

# Promoting Safer Sexual Behavior on the HBCU Campus through a Focus on Ethnic Identity

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## Introduction & Background

- African American college students reported significantly more sex partners (12% vs. 8%,  $p < .001$ )
- Double the rate of STIs than their White counterparts (Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA), 2012).
- African American students attending historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) were 4.4 times more likely to have a STI history compared to White students attending a predominately White college/university (PWI).
- African Americans tend to restrict their sexual networks to their own race and ethnicity (CDC, 2015).
- Thus, efforts to understand sexual risk-related behavior prevention on HBCUs remain important.

### Purpose of the Present Study

To explore the role of ethnic identity in the condom use behaviors of African American young adults.

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## Methodology

### Participants:

- 255 sexually active African American college students, recruited at a 4-year college in the South
- (40% (N=102) males and 60% (N=153) females)
- Ages ranged from 17-25 ( $M_{age} = 19$ ,  $SD = 1.4$ )

Procedure: Convenience sample via confidential online survey

Measure: 260-item survey on various health & interpersonal behaviors, including condom use, ethnic identity, and psychosocial variable related to condom use.

Analysis: Logistic regression models of attitudes, subjective norms, & self-efficacy x levels of ethnic identity predicting self-reported condom use frequency.

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## Analytic Procedure & Results

### Analytic Procedure

- IVs: Attitudes about condoms (4), Subjective Norms (4), Self-efficacy (7), Ethnic Identity Achievement (5)
- Psychosocial construct 5pt scale; EI 4pt scale
- Dependent Variable: Condom use frequency (“Would you say you use condoms...”) 1-never 2-hardly ever 3-sometimes 4-most of the time 5-all the time
- Psychosocial variables were summed and averaged; Cut-points were used to indicate high and low ethnic identity; condom use was truncated to indicate 1= all of the time and 0= not all of the time.

Logistic regression models constructed to test impact of psychosocial constructs x ethnic identity on condom use frequency.

### Results

- Ethnic identity ( $p < .001$ ) and self-efficacy ( $p = .01$ ) were predictors of condom use.
- Self-efficacy x ethnic identity was the most influential predictor of condom use.
- Those with high ethnic identity and self-efficacy were 2.8 times more likely to use condoms all the time;  $p = .03$ .

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## Results: Table 1

Model	B	OR (95% CI)	P-value
Attitudes	.85	1.22 (.02 - 1.59)	.16
Ethnic Identity	.26	1.37 (.19 - 1.32)	.25
Attitudes x Ethnic Identity	1.20	1.19 (.64 - 4.82)	.09*
Subjective Norms	.07	1.15 (.32 - 3.32)	.49
Ethnic Identity	.27	1.09 (.07 - 2.35)	.15
Subjective Norms x Ethnic Identity	.63	1.09 (.59 - 1.27)	.14
Self-Efficacy	.26	1.64 (1.20 - 2.26)	.01**
Ethnic Identity	.41	1.59 (1.19 - 3.30)	<.001***
Self-Efficacy x Ethnic Identity	1.22	2.79 (1.5 - 3.68)	.03**

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## Broader Impacts & Future Directions

In knowing that ethnic identity achievement and self-efficacy about condom use is positively associated with the odds of using condoms all the time, it is recommended that campus initiatives aimed at increasing condom use on HBCU campuses incorporate objectives into their campaigns or interventions to address ethnic identity.

Peer education may also be a beneficial way to teach college students about condom use. Younger college adults, especially college freshmen and sophomores may be more receptive to their college peers about the realities of sexual risk behaviors on campus. Furthermore, peer educators are in a good position to influence and model a healthy internalization of ethnic identity.

Future studies should explore how ethnic identity is related to other sexual risk-related behaviors (drugs & alcohol, multiple partners, “hook-up” behaviors, etc.). Limitations include self-reported behaviors and convenience sampling.

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### References

- American College Health Association. (2012). Spring 2012 reference group executive summary. *National College Health Assessment*.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2015). CDC HIV/AIDS fact sheet: HIV/AIDS among African-Americans. *Atlanta: CDC*.