes of African American women toward marriage-related issues

Andrew Lewayne Williams

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ATTITUDES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN TOWARD MARRIAGE-RELATED ISSUES

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
Andrew Lewayne Williams
June 2004
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Approved by:

Dr. Laurie Smith, Faculty Supervisor
Social Work

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

Date
ABSTRACT

Marriage rates of African American women have significantly declined over the last three decades in the United States. Less than half of the some 8.5 million African American families in the United States are comprised of a married couple (Miller & Browning, 2000). According to more than 130 empirical studies, married people tend to be happier, healthier, and less stressed than single people (King, 1999). This study attempts to answer the following question: "If research indicates that being married is linked to so many positive benefits (i.e., physical health, life expectancy, financial stability, etc.), why is it that so many African American women never marry?"

This study presents the results of 108 African American women whom were questioned regarding their attitudes toward marriage, their ideal spouse, and African American men in general. The findings indicate that 84% of the respondents in this study felt that a woman doesn't need to be married to be happy; nearly 80% of the respondents reported "My ideal spouse is African American"; yet most of respondents also felt "There is a shortage of good African American men". Limitations of the study and social work implications are discussed.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The marriage rates of African American women have significantly declined over the past 25 years. African Americans are less likely to marry, and if they marry, are more likely to divorce or separate and less likely to remarry (Dickson, 1993). According to Taylor (1999) the marriage rates of African Americans are declining more rapidly than in the rest of the population. Less than half of the some 8.5 million African American families in the United States are comprised of a married couple (Miller & Browning, 2000).

There has been a significant decline in marriage rates among African Americans since the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1960, 65% of all African American women ages 30 to 34 were living with a husband, compared to only 38% 1990 (Dickson, 1993). Dickson (1993) cited that over the same period of time, the percentage of 30 to 34-year old African American women who had never married grew from 10% to 35%. This trend remained even among those of prime marriage age (20-29), as 72% of African American women in
that age group reported they had never married (Dickson, 1993).

It has been estimated that 25% of African American women will never marry, nearly three times the rate for Caucasian women (Dickson, 1993). African American women marry later than Caucasian women and appear less likely to ever marry (South, 1993).

African American women are less likely to marry than Caucasian women. At age 40, 25% of African American women never have married, compared to 10% of Caucasian women (Census Bureau, 1995). According to the Census Bureau (1995) in 1975, 90% of African American women had married by 40, but that had declined to 81% by 1985 and 75% by 1990. Among Caucasian women of the same age, the marriage rate has held steady at above 90% during that time period (King, 1999). In 1970, 17.4% of all African American women had never married (King, 1999). King (1999) cited the percentage of African American women that had never married had risen to 36.2%. In 1994, only 40.4% of all African American women were married, compared to 61.7% in 1970 (Census Bureau, 1995).

King (1999) reported that numerous studies found that declining marriage rates among African American women were linked to the rising out-of-wedlock births; single-parent,
female-headed families; and child poverty. Approximately 52% of all children born to African American women in 1982 were conceived out-of-wedlock (Staples, 1985). Increasing poverty among African American children has placed them at a greater risk for a series of social problems such as teenage pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, criminal victimization, and poor academic performance.

One of the most significant changes in the African American family in the last 30 years has been the increase of female-headed households. In 1965, it was reported that more than three-fourths of all African American families with children were headed by a husband and wife (Staples, 1985). Staples (1985) reported in 1982 that barely one-half of all such families included parents of both sexes. Those households headed by African American women had a median income of $7,458 in comparison with the median income of $20,586 for African American married couples and $26,443 for white married couples (Staples, 1985).

Declining marriage rates may also have a negative impact on African American single women. As cited in King (1999), Thompson-Seaborn and Ensminger (1989) found that long-term, single parenting causes chronic stress among poor African American women, especially when there are no other adults in the household.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to measure the attitudes of African American women toward marriage-related issues. This study is comprised of three main areas of concern: (1) review of the attitudes that African American women have toward marriage, and (2) review of the attitudes that African American women have toward African American men, as well as, (3) review of the characteristics respondents' report are representative of their ideal spouse.

The purpose of this study is also the exploration of the following hypotheses:

1.) The African American women in this study will have positive attitudes toward marriage, despite also reporting a woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy.

2.) The majority of African American women will feel marriage should be forever despite agreeing that divorce is an option if the divorce doesn’t work out.

3.) The majority of African American women in this study will report their ideal spouse is African American and not Caucasian.

4.) The majority of African American women studied will report “it bothers me” when African American men
marry Caucasian women and report they feel there is a shortage of “good” African American men.

5.) The African American women studied will report more negative perceptions of African American men than their perceptions of non-African American men. Since numerous studies indicate that African American women are less likely to marry, the main purpose of this study is to explore if the attitudes of African American women toward marriage contribute to this trend. South (1993) found that African American men and women were significantly less desiring of marriage than their Caucasian counterparts.

However, many other studies indicate that African American women do desire to get married but may face difficulty in doing so for the following reasons: mate availability, the high sex-ratio imbalance, economic concerns, and education concerns. Declining labor force participation has reduced the supply of “eligible” African American men (Staples, 1995). Many studies have linked low African American sex ratios (shortage of men) to what some have termed the “crisis in the African American family” (Staples, 1995).

Fossett and Kiecolt (1993) found that mate availability was significantly related to women’s marriage
prevalence, the percentage of marital births, and the percentage of children in husband-wife families. African American men and women are more likely to marry when men have more favorable economic opportunities (Fossett & Kiecolt, 1993).

It has been suggested that possibly macro issues may have contributed to the high imbalance in the sex ratio (more women than men). For example, the sex ratio might have an imbalance due to policies in the areas of education, health care, employment opportunities, the military and the criminal justice system (Fossett & Kiecolt, 1993). African American men are more likely to be in mental institutions than African American women (Staples, 1995). Also, the high incarceration rate of African American men has effectively taken them out of their communities and had detrimental effects of their availability to marry.

In 1990, approximately one in four (23%) of young African American men between the ages of 20 to 29 were under some form of correctional supervision—jail, prison, probation, or parole (Miller & Browning, 2000). This current study takes this information into consideration and examines if any of these themes are presented in the results.
Possibly, the results from this study might be able to compliment similar preexisting studies that have also attempted to examine the possible causes of the declining marriage rates of African American women.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The significance of this project for Social Work is that it may produce research that can make social workers more knowledgeable about their clients whom are African American women. Social workers should be aware that numerous studies have found that marriage enhances the emotional, psychological, and physical well being of adults. It is equally essential that social workers understand that married persons tend to be happier, healthier, and less stressed than single persons (King, 1999). Married people live longer than people not married (Coombs, 1991). More specifically, married men and women have lower alcoholism, suicide, morbidity, and mortality rates than their unmarried counterparts (King, 1999).

Thus, it is imperative that social workers understand that marital status has been strongly linked to personal well-being, yet also understand, it is difficult to determine if this is a causational relationship or merely a correlation. Social workers should understand that
correlation does not necessarily mean causation. Hence, social workers should question, do married people tend to be happier and healthier as a result of getting married, or do they get married as a result of being happier and healthier prior to marriage?

Social workers should also be competent of systems theory, and its implications. Systems theory would suggest that not only the unmarried African American client is at risk of harmful emotional, psychological, physical, and economic problems but also any other members of that system (i.e., their children). Families headed by single-parent women are related to the rise in poverty among children (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000). Social workers should also be aware and competent of cultural differences when dealing with African American clients. There are many stereotypes of African American women that portray them negatively. Here are some of them:

1.) African American women have bad attitudes.

2.) African American women are always putting African American men down.

3.) African American women don’t respect African American men.

This study should be able to help social workers critically challenge these stereotypes by presenting
literature that has previously investigated the attitudes of African American women toward marriage and African American men. Social workers should also be aware of this phenomenon (low marriage rates of African American women) and, possibly, work to address this serious social problem. Lastly, this project may produce results that can shed light on some of the factors that may contribute to the decline in marriage rates among African American women.

Declining marriage rates of African American women remain a troubling puzzle not only to social workers, psychologists, sociologists, and researchers, but also to policymakers. In our society, there have been numerous policies constructed to benefit those whom are married, for example, tax relief. The main research question that this research project will attempt to answer is: "If research indicates that being married is linked to so many positive benefits (i.e., physical health, life expectancy, financial stability, etc.), why is it that so many African American women never marry?"
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review is a brief summary of research studies that have investigated the link between African American women and their low marriage rates. This chapter will be divided into five main areas. The first section will review articles relating to the attitudes of African American women toward marriage. The second section will examine literature pertaining to the structure of the African American family. The third section will explore the link between marital status and personal well-being. The fourth section will focus on factors that contribute to the low marriage rates of African American women. The final section will focus on the theories that guide the conceptualization of the issues being studied.

African American Women and Attitudes Toward Marriage

This section examines studies on African American women and their attitudes toward marriage. King (1999) provides exploratory data on African American females' attitudes toward marriage. This exploratory study examined (a) females' overall attitudes of marriage, (b) their
perception of the impact marriage has on a person's personal growth, and (c) the importance they placed on a successful marriage relative to a successful career. The data from this study was taken from 317 adult African American women from Northeastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania from various locations such as colleges, sorority and fraternity meetings, social-service agencies, bowling alleys, and nightclubs. Respondents were asked to respond to eight statements concerning marriage, which measured five dimensions of African American females' attitudes toward marriage.

The results indicated that although most respondents did not believe everyone should want to get married, many felt that marriage helps individuals mature and does not stifle individual growth. The majority of respondents also felt that the people they know are less committed to marriage than in the past. In general, respondents with higher income, higher education and were married expressed the most positive attitudes toward marriage. Conversely, less educated, never-married respondents indicated that a successful career was more important to them than a successful marriage.

South (1993) examined racial and ethnic differences in the desire to marry. South discussed the difficulty in
determining whether the low marriage rates among African Americans are a result of the attitudes toward marriage of African American males or females. The failure to marry could not only result from one's own unwillingness to marry, but from the inability to find someone of the opposite sex who is amenable to marriage. Hence, this is the rationale of why some of the studies in this review report findings about African American men. Since marriage is the union between both a female and a male, it would not be wise to disregard the findings of African American men and their attitudes toward marriage when studying about African American women and their attitudes toward marriage. The commonalties and/or differences should be investigated.

South's study explored what factors might contribute to the racial difference in marital entry. Also explored was the extent to which the perceived costs and benefits from marriage might contribute to this phenomenon. Questionnaire data was taken from 2,073 respondents in the National Survey of Families and Households. The study found that more than 17% of the respondents did not agree with the statement "I would like to marry someday". African American males were found to be the least desirous of marriage, while Hispanic males were the most desirous.
Gender differences were investigated and South found that the difference in means between Caucasian and African American men were twice as large as the difference between Caucasian and African American women. South concluded this large gap between desire to marry among Caucasian and African American men is based on the belief African American men expect marriage to have a more negative impact on their personal friendships and sex. In addition, South found that African American men and women were significantly less desiring of marriage than their white counterparts (1993).

Bulcroft and Bulcroft (1993) examined the role of race differences in attitudinal and motivational aspects of the mate selection and marital timing process. This study investigated the race and gender differences in four attitudinal and motivational aspects of the decision to marry: (a) perceived likelihood of marriage, (b) perceived benefits of marriage, (c) the importance of economic supports in the marital timing decision, and (d) adherence to traditional mate selection norms.

Data used in this study was taken from the National Survey of Families and Households which consisted of 13,017 adult respondents. Contrary to many studies, the African American women in this study perceived themselves
to be more likely to marry than their white counterparts regardless of age. The results also shown that African American women perceive more economic benefits from marriage than Caucasian women in early adulthood, but the difference diminishes and even reverses slightly in the later years.

Bulcroft and Bulcroft explain this phenomenon by suggesting that Caucasian women gradually take a more positive view of economic benefits of marriage; while African American women adjust their perceptions downward, reflecting, perhaps, to a more realistic view of their marriage market options (1993).

Interestingly, African American men were reported to have lower expectations for getting married and generally perceived fewer economic and social/emotional benefits from marriage than Caucasian men. African American women were found to be less willing than their Caucasian counterparts in every age group to marry someone who has fewer resources than they do. African American women were also found to be less likely than Caucasian women to marry someone who has been married before or has children.
The Structure of the African American Family

This section examines studies regarding the structure of the African American family. Staples (1985) examined the changes in African American family structure and the conflict between family ideology and structural conditions. The most significant change in the African American family during the last 30 years has been the growth of female-headed households. In 1965, more than 75% of all African American families with children were headed by a husband and wife. By 1982, only half of such families included parents of both sexes. Those households headed by African American women had a median income of $7,458 in comparison with the median income of $20,586 for African American couples and $26,443 for Caucasian married couples. Not only has the number of African American female-headed households grown rapidly, but the majority of adult African American women are now not married.

Staples found that while one out of two Caucasian marriages will end in divorce, two out of three African American marriages will eventually end in divorce. This phenomenon relates to the low marriage rates among African American women because Staples found that African American women are less likely than their Caucasian counterparts to
remarry. Staples reported that in 98% of marriages with an African American female bride, the groom will be an African American male. Thus, it is rare for an African American female to marry someone outside of their race.

Dickson (1993) examined current trends that may influence the future of African American marriages and families. Dickson reports there is little question that African American males and females have had a more difficult time in establishing and maintaining stable relationships with each other during the 1990s. Evidence of this difficulty is indicated in the lower marriage rates, higher divorce and separation rates, and lower remarriage rates of African Americans.

Dickson (1993) mentioned that it has been estimated that 25% of African American women will never marry, nearly three times the rate of Caucasian women. In 1985, 70.3% of African American women between the ages of 18 to 44 had children. Among those, 40% were married, 29% were divorced, separated, or widowed, and 31% had never married. Similarly to numerous other studies, Dickson reported African Americans are less likely to marry, and if they marry, are more likely to divorce or separate and are less likely to remarry.
African American men have been considered an endangered species by some because they represent only 6% of the U.S. population yet represent 50% of male prisoners in local, state, and federal jails (Dickson, 1993). Today, there are more African American men in prison than in college (Dickson, 1993). More than 35% of African American men in U.S. cities are drug or alcohol abusers; more than 18% of African American males drop out of high school; more than 50% of African American males under the age of 21 are unemployed, and 46% of African American males between 16 and 62 are not in the labor force (Dickson, 1993).

Dickson stated approximately 32% of African American males have incomes below the poverty level and the homicide rate for African American males is six times higher than for white men (1993). All of these trends are significant for their impact in the "deconstruction" of the African American family and have consequently had adverse effects on the marriage rates of African American women.

Miller and Browning (2000) explored relationships between African American males and females and the impact on these relationships on the structural change of the African American family. Miller and Browning mention many
early theorists and researchers believed that African Americans held different and "deviant" values of family life which explained their inability to establish and form enduring marital unions.

Miller and Browning mention that some argued that the problems within the African American community were caused by domineering African American woman who "through her unrelenting demands and assertions of independence" forced the African American man out of the home (2000). Furthermore, it is argued this emergence left little room for the African American male to exercise control and authority over the woman and his children.

Miller and Browning argue that young African American boys have been socialized to believe their role in the African American family is to father children then leave the raising and supporting of the children to the women in the family, thus relinquishing their role as head of the family. It is suggested that the rise in single headed families, marital disruption, and delayed marriage patterns that occur among African Americans are a direct result of the decreasing economic status of the African American male.

Mitchell and Phillips (2000) studied the effects of family typology and parental marital status on African
American adolescents’ self-concept and racial/ethnic identity. Findings indicated the family structure plays a significant role in shaping the adolescent’s personality, beliefs, and attitudes. However, the results indicated parental marital status had no significant effect on the adolescent’s self-concept or their racial/ethnic identity.

Though the results of this study did not find any significant correlations between parental marital status and the adolescent’s self-concept or racial/ethnic identity, numerous studies have found that African American adolescents raised in single-headed households in comparison to two-parent households are more likely to be raised in poverty, have more behavioral problems, and have fewer mathematics and reading abilities (Lidz, 1976; Thorman, 1982; and Teachman et al., 1998).

In addition, parental marital status has been linked to drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, social support, and adult development (Mitchell & Phillips, 2000).

Marital Status and Personal Well-Being

This section examines studies that discuss the linkages between marital status and personal well-being. Coombs (1991) conducted a literature review of journal articles that examined whether unmarried individuals
experience more emotional and health problems than their married counterparts. According to more than 130 empirical studies, married people tend to be happier, healthier, and less stressed than single people. Moreover, research has reported that married people tend to live longer than unmarried people and are generally more emotionally and physically healthy.

Coombs found that marital status has also been significantly linked to alcoholism, suicide, morbidity and mortality, schizophrenia and other psychiatric problems (1991). Unmarried people are more likely to have alcoholism problems than married people. Furthermore, empirical studies dating back to the 19th century have shown that the highest suicide rates occur among the divorced, the widowed, and the never married, whereas the lowest rates are among the married. Married people consistently show lower mortality rates than single, widowed, or divorced persons.

Many studies investigating schizophrenia have found hospitalization rates for schizophrenia were lower among married patients than for separated, divorced, widowed, or single. Additionally, studies have shown that married people have lower psychiatric hospitalization admission rates overall than single, divorced, or widowed people. It
has been argued that marital status is the best predictor of mental health.

Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan (1998) examined the relationship between perceived marital opportunity and indicators of psychological well-being among single African American, Latina, and Caucasian women. The findings reported perceptions of mate availability were significantly and negatively correlated with certain indicators of well-being among Latina and Caucasian women, but not for African American women.

Only one significant association was evident among African American women, which was anxiety was associated with "date availability". More recent studies have determined that it is the quality of marital relationships, rather than marriage per se, that relates to mental well being. Tucker and Mitchell-Kernan suggest that marriage serves as a source of social support, thus positively impacting potential stress and illness (1998).

Broman (1998) examined the relationship of marital and parental status to life satisfaction among African Americans. The findings show that divorced and separate African Americans have lower levels of life satisfaction than those who are married. For African American women, age, social participation, health, and an income measure
(the ratio of income to poverty-level income) were positively related to life satisfaction. Broman points out that marital status is an important predictor of satisfaction, with the married being the most satisfied.

Interestingly, the highly educated respondents in this study tended to have lower levels of life satisfaction than the poorly educated. This might be explained because marriage has been strongly linked with life satisfaction and studies have found that many highly educated African American women rather remain unmarried than marry someone less educated than them (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995).

Possible Causes for Low Marriage Rates

This section examines studies that address some of the possible causes for low marriage rates among African American women. Townsend (2000) conducted an exploratory study that measured 71 African American males’ attitudes toward marriage, their ideal marriage partner, and their attitudes toward African American women. Most social scientists believe the declining marriages rates among African Americans may be due to social and economic factors such as the high sex-ratio imbalance and the economic instability of African American men.
Townsend argues that many African American men who are considered "marriage material" have room to "play" because they have more viable alternatives readily available to them, which consequently deter their decision to marry. Some believe the difficulties African American males' encounter fulfilling the provider role (i.e. financially) has rendered them less attractive marital partners, which in turn has weakened their willingness and ability to marry. In Townsend's study, 52% of the respondents felt their ideal marriage partner should be financially stable.

Several scholars have claimed interpersonal conflict between African American men and women has contributed to the unwillingness of African American men to marry (Cazenave & Smith, 1990; Dickson, 1993; Staples, 1993). The high percentage of African American men who are unemployed, underemployed, imprisoned, and/or suffering from drug abuse or mental illness also contribute to the shortage of marriageable African American men.

This current study argues that because marriage, legally, is comprised of both a male and a female, it is equally important, to investigate the attitudes that both African American men and women have toward marriage. Furthermore, the failure for African American women to
marry may not result from one's own willingness to marry, but from the inability to find someone of the opposite sex who is willing to marry. The recent trend of African American men marrying outside of their race may contribute to low marriage rates of African American women. Townsend found that only 31% of African American women stated their spouse must be African American (2000).

Crowder and Tolnay (2000) examined the impact of interracial marriage by African American men on the marriage prospects of African American women. Recent declines in the rate of marriage among African American women have been accompanied by significant increases in the rates of interracial marriage, especially between African American men and non-African American women. Interestingly, the results showed on average, African American men married to non-African American women earned about $1,400 more per year than African American men married to African American women, and more than $9,000 more per year than the average unmarried African American man.

Crowder and Tolnay found that in comparison with African American men married within their race, intermarried African American men had about a half-year
advantage in years of education, had higher occupational prestige, and were slightly more likely to be employed.

The results of this study show that African American women's likelihood of being married decreases significantly with increasing levels of interracial marriage between African American men and non-African American women. Additionally, this study implies there is a shortage of African American men who are highly educated and financially stable, and those whom are may tend to marry outside of their race, thus adversely affecting African American women who prefer to marry within their race.

Fossett and Kiecolt (1993) investigated the effects of mate availability, men's and women's levels of socioeconomic status and employment, level of public assistance, population size, and region on several aspects of family formation and family structure among African Americans. The issue of mate availability is particularly relevant to the African American population because of the high rates of mortality and incarceration among African American men.

Many studies have linked low African American sex ratios (shortage of men) to the lower levels of marital prevalence, lower marital fertility ratios, lower
prevalence of husband-and-wife families, and the increasing trend of single-mother households. African American men’s economic status has been positively related to marriage and the prevalence of husband-wife families.

Fossett and Kiecolt mention that low prevalence of traditional family structure among African Americans is widespread and by no means unique to large metropolitan areas. Findings indicated that African American women have the poorest mate availability in relation to Caucasian and Latina women (Catanzarite & Ortiz, 2002). The results show that African American men and women are more likely to marry when African American men have favorable economic opportunities.

Bethea (1995) focused on the historical origin of the African American male-female relationship dilemma and contemporary forces that have an impact on opportunities for intimacy and marriage among African American women. Bethea points out that little attention has focused on the crisis between African American men and women but tends to focus on the socioeconomic crisis of African American men.

Bethea concludes that because both African men and women have common desires to marry, dilemmas of African American women are also dilemmas of African American men as well. African American men have been stereotyped as
unreliable and lazy, while African American women have been stereotyped as too domineering.

The historical perspective relating to these stereotypes is that during slavery African American men were limited in their role as father or husband and were often removed from positions of power in the family and in the workforce. Likewise, African American women were expected to deviate from femininity in order to complete tasks during slavery. It has been noted that the increasing resistance of African American women to marry may be related to African American women's refusal to marry beneath their social status, which has been termed "marrying down".

Bethea cites that African American men are more likely to select a Caucasian partner than are African American women, which supports the hypothesis being tested in this current study. Although African American women are beginning to view interracial marriage as an option, 98% of African American women marry African American men. Less than 1% of all marriages in the U.S. in 1993 consisted of an African American female and a Caucasian male (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995). Also related to the hypothesis of this current study is the finding that interracial relationships between African American men and Caucasian
women often generate resentment among African American women.

It has been suggested that African American men have tended to internalize the dominant view of African American women as "undesirable", "domineering", and "second best". Some African American men even view themselves as victims of the achievement and independence of African American women (Staples, 1993). It is concluded that African American men may displace their racial and economic frustrations onto their relationships with African American women (Cazenave, 1983).

Porter and Bronzaft (1995) investigated whether the future plans of college educated African American women include African American men. The results found that African American women are earning more undergraduate and graduate degrees than African American men. Moreover, from 1982 to 1992, the number of African American men earning doctorates declined by 20%. This phenomenon may be related to the surprising fact that college educated African American males earn less income than Caucasian males who have dropped out of high school (Staples, 1985).

Porter and Bronzaft report that African American women who possess college degrees are least likely to marry because they have difficulty locating suitable
marriage partners whom have similar education levels. Some researchers argue that African American women may prefer to remain single rather than marry less-educated African American men (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995). Most interracial marriages involving a Caucasian and an African American are comprised of an African American male and a Caucasian female. This phenomenon was true for approximately 76% of such marriages in 1977, 72% in 1980, 68% in 1987, and 75% in 1993 (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995).

Some argue this phenomenon exists because African American males may believe that being married to a Caucasian woman enhances both their egos and their status in society. On the other hand, it has been argued that Caucasian men are penalized economically and socially when they intermarry; thus, fewer of them choose African American women as marriage partners. Porter and Bronzaft reported that 87% of the respondents in their study indicated the desire to marry African American men, whereas, only 1% reported the desire to marry Caucasian men.

Among the women studied, 11% reported they wanted to be unmarried career women, 60% indicated they were dating someone who attended college, while only 13% reported they were dating men who only had a high school education.
Eighty-five percent of the respondents reported their most rewarding and fulfilling dating experiences had been with African American men. The results also found that 50% of the respondents felt that African American men have a more difficult time committing to permanent relationships than do men of other racial/ethnic groups.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Systems Theory guides the conceptualization of this study because it emphasizes the importance of taking all elements within the whole into consideration. It is essential to realize that the recent trends within the African American family affect all members of the family equally. Hence, it is imperative to realize that the attitudes that African American women have toward marriage not only affect whether they marry or not, but also affect African American men who may desire to marry.

Moreover, it should be known that children that are raised in single-households are adversely affected economically, educationally, and socially. Systems theory would suggest that if numerous studies report unmarried people tend to be less happy, less healthy, and more stressed than married people, one should consider that
children raised in single-households may be susceptible to these same adverse conditions.

Summary

Most studies that have investigated the phenomenon of low marriage rates among African American women have tended to focus primarily on the high sex-ratio imbalance and mate availability as possible causes for this trend. There have been fewer studies that have investigated African American women and their attitudes toward marriage, the characteristics of their ideal spouse, and their overall attitudes toward African American men. This current study will explore each of these dimensions in an attempt to address these neglected areas.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODS

Introduction

This chapter identifies the steps that were used in conducting this study. Specifically, the design of the study, the sample used, an explanation of how the data was collected, specific procedures of the study, confirmation of the protection of human subjects, and data analysis are discussed thoroughly.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of African American women toward the following marriage-related issues: marriage itself, their ideal spouse, and African American men in general. The following hypotheses are tested in this study:

1.) The African American women in this study will have positive attitudes toward marriage, despite also reporting a woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy.

2.) The majority of African American women will feel marriage should be forever despite agreeing that divorce is an option if the divorce doesn’t work out.
3.) The majority of African American women in this study will report their ideal spouse is African American and not Caucasian.

4.) The majority of African American women studied will report "it bothers me" when African American men marry Caucasian women and report they feel there is a shortage of "good" African American men.

5.) The African American women studied will report more negative perceptions of African American men than their perceptions of non-African American men.

The main research question that this study attempts to answer is: "If research indicates that being married is linked to so many positive benefits (i.e., physical health, life expectancy, financial stability, etc.), why is it that so many African American women never marry?"

Surveys are particularly useful in investigating attitudes, perceptions, desires, and feelings because these are unobservable variables. Hence, survey research was conducted in this study since the objective of the study was to examine the attitudes of African American women toward marriage-related issues. Survey research was also utilized in this study in an attempt to gather more
reliable information since one’s attitudes about marriage and African American men may usually be kept private.

Sampling

A non-probability, convenience sample was taken in order to gather the 108 African American women respondents in this study. Convenience sampling was utilized due to the time restrictions of this study. The limitation of using this method of sampling is that the results of this study may not necessarily be representative of the attitudes of all African American women in other geographical locations.

The convenience sample in this study was taken from various locations. Among them, 66.7% (n=72) of the respondents were from numerous hair salons; 14.8% (n=16) were from a food establishment; 13.9% (n=15) were from a church; 2.8% (n=3) were taken from a group home (staff); and 1.9% (n=2) were taken from graduate students enrolled at California State University.

All of the respondents in this study were at least 18 years old. The age range of respondents was 18 to 88 years old, with the average age being 36 years old. The respondents in this study were comprised of 42.6% (n=46) single African American women, 37% (n=40) married African
American women, 5.6% (n=6) separated African American women, 13.9% (n=15) divorced African American women, and 0.9% (n=1) widowed African American women. Virtually all of the respondents reported to be of Christian background, with 38.9% reporting to be Baptist, which was the most frequent response given.

Data Collection and Instruments

The data was collected using a 31-item questionnaire. The statements on the questionnaire (see Appendix A) were taken primarily from existing studies (King, 1999; Townsend, 2000; and Miller & Browning, 2000). Slight modifications were made to some of the statements in order for them to relate to the sample used in this study and also to test the hypotheses of this study.

The statements in the instrument attempted to measure the following: (a) the extent to which the respondents value marriage, (b) the respondents’ perceptions of their ideal spouse, and (c) the overall perceptions that the respondents have toward African American men.

This current study attempts to be a complementary study to Townsend’s (2000) study that focused on “Black males’ attitudes toward marriage”. The findings of this study will be compared to the results in Townsend’s study.
to reveal any significant gender similarities or differences.

Furthermore, unlike King (1999) and Townsend (2000), this researcher elected to omit the option of choosing "undecided" as a response to statements on the questionnaire, based on the researcher's belief that most respondents only tend to respond "neutral" or "undecided" when given the option to. Furthermore, this researcher believes that if respondents are not given the option to choose a neutral response, they will eventually elect to "agree" or "disagree". A volume of "undecided" responses are in essence worthless to research.

Hence, this researcher believed it would be more beneficial to require respondents either "agree" or "disagree", with the choice of specifying if you "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree". Thus, the statements on the questionnaire were rated on a 4-point Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree.

In addition to the 31-item questionnaire, six questions preceded the questionnaire, which pertained to the demographic profile of the respondents (see Appendix B). Demographics obtained were the respondent's age, highest level of education completed, annual income range,
marital status, religion or spiritual beliefs, and the length of time the unmarried respondent plans to wait before they get married.

Procedures

The method in which the questionnaires were administered differed by location. The majority of respondents (n=72) were gathered from numerous hair salons. In hair salons, blank questionnaires were given to one designated representative of the salon, on a clipboard, which had a pen attached, to distribute to willing patrons of their hair salon. The designated person of the salon was informed to remind each respondent to place their completed questionnaire, facedown, inside a black tray, that was provided by this researcher.

Similarly, all of the questionnaires administered at the food establishment (n=16) were available on two clipboards which had pens attached. The clipboards were left on a table, in the waiting area. The researcher of this study left specific instructions nearby, which were typed on a paper, which was later placed inside a glass picture frame, and placed on the table, so that prospective participants would understand the procedures they should follow in returning their completed
questionnaires (see Appendix C for both versions of "framed instructions" utilized). Additionally, this researcher elected to utilize "framed instructions" so that prospective participants would not repeatedly disturb the staff (from both the hair salons and the food establishment) with the same questions continuously regarding the study.

The remaining questionnaires acquired from the church (n=15), the group home (n=3), and California State University (n=2) were handed out, individually, by this researcher and returned immediately after completion to this researcher.

All prospective respondents were informed that participation in this study was completely voluntary and that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time. Respondents were also informed of the nature of the study and informed that it should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents was protected by requesting each respondent place a check mark in a box on the informed consent form (see Appendix
D) in place of signing their name. Each respondent was also asked to write the date on the informed consent form. A copy of the informed consent form was given to each respondent. Included within the informed consent form were the risks and benefits from participation in this study. For example, prospective respondents were informed that there were no known significant risks for participating in this study, at this time.

Furthermore, the benefits of participating in this study were given, which are, some participants might be able to enhance their insight and awareness of their personal views and attitudes toward marriage and African American men. In addition, each respondent was given a debriefing statement (see Appendix E), which was attached to the questionnaire, which provided each respondent with counseling resources in the event that the study caused any unexpected emotional distress.

The researcher of this study realized, unfortunately after the data was gathered, that it would have been better if all questionnaires were placed in the designated tray rather than asking some respondents (i.e. from the church) to return them directly to the researcher. Some respondents personally knew this researcher, and as a result, may not have answered all of the items in the
questionnaire honestly, in fear that their anonymity might have been in jeopardy.

Despite this occurrence, to ensure these respondents confidentiality the researcher immediately placed the newly completed questionnaires returned inside the pile of other questionnaires, and did not review any of the questionnaires until all of the questionnaires were gathered. Finally, after the data was inputted into statistical software (SPSS) for statistical analysis, the data was immediately destroyed to protect the privacy of the human subjects that participated in this study.

Data Analysis

Interpretive associations of the data were used to test the hypotheses of this study. A total of five hypotheses are tested in this study. Specifically, each hypothesis is tested by comparing one questionnaire statement with another.

Hence, the first hypothesis of this study (The African American women in this study will have positive attitudes toward marriage, despite also reporting a woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy) involved comparing the responses of questionnaire statements #2 (Marriage helps individuals mature) and with the responses to
questionnaire statement #8 (A woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy).

The second hypothesis of this study (The majority of African American women will feel marriage should be forever despite agreeing that divorce is an option if the divorce doesn’t work out) was tested by comparing the responses of questionnaire statement #10 (Marriage should be forever) with the responses to questionnaire statement #9 (If marriage doesn’t work out, divorce is an option).

The third hypothesis of this study (The majority of African American women in this study will report their ideal spouse is African American and not Caucasian) was tested by comparing the responses of questionnaire statement #13 (My ideal spouse is African American) with the responses to questionnaire statement #16 (My ideal spouse is Caucasian).

The fourth hypothesis of this study (The African American women studied will report “it bothers me” when African American men marry Caucasian women because they feel there is a shortage of “good” African American men) was tested by comparing the responses of questionnaire statement #26 (It bothers me when African American men marry Caucasian women) with the responses to questionnaire.
statement #28 (There is a shortage of "good" African American men).

The fifth hypothesis of this study (The African American women studied will report more negative perceptions of African American men than their perceptions of non-African American men) was tested by analysis of statements #20 (African American men are more financially stable then other men), #22 (African American men are more afraid of commitment than other men), #30 (African American men are more likely to cheat than other man) and #31 (African American men resist marriage more then other men).

Computer analysis (SPSS software) was utilized to examine the frequencies and percentage distributions of the responses given. The frequencies and percentages for the questions in the hypothesis were then compared. The demographic profile (i.e., age, annual income range, highest level of education, marital status, religion, etc.) gathered from respondents was analyzed to identify any trends in the results.
Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the design of this study, the sample that was used, an explanation of how the data was collected, specific procedures of the study, confirmation of the protection of human subjects, and provided data analysis to assist future researchers that might want to replicate this study.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of this study using tables and figures which illustrate the frequencies and percentage distributions of all responses given by respondents. More specifically, the tables presented will provide analysis of the location the data was collected from, the demographic characteristics of the sample, and the results to all 31-items (statements) of the questionnaire. The figures presented will provide pie charts and bar graphs to illustrate specific percentage distributions that will be discussed further in the next chapter.
Presentation of the Findings

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages Of Demographics
(N=108)

Age of Participant: (Mean=36.06) (SD=12.8)

Highest Level of Education Completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual Income Range:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$60,001+</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,001-45,000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,001-30,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$45,001-60,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital Status:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married, not Cohabitating</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married, but Cohabitating</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If NOT currently married, when do you plan to marry:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan to Marry</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A=Married/separated/divorced/widowed</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never plan to get married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of
the sample. Among the 108 African American women
respondents, the average age was 36 years old, with a range of 18 to 88 years of age. Over 73% of the respondents were reportedly college educated. The most frequent annual income range reported was $60,000+, with 28.7% (n=31) reporting this.

Over 40% (n=46) of the respondents reported they have never been married. Among them, 10 respondents reported to be cohabitating. The most frequent time frame given among unmarried respondents, who intended to marry, was “five or more years”, with over 19% (n=21) indicating such. Lastly, 37% (n=40) of the respondents indicated they are currently married.
Table 2. Percentage Distribution Of Responses Related To Attitudes Toward Marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Everyone should want to get married.</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Marriage helps individuals mature.</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) A successful marriage is more important than a successful career.</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) The people I know are less committed to marriage than people in the past</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) There are fewer advantages to marriage now than there were in the past.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) The people I know are more committed to marriage than people in the past</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) To be happy and lead a full life, you must be married.</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) A woman doesn't need to be married to be happy.</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) If marriage doesn't work out, divorce is an option.</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) Marriage should be forever.</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.) My marriage (future or present) will last forever.</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the results of questionnaire statements #1-11, which are related to attitudes toward marriage. For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped as such: disagreed=“strongly disagreed” and “disagreed” and agreed=“strongly agreed” and “agreed”.

Over 67% of the respondents disagreed that “Everyone should want to get married”. Furthermore, 71.3% agreed that “If marriage doesn’t work out, divorce is an option”, despite 92.6% of the respondents agreeing “Marriage should be forever”. Only 6.5% (n=7) agreed that “To be happy and lead a full life, you must be married”. Moreover, 84.2% agreed “A woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy”.

There were some positive views toward marriage, such as, 55.6% agreed “Marriage helps individuals mature”; and 62.9% agreed “A successful marriage is more important than a successful career”. Nearly 60% (58.3%) agreed that “The people I know are less committed to marriage that people in the past”.

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Table 3. Percentage Distribution Of Responses Related To Respondents' Ideal Spouse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.) My ideal spouse is financially stable.</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.) My ideal spouse is African American.</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.) Race should not be an issue when choosing a spouse.</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.) My ideal spouse is monogamous.</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.) My ideal spouse is Caucasian.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.) My ideal spouse has never been arrested.</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.) My ideal spouse has completed some college.</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.) My ideal spouse should be the head of the family.</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 presented the results of questionnaire statements #12-19, which are related to the characteristics of the respondents' ideal spouse. For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped
as such: disagreed=“strongly disagreed” and “disagreed” and agreed=“strongly agreed” and “agreed”.

Over 91% agreed “My ideal spouse is financially stable”; and nearly 80% agreed “My ideal spouse is African American”. Interestingly, 74% of the respondents agreed “Race should not be an issue when choosing a spouse”; yet 96.3% disagreed with the statement “My ideal spouse is Caucasian”.

Over 86% agreed “My ideal spouse is monogamous”, while nearly 14% disagreed with the statement. Nearly 70% (68.5%) agreed “My ideal spouse has never been arrested”, while over 31% (31.5%) disagreed with the statement. Over 82% (82.4%) agreed “My ideal spouse has completed some college”. Contrary to stereotypical views of African American women being domineering, 92.6% agreed “My ideal spouse should be the head of the family”.
Table 4. Percentage Distribution Of Responses Related To Attitudes About African American Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>(SA)</th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.) African American men are more financially stable than other men.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.) African American men are too ambitious.</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.) African American men are more afraid of commitment than other men.</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.) African American men are monogamous.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.) African American men are supportive of African American women.</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.) Most African American men don’t respect African American women.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.) It bothers me when African American men marry Caucasian women.</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.) African American men date or marry Caucasian women because they can run all over them, unlike they can with African American women.</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.) There is a shortage of good African American men.</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.) African American men are always putting African American women down.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Percentage Distribution Of Responses Related To Attitudes About African American Men (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>(SA)</th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30.) African American men are more likely to cheat than other men.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.) African American men resist marriage more than other men.</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 presents the results of questionnaire statements #20-31, which are related to attitudes toward African American men. For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped as such: disagreed=“strongly disagreed” and “disagreed” and agreed=“strongly agreed” and “agreed”.

Only 10.2% (n=11) agreed “African American men are more financially stable than other men”; only 12.9% (n=14) agreed “African American men are too ambitious”; and only 29.6% (n=32) agreed “African American men are monogamous".
Questionnaire statements that were comparisons between African American men and other men presented the following results: Over 64% disagreed "African American men are more afraid of commitment than other men"; 87.1% disagreed "African American men are more likely to cheat than other men"; and nearly 80% (77.7%) disagreed "African American men resist marriage more than other men".

Lastly, 43.5% agreed "African American men date or marry Caucasian women because they can run all over them, unlike they can with African American women". In addition, over 35% agreed "It bothers me when African American men marry Caucasian women". Furthermore, 62% agreed "There is a shortage of good African American men".
Figure 1 shows the results of the responses given to statements #7 (To be happy and lead a full life, you must be married) and #8 (A woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy).
be happy), which pertain to attitudes toward marriage. For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped as such: disagreed="strongly disagreed" and "disagreed" and agreed="strongly agreed" and "agreed".

The results indicate that 93.5% disagreed "To be happy and lead a full life, you must be married." Moreover, 84.3% agreed "A woman doesn't need to be married to be happy." This researcher will discuss the implications of these findings further in the final chapter, and suggest how these findings might contribute to the phenomenon of low marriage rates among African American women.
Question #12: My ideal spouse is financially stable.

Question #20: African American men are more financially stable than other men.

Figure 2. Comparisons Between Respondents' Ideal Spouse And Their Attitudes Toward African American Men (Part A)
Figure 3. Comparisons Between Respondents’ Ideal Spouse And Their Attitudes Toward African American Men (Part B)

Figures 2 and 3 compare the results of the responses given which pertain to the characteristics of respondents’ ideal spouse and their overall attitudes of African
American men. For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped as such: disagreed="strongly disagreed" and "disagreed" and agreed="strongly agreed" and "agreed".

Figure 2 compared the responses given to statements #12 (My ideal spouse is financially stable) and #20 (African American men are more financially stable than other men). The results indicate that nearly 92% (91.7%) agreed "My ideal spouse is financially stable." However, only 11 out of 108 respondents (10.2%) agreed "African American men are more financially stable than other men."

Figure 3 compared the responses given to statements #15 and #23. The results indicate that 86.2% agreed "My ideal spouse is monogamous." However, only 29.6% agreed "African American men are monogamous." This researcher will discuss the implications of these findings further in the final chapter, and suggest how these findings might contribute to the phenomenon of low marriage rates among African American women.
#1: The African American women in this study will have positive attitudes toward marriage, despite also reporting a woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy.

**Question #2:** Marriage helps individuals mature.

![Bar chart showing responses to Question #2: Marriage helps individuals mature.]

**Question #8:** A woman doesn't need to be married to be happy.

![Bar chart showing responses to Question #8: A woman doesn't need to be married to be happy.]

Figure 4. Hypothesis #1

For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have.
been grouped as such: disagreed="strongly disagreed" and "disagreed" and agreed="strongly agreed" and "agreed".

The figures pertaining to hypothesis #1 show that 53.6% agreed "Marriage helps individuals mature", which was one measure used to determine whether the respondents in this study have positive or negative views toward marriage. Moreover, 62.9% agreed "A successful marriage is more important than a successful career."

Despite these findings that indicate the respondents have some positive attitudes toward marriage, there was a stronger endorsement of the statement "A woman doesn't need to be married to be happy", which 84% of the respondents agreed to. Further, 67.6% disagreed "Everyone should want to get married."

This particular hypothesis was supported as the majority of respondents had some positive attitudes toward marriage despite reporting "A woman doesn't need to be married to be happy." This researcher will discuss these findings further in the final chapter and attempt to explain why these seemingly conflicting views may occur.
The majority of African American women will feel marriage should be forever despite agreeing that divorce is an option if the divorce doesn’t work out.

Question #10: Marriage should be forever.

Question #9: If marriage doesn't work out, divorce is an option.

For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have
been grouped as such: disagreed=“strongly disagreed” and
“disagreed” and agreed=“strongly agreed” and “agreed”.

The figures pertaining to hypothesis #2 show that
this particular hypothesis was supported. Overwhelmingly,
over 92% of the respondents agreed “Marriage should be
forever.” However, over 71% agreed “If marriage doesn’t
work out, divorce is an option.”

Though these findings seem to be conflicting views
toward marriage lasting forever, 91.7% remain hopeful, by
agreeing “My marriage (future or present) will last
forever.” This researcher will discuss these findings
further in the final chapter and attempt to explain why
these seemingly conflicting views may occur.
#3: The majority of African American women in this study will report their ideal spouse is African American and not Caucasian.

![Question #13: My ideal spouse is African American.](image1)

![Question #16: My ideal spouse is Caucasian.](image2)

Figure 6. Hypothesis #3

The figures pertaining to hypothesis #3 clearly support the hypothesis of this study. For clarification,
as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped as such: disagreed=“strongly disagreed” and “disagreed” and agreed=“strongly agreed” and “agreed”.

Nearly 80% (78.7) of the respondents agreed “My ideal spouse is African American.” Interestingly, statement #16, “My ideal spouse is Caucasian” was the only statement in the entire 31-item questionnaire that failed to get at least one response indicating “strongly agree”. Hence, over 96% disagreed “My ideal spouse is Caucasian”, and only 4 out of 108 (3.7%) of the respondents agreed to the statement.

This researcher will discuss the implications of these findings further in the final chapter, and suggest how these findings might contribute to the phenomenon of low marriage rates among African American women.
For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have
been grouped as such: disagreed=“strongly disagreed” and disagreed and agreed=“strongly agreed” and “agreed”.

The figures pertaining to hypothesis #4 do not support the hypothesis of this study. The majority of respondents disagreed (64.8%) “It bothers me when African American men marry Caucasian women.” while the majority of respondents (62%) did agreed “There is a shortage of good African American men”. Though the majority did not agree “It bothers me when African American men marry Caucasian women.”, it should be noted that 35.2% did agree to the statement.

Contrary to the stereotypical views of African American women in regard to their attitudes toward African American men who date or marry Caucasian women, the majority of respondents (56.5%) disagreed “African American men date or marry Caucasian women because they can run all over them, unlike they can with African American women.” It is noteworthy to report that though the majority disagreed with this statement, over 43% of the respondents agreed.
#5: The African American women studied will report more negative perceptions of African American men than their perceptions of non-African American men.

Question #20: African American men are more financially stable than other men.

Question #22: African American men are more afraid of commitment than other men.

Figure 8. Hypothesis #5 (Part A)
The four figures (shown in Part A and B) pertaining to hypothesis #5 do not support the hypothesis of this study. In contrast, the results indicated, more times than not, that the respondents disagreed with statements that
were framed as "negative views" about African American men in comparison to non-African American men. Though some responses framed as "negative views" about African American men were agreed upon, when respondents were asked to compare African American men to other men, the views became more "positive", as the respondents did not feel there was much difference between either of the two.

For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped as such: disagreed="strongly disagreed" and "disagreed" and agreed="strongly agreed" and "agreed".

For instance, 89.8% disagreed to the statement "African American men resist marriage more than other men"; 87.1% disagreed to the statement "African American men are more likely to cheat than other men"; and 64.8% disagreed to the statement "African American men are more afraid of commitment than other men".

Despite these findings, when asked to respond to the statement "African American men are more financially stable than other men", only 11 out of 108 (10.2%) agreed, while nearly 90% (89.8%) disagreed. Additionally, 87% disagreed, to some extent, to the statement "African American men are too ambitious."
Summary

This chapter reviewed the results of this study by using tables and figures to display the frequencies and percentage distributions of the responses given. In addition, the hypotheses of this study were presented and analyzed to determine if they were supported based on the findings. The findings supported the following hypotheses:

1.) The African American women in this study will have positive attitudes toward marriage, despite also reporting a woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy.

2.) The majority of African American women will feel marriage should be forever despite agreeing that divorce is an option if the divorce doesn’t work out.

3.) The majority of African American women in this study will report their ideal spouse is African American and not Caucasian.

Hypothesis #4 and #5 were not supported. The next chapter will provide useful discussion about the results of this study, as well as, the limitations of the study, and the recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Discussion of the results in any study is important, but it is the discussion of the implications of the findings that should be viewed as the most vital. Thus, this researcher will expound on some of the major results of this study as well as pay particular attention to the implications of the findings of this study. This last chapter will also discuss the limitations of the study, and provide recommendations for social work practice, policy, and research.

Discussion

This study presented the results of 108 African American women who were questioned regarding their attitudes toward marriage, the characteristics of their ideal spouse, and their attitudes toward African American men. For clarification, as the findings are reported it should be noted that the percentages of responses have been grouped as such: disagreed="strongly disagreed" and "disagreed" and agreed="strongly agreed" and "agreed".

This study is actually a complementary study to Townsend's (2000) study which focused on "Black males'
attitudes toward marriage". Since marriage is legally comprised of a man and a woman, it is important to study the attitudes toward marriage of both African American women and men. Hence, this discussion will make many references to Townsend’s study, to support the recommendations made for social work practice, policy, and research.

Some of the major findings in this current study are: 84% of the respondents agreed that “A woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy”; nearly 80% of the respondents agreed “My ideal spouse is African American”; and 62% of respondents felt “There is a shortage of good African American men”. But what are the implications of these results?

While attempting to discuss the implications of these results, keep in mind that this study attempted to answer the following question: “If research indicates that being married is linked to so many positive benefits (i.e., physical health, life expectancy, financial stability, etc.), why is it that so many African American women never marry?”

Respondents’ Attitudes Toward Marriage

In an attempt to answer this particular research question, this study investigated if the attitudes that
African American women have toward marriage-related issues might be a factor in the low marriage rates among African American women. The results indicated that over 93% disagreed “To be happy and lead a full time, you must be married”. Also, over 84% agreed “A woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy.” These two findings are clearly negative attitudes toward marriage.

However, these findings can be viewed in two different and unique perspectives:

(1) Some might argue that the negative views that the African American women in this study expressed toward marriage can be generalized to the views of most African American women. Thus, it may be these negative views toward marriage that explain why so many African American women never marry.

(2) Contrary, some might argue that African American women have this negative view toward marriage, more as a coping mechanism, because they might be having difficulty finding any “good”, ideal, and/or marriageable African American men. Further, they may devalue marriage, unconsciously, by using one of the most common defense mechanisms, denial, to cope with not being married by telling themselves and others, “being married isn’t really that important anyway”.

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Hence, over 84% of the African American women in this study agreed “A woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy”, but is this how they really feel about marriage? Or is it just their way to cope with the inability to find “good” African American men to marry? Finding the true answer is quite difficult or simply put, just as easy as answering “Which came first? The chicken or the egg?”. Townsend’s study (2000) reported that only 39% of the African American men disagreed “Everyone should want to get married”; whereas, over 67% of African American women in this study disagreed with the statement. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have found African American women and men to be less desirous of marriage than their Caucasian and Hispanic counterparts (South, 1995). But why does this phenomenon exist?

Townsend argues that African American men realize that there is a shortage of “good” African American men, thus, they may feel like they have more room and time to “play” before deciding to marry, since they feel they are in such “high demand”. Miller and Browning (2000) argue that this phenomenon exists because an alternative family has formed among the African American family, which mimics the traditional marriage.
Unlike traditional marriages which are comprised of one man and one woman, Miller and Browning (2000) argue that African American women have begun to settle for "a piece of a man"—sharing the other half of the man with another woman in order to adapt to the declining pool of "marriageable" African American men. This may be true, as 13.9% (n=15) of the female respondents in this study disagreed with the statement, "My ideal spouse is monogamous"; whereas, Townsend found that only 5% of the male respondents disagreed with the statement.

Hence, it may be true that African American women feel that they must "settle" for either sharing a man; "settle" for someone who is not reflective of their ideal spouse; or refuse to "settle" for either of the two, thus, remain single.

Lastly, over 92% of the respondents agreed "Marriage should be forever." However, over 71% also agreed "If marriage doesn’t work out, divorce is an option." These findings may imply that most African American women believe that marriage should, ideally, be forever but they also have a contradictory belief that "If marriage doesn’t work out, divorce is an option. This researcher suggests this phenomenon may exist as a result of divorce becoming more prevalent and even more acceptable than in the past.
Thus, though most of the respondents appear to believe, ideally, that marriage should be forever; it also appears they do not believe this “ideal view” of marriage is, perhaps, very reflective of reality. Hence, this may suggest why most of the respondents agreed “If marriage doesn’t work out, divorce is an option.”

Respondents’ Attitudes Toward African American Men

Townsend questioned if there might be some interpersonal conflicts between African American men and women, which might as a result, contribute to the low marriage rates among African Americans. Townsend concluded that this is an area of study that needed to be explored further. Hence, this current study attempted to explore this suggested area by asking the respondents to respond to questions, some written in “positive” form and some written in “negative” form about African American men.

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of respondents in this study disagreed overwhelmingly with “negative” statements about African American men when they were compared to other men. Though some responses framed as “negative views” about African American men were agreed upon, when respondents were asked to compare African American men to other men, the views became more
"positive", as the respondents did not feel there was much difference between either of the two.

Further, Townsend’s study showed similar results when African American men were asked to share their views about African American women. Contrary to stereotypical views about African American women, the majority of African American men in Townsend’s study disagreed to the following: “Most [African American] women don’t respect [African American] men”; and “[African American] women are always putting [African American] men down”.

Contrary to stereotypical views of African American women being domineering, nearly all of the respondents in this study agreed “My ideal spouse should be the head of the family”. These findings imply that it may not be the suggested, interpersonal conflict between African American men and women, which may contribute to the low marriage rates among African Americans but possibly other factors that need to be further explored.

Characteristics of Respondents’ Ideal Spouse

This study also explored the characteristics of the respondents’ ideal spouse. The rationale for comparing the characteristics of the respondents’ ideal spouse with their views toward African American men suggests that if African American women feel that African American men are
not reflective of their ideal spouse, they may choose to remain unmarried rather than marry someone who is not reflective of their ideal spouse.

Nearly 92% agreed "My ideal spouse is financially stable"; however, only 11 out of 108 respondents (10.2%) agreed "African American men are more financially stable than other men." In addition, over 86% agreed "My ideal spouse is monogamous"; while only 29.6% agreed "African American men are monogamous." More than 82% reported "My ideal spouse has completed some college".

Townsend (2000) reported that only 12 of the 71 (16.9%) African American men studied reported to have completed four years of college. Whereas, 79 out of the 108 (73.2%) African American women in this study reported to have completed at least four years of college. These findings illustrate the massive disparity between African American men and women in regard to highest level of education completed.

Dickson reported there are more African American men in prison than in college (1993). Porter and Bronzaft (1995) argue that African American women who possess college degrees are least likely to marry because they have difficulty locating suitable marriage partners whom have similar education levels. Thus, it can be argued that
African American women may prefer to remain single rather than marry less-educated African American men, especially since numerous studies show that education level is strongly linked to annual income. Many studies show that women, in general, believe that marriage should enhance their financial stability, so why would African American women marry someone whom they feel will hinder their financial stability rather than enhance it?

The implications to these important findings are that it may be possible that African American women do not marry because African American men are not reflective of their ideal spouse. Moreover, even though some Caucasian men might have some of the characteristics of their ideal spouse (i.e. financial stability, etc.), research shows that African American women are the least likely to be involved in a marriage with Caucasian men (Bethea, 1995; Porter & Bronzaft, 1995).

Consistent with numerous other studies, over 96% of the African American women in this study disagreed with the statement, "My ideal spouse is Caucasian"; while nearly 80% of them indicated, "My ideal spouse is African American". Hence, one can suggest that African American women may want to get married, but they feel there is a
shortage of "good" men to marry, which the majority of women in this study reported.

Why is it that 62% of the African American women in this current study agreed "There is a shortage of good African American men? According to Dickson, more than 18% of African American males drop out of high school; more than 50% of African American males under the age of 21 are unemployed, and 46% of African American males between 16 and 62 are not in the labor force (1993). Furthermore, African American women are earning more undergraduate and graduate degrees than African American men.

From 1982 to 1992, the number of African American men earning doctorates declined by 20% (Porter & Bronzaft, 1995). This phenomenon may be related to the surprising fact that college educated African American males earn less income than Caucasian males who have dropped out of high school (Staples, 1985). With that said, why would African American men be motivated to finish college anyway? This lack of motivation among African American men to pursue higher education may be one of the many factors that contribute to the low marriage rates among African American women.

Townsend (2000) argued that because there has been a decline in the stigma of marrying outside of one’s race,
consequently, the marriage pool for African American men has become much “wider” and as a result African American men may take advantage of the “variety” (ethnically speaking) of women to choose from.

Thus, African American women who desire to only marry within their race are at a greater disadvantage of getting married. This researcher suggests that, perhaps, it may be this dissimilarity of views toward interracial marriage between African American women and men that may ultimately contribute to the low marriage rates among African American women.

Limitations

Unfortunately, there are several limitations to this study. For instance, convenience sampling was used due to time constraints of this study, thus, the results are not necessarily reflective of all African American women, in all populations. Therefore, the results of this cannot be used to make board generalizations about African American women and their attitudes toward marriage-related issues.

Also, all of the respondents were asked to respond to many statements that might be very personal to them, thus, the concern about whether or not all of the respondents
answered honestly, to all of the statements, is also a limitation of this study.

An unexpected phenomenon occurred in this study when the results were analyzed. Contrary to most research about African American women, a large percentage of women in this study reported to be college educated (73.2%; including 31.5% reporting they have completed graduate school). In addition 28.7% reported to be making $60,000+ annually. This occurrence was unexpected because the researcher thought that by gathering data from five unique and diverse populations, the data would be very reflective of the general public.

However, research indicates that most African American women are not college educated nor have annual incomes of $60,000+. Hence, this researcher attempts to hypothesize why this phenomenon may have occurred by suggesting one should pay particular attention to where most of the data in this study was collected from, which is hair salons (66.7%).

First of all, the average age of respondents in this study was 36 years old. Second, one must wonder, "how much does it cost for the typical African American woman to get her hair done at a hair salon?" Usually it costs roughly $85-100, often even more. Thus, this may be why so many
African American women, in this study, are college educated and are reportedly making $60,000+ annually. Since many studies, including this one, have significantly linked level of education completed with annual income, one would suggest that the African American women that are less educated, thus, are most likely making less money, do not go to hair salons, but possibly rely on family members and/or friends to do their hair because it is more affordable.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

This study was conducted as a form of applied research, hopefully, to provide useful and helpful recommendations for, yet not limited to, professionals in the social work field. The researcher of this study hopes that this current study may have produced research that can help social workers become more knowledgeable about their clients who are African American women.

Social workers should be competent of systems theory, and its implications. Systems theory would suggest that not only the unmarried African American client is at risk of harmful emotional, psychological, physical, and economic problems but also any other members of that system (i.e., their children). Families headed by single-
parent women are related to the rise in poverty among children (Crowder & Tolnay, 2000).

Social workers should also be aware and competent of cultural differences when dealing with African American clients. In addition, social workers should be able to deconstruct myths about African American women which portray them negatively, as domineering woman that want to “run the family”. This current study deconstructed this myth as over 92% of the African American women studied reported “the man should be the head of the family”.

Social workers should also maintain a level of skepticism when African American women clients tell them remarks like: “I don’t need a man to be happy”, “Who cares about marriage?”, “I didn’t want to get married anyway”. One of the many responsibilities that a social worker has is to assist his or her client in their enhancement of their own insight and understanding of why they behave and say the things they do.

Hence, this researcher believes that social workers must help their clients discover if these are their true feelings about marriage or if they may be, unconsciously, using denial as a way to cope with the difficulty of finding someone “ideal” to marry. This researcher does not believe that merely getting married will make someone
happier or healthier, but this researcher believes it is vital that clients have insight and an understanding of why they may have certain views, negative or positive, about marriage, rather than just saying "I don't know. I just do!"

This researcher recommends that many others scholars within the social work field, yet not limited to, should continue to explore this troubling phenomenon in an attempt to address this serious social problem. Future research may be able to produce results that can shed light on some of the additional factors that might contribute to the steady decline in marriage rates among African American women.

In particular, this researcher suggests that future studies explore why is it that African American women are less desirous to marry outside of their race, more specifically Caucasian men? Does the remembrance about slavery play a role? If so, why doesn't (or does it?) it play a role for African American men, who are among the most likely to marry outside their race, more specifically, to Caucasian women?

Some have "joked" about this phenomenon stating that African American men remain bitter about slavery but report "what better way to payback the white man than to
have sex with his women”. This “joke” should be further investigated to assess for validity.

In regards to how this study is related to social work policy, this researcher would urge macro social workers to consider developing additional polices that might reward individuals for marrying. In this study, over 20% of respondents felt “there are fewer advantages to marriage than in the past”, thus, African American women might be more likely to marry if they felt there are more advantages to getting married.

Further, there is a definite need for social change when it has been reported that college educated African American males earn less income than Caucasian males who have dropped out of high school (Staples, 1985). Since most research about women and their attitudes toward marriage illustrates one common theme, which is the belief that marriage should enhance one’s financial stability, this should be the case for African Americans as well.

Hence, federal policies need to be developed to correct the incongruous finding that college educated African American males earn less income than Caucasian males who have dropped out of high school. This researcher strongly suggests that this financial injustice toward college educated African American men does not only have
adverse effects on African American men, but African American women who desire to marry but refuse to marry someone financially unstable.

Conclusions

This study has attempted to further explore some of the factors that may contribute to the low marriage rates among African Americans, in particular, African American women. Since marriage is comprised, legally, of a male and a female, this researcher suggests that all researchers who desire to explore this phenomenon further do not fail to examine the attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs toward marriage-related issues of both African American women and men.

Lastly, this researcher recommends that additional researchers continue to try in answer the main research question in this study: "If research indicates that being married is linked to so many positive benefits (i.e., physical health, life expectancy, financial stability, etc.), why is it that so many African American women never marry?"
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
SURVEY ON ATTITUDES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN TOWARD MARRIAGE-RELATED ISSUES

Instructions: Below are several statements regarding attitudes toward marriage, your ideal spouse and African American men in general. Please read each statement carefully. Record your answer by circling the number of your response. Your responses will remain anonymous, so please answer honestly. After you have completed this questionnaire, please return it to the researcher or place it in the assigned box. Thank you again for your participation.

KEY:
Strongly Agree (SA)  Agree (A)  Disagree (D)  Strongly Disagree (SD)

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS AND CIRCLE THE RESPONSE THAT BEST SUPPORTS YOUR VIEWPOINT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDES TOWARD MARRIAGE</th>
<th>(SA)</th>
<th>(A)</th>
<th>(D)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Everyone should want to get married.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Marriage helps individuals mature.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) A successful marriage is more important than a successful career.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.) The people I know are less committed to marriage than people in the past.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.) There are fewer advantages to marriage now than there were in the past.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.) The people I know are more committed to marriage than people in the past.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.) To be happy and lead a full life, you must be married.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) A woman doesn’t need to be married to be happy.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree (SA)</td>
<td>Agree (A)</td>
<td>Disagree (D)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (SD)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.) If marriage doesn’t work out, divorce is an option.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) Marriage should be forever.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.) My marriage (future or present) will last forever.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHARACTERISTICS OF IDEAL SPOUSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.) My ideal spouse is financially stable.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.) My ideal spouse is African American.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.) Race should not be an issue when choosing a spouse.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.) My ideal spouse is monogamous.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.) My ideal spouse is Caucasian.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.) My ideal spouse has never been arrested.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.) My ideal spouse has completed some college.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.) My ideal spouse should be the head of the family.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ATTITUDES ABOUT AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.) African American men are more financially stable than other men.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.) African American men are too ambitious.</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree (SA)</td>
<td>Agree (A)</td>
<td>Disagree (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.)</td>
<td>African American men are more afraid of commitment than other men.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.)</td>
<td>African American men are monogamous.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.)</td>
<td>African American men are supportive of African American women.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.)</td>
<td>Most African American men don't respect African American women.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.)</td>
<td>It bothers me when African American men marry Caucasian women.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.)</td>
<td>African American men date or marry Caucasian women because they can run all over them, unlike they can with African American women.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.)</td>
<td>There is a shortage of good African American men.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.)</td>
<td>African American men are always putting African American women down.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.)</td>
<td>African American men are more likely to cheat than other men.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.)</td>
<td>African American men resist marriage more than other men.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHICS
DEMOGRAPHICS

The following six questions are designed to gather additional information about you. Please answer each of the following questions carefully. To record your answer, please circle the appropriate number that reflects your response or fill in the blank when prompted to do so.

Please state your age: _______

Highest Level of Education Completed:
1.) Elementary
2.) High School
3.) Undergraduate
4.) Graduate

Annual Income Range:
1.) Less than 15,000
2.) $15,001-30,000
3.) $30,001-45,000
4.) $45,001-60,000
5.) $60,001+

Marital Status:
1.) Never Married, not Cohabitating (not living w/ partner)
2.) Never married, but Cohabitating (I'm living w/ partner)
3.) Married
4.) Separated
5.) Divorced
6.) Widowed

Religion:
1.) Baptist
2.) Catholic
3.) Protestant
4.) Jehovah's Witness
5.) Other, please specify __________________________
6.) Non-religious

If you are NOT currently married, do you plan to get married within:
1.) 1 year?
2.) 2 years?
3.) 3 years?
4.) 4 years?
5.) 5 or more years?
6.) I never plan to get married.
7.) I am currently married, separated, divorced, or widowed.
APPENDIX C

"FRAMED INSTRUCTIONS"
Please fill out this survey while you wait for your meal...

- If you are female
- If you are African American
- And at least (18) years old.

This survey is about the attitudes of African American women toward marriage-related issues.

Thank you.

(Please place your completed survey facedown in black tray.)
Please fill out this survey while you wait for your turn to be helped...

- If you are female
- If you are African American
- And at least (18) years old.

This survey is about the attitudes of African American women toward marriage-related issues.

Thank you.

(Please place your completed survey facedown in black tray.)
APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT

This study will examine the attitudes that some African American women have toward marriage-related issues. This study is being conducted by Andrew Williams, a social work graduate student, of California State University, San Bernardino under the supervision of Dr. Laurie Smith. This study has been approved by the Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate in this study or withdraw at any time without penalty. Please be assured your responses are strictly anonymous and no identifying information will be asked. Once you have completed the questionnaire, there is a debriefing statement attached that describes the study in more detail for you to read.

One of the benefits of participating in this study is that you might be able to enhance your insight and awareness of your personal views and attitudes toward marriage and African American men in general. This questionnaire should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, feel free to contact my supervisor Dr. Laurie Smith at (909) 880-5000, ext. 3837.

By placing a mark in the box below and dating this form you acknowledge that you have been informed, and understand the nature of this study. Your signature also confirms your awareness that participation is voluntary and you confirm that you are at least 18 years of age.

Check here □ Today’s Date ____________
APPENDIX E

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The research study you just completed is being conducted by Andrew Williams, a social work graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. Laurie Smith, from California State University, San Bernardino. The questionnaire was designed to explore the attitudes that some African American women have toward marriage-related issues.

This study has been approved by the Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino. Please be assured that the data collected will be reported in group form only and no identifying information was requested that might result in you being identified.

If any aspect of this study caused you any emotional distress, you can contact East Valley Community Health Center at (626) 919-5724 ext. 239 for counseling services, which are based on a sliding fee scale.

The results of this study will be available at John M. Pfau Library located at California State University, San Bernardino after June 1, 2004. Thank you again for your time and participation in this study.
REFERENCES


