

Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Interest among Emerging Adult College Students: Examining the Intersectionality of Culture and Sexuality

BACKGROUND

- ❖ Developing close, intimate relationships has been historically viewed as an important task during emerging adulthood (e.g. Furman & Collibee, 2014).
 - ❖ However, recent cohorts of emerging adult are delaying relationship transitions compared to past generations (Anderson, 2016).
- ❖ Lack of research that focuses on the intersectionality of identities (Crenshaw, 1989) and how that may influence romantic development, beliefs, and behaviors.

OBJECTIVE

- ❖ To examine romantic relationship attitudes, interest, and beliefs as a function of both cultural/ethnic identity and sexuality.

METHOD

Participants:

- ❖ 197 emerging adults enrolled at a university in the Northeast US.
- ❖ Age: $M = 19.3$, $SD = 1.1$; 60% female, 57% European American, 10% Black or African American, 11% Hispanic/Latinx, 14% Asian or Asian American, 9% other; 76% heterosexual, 13% bisexual, 4.5% gay/lesbian/homosexual, 2.5% pansexual, 3.5% other

Procedure:

- ❖ Self-report questionnaires were administered to participating students at 2 time points 1.5 months apart.
- ❖ Participants received academic credit.

METHOD

Measures: The following validated self-report measures were administered at T1:

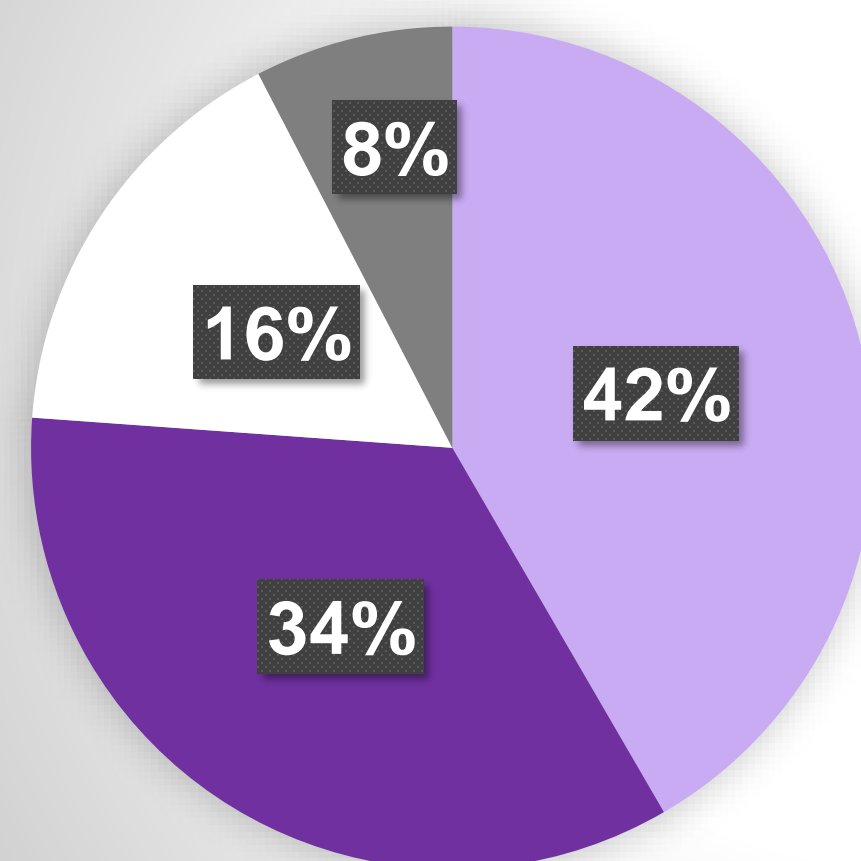
Relationship Attitudes	Scale	Example Item
Satisfaction with Relationship Status	5-item Satisfaction with Relationship Scale (ReSta; Lehmann et al., 2015)	"In general, how satisfied are you with your current status?"
Relationship Dismissal	4-item subscale from the Brief Measure of Relationship Importance (Watkins & Beckmeyer, 2020)	"Romantic relationships have more problems than benefits"
Relationship Desire	2-item subscale from the Brief Measure of Relationship Importance (Watkins & Beckmeyer, 2020)	"Being in a romantic relationship is very important to me"
Avoidant Attachment	6-item subscale from the Experience in Close Relationships Scale, Short Form (Wei et al., 2007)	"I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back"
Anxious Attachment	6-item subscale from the Experience in Close Relationships Scale, Short Form (Wei et al., 2007)	"My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away"
Fear of Being Single	6-item Fear of Being Single Scale (Spielmann et al., 2013)	"I feel anxious when I think about being single forever"
"Love Finds a Way"	6-item "Love Finds a Way" Subscale of Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprecher & Metts, 1989)	"I expect that in my relationship, romantic love will really last; it won't fade with time"

Analytic Plan:

- ❖ Four groups were created based on self-identified cultural/ethnic identity and sexual identity.
- ❖ ANOVAs were run to examine differences in means for relationship attitude variables across cultural/ethnic and sexuality groups.

RESULTS

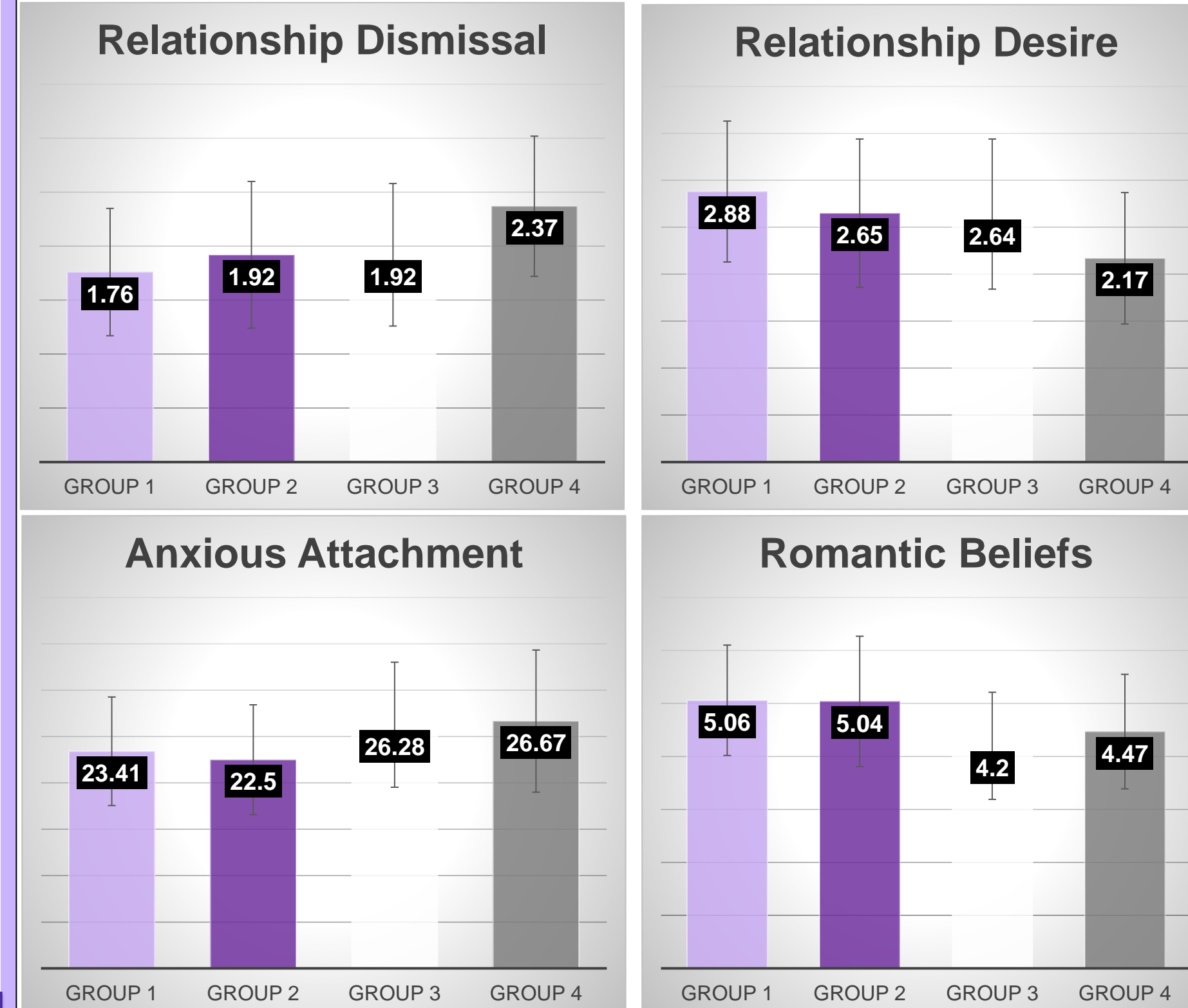
Cultural/Ethnic and Sexuality Groups



- Group 1: European American & heterosexual
- Group 2: African American/Black, Hispanic, Indian, Arab American, Asian/Asian American, Other†, or mixed & heterosexual
- Group 3: European American & LGBTQ+
- Group 4: African American/Black, Hispanic, Indian, Arab American, Asian/Asian American†, Other, or mixed & LGBTQ+

RESULTS

Figure 1. Mean Differences on Romantic Relationship Factors as a Function of Culture/Ethnicity and Sexuality



CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Findings highlight diversity in relationship attitudes among emerging adults.
- ❖ Importance of an intersectionality framework.
 - Exploring cultural/ethnic identity AND sexual identity.
- ❖ Past research suggests romantic involvement and attitudes are associated with well-being (Adamczyk et al., 2021; Girme et al., 2016).
 - Future research is needed to explore how systems of disadvantage and differences in relationship attitudes influence well-being.

REFERENCES

For a full list of references, please click [HERE](#)
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