

**Regional Influences on Marriages**  
**(Executive Summary)**

**For**  
**Smith Brothers Advertising on behalf of**  
**TWOgether Pittsburgh**

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## ***Executive Summary***

### **Overview**

As was expected, common factors such as *work schedules/commitments*, *finances*, *child rearing responsibilities*, and *equality in household chores* were all strong contributors of marital stress on residents of the Pittsburgh area.

Our aging population did not appear to have a dramatic impact —less than one in ten rated the three factors related to *aging parents* as contributing at least some amount of stress on their marriage. This was likely due to the fact that only 13 respondents (3.3%) mentioned that they currently have a parent or parent-in-law living within their household.

- Those who reported having a parent or parent-in-law living within their household indicated at least some amount of stress from the three issues related to aging parents, and in fact, two of these issues were among the top-five factors contributing to marital stress among this small group.

Our findings clearly identified traffic/construction-related issues as the most notorious “local” source of marital stress on Pittsburgh area residents.

- Respondents rated the following as the top-three regional factors that negatively affect relational interactions between them and their spouse:
  - *You are both in the car and there is heavy traffic or construction (53.5%).*
  - *You or your spouse just got home after traveling through construction, detours, and/or unexpected traffic jams (48.0%).*
  - *You or your spouse are late getting home or meeting somewhere because of traffic or construction (48.0%).*
- Additionally, when asked how Pittsburgh has a negative effect on how they and their spouse treat or react to each other, in an open-end format, *traveling/parking-related issues (23.0%)* were cited most often.

Considering the statistics that were recently released by *The Nielsen Co.*, which ranked Pittsburgh 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation with respect to prime-time television viewing, we were not very surprised when the findings suggested that TV viewing does in fact have some negative impact on the marriages of Pittsburgh residents.

- One-quarter or more of the respondents reported that each of the following scenarios has a negative effect on how they and their spouse treat or react to each other:

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- *You or your spouse are watching a TV show that the other one isn't interested in (42.0%)*
- *You are both watching a TV program that you both like (30.0%)*
- *You or your spouse is watching a local sports game that the other one isn't interested in (25.5%)*
- Further, respondents were somewhat less likely to rate their overall relationship status with a positive top-two box score whenever either they or their spouse watched more television, on average/per day, than the other.

It's no secret that Pittsburgh is not exactly famous for its weather conditions and our results do in fact show that our less than perfect climate does have an unfavorable effect on the relational interactions of many Pittsburgh couples.

- Over one in five respondents indicated that undesirable weather conditions negatively affect how they and their spouse treat or react to each other; the following conditions were most detrimental:
  - *Gloomy, rainy days (35.3%)*
  - *Humid days (34.0%)*
  - *Days where the temperature is above 90 degrees (33.5%)*
- Moreover, over one in five (21.5%) also mentioned a *weather/climate-related issue* when asked, in an open-ended format, how Pittsburgh has a negative effect on interactions with their spouse.

Finally, Pittsburgh's recent rank as the #1 sports city in the U.S. by *The Sporting News* may not be such a huge badge of honor after all. Although sports-related issues were the least impactful compared to the other regional factors, the following findings can not be overlooked:

- Nearly one in five (17.3%) reported that a *Steelers loss* had a negative effect on the way they and their spouse treat or react to each other and one in nine (11.0%) mentioned the same when *they or their spouse are attending a local sports event that the other one isn't*.
- Respondents were somewhat less likely to rate their overall relationship status with a positive top-two box score whenever a difference in fan support between them and their spouse, for at least one of Pittsburgh's local sports teams, was observed.