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## Ethnicity: A Barrier to Dating?

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# INVESTIGATING DIVERSITY

Exploring Race, Gender, and Unity in the Adventist Church



FEBRUARY 4, 2019 BY PAOLA MORA

## Ethnicity: A Barrier to Dating?

Before dating someone there is a lot of thought that goes into that decision. After all, every relationship is full of potentials: potential break-ups, potential dates, potential memories, potential engagements, potential families, potential tears, potential laughs and, if you are blessed enough, potential happily-ever-after.

No two people are alike, which is why relationships in themselves are hard. Hence, adding another layer of dissimilarity can make things even more complicated.

I recently conducted an informal survey, trying to find out a bit more about one of those extra possible layers. Participants were all between the ages of 16 and 25, and most were current college students. Answers were collected either through papers that were handed out in person or through an Instagram poll. However, most answers came from the latter. There were 103 participants in total, and they were all asked the same question:

## ***Would you rather date someone who belongs to a similar ethnicity as yours or someone who is from a different ethnicity?***

*Further down on this page, you will see the results and have an opportunity to vote yourself. But first, let's define 'ethnicity'. According to Cliff notes,*

*Ethnicity is shared cultural practices, perspectives, and distincti*

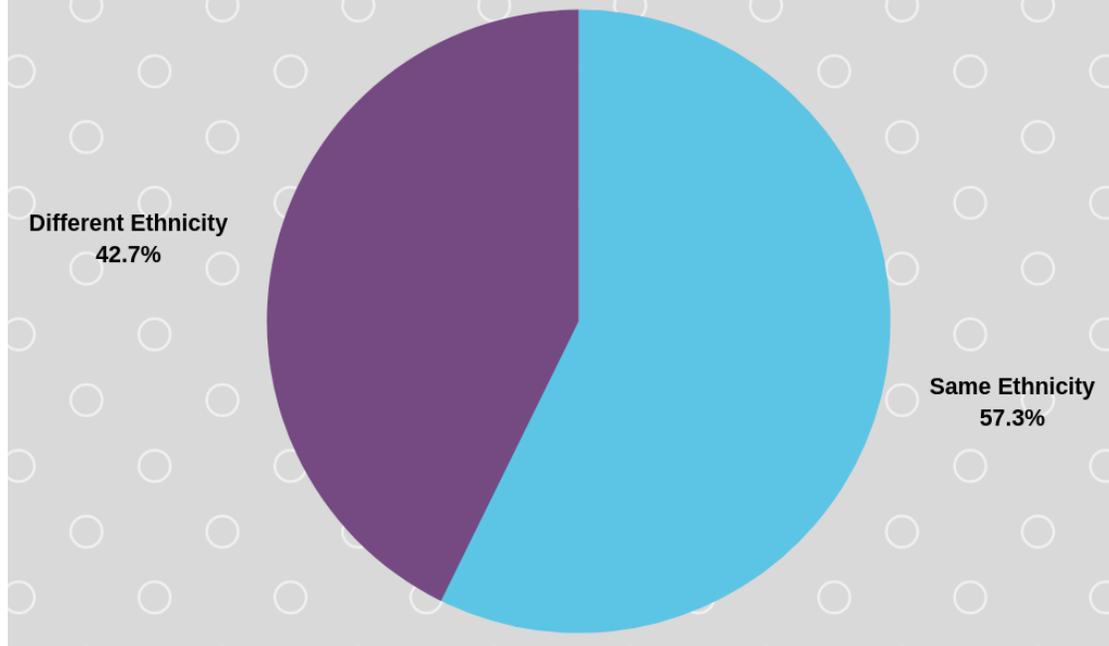
It is important to note that ethnicity is not the same thing as race. While race deals with the physical characteristics of a person, ethnicity has to do with their cultural traditions.

*Before reading the results, take your time to vote!*

*(The poll in this blog does not include votes from my research. To see research results, scroll to the next paragraph.)*

Though I was not expecting any particular answer, I was still surprised by the results. Out of 103 people, 57.3% said they would rather date someone of similar ethnicity while 42.7% said the opposite. This means that, if having to choose, the majority (59 individuals, to be precise) would pick to be with someone who has similar customs and perspectives.

## WOULD YOU RATHER DATE SOMEONE OF A...



What I found more interesting, however, was the reasoning behind their answers. Those who wanted to date within their own ethnicity speculated that the differences between cultures would cause profuse misunderstandings. In a way, many were afraid of the possible cultural shock. It seems easier to be with someone who has a common ground as it avoids the need of compromise.

***‘Sometimes being different causes drifts between individuals.’*** One participant wrote.

There was a pattern, however, that stood out from everything else. On one hand, it seemed like those who chose to date someone of a similar ethnicity were thinking of long-term plans when they made their decision. On the other hand, those who picked someone of a different ethnic background made their choice based on the “now”.

For the latter, they thought it would be amusing to learn about different cultures, try different foods, or even pick up another language. Though all great things, these responses seemed to focus on the fun of the moment.

In contrast, the first group worried about the cultural disagreements that may arise once the relationship developed into something bigger. Different cultures have different

customs and values. Things that may seem insignificant, like where to go for holidays or what to eat at home, may cause disagreements. Other things, however, such as the right way to discipline children or handle money, may have the potential to completely destroy a relationship, some of the respondents said.

There is no right or wrong answer to this informal survey. However, I was bothered by our unwillingness to compromise. Even as I thought of my own answer, I realized that I have some set perspectives that I do not want to change.

Now, don't get me wrong: We all have fundamental values and beliefs that should not, under any circumstances, be compromised. But differences in ethnicity should complement one another, not challenge each other's distinctions.

Why is it that many of us believe that, in the long run, cultural differences cannot work? Why is it so hard for us to see a future with someone who was not raised in the same way?

Food for thought...

📁 **RESEARCH PROGRESS**

# **DATING, ETHNICITY, INTER-ETHNIC DATING, POLL, SURVEY**