

Understanding the Motivations for Attending HBCU's



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- **Hypothesis #1:** Black, continuing -generation HBCU students will choose HBCUs because of their familial bonds to the institution.
- **Hypothesis #2:** If the student identifies as Non -black, then their answers will focus on the locality, affordability, and or the opportunity to develop social mobility
- **Hypothesis #3:** If the student is a Black, first -generation HBCU student, it is surmised that their impetus for attendance is locality and affordability.

In this study, we expect to find that black students will choose HBCUs because of their connections to the institutions, affordability of the institutions, and the relevance of location.



Methods

HBCU Students were selected at random from Bowie State University (Bowie, MD) for our data collection. Participants completed a survey to help us better understand their motivation for attending an HBCU and their stress management. While all participants were HBCU students aged 18 to 25, they diversify in race, gender, class, and place of origin.

Procedures

Surveys were randomly distributed to Bowie State students across class sections, collected by proctors, and entered into a digital database for statistical analysis.

Measures

We used nominal and ordinal measures :

- Nominal : academic year, age, gender, race, first -generation status .
- Ordinal : positive stress management (e.g., talking to friends, venting, exercising, seeking counseling, listening to music), rated on a 4-point scale .

The 20-minute survey was voluntary, confidential, and conducted in March 2025 .

Variables

The independent variable is the demographics while the dependent variable is the motivations for attending an HBCU.

Results

We used ANOVA (via SPSS v18.0) to examine why students chose their HBCU (locality, affordability, or cultural reasons — coded as WHYBSU2) and its relationship to positive stress management (TOTPOSSTRMGMT).

Sample (N = 66):

- Culture: n = 30, mean = 11.37
- Affordability: n = 18, mean = 12.72
- Locality: n = 18, mean = 14.33

Results:

- ANOVA: $F(2, 63) = 6.407, p = .003 \rightarrow$ statistically significant.
- Students choosing HBCUs for locality showed the highest positive stress management, followed by affordability, then culture.

Discussion

We examined why students choose to attend HBCUs, focusing on cultural identity, affordability, and locality. Based on past research (Faulk, 2024; Johnson, 2019), we hypothesized that Black continuing -generation students would prioritize cultural affirmation, while non -Black and first -generation students would value affordability and locality.

Using survey data from Bowie State (N=66), ANOVA analysis showed a surprising result: students motivated by locality had the highest positive stress management, while culturally motivated students reported the lowest —contradicting our initial hypothesis.

Despite limitations like the small, single -institution sample and lack of qualitative data, the study captured a diverse student population.

Key takeaway: HBCUs today play a vital role not just in cultural affirmation but in supporting mental wellness and providing affordable, accessible education. Future research should explore these motivations across more institutions.