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Substance Use Attitudes among Urban Black Adolescents: The Role of Parent, Peer, and Cultural Factors

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Abstract This study examined the influence of perceived parental, peer, and cultural factors on Black American adolescent attitudes toward substance use. One-hundred-eight Black American youth (grades 9–12) from economically disadvantaged urban neighborhoods of New York, completed self-report measures on: (a) parent-child involvement, parental supervision, and parent attitudes toward high risk behaviors; (b) peer bonds and peer attitudes toward high risk behaviors; and (c) ethnic identity, parental racial socialization, and extended family support. Youth disapproval of substance use was positively associated with higher perceived levels of peer and parental disapproval of high risk behaviors, parental supervision, and ethnic identity. Youth who reported parental messages about racial discrimination without balanced parental messages about racial pride and racial equality were more likely to approve substance use.

Keywords Substance use prevention · Adolescence · Ethnic minority youth

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The Black American adolescent population is projected to increase 18% by the year 2015 (Day, 1996). Research that specifically examines positive and negative influences on Black adolescent development is needed to ensure that social policies directed at or including this expanding base of Black youth are informed by culturally valid empirical data. Reported levels of substance use for Black youth are at or below those of Hispanic and White 9th–11th graders. However, a longitudinal study by Johnston *et al*. (2003a) found an increase in the rates of substance use among Black youth in recent years. This multi-ethnic national study reported that in the past 30 days, 30% of Black 12th graders had used alcohol and 12% had smoked cigarettes.

Like other adolescents in the United States, the use of cigarettes, alcohol, and illicit drugs pose serious physical and mental health risks for Black adolescents that extend into adulthood (Johnston *et al*., 2003b; National Center for Health Statistics, 2000). Substance use among youth in the general population has been associated with decreases in school achievement and problems in adulthood including marital discord, interpersonal problems, limited career opportunities, poor mental and physical health, and increased risk for sexually transmitted diseases (Jessor *et al*., 1998). However, variables associated with substance abuse in the general population may or may not be salient to Black American youth and their experiences (Fisher *et al*., 1997).

Although many Black youth reside in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods that place them at heightened risk for poor developmental outcomes, including those associated with substance abuse, the majority successfully transition into adulthood (Scales *et al*., 2000). Black ethnic identity, extended family support, and parental racial socialization practices are protective factors that have been found to facilitate positive development and resilience in Black American and other ethnic minority youth (Christian and

Barbarin, 2001; Fisher *et al*., 2000). However, parental, peer, and cultural assets specifically influencing attitudes toward substance use in young Black Americans has rarely been studied. In the absence of such data, substance use prevention approaches may be of limited benefit to Black adolescents. The research described in this article adds to the small but growing literature on culturally specific factors associated with youth attitudes underlying engagement in or resistance to substance use behaviors.

Attitudes toward substance use correlates

Across multiethnic samples, youth attitudes toward substance use have been significantly correlated with their substance use behaviors (Best and Barrie, 1997; SAMHSA, 1996). In the Monitoring the Future data (1976–1996) adolescent approval of substance use accounted for over 50% of the variance in marijuana use (Bachman *et al*., 1998). A longitudinal study by Graham (1996) involving 1,247 multi-ethnic adolescents (66% Black) found approval of substance use to be a significant predictor of marijuana and alcohol use.

Correlates of youth substance use in the general population

Currently, there are few studies specifically examining attitudes towards substance use, substance use behavior, and demographic variables among Black youth populations. Studies involving the general population have found that boys are more likely than girls to become involved in substance use (Kann *et al*., 2000; Welte *et al*., 1999); although there has been an observed increase of involvement in substance use among females (Scheier *et al*., 1994). General population data also suggest that teenagers who perceive parental disapproval of substance use are less likely to use drugs (Como-Lesko *et al*., 1994; Towberman and McDonald, 1993).

Family factors

Studies of the general population report a positive association between youth involvement in substance use behaviors, poor parent-child relationships, and limited parental supervision (Pepler and Slaby, 1994). The presence of only one family caregiver (single parent households) has also been associated with youth substance use. It has been hypothesized that indirect effects of single parent residence on youth substance use may stem from ineffective discipline and poor parental monitoring (Rutter *et al*., 1998). Such findings in the general population may have significance to Black youth since national statistics confirm that there is a higher rate of single-parent households in Black American families than that of white families. According to the U.S. Census, fewer than 40% of Black families represent married couples and fifty-two percent of all Black family households are one-parent families (43% female, 9% male) (McKinnon, 2003). By comparison about 18% of white children are living with a single parent (13% female, 5% male). However, although the research has consistently shown negative effects of detached (divorced or only one biological parent in the home) families among white children, data are inconsistent regarding its impact on Black American youth (Austin, 1992).

Peer influences

Researchers have found peer influence in the general population to be a strong predictor of adolescent substance use (Marcos and Bahr, 1995). Of significance to the major aims of this investigation are findings that adolescents who believe their friends disapprove of substance use are less likely to use drugs themselves (Hemmelstein, 1995; Johnston *et al*., 2003b).

Cultural correlates of black youth resilience

The majority of research focusing on Black American populations has used race as the primary indicator for analysis. There are many methodological problems with this approach (McLoyd, 1998; Murry *et al*., 2004). This form of analysis often attributes youth attitudes and behaviors to an ill-defined concept of race non-inclusive of cultural factors. According to Triandis *et al*. (1980), culture includes subjective elements such as social norms, roles, beliefs, and values. Culturally relevant factors for Black populations are best operationalized as those that while potentially present in the general population have been empirically found to be related to outcomes specifically for Black Americans or theoretically predicted based upon the unique current or historical conditions of Black Americans (Frison *et al*., 1998). Three such cultural components have been identified: ethnic identity, parental racial socialization, and extended family support.

Ethnic identity

According to Rotheram-Borus *et al*. (1998), ethnic identity is an individual's sense of belonging to an ethnic group. This also includes the degree to which an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are due to ethnic group membership. Knowledge about ethnic identity emerges at the age of three, when children are able to perceive similarity to their own racial group and categorize other racial groups (Ponterotto, 1991). However it is not until adolescence that youth of color begin to examine the meaning of their ethnicity, culture, and minority status (Phinney and Chivara, 1995). Understanding which group one identifies with, as well as

identifying how groups are preferred by the self and society contribute to the psychological development of an individual (Garbarino and Kostelny, 1992).

There is a strong need among Black Americans to belong to an ethnically distinct group that has a shared history and values the interdependence of the community (Ward, 1995). Empirical evidence also indicates that level of ethnic identification is important to Black youth development (Phinney and Chavira, 1995; Ward, 1995).

Racial socialization

Socialization is the transmission of values, norms, morals, and beliefs from one person to the next. Socialization of youth takes place primarily in the family setting. The primary focus of socialization is on the performance and survival of an individual in the social setting (Stevenson, 1994). Parents socialize their children based on their own perception of the environment and their history of interaction with and identification as a member of the larger society (Fisher *et al*., 1997).

Ideally racial socialization helps teach adaptive responses to social, economic, and political barriers Black Americans may face in society. It assists in preparing Black American youth to cope with sometimes harsh social environments (Stevenson, 1994). According to Ogbu (1981), racial socialization provides tools for performing culturally specific tasks that are required for adult economic, political, and social roles.

Studies have shown that racial socialization is practiced often by Black Americans parents (Demo and Hughes, 1990; Phinney and Chavira, 1995). Exposure to most forms of racial socialization is associated with healthy adjustment among Black youth (Constantine and Blackmon, 2002; Ogbu, 1981). However, in a multicultural sample of youth (21% Black Americans), Fisher *et al*. (2000) found the type of parental racial messages could be positively or negatively associated with youth distress reactions in response to perceived racial discrimination.

Extended family support

The organization of Black families reveals a close network of relationships within and between families who may or may not be blood relatives (Martin and Martin, 1978). Researchers have found between twenty-seven to eighty-one different combinations of family composition within the Black community when quantifying populations in their studies (Wilson *et al*., 1995). Although the fabric of the Black family structure has changed in the last few decades, the extended family network is still an integral part of Black family life. This system of sharing is facilitated by a strong sense of obligation to the family (Barnes, 2001). The extended family network provides support through financial assistance, childcare, household maintenance, and social regulation (Taylor, 2000).

Wilson (1990) suggested that the impact of the extended family in Black youth development may have an indirect effect, where involvement of extended family members provides support for parents, which in turn impacts the development of the child. The unique nature of the extended Black family may serve as protection against many deficits within poverty stricken Black neighborhoods and lack of opportunities faced by many Black American youth (Wilson, 1990).

Black culture and youth drug use attitudes and behaviors

Although Black youth development research has explored cultural factors, only recently have studies looked at how these factors may be related to risk involvement. A study by Brook *et al*. (1998) consisted of 627 Black American youth (41% male: 59% female) ages 16–25 years (mean age 19 years). Approving attitudes toward drugs was related to higher stages of substance use. In addition, high levels of awareness of Black American culture were negatively related to substance use. Resnicow *et al*. (1999) conducted a study examining the relationship between ethnic identification and adolescent normative functioning. Three hundred and forty six Black American youths ages 11–16 participated. Those who scored high on the pro-Black factors showed significantly higher levels of anti-substance use attitudes. In addition, individuals who perceived more racism in society reported more substance use. Marsiglia *et al*. (2001) examined the relationship of ethnic identity as predictors of substance use among 451 seventh grade Black American and Mexican American youth. Ethnically proud Black American and Mexican American students reported significantly less substance use than those with less ethic pride.

Study objectives and hypotheses

Previous substance use research within the Black youth population has been limited in scope; drawing upon global patterns observed in multicultural or ethnic majority samples (Brook *et al*., 1998; Resnicow *et al*., 1999). The current research examined Black youth attitudes toward substance use within multiple contexts including perceived familial influences, peer factors, and Black cultural variables. Specifically, the study examined the relationship of Black adolescent attitudes toward substance use to: (1) demographic variables (grade, gender, mother's educational level, family constellation); (2) youth perceptions of parenting factors (parental involvement, parental supervision, and parent attitudes toward delinquency); (3) youth perceptions of peer factors (peer bonds and peer attitudes toward

delinquency); and (4) cultural factors (ethnic identity, racial socialization, and extended family support).

Based on previous empirical literature the following predictions were tested: (1) girls and younger students will be more disapproving of substance use than boys and older students, respectively; (2) parental and peer disapproval of high risk behaviors will be associated with negative youth attitudes toward substance use; (3) high levels of parental involvement and supervision will be positively related to youth disapproval of substance use; and (4) greater frequency of parental racial socialization messages and higher levels of ethnic affiliation will be associated with higher levels of youth disapproval of substance use.

Method

Participants

One-hundred-eight youth (37% male, 63% female) 13–20 years of age ($M = 16.4$ years) who self-identified as Black American were recruited from grades 9–12 in high schools and youth oriented community programs located in urban economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the New York Metropolitan area. More than half the students were economically disadvantaged (57% eligible for free/reduced lunch). Approximately half the students reported living in 2-parent homes (53%) and half in single parent homes (47%). The majority of those reporting living in single parent households, where living with their mother (67%). Students reported a wide range of maternal education: 6 % had not entered high school; 33% had completed or finished at least some high school; 32% went to technical school or some college courses; and 29% finished college or graduate/professional school.

A power analysis computed by the Power and Precision computer program (Biostat, 2005), revealed that a sample of 94 participants was sufficient for a regression analysis with 8 independent variables (main effect), medium effect size (.15), and an alpha level of .05.

Instruments

All measures selected for this study had been previously tested in samples involving Black youth. Inter-item consistency for each scale in the sample tested for this study was moderate to excellent (alpha range = .69–.93).

Youth attitudes toward substance use

The dependent measure for this study, youth attitudes toward substance use, was derived from the Monitoring the Future project (Bachman *et al*., 1996), a 26-year longitudinal study tracking the patterns of substance use among secondary school students since 1976. This 20-item measure asks participants to indicate their attitudes toward the use of various substances (e.g. cigarette, alcohol, marijuana, and illicit substances) through Likert-type ratings ranging from 1- "Don't Disapprove" to 3-"Strongly Disapprove." According to Bachman *et al*. (1997), the measure is highly reliable. Inter-item reliability analysis conducted for this scale yielded a coefficient alpha of .91.

Parental attitudes toward high risk behaviors

Parental/caregiver attitudes toward high risk behaviors were measured using the Parent Attitude Toward Deviance Scale (Elliott, 1982). The 11-item Likert-type scale asks respondents to list how improper they think their parent would find each high risk behavior (Very Wrong [4] to Not at All Wrong [1]). Questions about substance use and other risk behaviors (e.g., violence, property damage) are included in this measure. Reliability analysis conducted for this scale yielded a coefficient alpha of .75.

Parental involvement

Parental/caregiver involvement was measured using the 10-item Likert type, Parent-Child Involvement Scale (PCI) (Smith and Krohn, 1995). Items include youth evaluations of communication with parents/caregivers about school and friends, as well as time spent with the parent/caregiver in and out of the home (1- Never to 4- A lot). The coefficient alpha reliability for this study was .86.

Parental supervision

Parental supervision was measured with the Parental Control Scale (Smith and Krohn, 1995) a 12-item scale based on the work of Patterson and Reid (1984). Using a Likert-type scale, the instrument measures frequency of parental supervision and the consistency and predictability of parental discipline from the perspective of the adolescent (1- Never to 4- A lot). This study yielded a coefficient alpha of .81 for this measure.

Peer bond

The Peer Bond Scale (Elliott, 1982) is a 3-item measure asking respondents to list how much time they spend with those considered to be their 'friends' (Scale 1–5). Reliability analyses conducted for this measure found a coefficient alpha of .69.

Peer attitudes toward high risk behaviors

Peer attitudes toward high risk behaviors were measured using the Peer Attitude Toward Deviance Scale (Elliott, 1982). The 11-item Likert-type scale asks respondents to list how improper they think their peers would find each high risk behavior (4 = Very Wrong to 1 = Not at All Wrong). Questions regarding substance use and other high risk behaviors are included in this measure. Reliability analysis conducted for this scale yielded a coefficient alpha of .91.

Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity was measured using the Affirmation and Belonging sub-scale of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992). The MEIM is a widely used instrument that assesses the extent to which adolescents from diverse ethnic and racial groups have achieved a sense of ethnic identity (e.g., 'I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments'). Items are scored on a 4-point scale, 4 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). In the current study, the Affirmation and Belonging sub-scale yielded a moderate reliability coefficient of .69.

Racial socialization

The Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (TERS) (Stevenson *et al*., 2002) is a 40-item instrument that measures youth reports of the frequency of parental/caregiver messages about Black American culture and racial barriers (e.g., parents have told youth, 'You should be proud to be Black,' 'Racism is real and you have to understand it or it will hurt you'). Items are scored on a 3-point scale, 3 (a lot) to 1 (never). A total score represents a composite of racial socialization, with a high score resulting in high levels of racial socialization. The scale includes five subscales: a 13-item Cultural Coping with Antagonism (CCA), a 9-item Cultural Pride Reinforcement (CPR), a 5-item Cultural Legacy Appreciation (CLA), a 6-item Cultural Alertness to Discrimination (CAD), and a 6 item Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream (CEM). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was .93 for the TERS total score, and .88, .78, .76, .80, and .71 for the CCA, CPR, CAD, CLA, and CEM subscales, respectively. In the present study, there were significant but moderate correlations between the subscales (range .26–.93), indicating that they measure both common and unique aspects of racial socialization.

Extended family support

The frequency of contact with extended family and the degree of social and emotional support offered to the immediate family by adult "relatives" was measured using the Kinship Social Support Scale (Taylor *et al*., 1993). Sample items included, 'We can count on our relatives to help when we have problems,' 'If someone in our family was in some kind of trouble, we would call a relative for advice.' This 13-item scale uses 4-point Likert-type response scales (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree). In this study, a coefficient alpha of .84 was obtained.

Procedures

All youth were recruited from public schools and youth oriented community programs. The research was approved by the public school system, youth program staff, and university IRB. Youth returned parental consent forms and completed the questionnaire packet while read by the project staff. Youth received a movie gift certificate and a list of local youth friendly resources.

Results

Across grade and gender, the mean score on the scale assessing teenage disapproval of substance use was 50.67 ($SD = 7.84$, Range 23–60). Higher scores on the scale indicate more disapproval of substance use. On average, students in our sample were more likely to disapprove than approve substance use. Negative attitudes toward drug use have been found in other national samples of Black adolescents (Johnston *et al*., 2003a,b). Youth were most likely to disapprove trying crack cocaine (2%), trying powder cocaine (2%), and trying heroine (2%) and to approve trying one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage (49%), trying marijuana once in while (33%), and smoking marijuana occasionally (22%). Table 1 provides means and standard deviations for all independent variables by gender and grade.

Gender, grade, and family constellation

Gender (2) × grade (4) ANOVAs were conducted to examine the relationship of gender, grade, and their interaction on youth drug use attitudes and parent, peer, and cultural factors. No significant grade by gender interactions were found. A significant main effect of gender emerged for peer approval of high risk behaviors $F1, 99 = 11.34$, $p < .001$, with males perceiving higher levels of peer approval than females

Table 1 Means and standard deviations by grade and gender for all measures

Measure	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade	F^a
Youth attitudes	M–55.47 (4.65)	M–47.64 (6.76)	M–48.00 (7.00)	M–51.38 (7.33)	.962
toward substance use	F–54.02 (5.76)	F–50.88 (6.87)	F–50.40 (7.80)	F–48.34 (10.76)	
Parent measures					
Parent attitude	M–12.06 (2.14)	M–13.00 (3.22)	M–13.40 (3.03)	M–12.85 (3.21)	.051
toward high risk behaviors	F–12.44 (2.71)	F–14.00 (3.42)	F–14.00 (3.59)	F–13.88 (4.20)	
Parent-child	M–27.50 (5.15)	M–24.50 (6.89)	M–19.91 (3.45)	M–21.15 (5.81)	.679
involvement	F–25.51 (8.68)	F–23.69 (4.90)	F–22.73 (4.28)	F–21.35 (6.38)	
Parental	M–23.10 (5.26)	M–22.02 (6.04)	M–17.40 (6.44)	M–18.75 (5.40)	.615
supervision	F–22.31 (7.25)	F–21.07 (6.13)	F–21.01 (5.61)	F–20.25 (8.91)	
Peer measures					
Peer bond	M–8.00 (4.57)	M–8.17 (4.26)	M–9.92 (2.78)	M–6.46 (3.15)	.694
	F–8.06 (4.63)	F–7.11 (3.08)	F–7.71 (3.00)	F–6.80 (4.27)	
Peer attitudes	M–22.88 (7.62)	M–24.00 (10.37)	M–24.18 (6.75)	M–25.70 (9.76)	.162
toward high risk behaviors	F–19.04 (7.61)	F–19.93 (5.68)	F–19.47 (6.20)	F–19.28 (6.58)	
Cultural measures					
Extended family	M–37.50 (4.72)	M–37.62 (6.22)	M–35.83 (7.83)	M–35.53 (5.72)	.461
support	F–40.89 (6.74)	F–39.07 (4.70)	F–35.83 (5.33)	F–34.99 (7.70)	
Ethnic identity	M–18.88(1.46)	M–17.83 (1.72)	M–18.48 (1.73)	M–18.31 (2.43)	1.09
	F–17.94 (2.11)	F–18.23 (2.16)	F–18.76 (1.44)	F–17.95 (2.31)	
Racial socialization-	M–79.38 (11.03)	M–81.10 (15.50)	M–85.42 (13.73)	M–79.17 (16.68)	.561
full scale	F–78.89 (16.18)	F–85.02 (13.87)	F–77.88 (16.85)	F–73.74 (18.31)	
Racial socialization-	M–24.85 (4.86)	M–23.71 (7.32)	M–25.99 (6.61)	M–25.00 (6.41)	.689
CCA	F–23.94 (7.17)	F–26.61 (5.84)	F–24.65 (7.35)	F–22.20 (6.23)	
Racial socialization-	M–21.38 (2.92)	M–23.17 (3.06)	M–22.46 (2.63)	M–21.42 (4.58)	335
CPR	F–22.06 (3.45)	F–22.50 (2.85)	F–21.09 (4.22)	F–20.26 (5.02)	
Racial socialization-	M–11.38 (1.85)	M–10.67 (2.50)	M–11.54 (2.44)	M–11.08 (3.20)	.764
CAL	F–10.59 (3.76)	F–11.98 (2.95)	F–10.48 (2.95)	F–9.70 (3.36)	
Racial socialization-	M–11.13 (2.90)	M–13.33 (3.78)	M–14.60 (2.00)	M–11.58 (3.23)	1.52
CAD	F–11.69 (2.57)	F–12.64 (2.73)	F–11.56 (3.74)	F–11.10 (3.70)	
Racial socialization-	M–8.00 (1.69)	M–8.23 (1.17)	M–8.83 (2.06)	M–7.92 (1.56)	.649
CEM	F–8.34 (2.58)	F–9.00 (2.18)	F–8.13 (1.63)	F–8.65 (2.94)	

Note. M = Males, F = females; standard deviations are in parenthesis.

[a] F scores for ANOVAs on gender × grade differences.

$^{*}p < .05$.

$^{**}p < .01$.

$^{***}p < .001$.

($M = 24.40$ *SD* vs. $M = 19.41$ *SD* respectively). Significant main effects for grade were limited to parent child involvement, $F(3, 96 = 3.85, p < .05)$ and extended family support $F(3, 103 = 3.22, p < .05)$. Tukey tests with a significance level set at .05, indicated that 9th grade students ($M = 26.18$, $SD = 7.62$) had higher levels of parent child involvement than 11th grade ($M = 21.54$, $SD = 4.13$) and 12th grade students ($M = 21.26, SD = 6.19$). These parent child involvement levels did not significantly differ from 10th ($M = 23.94$, $SD = 5.42$) grade students. Tukey tests with a significance level at .05, indicated that 9th grade students ($M = 39.76$, $SD = 6.25$) had higher levels of extended family support than 12th grade students ($M = 35.20, SD = 6.89$). These extended family support levels did not significantly differ from either 10th ($M = 38.64, SD = 5.07$) or 11th ($M = 35.83, SD = 6.40$) students.

Univariate ANOVAs were conducted to examine the relationship of family constellation on parent, peer, and cultural factors. Youth from single parent households ($M = 35.40$) compared with two parent households ($M = 38.54$) reported significantly less extended family support $F(1, 105 = 6.55, p < .05)$ and lower levels of cultural pride $M = 20.74$ vs. $M = 22.45$; $F(1, 103 = 5.45, p < .05)$. Youth from single parent homes also reported higher levels of parental approval high risk behaviors $F(1, 97 = 6.66, p < .05$; $M = 14.17$ and $M = 12.51$ respectively).

Correlations

A correlation matrix of all study variables (non-categorical) for the total sample was computed to examine strengths of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables (see Table 2). Higher levels of youth disapproval of substance use was significantly and positively correlated with parental supervision and youth ethnic affiliation and belonging. Correlations also revealed significant negative relationships between higher levels of youth disapproval of substance use and parental approval of high risk behaviors, peer approval of high risk behaviors, and racial socialization on the subscale regarding parental messages about racial discrimination.

Regression analysis

A regression analysis was performed to assess contributions of demographic (step 1), parent and peer (step 2), and cultural factors (step 3). In Step 1, disapproval of substance use was regressed on gender, grade, and family constellation. As shown in Table 3, the R^2 was not statistically significant ($R^2 = .122$).

The second step added peer attitudes toward high risk behaviors, parental supervision, and parental attitudes toward high risk behaviors and was found to be significant ($F(6, 101) = 6.0$, $p < .001$). The R^2 change for this step was .21 indicating that 21% of the variance of teenage disapproval of substance use can be accounted for by these variables. Each variable under this model was examined for individual significance to test predictions based on previous literature. As predicted, perceived peer and parental disapproval of high risk behaviors significantly predicted youth disapproval of substance use ($\beta = -.26$, $t(101) = -2.4$, $p < .05$ and $\beta = -.72$, $t(101) = -2.9$, $p < .01$, respectively).

In the third step, cultural variables were added: Ethnic affiliation and belonging and racial socialization regarding racial discrimination awareness. This third step yielded significance $F(8, 99) = 6.5$, $p < .001$). The R^2 change for this step was .08, indicating cultural variables contributed 8% of the variance of teenage disapproval of substance use over and above peer and parental factors. Frequent racial socialization messages regarding racial discrimination awareness from parents ($\beta = -.61$, $t(99) = -3.0$, $p < .01$) predicted less youth disapproval of substance use.

Discussion

Substance use among adolescent populations is a concern because of the risk associated with its long term use. Although, Black American youth have historically used fewer substances than other racial and ethnic groups, rates in this population are increasing (Grunbaum *et al*., 2002). Previous studies have found that youth attitudes towards drug use predict youth use of substances (Bachman *et al*., 1998; Zastowny *et al*., 1993). examined factors associated with substance use attitudes among Black youth and therefore provides empirical data to inform substance use prevention among this population.

In this sample of Black teenagers, the majority did not approve of substance use. Substances most likely to be approved by the sample included, trying one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage, trying marijuana once in while, and smoking marijuana occasionally. This is consistent with previous research on substance use trends among a multi-ethnic sample of youth (Johnston *et al*., 2003b).

The study sought to examine whether factors that have been found to be associated with youth substance use attitudes in general youth populations were applicable to urban Black American youth populations. The results confirmed that some factors were relevant for this population. Adolescents with peers who disapprove of high risk behaviors are more likely to disapprove substance use. This is consistent with studies on actual substance use behavior that have found youth substance use follows similar patterns as the trends of their peers' problem behaviors (Welte *et al*., 1999). Family factors also played a role in youth attitudes toward substance use. Having parents who are more disapproving of high risk behaviors was related to youth disapproval of substance use. These results parallel studies with general youth populations, which have found that teenagers who perceive their parents disapprove of substance use are less likely to use drugs (Como-Lesko *et al*., 1994). Youth with higher levels of parental supervision were found to be related to higher levels of disapproval of substance use with bivariate analysis. Previous research has indicated that parental supervision is related to less approval of substance use (Zimmerman *et al*., 1995).

Other factors were not found to be associated with attitudes toward substance use among this population. Students in higher grade levels held similar values regarding substance use as lower grade level students. This finding differs from previous substance use research among general populations, which have found that students in higher grade levels use more substances than students in lower grade levels (Kann *et al*., 2000). It is possible that grade differences in substance use attitudes appear at a younger age (e.g., junior high school) than youth involvement in those behaviors. In addition, results from this study found that there were no gender differences for disapproval of substance use. Scheier *et al*. (1994) found that there were few differences in substance use among males and females, supporting other research findings that the gender gap in adolescent drug use may be decreasing. However, more research should be conducted to identify if gender differences emerge

Table 2 Summary of correlations among variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Youth disapproval of substance use	–	−.216*	−.013	−.105	−.397***	.127	.258**	−.475***	−.031	−.008	−.249**	.028	.027	−.011	.219*	.010
2. Grade		–	−.159	−.101	.080	−.314**	−.173	.116	−.097	−.135	−.034	.006	−.068	−.099	−.006	−.284**
3. Mother's education			–	0.05	.128	.162	−.067	.257*	.165	.197	.034	.037	.174	.158	.120	.112
4. Peer bond				–	.126	.037	−.323***	.241*	.061	.069	.150	.055	−.024	.105	.027	−.116
5. Peer attitudes toward delinquency					–	−.281**	−.251*	.381***	−.086	−.009	.093	−.226*	−.109	−.063	−.124	−.253*
6. Parent child involvement						–	.475**	−.137	.112	.146	−.006	−.065	.088	.158	.169	.500***
7. Parental supervision							–	−.337***	.113	.108	−.039	.113	.086	.172	−.021	.333***
8. Parent attitudes toward delinquency								–	−.083	−.058	−.011	−.010	−.094	−.041	−.190	−.234*
9. Racial socialization-total scale									–	.896***	.690***	.595***	.931***	.862***	.123	.180
10. Racial socialization-racial pride										–	.591***	.384***	.783***	.772***	.171	.205*
11. Racial socialization-racial discrimination awareness											–	.264**	.499***	.518***	.012	.077
12. Racial Socialization-racial equality												–	.519***	.446***	−.037	.058
13. Racial Socialization-cultural coping skills													–	.776***	.134	.160
14. Racial Socialization-legacy appreciation														–	.126	.062
15. Ethnic identity															–	.093
16. Extended family support																–

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table 3 Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting teenage disapproval of substance use ($N = 99$)

Variable	ΔR^2	B	SE B	β^a
1. Demographic	.05			
Gender[a]		−1.42	1.48	−.088
Grade		−1.17	0.58	−.169*
Family constellation		0.49	1.34	.031
2. Peer and Parent Factors	.21***			
Peer attitudes toward high risk behaviors		−0.23	0.10	−.218*
Parental attitudes toward high risk behaviors		−0.68	0.24	−.271**
Parental Supervision		0.11	0.10	.095
3. Cultural Factors	.08**			
Ethnic identity		0.58	0.33	.146
Racial socialization racial discrimination awareness		−0.61	0.20	−.250**

[a]Gender coded as 0 = Male, 1 = Female.

*$p < .05$.

**$p < .01$.

***$p < .001$.

in the form of substances approved and used among Black youth.

Respondents from single parent households had similar levels of disapproval of substance use as those living in two parent households. This finding is different from results of previous studies on involvement in substance use behaviors among general youth populations but similar to results found in studies of Black youth populations (Friedman *et al*., 2000). It appears that Black adolescents exhibit the ability to resist substance use although they are reared in non-traditional family structures. This may be because family disruption, a risk factor for youth substance use, is less likely among this population due to the fact that Black youth are less likely to live in reconstituted or stepparent families (Barnes, 2001).

There were no differences found in the level of peer bond and youth disapproval of substance use. However, the literature has shown a positive relationship between peer social support and risk taking among teenagers (Seidman *et al*., 1999). It may be that the peer bond measure used in this study was not a good measure of peer attachment.

An additional goal of this study was to identify unique factors associated with Black cultural values that may be associated with Black youth attitudes toward substance use. Cultural variables accounted for 8% of the variance in substance use attitudes. Results found that cultural factors were found to be significantly both positively and negatively associated with Black youth attitudes towards substance use. Strong ethnic identify for example, appeared to be related to youth disapproval of substances. Although only bivariate and not regression analyses found this relationship, attachment to one's ethnic group has previously been found to be a significant protective factor for Black youth involvement in substance behaviors (Marsiglia *et al*., 2001). The study also found that families whose racial socialization messages stress the ubiquity of racial discrimination without an equal amount of messages from other domains (e.g., racial pride, racial diversity) may foster a sense of hopelessness that leaves Black youth vulnerable to substance use. These results and previous research with similar populations seem to reflect that racial discrimination awareness socialization alone may be maladaptive for this population (Fisher *et al*., 2000; Stevenson, 1997)

Generalizability of patterns found in our sample will need to be tested in other urban and non-urban settings and with youth from different economic contexts. In addition, it is possible that self- report scores reflect an overall tendency to underreport or over-report responses, which may be due to social desirability. However, the results are consistent with previous studies that have controlled for these limitations (e.g., matching responses with logically related measures and using multiple informants).

This study was an attempt to highlight the value of culturally informed research designs for understanding youth attitudes toward substance use. Additional research is needed to assess whether parental messages regarding racial discrimination precede or are in response to adolescent substance affirming attitudes, whether other forms of racial socialization serve as a buffer, and if the elimination of racial discrimination awareness in racial socialization practices are more or less beneficial than its' inclusion. Future research could examine how cultural factors have a protective or risk impact on adolescent attitudes toward other health compromising behaviors.

Interventions should attempt to develop culturally specific programming, which incorporate curriculum aimed at increasing a sense of ethnic affiliation and cultural pride. In addition, it is likely that parent-training programs that are able to help Black parents develop appropriate racial socialization strategies may reduce adolescent risk taking (Coard *et al*., 2004).

Despite the environmental risks that many urban Black American youth encounter, most are able to transition into adulthood successfully. Black American youth like other adolescents will thrive in contexts that promote positive youth development (Lerner *et al*., 2002). However, factors associated with positive youth development among Black populations need to be understood in terms of the contextual environment and cultural values of this group. There is an extensive body of theoretical literature regarding Black culture and its influence on general Black youth development. Researchers can utilize this wealth of literature to develop studies that take into account these factors. Understanding how factors from multiple domains (individual,

peer, family) are embedded in specific cultural contexts is key to developing social policies and programs that are instrumental in promoting healthy adjustment among youth of color.

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