

SMITH, TASIA M., M.S. Colorism and Perceived Sexual Risk Taking Among African American Adolescent Girls: Where Does Racial Socialization Fit in This Relationship? (2010)

Directed by Dr. Stephanie I. Coard. 50 pp.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the influences of colorism on perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors among 243 African American adolescent females. Additionally, this study sought to examine the potential moderating role of cultural pride reinforcement messages and cultural endorsement of the mainstream messages. Hierarchical linear regressions were conducted to examine the study's hypotheses. The findings revealed that higher levels of acceptance of Eurocentric standards of beauty were associated with lower levels of perceived harm of sexual risk taking variables. However, further analyses revealed that this relationship did not remain significant. Additionally, neither cultural pride reinforcement messages or cultural endorsement of the mainstream messages served as significant moderators in the relationship between colorism and perceived harm of sexual risk taking.

COLORISM AND PERCEIVED SEXUAL RISK TAKING AMONG
AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT GIRLS:
WHERE DOES RACIAL SOCIALIZATION
FIT IN THIS RELATIONSHIP?

by

Tasia M. Smith

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

Greensboro
2010

Approved by

Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

Date of Acceptance by Committee

Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis could not have been written without the continued support and guidance of my advisor, Dr. Stephanie Irby Coard. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Andy Supple for his guidance and statistical expertise, Dr. Andrea Hunter for her guidance and contextual knowledge, and Dr. Tiffany Townsend for the utilization of her dataset and continued support throughout the process. Lastly, this thesis would not have been made possible without funding from the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (SAMHSA/CSAP; Grant # 1H79SP1068). Again thank you for helping me to successfully navigate the thesis process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. STANDARDS OF BEAUTY.....	7
III. GOALS OF PRESENT STUDY.....	18
IV. METHODS.....	20
V. RESULTS.....	24
VI. DISCUSSION.....	27
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSION.....	32
REFERENCES.....	34
APPENDIX A: TABLES.....	40

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics.....	40
Table 2. Bivariate Correlations of Demographics.....	42
Table 3. Bivariate Correlations of Major Study Variables.....	43
Table 4. Summary of Multivariate Regression Analyses.....	44

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sexual risk taking: Statement of the problem.

Sexual risk taking (e.g., multiple partners, early onset of intercourse) among adolescents is a serious problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2006), nearly half (47%) of all high school students have had sexual intercourse, and of these sexually active teens, 14% report having had four or more sexual partners. Also, nearly a third did not consistently use condoms (CDC, 2006). Risky behaviors such as these lead to an increase in teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and, more seriously, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Young adults between the ages of 15-24 account for almost half of all STI infections reported (Weinstock, Berman, & Cates, 2000). Additionally, adolescents between the ages of 15-19 account for 13 percent of HIV/AIDS cases reported (CDC, 2005).

Within this large group of adolescents engaging in risky sexual behavior, Black youth are disproportionately represented in these statistics. Black youth account for 66.5% of all adolescents who have ever been sexually active. They also account for 35% of currently sexually active adolescents (i.e., past 3 months; CDC, 2007). Among Black adolescents, 16.5% have had sex prior to the age of thirteen, compared to 4% of their white peers (CDC, 2006). Black youth also account for the majority of HIV/AIDS cases (73%) reported among 15-19 year olds (CDC, 2006).

Furthermore, of the currently sexually active adolescents (35%), Black females make up 43.5% of this group as opposed to White and Hispanic females only accounting for 35.1% and 35.3% respectively (CDC, 2007). Black females were the least likely to have used a condom during their last sexual encounter. Also, white females were more likely to use birth control pills as opposed to Black females (CDC, 2007).

Sexual risk-taking: Attitudes and perceptions.

Among African American adolescent females, an association has been found between one's attitudes about risk behaviors and subsequent engagement in such behaviors (Staunton, Li, Black, & Ricardo, 1996; Ravis, Sheeran, & Armitage, 2006). In support of the association between attitudes and subsequent engagement in risk behaviors, Whitbeck, Yoder, Hoyt, and Conger (1999), found that if adolescents display more positive attitudes towards sex they were more likely to engage in sexual behaviors. Conversely, after controlling for age, race/ethnicity, and parental education, negative attitudes and perceptions about sex was a strong predictor of delayed sexual debut among adolescents (Carvajal et al., 1999). This association suggests that it is imperative to better understand attitudes toward, perceptions of risk, and subsequent sexual practices in African American adolescent females. Targeting attitudes and perceptions toward sexual risk taking in African American girls may assist in identifying key factors to consider in efforts to prevent risky sex practices.

While literature has examined attitudes and perceptions of sexual risk taking behavior among African American adolescents, the majority of studies ignore several culturally relevant protective factors that are most salient to this ethnic group (e.g.,

MacDonald & Martineau, 2002; Bachanas et al., 2002). Studies tend to explore, and programs tend to target, universal protective factors across racial/ethnic groups (e.g., self-esteem) rather than focusing on factors that may be unique to a particular racial/ethnic group (Rucibwa, Modeste, Montgomery, & Fox, 2003). For example, when examining African Americans in general, and African American adolescent girls in particular, it may be important to explore culturally relevant factors (e.g., colorism, racial socialization) in promotion of safer sex practices and prevention of risk-taking behaviors.

Based on the need to better understand what factors influence attitudes and perceptions about sexual risk taking the aim of this current study is to examine the relationship between rejection of Eurocentric standards of beauty and perceived sexual risk taking. African American females are receiving societal messages, which help them to define “What is beautiful?”. Based on the content of the messages that are transmitted from varying sources (e.g., media, peers, and neighborhood) these messages can serve as a potential risk factor. This is especially true for African American girls growing up in a homogenous context (i.e., ethnically homogenous) and embracing Eurocentric standards of beauty. The internalization of these messages can lead to increased perceived sexual risk taking. Racial socialization will be examined as a potential moderator within this relationship. Based on the risk and protective model, protective factors (i.e., racial socialization) can potentially buffer the effects of potential risk factors (i.e., acceptance of Eurocentric standards of beauty) on perceptions of risk behaviors among adolescents (Bachanas et al., 2002).

Historical perspective.

Despite great strides, racism is still a major issue within the United States. In most contexts racism has become more institutionalized in nature. Along with a system that privileges white individuals over individuals from historically marginalized groups discrimination also exists within these historically oppressed groups. This process, which often "... privileges light-skinned people of color over their dark-skinned counterparts" is known as colorism (Hunter, 2005, p.1). Although colorism affects many groups of color (e.g., Hispanics and Asians) the author is particularly interested in this phenomenon within the context of African American families and communities. Colorism is a deep-rooted social and political issue within the African American community that is often difficult for many to discuss. The origins of colorism stem from intergroup discrimination between blacks and whites, which dates back to slavery. During this time slave owners often raped African slaves, and as a result, these African women often gave birth to mixed-race children. These children, even though they were considered black had a phenotypic make-up more similar to Whites. Often these children were granted special privileges such as being able to work in the house as opposed to the fields and were taught skills such as how to read (Hunter, 1998; 2007). Also, lighter skinned slaves (house slaves) were given the opportunity to maintain their hair so that they could appear decent in front of their master and his guests (Byrd & Tharps, 2001). The house slaves were encouraged to straighten their hair, further creating an identity that was more in line with their White superiors than their Black slave counterparts (Byrd & Tharps, 2001). On the other hand, the field slaves were often forced to wear scarves to cover their hair

because it was viewed as offensive to Whites. Whites referred to Black hair as “wool”, which further devalued their thick, kinky hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2001). The only time that field slaves were given for personal grooming was on Sundays. This was the only time they could show off their intricately braided hair and admire each other’s hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2001). During this period a clear distinction existed between black skin, African features representing “savagery, irrationality, ugliness, and inferiority” versus white skin, European features representing “civility, rationality, beauty and superiority”. This comparative viewpoint further perpetuated the systems of racism and colorism (Hunter, 2004, p. 26).

After slavery, the distinction between lighter skinned and dark skinned African Americans did not disappear. The rise of an elite class of lighter skinned African Americans reaffirmed the association of skin tone with one’s level of affluence and superiority. In order for African Americans to be associated with the elite clubs, they had to pass the “paper bag” test, which only admitted members whose skin tone was lighter than a “paper bag” or light enough for the visibility of “blue veins” (Okazawa Rey, Robinson, & Ward, 1987).

During the 1960’s the “black is beautiful” movement called for appreciation of all hues of African Americans by glorifying darker skin tones, natural hair, and cultural pride. The defining symbols of the black power movement included dashikis and large Afros. By embracing an Afrocentric style the African Americans community attempted to redefine what was considered beautiful (Bellinger, 2007). However, this celebration of

blackness was short lived thus reaffirming the dominant power of Eurocentric standards of beauty (Bellinger, 2007).

Within the contemporary discussion of colorism, only the differing hues of skin tone are primarily discussed. However, it is highly correlated with other Eurocentric features such as preference for lighter eye color (e.g., green, light brown), preference for straightened hair versus natural hair, and preference to be smaller versus larger (i.e., in terms of thinness; Herring, Keith, Horton, 2003). Although this form of discrimination is almost never discussed it has serious impacts on the lives of African American women and adolescent girls. Society has defined a standard of beauty that is derived from the “white is right ideology”. Among women, beauty serves as a mode of social capital and influences every aspect of their life from their income to their mate selection (Hunter, 1998). The dominant standard of beauty (i.e., white, tall, thin, and long silky hair) is reinforced throughout all types of media as well as through messages that are transmitted from generation to generation. Even black models and actresses which serve as “role models” for many young black females are often lighter in complexion, thin, and have long, straight hair (Hunter, 2005). Therefore, it is highly imperative to understand to what degree African American adolescent females conform or reject Eurocentric standards of beauty and how these ideals influence their attitudes about other domains of their lives such as risky sexual practices.

CHAPTER II

STANDARDS OF BEAUTY

Skin tone.

As previously stated, skin tone impacts the lives of women in many ways. Hunter (1998) found that lighter-skinned women had higher educational attainment, higher average income, and were more likely to marry a highly educated man in comparison to darker-skinned women. The effects of colorism not only influence the lives of adults, but children and adolescents as well. Porter (1991) examined skin tone preferences and reasoning for these preferences among black children between the ages of 6-13. The least preferred colors were those at the darker end of the spectrum (i.e., very dark brown and dark brown). The author found that older children (ages 11-12) reasoning behind their skin tone preferences were based on physical attractiveness. This suggests that children's awareness of preferences and perceptions of skin color began early. Therefore, it is probable that these beliefs may become stronger as children increase in age and begin to choose dating partners. Robinson and Ward (1995) found that students who reported their skin tone at either end of the continuum (i.e., dark skinned or light skinned) were more likely to be dissatisfied with their skin tone when compared with those who reported their skin tone as "somewhere in between". This suggests that adolescents understand the

conations that are associated with being defined at these extreme ends of the spectrum, i.e., light-skinned is associated with attractiveness and unconnected to black identity and dark-skinned is associated with unattractiveness and lack of intelligence. Coard, Breland, and Raskin (2001) found comparable results in a sample of African American college students, such that these students preferred a medium skin tone as opposed to light or dark skin. Stephens and Few (2007) found that among a sample of African American adolescents aged 11-13 that lighter skinned were viewed as more attractive. Skin color preferences also have varying meanings based on gender. Both males and females agreed that skin color was important to males in dating (Robinson & Ward, 1995). Furthermore, a greater proportion of males than females preferred lighter skinned dating partners (Robinson & Ward, 1995). In support of this finding, Stephens and Few (2007) found that the comments of the adolescent boys in their sample indicated that they found lighter skin more attractive. Skin tone preferences of males highly influenced females' beliefs. For example, girls were more likely to make a direct linkage between what males found physically attractive and what they considered to be attractive. However, the same connection did not hold true for males (i.e., what they considered attractive was based off of their own personal preferences; Stephens & Few, 2007). These findings highlight the importance of peer opinions among African American adolescent females, especially those of their male counterparts. Peer influences also impact adolescents' attitudes about sexual behaviors. For instance, DiIorio et al. (2001) found that if adolescents believed that their peers viewed sexual intercourse as less favorable they were more likely to abstain. Furthermore, if adolescents held more favorable attitudes about abstaining from

sex they were less likely to engage in sexual practices (DiIorio et al., 2001). It is important to explore skin tone preferences in relation to attitudes about sexual risk taking. Given the value that adolescents place on their peers' opinions and the perceived potential positive benefit of engaging in risky sexual practices (i.e., attracting a male that is not normally attracted to them based on skin tone) African American adolescents may not view the perceived harm in such behaviors.

Hair Texture.

As a part of defining what is considered beautiful, hair texture is an important component for African American women and adolescent girls. Unlike skin tone, which is more difficult to change (although products such as bleaching creams do exist), women can invest large amounts of money in altering their hair. Within the mainstream culture long, straight, silky hair is considered beautiful. African American women often invest large amounts of money in chemical relaxers, weaves, and wigs to get long, straight, silky hair (Byrd & Tharps, 2001). All of these techniques further perpetuate hair that is valued by the dominant culture. Furthermore, long, straight, silky hair becomes identified as "good hair" and short, kinky hair (which is characteristic of African Americans) becomes identified as "bad hair" (Bellinger, 2007). Also, this ideal of straight hair being desired begins at a very young age. Girls as young as five experience having their hair pressed or even chemically processed. These young girls were taught that the altered state relative to their natural state was preferred (White, 2005).

In a qualitative study with 15 African American females aged 16-18 Bellinger (2007) explored how these young women defined good hair. She discovered that these

young girls' classified "good hair" as being associated with Caucasian hair or chemically processed hair that is "long and silky straight". Although the females identified good hair as such, they further illustrated that they did not buy into this White standard of beauty, but recognized that good hair is more than texture (Bellinger, 2007). Furthermore, the females stated that the reason their generation continues to alter the state of their hair is because of the convenience in maintaining and styling that relaxers provide. Despite this recognition of good hair encompassing more than long straight hair the girls recognized that chemically altered hair can be viewed as commodity for women and can influence important aspects of their life such as employment opportunities (Bellinger, 2007). By understanding that hair is viewed as source of social capital for females, these young girls may be unconsciously buying into the standards of beauty presented by the dominant culture because they may potentially uphold these standards (e.g., relaxed hair) to achieve a desired status (e.g., better job opportunities). Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) further challenge the meaning associated with long, straight hair. The authors argue that by choosing to straighten or dye one's hair is not an automatic rejection of black pride among some African American women. Instead these women engage in these processes for different reasons such as obtaining a new look or for gaining access to better jobs. Although this view may hold true, African American women's hairstyles are still defined within the broader culture as affirming or rejecting white standards of beauty (Patton, 2006).

Although many of women still continue to adhere to standards of beauty associated with dominant culture despite their personal reasoning, some African

American women do make the decision to embrace their natural hair texture. White (2005) argues that the reasons that women decide to make this decision include not only rejecting Eurocentric standards of beauty but also as a means of self-definition and liberation. Many women who decided to “go natural” reported resistance from multiple domains about their choice of hairstyle. The lack of hair salons, which specialized in natural hair care, the lack of diversity in African American (or any race of women) presented in the media, and the comments made by others all support the idea that natural hair is not a valued choice in either the African American community or the dominant culture (White, 2005). This further highlights that the messages received by African American women and adolescent girls are not only presented within the dominant culture but also reaffirmed by interactions with others within the African American community. Also, these messages about natural hair representing negativity, ugliness, and unfeminine characteristics impacted the lives of the interviewees. It influenced several domains of their life including work and interpersonal relationships (White, 2005). Most interestingly, many of the women describe that once they converted their hair back to a natural state they now attract a “different type of man” (White, 2005). This suggests that men understand the link that society places between long, straight hair and beauty. Therefore, some men also define their standards of beauty based on these ideals as well. These negative messages about natural hair are transmitted to younger generations of females as well. The young girls interviewed in Stephens and Few (2007) study stated that although they may admire women with dreadlocks or natural hair styles, they themselves would not actually wear this still because of fear that they would be perceived

as unattractive and unfeminine. This finding illustrates the complexity of the meaning of hair in the African American community. Although many young girls view these individuals as beautiful, they themselves still conform to the dominant standards of long, straight hair, because it leads to better opportunities and it allows them to remain attractive to boys. This suggests that it is important to gain an understanding of both girls' personal preferences as well as their perceptions of others especially boys. Also, the literature on hair in the African American community reveal that how hair contributes to the lives of many women and adolescent girls is more complex than having a polarized view of either accepting or rejecting Eurocentric standards of beauty.

Body Image.

Just as the dominant culture does not value varying hues of beauty and kinky hair texture, the type of body that is valued is often one-dimensional as well. Within contemporary society the ideal woman tends to be White, extremely slender, tall, and upper middle class (Patton, 2006). Of course this ideal only describes a small proportion of the population, however women go through drastic measures such as extreme dieting, cosmetic surgery, and investing large amounts of money in cosmetics and beauty products to achieve this unobtainable goal (Hunter, 2005). The power of these messages in the African American community are relevant by the constant battles that African American celebrities have fought in the limelight such as Tyra Banks and Oprah who have both been constantly scrutinized for both their periods of weight gain and weight loss. This suggests that the messages of the white standards of beauty are also communicated to the African American community as well. However, it is argued that

although these messages are translated to the African American community, African American women do not adhere to these standards of beauty.

Relative to their European American counterparts African American girls and women tend to exhibit greater levels of body satisfaction (Kelly et al., 2005; Gluck & Geliebter, 2002; Jones, Fries, & Danish, 2007). The desirable body type among African American women is a full-figured body as opposed to a slender one (Thomas, 1989). These differences can be partially explained by the fact that African American women feel that African American men prefer larger women, which decrease their desire to lose weight and allow them to feel more satisfied with their body size (Molloy, 1998). Research with African American males has supported the beliefs of African American women. Rosenfeld et al. (1999) found that African American men tended to prefer an ideal weight of African American women as 10 pounds heavier than the ideal weight of European American males of European American females. Another important determinant of satisfaction is the extent to which African American women interact with other African Americans (Molloy, 1998). Therefore, social class is important to consider. Upper and middle class African Americans tend to be influenced by the dominant culture's views of thinness equating to beauty (Root, 1990) whereas working class and lower class individuals tend to be heavier and value a body size that is more curvaceous (Molloy, 1998). Another explanation offered is that due to this acceptance within the African American community of large women, they are not preoccupied with altering their body size as European American women, instead African American women may

define their level of attractiveness based on how these choose to style or dress the body they are given (Parker et al., 2005).

Given that the majority of studies that examine body image among African American adolescent females are comparative in nature it is important to explore body image within the African American community and how it influences adolescents' perceptions and attitudes about sexual risk taking. Wingood et al. (2002) found that among African American adolescent females, after controlling for depression, self-esteem, and Body Mass Index that greater levels of body dissatisfaction was associated with increased perceptions of fewer options of sexual partners and less control in a relationship. This finding suggests that given the multiple factors, which influence levels of body satisfaction, African American adolescent females may view their body image less favorably, and these views in turn, influence unhealthy perceptions about sexual practices. Therefore, if adolescents have distorted views about their choice in partners they may have distorted views about the harms of sexual behaviors such as unprotected sex. Not only does negative body images among African American adolescent females influence their ability to maintain a relationship, but also their choices about voluntary sex with casual partners, which is a risky sexual behavior. For example, Crosby et al. (2001) found that engaging in voluntary sex with casual partners in a group of African American adolescent females was associated with dissatisfaction with body image and disregarding messages about the value of condom use in disease prevention. The findings of this study highlight the relationship between perceptions (i.e., disregarding messages) and subsequent actions (voluntary casual sex) and how this is also associated with their

views of standards of beauty. This further highlights the importance of examining the relationship between standards of beauty and attitudes about sexual practices. Overall, just like other standards of beauty, such as skin tone and hair texture, Eurocentric ideals of body image may contribute to how African American girls conceptualize sexual behaviors.

Racial Socialization.

Although society and peers heavily influence African American adolescent females decision-making skills, the family also plays an important role. Within the African American community, racial socialization, which is the process by which messages are transmitted inter- and intra-generationally regarding the significance and meaning of race and ethnicity, serves as an important protective factor (Coard & Sellers). Given that these girls are apart of a historically marginalized group they must be equipped with the necessary skills needed to traverse both minority and majority culture (Coard & Sellers, 2005).

Racial Socialization is broad term that encompasses multiple forms of messages that are transmitted and received within the family context. Two vital forms of messages that may contribute to how African American adolescent female girls make sense of their conceptualization of standards of beauty in relation to their attitudes about sexual risk taking is Cultural Pride Reinforcement (CPR) and Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream (CEM). Cultural Pride Reinforcement messages focus on “African American unity, teachings about heritage, and instilling positive feelings towards the group” (Coard & Sellers, 2005, p. 268). Among African American adolescents, cultural pride messages

influence what they personally conceptualize as beautiful. For instance, Bellinger (2007) found that the young girls she interviewed often maintained their hair in the way their mother did or had taught them to do so. One female who chose to wear her hair natural explained that she did so because her mother wore her hair natural and approved of her choice. Additionally, African American adolescent females' views of other women were also influenced by the messages transmitted to them. Unlike many African American adolescent boys, adolescent females had a greater appreciation for varying forms of beauty that was not simply based on Westernized ideals of beauty (Stephens & Few, 2007). According to Stephens & Few (2007) this complex definition of beauty that African American females create, which incorporates what males view as attractive (i.e., ideals based on Westernized forms of beauty) as well as an appreciation for Afrocentric forms of beauty, are transmitted through racialized and gendered messages from mothers and other significant female figures in their lives (Stephens & Few, 2007; Stephens & Phillips, 2005). Therefore, when examining the standards of beauty that African American adolescent females hold in relation to perceived sexual risk taking, cultural pride reinforcement may serve as a buffer against adolescent females internalizing the messages transmitted from varying socializing agents, such as the media about "What is Beautiful?" and seeking to conform to this form of beauty in the way they conceptualize sexual risk taking (i.e., no risk if it allows a male to view them as attractive).

Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream are messages, which focus on embracing ideals that are in line with the dominant culture. Therefore, failing to view African Americans as an oppressed group that has a unique culture different from that of

mainstream American (i.e., whites). Instead of buffering the effects of the relationship between standards of beauty and perceived sexual risk taking, Cultural Endorsement of the mainstream messages may exacerbate the potential risk of the standards of beauty influencing their perceptions of sexual risk taking.

CHAPTER III

GOALS OF PRESENT STUDY

Given the complex nature of colorism within the African American community, especially in understanding how African American female adolescents accept or reject Eurocentric standards of beauty (e.g., light skin and long hair), the present study, explores how African American adolescent girls level of acceptance or rejection of these dominant ideals influence their lives particularly in the domain of perceptions of sexual risk taking. This study chose to focus on this particular relationship because for African American adolescent girls embracing an Eurocentric standard of beauty shows that these females are greatly influenced by the dominant culture. One of the ways that the dominant culture influences these adolescents is their perceptions and attitudes of behaviors. Given that the conflicting views beauty presented by the media, oneself and peers makes it difficult for an African American female to embrace her Afrocentric beauty. Therefore, if an African American girls chooses to embrace an Eurocentric standard of beauty within the context of her minority culture it may present the female with a distorted view of what is beautiful, which in turn impacts her attitudes and perceptions about other domains of her life (i.e., less perceived harm of sexual practices), which ultimately can impact actual behaviors. These distorted views about perceived harm of sexual practices may be African American females' way of coping with a lack of understanding of whom they are

as an African American females growing up in a society that is greatly influenced by the dominant culture. Although, African American females are navigating a difficult terrain they do not have to battle these conflicting beliefs alone. Within the African American community the family is a major agent of socialization. Therefore, the messages about standards of beauty that African American females receive from other sources such as peers and the media can potentially be buffered by messages about embracing their cultural pride and feeling beautiful with who they are as African American females that are transmitted from their family.

The following hypotheses and research aim(s) are proposed:

1. The rejection of colorism will be positively associated with perceptions of sexual risk taking behaviors. Therefore, higher levels of an adolescent's rejection of Eurocentric standards of beauty (e.g., light skin, long hair, and thinness) will be associated with higher levels of perceived harm of sexual risk taking.
2. The relationship between colorism and perceptions of sexual risk taking will be moderated by racial socialization (i.e., Cultural Pride Reinforcement (CPR) and Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream (CEM)). Higher levels of CPR messages will strengthen the relationship, while higher levels of CEM messages will weaken the relationship.
3. To develop recommendations for improving intervention approaches targeting sexual risk-taking attitudes and behaviors among African American girls. Findings from this study may inform development of those recommendations.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS

Overview.

Data from this current project is part of a larger longitudinal study, *Intelligent Sisters Improving Selves, (ISIS) project* (Townsend, P.I., SAMHSA, Grant # 1H79SP1068), which investigated the efficacy of a HIV/substance prevention program. The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (SAMHSA/CSAP), funded ISIS. The program focused on protective and resilient factors that help to prevent the occurrence of these risk behaviors in African American adolescent girls between the ages of 10 and 15.

Recruitment was conducted through four middle schools in Southwest Philadelphia, which is a predominantly African American area. Girls that identified as African American, Black, or Biracial (i.e., one parent identified as Black/African American) were invited to participate in the study.

Participants.

A total of 249 African American adolescent females (Hispanic and Biracial girls were excluded) who participated in the first assessment of the I.S.I.S investigation are the focus of the current study. Demographic information for these families is presented in Table 1. Adolescents were 13 years old on average ($SD = 1.03$; range = 10-15 years). The majority of mothers and fathers were employed (71.9% and 69.1% respectively), with

most employed full time (45.8% and 47.8 respectively). The education level of mothers varied greatly. Most commonly, mothers had completed high school (30.5%), had a college degree (24.1%), or the adolescents did not know (27.7%).

Procedure.

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from parents and students. Research Assistants also informed students that all questionnaires would remain confidential and no identifying data linking them to the study would be provided. They also explained that ID numbers would be issued to ensure this would occur. Trained African American research assistants conducted assessments in classrooms. Prior to assignment to either intervention or control group all of the adolescent girls completed questionnaires related to engagement and perceived future engagement in risk behaviors as well as potential protective factors. One research assistant read the questions aloud, which minimizes the error that can result from varying literacy levels in the sample, while the girls read along silently. A second research assistant was available to answer any questions the girls might have. The questionnaires took approximately 60 minutes for the girls to complete, and they were compensated for their participation.

Measures.

Colorism was assessed using the *Image Acceptance Measure* (IAM; Plybon, Pegg, & Reed, 2003). The IAM measures the rejection of stereotypically preferred physical traits that stem from a standard of beauty consistent with “colorism” (e.g., light complexion, straight and long hair, thinness). Sample items are as follows: “Straightened hair looks better than natural hair” or “I think guys prefer girls who have lighter skin.”

The 12 item measure uses a 5 point score (from 1 = agree a lot to 5 = disagree a lot). A higher IAM score denotes rejection of “colorism” or an appreciation for a more traditional African American standard of beauty. This scale evidenced strong internal consistency ($\alpha=.83$) with our sample.

Attitudes toward sex and risky sexual behavior were assessed using the *John Snow Inc. (JSI) Women’s Form* that measures perceived harm of sexual risk behaviors (John Snow Inc., 2000). One item was deleted from original scale to improve reliability. The resulting five item measure was scored on a scale ranging from 1 to 4 and assessed the extent to which the adolescent believed certain sexual behaviors were harmful or risky (e.g. how much do people risk themselves if they have oral sex without a condom or dental dam). A ‘4’ represents the greatest perceived risk ($\alpha=.84$).

Racial socialization was assessed using the *Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization* (TERS) scale, which was developed by Stevenson, Cameron, and Herreo-Taylor (1996) to measure the frequency of messages that adolescents have received from their parents or guardians regarding their culture and racial barriers. TERS is a 40-item measure that asks respondents to list how often they have heard each racial socialization message from their caregiver/parent on a 3 point likert scale (0 = never, 1= a few times, 2 = a lot). Questions include, “You should be proud to be Black”; “Whites have more opportunities than Blacks”; and “You should know about Black history, so you will be a better person.” A total score represents a composite of racial socialization, with a high score representing a high level of racial socialization. The five subscales include a 13-item Cultural Coping with Antagonism (CCA) scale, a 9-item Cultural Pride

Reinforcement (CPR) scale, a 5-item Cultural Legacy Appreciation (CLA) scale, a 6-item Cultural Alertness to Discrimination (CAD) scale, and a 6-item Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream (CEM) scale (Stevenson et al., 2002). The alpha coefficient for full scale among this sample was excellent (.92). Reliability for subscales was as follows: .84 (CCA), .71 (CPR), .61 (CLA), .82(CAD), and .66(CEM). Only the CPR scale and CEM scale were used in the present analyses.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses.

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations on all major study variables are presented in Table 1. As shown, adolescents reported a mean score of 39.7 ($SD=9.5$) for the Image Acceptance Measure (IAM; i.e., colorism). They also reported a mean score of 24.77 ($SD=2.94$) for Cultural Pride Reinforcement racial socialization scale, and a mean score of 14.47 ($SD=2.23$) for Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream racial socialization scale, and a mean score of 10.77 ($SD=7.59$) for perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors.

Correlation analyses were conducted to examine bivariate associations between each demographic variable and perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors. As shown in Table 2, adolescent age was significantly associated with perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors ($r=.30, p<.01$), such that older adolescents were more likely to report more perceived harm for the sexual risk taking behaviors examined. Mother's employment status ($r=-.08, n.s.$) and mother's education level ($r=.07, n.s.$) was not significantly associated with the outcome variable. Also, father's employment status was not significantly associated with perceived harm of sexual risk taking as well ($r=-.01, n.s.$).

Associations between major study variables and perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors were also examined (see Table 3). Colorism was not significantly associated with perceived harm of sexual risk taking ($r=.06$, *n.s.*). Also, neither the CPR racial socialization subscale ($r=.10$, *n.s.*) nor the CEM racial socialization subscale ($r=-.12$, *n.s.*) was associated with the outcome variable.

Primary Analyses.

Study hypotheses were examined using hierarchical linear regressions. To test the first hypothesis, the sociodemographic variable (i.e., adolescent's age) associated with the outcome was entered in the first block. In the second block, colorism was entered in order to investigate the main effects of colorism while controlling for adolescent's age.

Results are shown in Table 4. There was a significant association with adolescent's age and perceived harm of sexual risk taking, $\beta = .30$, $p < .01$. Consistent with correlation analyses, older adolescents were more likely to perceive more harm in the risk taking behaviors examined. After controlling for adolescent's age, the association with colorism became significant in the multivariate model, $\beta = .12$, $p < .01$, such that higher levels of colorism was associated with less perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors. However, colorism only explained 1% of the variance in perceived harm of sexual risk taking.

The second study hypothesis was also examined using hierarchical linear regression. To test the moderating role of the CPR subscale and CEM subscale the sociodemographic variable (i.e., adolescent age) associated with the outcome was entered in the first block. In the second block the centered variables of the independent variable

(IAM) and moderators (CPR and CEM) were entered. In the third block the interaction terms utilizing the centered means (IAM*CPR and IAM*CEM) were entered (see table 4 for results).

Within this model adolescent age remained significantly associated with perceived harm of sexual risk taking $\beta = .30, p < .01$. However, consistent with bivariate analysis, colorism was no longer a significant predictor, $\beta = .10, n.s.$ Both CPR, $\beta = .16, p < .01$, and CEM, $\beta = -.21, p < .01$ were significantly associated with the outcome, such that increasing levels of CPR messages were associated with increased perceived harm while increasing levels of CEM messages were associated with decreased perceived harm. There was no significant interaction between IAM and CPR, $\beta = -.07, n.s.$, and no significant interaction between IAM and CEM, $\beta = .02, n.s.$

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to examine the association between colorism and perceived harm of sexual risk taking among African American adolescent females. The first hypothesis, that higher levels of rejection of Eurocentric standards of beauty would be associated with higher levels of perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors was supported in the initial multiple regression analyses. This suggests that embracing Africentric standards of beauty is associated with a greater understanding of the risks associated with sexual risk taking. However, in the second multiple regression analyses when colorism was entered in the same block with racial socialization, the relationship between colorism and perceived sexual risk taking was no longer significant. Given that the relationship between rejection of colorism and perceived sexual risk taking did not remain significant in the second regression model, it is important to give additional thought as to why this occurred. One explanation could be that African American females having a greater appreciation for Afrocentric standards of beauty is just one aspect of the many racialized and genderized messages that are transmitted to them. This is consistent with research that documents the complex, synergetic, multifaceted messages that African American girls are receiving via racial socialization (i.e., cultural pride reinforcement and endorsement of the mainstream messages) are more powerful

indicators of girls' attitudes and perceptions about sexual risk taking. This also highlights the continued importance of parents as socializing agents, given the racial socialization messages delivered by parents predicted perceived sexual risk taking above and beyond other socializing agents. Furthermore, this particular study focused on the range of beauty that exists from Eurocentric standards of beauty to Afrocentric standards of beauty, however, given the negative stereotypes of African American females in the media including those of a hypersexual being (Stephens & Few, 2007) a study that particularly tapped into the varying forms of beauty within the African American community may have been more strongly correlated with perceived sexual risk taking. Also, the risk protective model I presented earlier suggests that these girls are at risk for greater acceptance of Eurocentric standards of beauty, which in turn leads to potentially negative perceptions of sexual risk taking. The girls in this particular sample may not have this same level of risk as African American girls which are raised in heterogeneous neighborhoods. As the work of Granberg, Simons, and Simons (2009), illustrates, greater numbers of African Americans within a particular area serve as a potential protective factor.

Given the above result, the second hypothesis, which predicted that racial socialization (i.e., CPR and CEM subscales) would serve, as a moderator in the relationship between colorism and perceived harm was not supported. Neither of the interaction terms was significant. Although not the focus of this current study, it is important to note that both racial socialization subscales were significant predictors of perceived harm of sexual risk taking. They explained an additional 5% of the variance.

Therefore, racial socialization predicted perceived harm above and beyond colorism. Future studies should examine racial socialization as a potential independent variable. The significant racial socialization findings indicate that messages transmitted about race impact adolescent female's perceptions about risky sexual practices. Furthermore, based on the content of the racial socialization messages, they can either have a positive or negative impact on a desired outcome (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). The findings within this study illustrated the positive and negative effects of racial socialization messages. Within our study, greater levels of cultural pride reinforcement messages were associated with greater perceived harm of sexual risk taking, while greater levels of cultural endorsement of mainstream messages were associated with lower levels of perceived harm of sexual risk taking behaviors. In addition to examining racial socialization as an independent variable potential mediating variables such as racial identity and self-concept may better explain the association between racial socialization and perceived sexual risk taking. Therefore, if parents transmit mainstream messages or cultural pride reinforcement messages, in turn these adolescents internalize these messages and utilize these messages in formulating their identity and evaluating their feelings, perceptions, and ideals of themselves (i.e., racial identity and self-concept; Marcia, 1983). This process then influences how adolescents define and redefine what they consider to be risk behaviors (Houlihan et al., 2008). Also, it would be interesting to examine standards of beauty as a mediator in the relationship between racial socialization and perceived sexual risk taking. Given the positive impact of parental messages about cultural pride reinforcement family members, African American adolescent females may

have a greater appreciation of varying forms of beauty, and in turn, gain skills to better understand the differing messages that are presented to her as member of an oppressed group growing up in a society heavily influenced by main stream ideals. These skills will then help the adolescent females to cognitively conceptualize that they do not have to seek benefits in harmful risk taking behaviors to access “the obtainable beauty” (i.e. Eurocentric standards of beauty), because they can appreciate and understand whom they truly are. Conversely, if parents endorse and transmit mainstream beliefs, this in turn will present the adolescent female with a distorted view of what is considered beautiful given that she may strive to achieve Eurocentric features. This in turn may to inability to cognitively process other domains of her life including perceptions about risk taking behaviors.

The study’s findings must be considered within the context of its limitations. The current measure used to assess colorism (i.e., IAM) did not allow one to accurately disentangle the adolescent’s perceptions of societal standards of beauty relative to the standards of beauty they endorsed and/or desired. It could be that the adolescents’ own perceptions of where they fit along the continuum of standards of beauty may impact their perceptions of sexual risk taking more than how they perceive standards of beauty within society. Also, given that the average age of the sample was 13 it is possible that these issues may not yet be salient for these adolescent females. For instance, the results revealed a significant association with age and perceptions of sexual risk taking indicating that older adolescents have more knowledge about these behaviors. Therefore, future research should replicate this study with late adolescent African American females.

Additionally, future research should replicate this study with a larger sample. In doing so, will result in more explanatory power. Also, given the homogeneity (i.e., predominantly African American) of the area in which these girls reside, it would be interesting to see how standards of beauty, racial socialization and perceived sexual risk taking are related among a group of African American adolescent females who live in more heterogeneous contexts.

Despite its limitations, this study has many strengths. This study examined within group differences among African American adolescent females. This is extremely important given that many studies examining African American females are comparative in nature. African Americans possess unique problems and protective factors relative to their European American counterparts. It also extends the racial socialization literature, which has primarily viewed the influence of racial socialization on developmental and mental health outcomes such as self-esteem, racial identity, and psychological well being of African American adolescents (see Hughes et al., 2006 for review). However, the author is not aware of any study to date that examines racial socialization as a potential moderator in the relationship between colorism and perceived sexual risk taking. Although, this particular study did not support the moderating hypothesis we did find support of a direct relationship between racial socialization and perceived sexual risk taking, suggesting that racial socialization influences risk behaviors as well. Additionally, this finding also highlights the importance of distinguishing between positive and negative racial socialization.

CHAPTER VII

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from this study, standards of beauty remains an important area of study that warrants continued research. Through continued research we can gain a better understanding of how standards of beauty are impacting the lives of African American adolescent females. We can then translate this research into effective programming. In reviewing the significant findings of this study, important recommendations to consider in future intervention programs targeting African American adolescent girls include:

1. Focusing on culturally relevant protective factors such as racial socialization
2. Continue to explore standards of beauty, specifically focusing on the ideologies adolescent's hold about what is considered beautiful
3. Also, focus on the specific messages that are transmitted about standards of beauty from differing socializing agents (e.g., media, peers, and family). Then teach skills that will help empower African American adolescent girls and allow them to gain a positive sense of self.
4. Cognitive-behavioral programs that focus on cognitive restructuring around sexual risk taking

It is important to continue to understand what factors contribute to African American adolescent females' attitudes, perceptions, and subsequent engagement in sexual risk taking behaviors because the number of HIV/AIDS cases among Black adolescents is disproportionately higher than that of white adolescents (CDC, 2006). If more effective ways of preventing sexual risk-taking can be found, it will increase the likelihood that this will not only decrease HIV/AIDS, but also the number of teenage pregnancies and STDs, as well as other problem behaviors. Given the findings from this current study it is imperative that we explore additional potential protective factors given the magnitude of sexual risk taking occurring within the African American community.

REFERENCES

- Bachanas, P. J., Morris, M. K., Lewis-Gess, J. K., Sarett-Cuasay, E. J., Sirl, K., Ries, J. K., et al. (2002). Predictors of risky sexual behavior in African American adolescent girls: Implications for prevention and interventions. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 27*, 519-530.
- Bellinger, W. (2007). Why African American women try to obtain 'good hair'. *Sociological Viewpoints, 23*, 63-72.
- Byrd, A. & Tharps, L. L. (2001). *Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Carvajal S. C., Parcel, G. S., Basen-Engquist K, Banspach, S. W., Coyle, K. K., Kirby, D. et al. (1999). Psychosocial predictors of delay of first sexual intercourse by adolescents. *Health Psychology, 18*, 443-452.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2005). HIV/AIDS surveillance report, 2004. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2006). Youth risk behavior surveillance: United States, 2005. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report, 55*(SS-5), 1-108.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007). Youth risk behavior surveillance: United States, 2007. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report, 57*, 1-131.

- Coard, S. I., Breland, A. M., & Raskin, P. (2001). Perceptions of and preferences for skin color, Black racial identity, and self-esteem among African Americans. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 31*, 2256-2274.
- Coard, S. I. & Sellers, R. M. (2005). African American families as a context for racial socialization. In V. C. McLoyd, N. E. Hill, & K. A. Dodge (Eds.), *African American family life: Ecological and cultural diversity* (pp.264-284). New York: Guilford Press.
- Crosby, R. A., DiClemente, R. J., Wingood, G. M., Sionean, C., Cobb, B. K., Harrington, K. F. et al. (2001). Correlates of casual sex among African-American females teens. *Journal of HIV/AIDS Prevention & Education for Adolescents & Children, 4*, 55-67.
- DiIorio, C., Dudley, W. N., Kelly, M., Soet, J. E., Mbwara, J., & Potter, J. S. (2001). Social cognitive correlates of sexual experience and condom use among 13-through 15-year-old adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 29*, 208-216.
- Fisher, C. B., Wallace, S. A., & Fenton, R. E. (2000). Discrimination distress during adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 29*, 679-695.
- Gluck, M. E., & Geliebter, A. (2002). Racial/ethnic differences in body image and eating behaviors. *Eating Behaviors, 3*, 143– 151.
- Granberg, E. M., Simons, L. G., & Simons, R. L. (2009). Body size and social self-image among adolescent African American Girls: The moderating influence of family racial socialization. *Youth and Society, 41*, 256-277.
- Herring, C., Keith, V. M., & Horton, H. D. (Eds.). (2003). *Skin deep: How race and*

complexion matter in the "color-blind" era. Chicago, IL: Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy.

Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E. P., Johnson, D. J., Stevenson, H. C., & Spicer, P. (2006). Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. *Developmental Psychology, 42*, 747-770.

Hunter, M. L. (1998). Colorstruck: Skin color stratification in the lives of African American women. *Sociological Inquiry, 68*, 517-535.

Hunter, M. L. (2004). Light, bright, and almost white: The advantages and disadvantages of light skin. In C. Herring, V. M. Keith, & H. D. Horton (Eds.), *Skin deep: How race and complexion matter in the "color-blind" era* (pp. 22-44). Chicago: Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy.

Hunter, M. L. (2005). *Race, Gender, and the Politics of Skin Tone*. New York, NY:

Routledge. Hunter, M. (2007). The persistent problem of colorism: Skin tone, status, and inequality. *Sociology Compass, 1*, 237-254.

Jones, C. & Shorter-Gooden, K. (2003). *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

Jones, L. R., Fries, E., & Danish, S. J. (2007). Gender and ethnic differences in body image and opposite sex figure preferences of rural adolescents. *Body Image, 4*, 103-108.

JSI (2000a). Health /Promotion in Our Communities. Multi-site Baseline Assessment Women's Form/ (2000). JSI Research and Training Institute, Inc., Boston, MA.

- Kelly, A. M., Wall, M., Eisenberg, M. E, Story, M., & Neumark-Sztainer, D. (2005). Adolescent girls with high body satisfaction: Who are they and what can they teach us? *Journal of Adolescent Health, 37*, 391-396.
- Lesane-Brown, C. L. (2006). A review of racial socialization within Black families. *Developmental Review, 26*, 400-426.
- MacDonald, T. K., & Martineau, A. M. (2002). Self-esteem, mood, and intentions to use condoms: When does low self-esteem lead to risky health behaviors? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38*, 299-306.
- Molloy, B. L. (1998). Body image and self-esteem: A comparison of African American and Caucasian women. *Sex Roles, 38*, 1-11.
- Okazawa-Rey, M., Robinson, T., & Ward, J. V. (1987). Black women and the politics of skin color and hair. *Women and Therapy, 6*, 89-102.
- Parker, S., Nichter, M., Nichter, M., Vuckovic, N., Sims, C., & Ritenbaugh, C. (1995). Body image and weight concerns among African American and White adolescent females: Differences that make a difference. *Human Organization, 54*, 103-114.
- Patton, T. O. (2006). Hey girl, am I more than my hair?: African American women and their struggles with beauty, body image, and hair. *NWSA Journal, 18*, 24-51.
- Plybon, L.E., Pegg, P.O., & Reed, M. (2003). The Image Acceptance Measure: A validation study. Poster presented at the Biannual Society for Research in Child Development, Conference, April, Tampa, Florida.
- Porter, C. (1991). Social reasons for skin tone preferences of Black school-age children. *Journal of American Orthopsychiatric Association, 61*, 149-154.

- Rivis, A., Sheeran, P., & Armitage, C. J. (2006). Augmenting the theory of planned behavior with the prototype/willingness model: Predictive validity of actor versus abstainer prototypes of adolescents' health-protective and health-risk intentions. *British Journal of Health Psychology, 11*, 483-500.
- Robinson, T. L., & Ward, J. V. (1995). African American adolescents and skin color. *Journal of Black Psychology, 21*, 256-274.
- Root, M. (1990). Disordered eating in women of color. *Sex Roles, 22*, 525-536.
- Rosenfeld, L. B., Stewart, S. C., Stinnett, H. J., & Jackson, L. A. (1999). Preferences for body type and body characteristics associated with attractive and unattractive bodies: Jackson and McGill revisited. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 89*, 459-470.
- Rucibwa, N., Modeste, N., Montgomery, S., & Fox, C. (2003). Exploring family factors and sexual behaviors in a group of black and Hispanic adolescent males. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 27*, 63-74.
- Staunton, B. F., Li, X., Black, M., & Ricardo, I. (1996). Longitudinal stability and predictability of sexual perceptions, intentions, and behaviors among early adolescent African Americans. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 18*, 10-19.
- Stephens, D. P. & Few, A. L. (2007). The effects of images of African American women in hip hop on early adolescents' attitudes toward physical attractiveness and interpersonal relationships. *Sex Roles, 56*, 251-264.
- Stevenson, H. C., Jr., Cameron, R., Herrero-Taylor, T., Davis, G. Y. (2002). Development of the Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization scale: Correlates

- of race-related socialization frequency from the perspective of Black youth. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 28, 84-106.
- Thomas, V. (1989). Body image satisfaction among Black women. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 129, 1-7-112.
- Weinstock, H., Berman, S., Cates W. (2004). Sexually transmitted diseases among American youth: Incidence and prevalence estimates, 2000. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 36(1), 6-10.
- Weitz, R. (2001). Women and their hair: Seeking power through resistance and accommodation. *Gender and Society*, 15, 667-686.
- Whitbeck L. B, Yoder K. A, Hoyt D. R, Conger R. D. (1999). Early adolescent sexual activity: A developmental study. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 61, 934 – 946.
- White, S. B. (2005). Releasing the pursuit of bouncin' and behavin' hair: Natural hair as an Afrocentric feminist aesthetic for beauty. *International Journal of Media Cultural Politics*, 1, 296-308.
- Wingood, G. M., DiClemente, R. J., Harrington, K., & Davies, S. L. (2002). Body image and African American females' sexual health. *Journal of Women's Health and Gender-Based Medicine*, 11, 433-439.

APPENDIX A. TABLES

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics*

Variable	M (SD)	%
<i>Descriptive Variables</i>		
Adolescent Age (yrs.)	13.02(1.03)	
Adolescent grade		
4 th		4
5 th		22.1
6 th		26.5
7 th		47.4
Mother employment status		
No Job		16.9
Part-time		26.1
Full-time		45.8
Unknown		11.2
Father employment status		
No Job		8
Part-time		21.3
Full-time		47.8
Unknown		22.8
Mother education level		
Some HS		7.2
HS Diploma or GED		30.5

Some College		10.4
College Degree		24.1
Unknown		27.7
Variable	M(SD)	%
<i>Primary study variables</i>		
IAM (Colorism)	39.7(9.5)	
CPR (Cultural Pride Reinforcement)	24.77(2.94)	
CEM (Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream)	14..47(2.23)	
Perceived harm of sexual risk taking	10.77(7.59)	

Table 2 . Bivariate Correlations of Demographics.

	<i>Perceived harm of sexual risk taking</i>
<i>Adolescent Age</i>	<i>.30**</i>
<i>Adolescent Grade</i>	<i>.32**</i>
<i>Mother employment status</i>	<i>-.08</i>
<i>Father employment status</i>	<i>-.01</i>
<i>Mother education level</i>	<i>.07</i>

**p ≤ .05 **p ≤ .01*

Table 3. *Bivariate Correlations of Major Study Variables*

	<i>Perceived harm of sexual risk taking</i>
<i>IAM (Colorism)</i>	<i>.06</i>
<i>CPR (Cultural Pride Reinforcement)</i>	<i>.10</i>
<i>CEM (Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream)</i>	<i>-.12</i>

**p ≤ .05 **p ≤ .01*

Table 4. Summary of Multivariate Regression Analyses

Variable	F	R2 Δ	B	t
DV: Perceived Harm of sexual risk taking Block 1: Demographics Adol. Age	27.30**	.11	.30	5.23**
Block 2: Colorism	15.84**	.01	.12	2.02**
Moderation				
DV: Perceived Harm of sexual risk taking Block 1: Demographics Adol. Age	27.30**	.09	.30	5.23**
Block 2: Colorism CPR CEM	11.07**	.05	.10 .16 -.211	1.68 2.46** -3.23**
Block 3: Colorism*CPR Colorism*CEM	7.56**	.00	-.07 .02	-1.03 -.25

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$