

# Gender Variation among Perceived Social Concomitants of Sexual Behavior in Emerging Adulthood

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## Introduction & Background

- Sexual health is influenced by a myriad of factors:
  - Low levels of access to health care
  - Employment
  - Educational opportunities
  - High baselines prevalence of STIs (CDC, 2017)
- Gender socialization may also play a role:
  - Young girls experience stricter social norms as they are encouraged to refrain from sex and avoid multiple partners.
  - Boys are generally given more sexual freedom (more approval to have sex). (Maas, Shearer, Gillen, & Lefkowitz, 2015)

Minority young adults in the U.S. are at risk of adverse sexual outcomes due to early sexual initiation, unprotected sex, & high rates of STIs and unprotected sex.

### Purpose of the Present Study

It is important to explore the role of gender in the social concomitants related to sexual behavior among minority young adults.

## Methodology

### Participants:

- 236 sexually active African American college students, recruited at a 4-year college in the South
- 49% (N=115) males & 51% (N=120) females
- Ages ranged from 17-23 ( $M_{age} = 19$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ )

### Procedure:

Convenience sample via confidential online survey

Measure: 260-item survey on various health & interpersonal behaviors, including sexual behavior and psychosocial variables

Analysis: Indep. t-tests for social concomitants & gender; Logistic regression moderation models of gender x social concomitant predicting “sex would be a bad idea.”

## Results: Table 1

Social Concomitant	Means (s)		t	Sig.
	Male	Female		
I am not likely to graduate on time if I get involved in a sexual relationship	2.3 (1.5)	2.3 (1.5)	-.19	.85
I am not likely to obtain the career that I want if I get involved in a sexual relationship	2.3 (1.4)	2.5 (1.5)	-1.16	.25
God would be angry if I had sex before marriage	3.2 (1.4)	3.3 (1.5)	-.38	.70
<b>My parents would be angry if I have sex</b>	3.1 (1.5)	3.7 (1.4)	-3.02	.003**
I increase my chances of getting AIDS if I have sex with multiple people	2.6 (1.4)	3.1 (1.4)	-2.68	.008**
My mother's opinion about what I do here in college is important to me	4.0 (1.3)	4.0 (1.3)	.19	.85
My father's opinion about what I do here in college is important to me	3.6 (1.6)	3.7 (1.5)	-.55	.59
My friends' opinion about what I do here in college is important to me	3.2 (1.4)	3.4 (1.4)	-1.27	.21
<b>My parents would be proud to know I maintained my virginity throughout my teenage years. (Please answer hypothetically even if you did not remain a virgin as a teen.)</b>	3.6 (1.6)	4.6 (1.1)	-5.76	<.001***
I increase my chances of getting AIDS if I have sex without a condom	3.2 (1.5)	3.6 (1.5)	-1.70	.09†

## Results: Table 2

Logistic Model: Do you believe it would be a good idea for you to have sex? (1=bad idea; 0=good idea)	B	Sig.	OR (95% CI )
I am not likely to graduate on time if I get involved in a sexual relationship	.077	.59	1.08 (.82 - 1.43)
Gender	.901	.09*	2.46 (.86 - 7.09)
Factor x Gender	.220	.28	1.25 (.84 - 1.86)
I am not likely to obtain the career that I want if I get involved in a sexual relationship	.196	.17	1.22 (.92 - 1.61)
Gender	1.14	.04*	3.14 (1.05 - 9.42)
Factor x Gender	1.09	.66	1.09 (.74 - 1.60)
<b>My mother's opinion about what I do here in college is important to me</b>	-.288	.06†	.75 (.55 - 1.02)
Gender	-.108	.21	.34 (.06 - 1.85)
Factor x Gender	.62	.003**	1.86 (1.23 - 2.82)
<b>My father's opinion about what I do here in college is important to me</b>	-.098	.46	.91 (.70 - 1.17)
Gender	.134	.85	1.14 (.28 - 4.61)
Factor x Gender	.329	.07†	1.39 (.97 - 1.99)
<b>My friends' opinion about what I do here in college is important to me</b>	-.114	.44	.89 (.67 - 1.19)
Gender	.217	.76	1.34 (.31 - 5.01)
Factor x Gender	.343	.09*	1.41 (.95 - 2.10)
<b>My parents would be proud to know I maintained my virginity throughout my teenage years. (Please answer hypothetically...)</b>	.297	.05*	1.35 (.99 - 1.83)
Gender	1.93	.06†	6.87 (.90 - 52.61)
Factor x Gender	-.16	.49	.85 (.54 - 1.34)
I increase my chances of getting AIDS if I have sex without a condom	.03	.82	1.03 (.79 - 1.36)
Gender	1.38	.05*	3.98 (.98 - 16.09)
Factor x Gender	-.01	.98	.96 (.68 - 1.45)

## Broader Impacts & Future Directions

Women who value their mother's, father's, and friends' opinions are 1.86, 1.39, and 1.41 times more likely (respectively) to believe sex is a bad idea, as compared to men.

Those who believed their parents would be proud of them maintaining their virginity as teen were 1.35 times more likely to believe sex is a bad idea. Women may associate sex with something that can penalize them in different ways (i.e. the success of their career) Parents are suited to engage and educate their children about sexual health, as family shapes attitudes, beliefs and norms that influence their behavior (Sutton, Lasswell, Lanier, & Miller, 2014).

Prevention tools should include increased awareness of STIs/HIV.

Policies and university practitioners can improve capacity for informed decision making.

Differing gender stigmas need to be discussed via rich-data methods such as focus groups.