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Breanna Jones

Noelle Manfredi

Calvin Hall

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The Moderating Role of Body Appreciation on Ethnic Identity and Condom Use Intentions

Breanna Jones, BSc, Noelle Manfredi, Calvin Hall, MS, & Kristina Hood, PhD
Virginia Commonwealth University

Introduction

- Scholars have long explored the influence of ethnic identity affirmation, or feelings of belonging to one's ethnic group (Phinney, 1990), on condom use intentions (Beadnell et al., 2003).
- Research suggests that higher ethnic identity safeguards against risky sexual behaviors (Townsend et al., 2010), such that those with higher ethnic identity affirmation reported less risky sexual behaviors (i.e., condom use intentions).
- Previous research also found that women with high body appreciation report greater condom use self-efficacy (Grower & Ward, 2018).
- The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Townsend et al., 2006) asserts that one's behavioral intentions (e.g., condom use intentions) are tied to social norms and their attitudes about themselves.

Purpose of Study

Limited research has explored the relationship between body appreciation, ethnic identity affirmation, and sexual risk behaviors. Therefore, the current research examined the relationship between body appreciation, ethnic identity, and condom use in a sample of heterosexual Black and Latinx women. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior, we hypothesized that body appreciation would moderate the link between ethnic identity affirmation and future condom use intentions.

Method

Participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk and completed an online survey. The sample consisted of 148 heterosexual Black ($n = 81$) and Latinx women ($n = 67$) with a mean age of 30.78 years.

Measures

- Body Appreciation Scale (Avalos, Tylka, Wood-Barcalow, 2005).
- Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004), using the Affirmation subscale.
- Condom Use Measure (Adapted from DiClemente & Wingood, 1995).

Results

The Hayes PROCESS (2017) regression-based tool was used to examine whether body appreciation moderated the relationship between ethnic identity affirmation and future condom use intentions after controlling for age and relationship status. There was an interaction between ethnic identity affirmation and body appreciation on future condom use intentions, $B(SE) = -.11(0.06)$, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $p = 0.05$. Black and Latinx women with higher body appreciation and lower ethnic identity affirmation had greater condom use intentions than those with higher ethnic identity affirmation, $b(SE) = 0.84(.90)$ 95% CI [-.40, -.52], $p = 0.01$. When Black and Latinx women had lower body appreciation, ethnic identity did not influence condom use intentions, $b(SE) = -7.20 (.05)$, 95% CI [-.17, 0.28], $p = 0.16$.

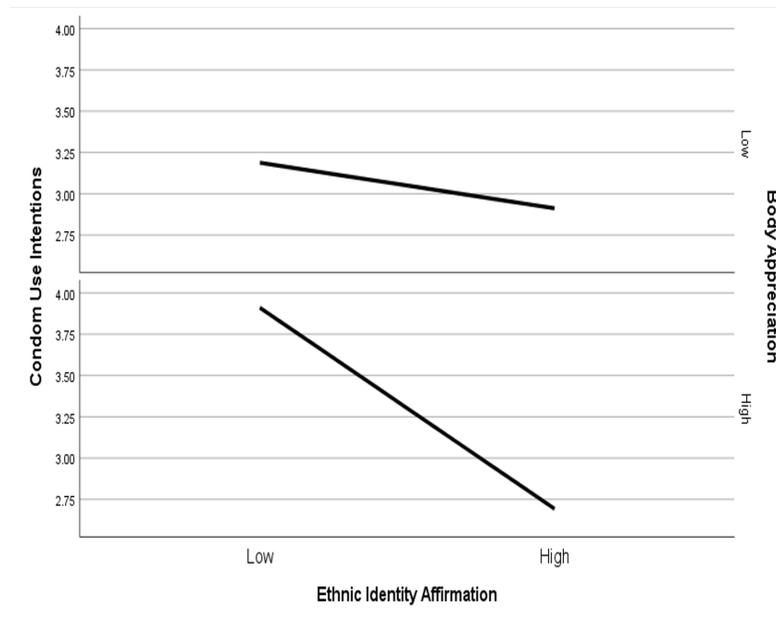


Figure 1. Moderating role of body appreciation on ethnic identity and condom use intentions.

Discussion

- These findings highlighted the influence of body appreciation on the relationship between ethnic identity and condom use.
- Our results suggest that body appreciation serves as a moderator between ethnic identity affirmation and condom use in this sample. For Black and Latinx women with high levels of body appreciation, lower levels of ethnic identity affirmation were associated with greater condom use intentions than those with higher ethnic identity affirmation.
- The association between body appreciation, ethnic identity, and condom use intentions suggests body appreciation functions differently based on one's level of ethnic identity affirmation.

Limitations

- This study has a relatively small sample size, though the size of effects were significant.
- The current sample only consisted of Black and Latinx women, which did not allow researchers to examine these variables in other racial minority women.
- This study used a cross-sectional design that only utilized quantitative survey measures, which did not allow researchers to make causal connections between study variables.

Conclusion

- Informed by the theory of planned behavior, the current findings suggest that Black and Latinx women with high body appreciation and lower ethnic identity affirmation may have greater intentions to use condoms in the future.
- Further research should explore other aspects of sexual risk behaviors associated with these variables, such as illicit drug use and vaginal-penile sexual intercourse with multiple partners.
- Subsequent research can also be used to inform intervention aimed at decreasing risky sexual behaviors and increasing positive body image in this population.

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