



# Relationship Between Acculturation and Body Image Among Latina College Students

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## BACKGROUND

- Professionals have become interested in the field of body dissatisfaction because of the psychological and health risks associated with body dissatisfaction such as disordered eating and depression. Unfortunately, most of the research focuses on body dissatisfaction among Caucasian women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006)
- With the recent increase in different ethnic minorities in the United States, there is a need for research to shift its focus from Caucasian women to other ethnic groups such as the Latino population. Research on body image and other ethnicities yields great importance for mental health professionals
- According to Blow, Taylor, Cooper, and Redfean, (2010), Hispanic individuals represent the fastest growing minority group in the U.S.
- Many Latinos experience a process of cultural transition in which their attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors change as they attempt to adapt to their new environment (Perez, Voelz, Pettit, & Joiner, 2002)
- Marin (1992) defines acculturation as "a process of attitudinal and behavioral change undergone by individuals who reside in multicultural societies or who come in contact with a new culture" (p. 236)
- Lopez, Blix, and Blix (1995) define body image as a measure of an individual's perception of their body size and a mental picture of one's body based on conscious and unconscious perception, attitudes and feelings.

## PURPOSE

- Educate social workers and other professionals about Latina college students body image attitudes
- Assist in the development of culturally competent intervention strategies
- Bring awareness to the issue of distorted body image among Latina women and women in general

## RESEARCH QUESTION & HYPOTHESIS

### RESEACH QUESTION

What is the relationship between level of acculturation and body image attitudes among Latina college students?

### HYPOSTHESIS

Based on the literature review, the hypothesis for this research study was: Latina women with higher levels of acculturation experience a more distorted body image in comparison to less acculturated Latina women.

## METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was a quantitative exploratory study focused on exploring the relationship between acculturation and body image among Latina women. In the present study, the dependent variable was body image and the independent variable was acculturation. A total of 112 Latina women participated in the study based on survey completion

### POPULATION

- Self-identified Latina women who attend college or university

### RECRUITMENT

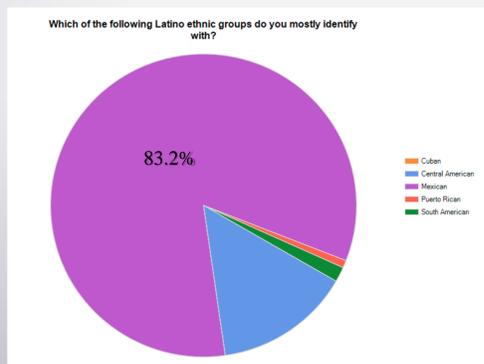
- Snowball sample via email using the Department of Social Work email distribution list
- Posting on social media sites, FACEBOOK

### MEASUREMENTS

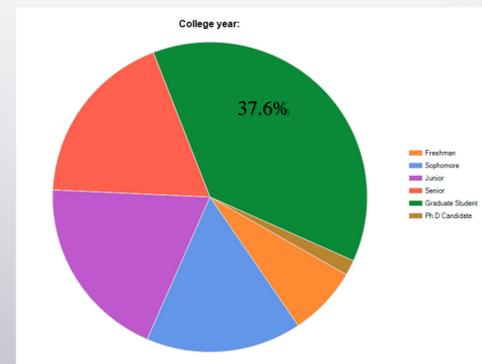
- 46 question survey using Survey Monkey
  - Combination of a:
    - Basic Demographics
    - 12-item Short Acculturation Scale (SASH)(Marin, Otero-Sabogal & Perez-Stable, 1987)
    - 30-item Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance (SATAQ-3) (Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999)

### DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

- Students in the Master's in Social Work Department received an email inviting them to participate in the study if they identify as a Latina female currently enrolled as a student at a university or college
- The email instructed all students to forward the email to other Latina students regardless of their decision or eligibility to participate in the study
- After about two weeks, not many people had responded to the online survey. At this point, this researcher decided to post the survey link on Facebook and ask people to share the link with friends
- The study required approximately 25 minutes of each participant's time



Participants' Ethnicity



Participants' Education Level

## LIMITATIONS

- Convenience Sample
- Insufficient amount of participants who identify with another Latino group besides Mexican
- Possible response bias related to education level
- 12-Item Acculturation Scale may not be relevant to the bicultural college population
- Strictly quantitative

## RESULTS

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

- 112 Latina women between the ages of 18 and 37 years completed the 46-question survey ( $N = 112$ )
- Median age of the participants was 22 years (18-37 years of age) with a mean age of 22.59 years
- 60% identified as undergraduate students in a college or university
- 83.2% identified as Mexican women. The remaining participants identified as Central American, South American and Puerto Rican
- 81.6% reported never being married. The other participants were either now married or separated

### SASH

- The mean acculturation score for the respondents was 3.13 ( $SD = .53$ ) with a median score of 3.08 ( $SD = .74$ )

### SATAQ-3

- The mean SATAQ-3 score for the participants was 3.19 ( $SD = .74$ ) with a median of 3.36

### PEARSON CORRELATION

- No significant correlation between the two variables,  $r = .712$ ,  $n = 112$ ,  $p > .05$ .
- Pearson correlation was used to test the correlation between acculturation and body image among the respondents who identified as "Mexican" and other (Central American, South American and Puerto Rican). However, there was no correlation between the acculturation and participants who identified as Mexican or other,  $r = .726$ ,  $n = 112$ ,  $p > .05$ .

		totalbody	acctotal
totalbody	Pearson Correlation	1	.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.712
acctotal	Pearson Correlation	.036	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.712	
	N	110	112

Pearson Correlation between SATAQ-3 and SASH Participant Scores

ethnic2		acctotal	totalbody
1	Pearson Correlation	1	.037
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.726
totalbody	Pearson Correlation	.037	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.726	
	N	91	91
2	Pearson Correlation	1	.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.899
totalbody	Pearson Correlation	.031	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.899	
	N	19	19

Pearson Correlation between SATAQ-3 and SASH Scores of "Mexican" and "Other" Participant's

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

- Results from previous studies related to acculturation and body dissatisfaction among Latina women indicate mixed results
- In the case of this study, even though most participants identified as acculturated as indicated by their scores on the SASH scale and some participants identified neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the medias influence on their body image, there was no correlation between the two variables
- Similar to other studies, this research study still shows inconsistencies in the research literature. Some of these inconsistencies may be related to cultural differences in relation to ideas of beauty among Latina women and may not be based on acculturation but other social factors