

The Role of Skin Complexion on African American Emerging Adults

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Abstract: Past literature exploring the role of skin complexion within the African American community has produced conflicting results (Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams, Belgrave; 2015). The current study uses a mixed-method approach to expand on this literature by exploring the experiences of African American emerging adults and their perceptions on how skin complexion has shaped their lives. Data will be collected using a brief survey to gather information about the participants' well-being and information regarding their own skin complexion. Focus groups will be conducted to further explore participants' life experiences regarding skin complexion and how they believe it has shaped their experiences in emerging adulthood. A T-test will be run to assess the relationship between self-rated skin complexion, satisfaction with skin complexion and well-being measures. The information relayed by the participants during the focus group will be transcribed and coded to reveal any common themes surrounding their experiences with skin complexion. We hypothesize that common themes of lower well-being, dissatisfaction with skin complexion, and negative experiences based on skin complexion in emerging adulthood will be arise more often from individuals who self-rate their skin complexion at the very light or very dark end of the spectrum, more so than individuals that self-rate their skin complexion as medium. Future research and implications will be discussed.