

Acculturative Stress and Body Image of Latina College Students Attending PWIs and HSIs

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the association between acculturative stress and body image concerns among Latina college students. The extent to which university environment moderates the relationship was also investigated. Surveying 779 Latina students across 31 university campuses in the United States, results showed that the pressure to be competent in Spanish was related to low body self-esteem for participants at HSIs. For Latinas attending PWIs, Spanish competency pressure and pressure against acculturation were related to high body appearance anxiety. University environment was not a moderator.

Keywords: acculturation, acculturative stress, Latina college student, body image

1. Introduction

The college years are often characterized by a whirlwind of different experiences, numerous transitions, and rapid growth as students traverse new academic and social environments. For Latina college students, an added challenge is the susceptibility to body image concerns and anxiety about their physical appearance (Warren, 2014). Due to the physical, psychological, and social transitions that occur during this impactful and formative period, body image is a significant developmental concern that can impede future mental and physical wellbeing (Duarte et al., 2015; Warren, 2014).

Scholars note that the university environment reflects White American culture values such as individualism, self-reliance, and idealization of the thin female body type (Menon & Harter, 2012; Warren & Rios, 2013). The emphasis on one's appearance as a determinant of personal worth and social standing has been frequently associated with disordered eating patterns and body image concerns (Claudat et al., 2015). As the preferred physical appearance for women in American culture involves long legs, light skin and eyes, and thin body shape, Latinas are vulnerable to experiencing higher stress levels as they attempt to navigate the disparities between White American and Latino cultures' beauty standards (Claudat et al., 2015). Due to the unique stressors Latina college students encounter that can negatively impact their body image and overall psychological health, this study examined the association between acculturative stress components and body image, and how attending a predominately White institution (PWI) or Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) influence the relationship.

Body image is the beliefs, assumptions, and feelings related to one's image, which can range from negative to positive (Warren & Rios, 2013). Although dissatisfaction with one's body and appearance affects more than 80% of college women (Duarte et al., 2015), existing body image research primarily focuses on White women, with few studies examining Latinas as the primary group of interest (Warren & Rios, 2013).

Studies that have examined Latinas have found they have similar rates of body image concerns with White women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006). In a study by Altabe (1998), both Latina and White participants were found to have greater weight-related body image disturbances in comparison to African Americans and Asian Americans. In another study, Latina college students in Puerto Rico and the United States reported significant concerns with body dissatisfaction and disordered eating at rates comparable to White female college students (Franko et al., 2012).

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Scholars purport that body image is a reflection of a person's attitude towards his or her body in comparison to cultural ideals and norms (Warren & Rios, 2013). That is, the body is often used as a marker to assess the congruency between one's physical appearance and the ideal body characteristics of a specific culture (Claudat et al., 2016). For Latina students, being exposed to American ideals of appearance can result in higher levels of body image dissatisfaction due to opposing cultural conceptualizations of beauty and physical appearance (Claudat et al., 2016).

Studies have shown that this discrepancy in body ideals has an impact on Latina mental health (Chamorro & Flores-Ortiz, 2000; Franko et al., 2012). For instance, in a study of Mexican American college students, participants who internalized White body image ideals were at a greater risk for disordered eating (Chamorro & Flores-Ortiz, 2000). In a qualitative study of antecedent risks for body image issues in Latina college students, researchers found that disparities between body ideals were noted by several participants (Franko et al., 2012). Participants reported struggling between holding on to family expectations of the ideal body type and mainstream's cultural messages of the body ideal.

1.1. Body Self-Esteem

Scholars have noted that body image consists of cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements (Cash, 2002). Researchers often regard low body self-esteem as a precursor to the development of an eating disorder (Latner et al., 2011). Body self-esteem (cognitive and affective elements) has been defined as the feelings and perceptions individuals have about their bodies. It consists of weight satisfaction, general feelings about one's physical appearance, and evaluations attributed to others about one's physical appearance (Mendelson et al., 2001; Warren & Rios, 2013).

Studies suggest that women who are concerned with their physical appearances are more likely to view their bodies through the opinions of others, and have higher levels of self-esteem and body satisfaction if they perceive their appearances to be congruent with the expectations of their peers and society (Mendelson et al., 2001; Pilafova et al., 2007). In a study of body self-esteem of 163 Latino college students (Blow et al., 2010), the study found that female participants internalized socio-cultural attitudes toward physical appearances more, viewed personal attractiveness as being very important, and more readily engaged in unhealthy weight-loss behaviors.

1.2. Body Appearance Anxiety

A behavioral component of body image is body appearance anxiety (Mendelson et al., 2001). Body appearance anxiety is the apprehension regarding negative evaluation by others over one's physical appearance (Hart et al., 2008). Eating disorders are often associated with a certain degree of social anxiety (Hart et al., 2008). Hart et al. (2008) argue that body appearance is strongly correlated with experiencing symptoms of anxiety (e.g., disproportionate stress or worry) about one's body because of the importance White American culture places on being attractive. Moreover, the erroneous notion that one's appearance is a determinant of worth and social standing may lead to higher levels of body appearance anxiety (Hart et al., 2008; Franko et al., 2012). Latina college students, therefore, may be at an increased risk of experiencing body appearance anxiety and, consequently, eating disorders as they traverse college environments that reflect White American cultural values of thinness and physical attractiveness (Franko et al., 2012).

Although body appearance anxiety, specifically within the social domain, is comorbid with eating disorders (Levinson et al., 2013), studies in this area have been predominately with White women. Levinson et al. (2013) conducted a study that proposed social appearance anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and perfectionism as risk factors for eating disorders and social anxiety disorder. Participants were 236 college students who were mostly White (90%). Results showed a strong positive relationship between body appearance anxiety and social anxiety. In another study, Levinson and Rodebaugh (2012) examined a clinical sample of 118 undergraduate students (who were mostly White women). Results determined that body appearance anxiety predicted bulimic symptoms and body image dissatisfaction.

1.3. Body Image, Acculturative Stress, and University Environment

Considering that enrollment at PWIs typically entails 50% or more White students, Latinas attending PWIs are constantly surrounded by White norms, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and expectations. Pervasive mainstream media, White peer socialization, and increased exposure to White-centric ideologies and norms can exacerbate Latina students' maladaptive beliefs about their physical appearances (Claudat et al., 2016).

In addition to body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety, interpersonal and institutional variables can influence Latina college students' body image (Warren & Rios, 2013). Research suggests that even though Latino students have different college experiences when attending a PWI or HSI, acculturative stress persists (Nuñez et al., 2011).

Acculturative stress is the difficulties that arise when adapting to a new cultural context (e.g., university environment) and can be detrimental to a student's psychological wellbeing (Castillo, 2009; Warren & Rios, 2013). Scholars have noted that acculturative stress is a multifaceted construct that consists of four primary components: pressure to acculturate, pressure against acculturation, English competency pressure, and Spanish competency pressure (Rodriguez et al., 2002). However, most studies on acculturative stress and its influence on body image have examined the construct as a whole.

In a study by Rodriguez et al. (2000), the researchers examined whether Latino college student psychological maladjustment can be attributed to minority-status stresses and acculturative stresses. The study focused on assessing Latino students at an HSI to examine whether being in an environment where there are more members of the Latino heritage culture might change the way a Latino student experiences psychosocial stresses. Their rationale was based on prior research supporting the idea that ethnic minority college students at PWIs report more minority-status stresses (Smedley et al., 1993). They found that despite being at an HSI, participants reported experiencing acculturative stresses in addition to general college demands.

Studies at PWIs have also shown that acculturative stress can be a significant contributing factor to the development of Latina body image issues and disordered eating behaviors (Gordon et al., 2010; Perez et al., 2002; Warren & Rios, 2013). For example, in a study of Latina college students, results showed a statistically significant relationship between bulimic symptoms and acculturative stress (Perez et al., 2002). Two other studies on Latina college students also found that acculturative stress was associated with eating disorder symptoms, such as body image dissatisfaction (Gordon et al., 2010; Warren & Rios, 2013).

1.4 The Current Study

The current study expands upon existing research by exploring the relationships between four acculturative stress components (pressure to acculturate, pressure against acculturation, English competency pressure, and Spanish competency pressure) and two components of body image (body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety) at two types of educational institutions (PWI and HSI). The primary purposes of this study were to (a) analyze the relationships between the four acculturative stress components and the two components of body image; and (b) investigate whether university environment (PWI; HSI) moderated the relationship.

It was hypothesized that there would be a negative relationship between the four acculturative stress components and body self-esteem (Hypothesis 1). Additionally, it was expected that there would be a positive relationship between the four components of acculturative stress and body appearance anxiety (Hypothesis 2). Finally, it was hypothesized that the strength of the direct effect of the four components of acculturative stress on body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety will be stronger for Latina students enrolled at PWIs (Hypothesis 3).

2. Method

2.1 Participants and Procedures

Data used for this study was collected as part of the Multi-Site University Study of Identity and Culture (MUSIC), a national collaborative research project that included 31 U.S. colleges and universities (Weisskirch et al., 2013). The data consisted of 10,573 (M age = 20.3 years, SD = 3.37 years) racially diverse undergraduate college students at 31 four-year, degree-granting institutions. Participants read a brief description of the research study on a webpage, provided consent, and completed an online survey. All instruments used in the survey were in English.

Given the specific aims of this study, the data analytic sample was limited to undergraduate female participants who self-identified as Latina at PWIs (n = 420) and HSIs (n = 359). Institutions were cross-referenced with the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU, 2017). Ages ranged from 18 to 24 (M = 19.35; SD = 1.47), years been in college from 1 year to 5 years (M = 1.94; SD = 1.09), and annual family income from \$30,000 to over \$100,000 (M = 2.38; SD = 1.42).

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Body Self-Esteem & Body Appearance Anxiety

The Brief Inventory of Body Image (BIBI; Agocha et al., 2007; Grabe & Cooper, 2002) is a 12-item self-report measure that assesses appearance-related self-evaluations.

The BIBI includes four sub-scales: Body Esteem (3 items; e.g., *I am proud of my body*), Appearance Comparison (3 items; e.g., *Most people would probably think that I am good-looking*), Appearance Anxiety (3 items; e.g., *I am anxious about my appearance and the way I look*), and Body Satisfaction (3 items; e.g., *I am happy with the way my body looks*). Participants rated their responses on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). For this study, the Body Esteem ($M=3.17$, $SD = 1.00$) and Appearance Anxiety ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .54$) sub-scales were used to assess for body self-esteem and appearance anxiety, respectively. Alphas for Body Esteem and Appearance Anxiety sub-scales for the current study were 0.865 and 0.739, respectively.

2.2.2 Acculturative Stress

The Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (MASI; Rodriguez et al., 2002) assesses participants' stress related to the acculturation process. The measure contains four sub-scales: Pressure to Acculturate (7 items; e.g., *It bothers me when people don't respect my family's cultural values*; $M = 2.21$, $SD = .85$), Pressure Against Acculturation (4 items; e.g., *People look down upon me if I practice American customs*; $M = 1.80$, $SD = .89$), English Competency Pressure (7 items; e.g., *I feel uncomfortable being around people who only speak English*; $M = 1.40$, $SD = .77$), and Spanish Competency Pressure (7 items; e.g., *I feel uncomfortable being around people who only speak my family's heritage language*; $M = 2.08$, $SD = 1.06$). Participants rated their responses to each item on a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Alphas for the Pressure to Acculturate, Pressure Against Acculturation, English Competency Pressure, and Spanish Competency Pressure sub-scales were 0.840, 0.846, 0.914, and 0.895, respectively.

3. Results

To determine if there was a relationship between the four components of acculturative stress (Spanish competency pressure, English competency pressure, pressure to acculturate, pressure against acculturation) and the two dependent variables (body self-esteem, body appearance anxiety). Pearson correlations were conducted (Table 1).

Table 1: Correlation Among Variables of Interest by University Environment

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Body Self-Esteem	-	-.044	-.019	-.007	-.008	.012
2. Body Appearance Anxiety	-.202**	-	.108*	.059	.090	.153**
3. SCP	-.114*	.212**	-	.184**	.013	.416**
4. ECP	-.007	.194**	.437**	-	.570**	.478**
5. PTA	-.052	.173**	.183**	.484**	-	.502**
6. PAA	-.010	.226**	.501**	.541**	.526**	-

Note. Correlations for Latinas at PWIs are presented above the diagonal ($n = 420$); correlations for Latinas at HSIs are presented below the diagonal ($n = 359$). SCP = Spanish Competency Pressure; ECP = English Competency Pressure; PTA = Pressure to Acculturate; PAA = Pressure Against Acculturation. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Based on the analysis, there were no statistically significant correlations found between body self-esteem and study variables for participants at PWIs. On the other hand, there was a statistically significant inverse correlation between body self-esteem and Spanish competency pressure ($r = -.114$; $p = .03$) for participants at HSIs. This suggests that for participants at HSIs, pressure to be proficient in Spanish is related to low body self-esteem scores.

Regarding body appearance anxiety, there were statistically significant correlations for participants at both institutions. For PWIs, body appearance anxiety was positively correlated with Spanish competency pressure ($r = .108$; $p = 0.02$) and pressure against acculturation ($r = .153$; $p = 0.001$). At HSIs, body appearance anxiety was also positively correlated with Spanish competency pressure ($r = .212$; $p = .00005$), English competency pressure ($r = .194$; $p = .0002$), pressure to acculturate ($r = .173$; $p = .0009$), and pressure against acculturation ($r = .226$; $p = .00001$). This suggests that participants who reported feeling pressure to resist assimilation or allow themselves to become more acculturated, in addition to experiencing demands to speak Spanish or English proficiently, reported greater distress about their physical appearance.

Using Mplus 8.0 (Munthen &

Munthen, 1998-2017), a multiple group analysis using path analytic techniques was conducted to examine whether university environment would moderate the association between acculturative stress and body image variables. The following indices were used to determine the fit of the multi-group model.

First, if the model fits the data well, then the chi-square test of significance (χ^2) is expected to generate a small non-significant χ^2 value; however, caution should be exerted as χ^2 is sensitive to sample sizes and may prove difficult to interpret (Kline, 2005). Second, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) values, which range from 0 to 1, should fall above 0.90 for adequate fit and over 0.95 for good model fit. Contrarily, when assessing the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the standardized root-mean residual (SRMR), lower values indicate that the model has better fit with the data. These two fit indices also range from 0 to 1. According to Loehlin (1998), values less than 0.10 and 0.06 indicate the model's fit to the data is acceptable for RMSEA, and values less than 0.08 and 0.05 indicate good or close fit for SRMR.

Body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety were modeled separately and all paths were constrained across university environment to determine if there are any differences between participants at HSI and PWI. Based on the results, there were no statistically significant differences between body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety at both institutions. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show identical path weights.

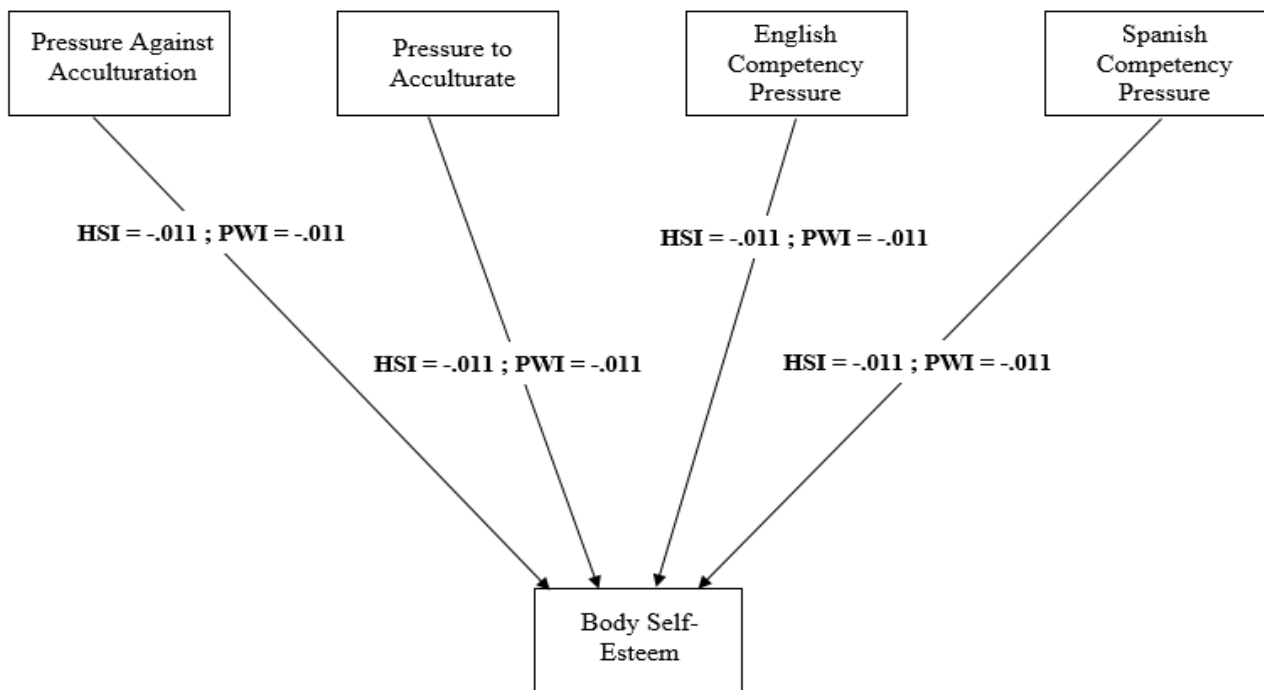


Figure 1. Constrained body self-esteem model. Tests institution type as a moderating variable. No significant differences were found.

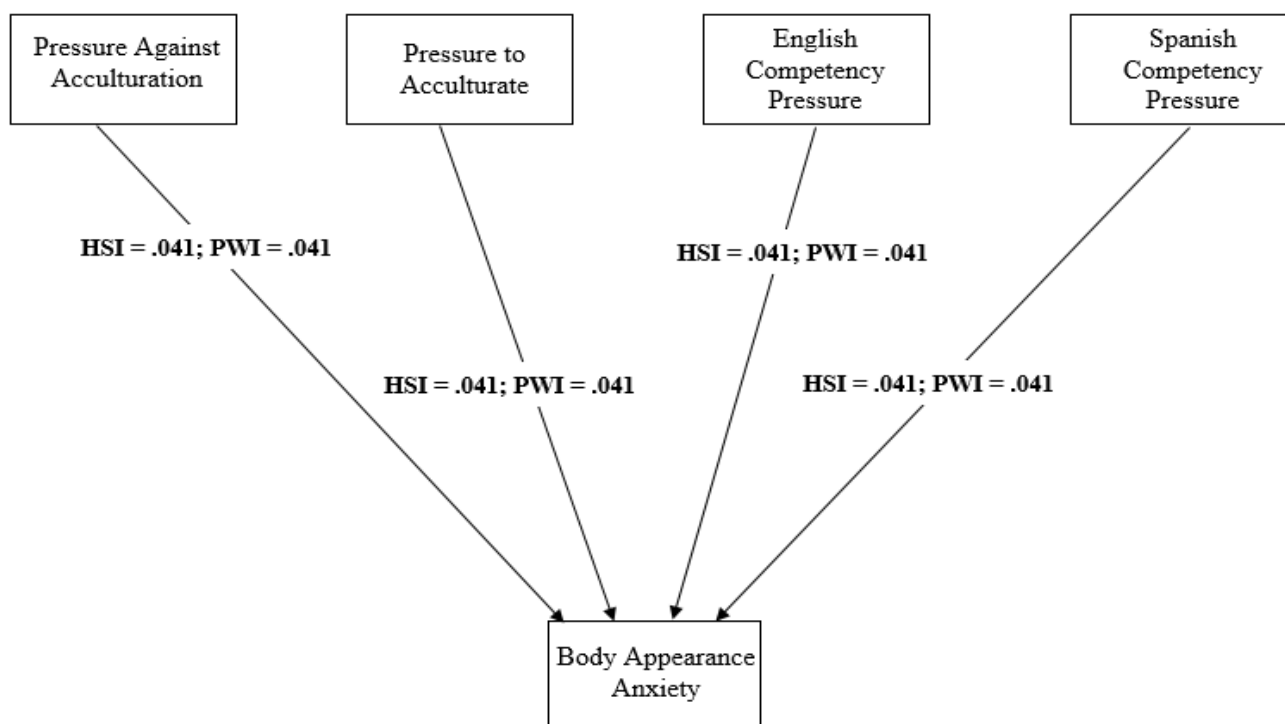


Figure 2. Constrained body appearance anxiety model. Tests institution type as a moderating variable. No significant differences were found.

Next, one pathway was constrained at a time to determine if university environment moderated any of the specific paths between the four acculturative stress components and body appearance anxiety and body self-esteem. Fit indices for each parameter that was constrained for body self-esteem indicated that only English competency pressure (CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .005; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .64) and pressure against acculturation (CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .004; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .37) had excellent model fit. However, there were no significant differences between each parameter constraint and the unconstrained model, and no paths were statistically significant (Table 2).

Table 2: Summary of Fit Statistics for Body Self Esteem

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	90% CI for RMSEA
Paths unconstrained	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00, .00
Paths fully constrained	8.14	7	.32	0	.017	.021	.00, .06
SCP path constrained	2.98	1	.08	0	.013	.073	.00, .17
ECP path constrained	.64	1	.42	1.00	.005	.00	.00, .12
PTA path constrained	1.125	1	.28	.827	.007	.018	.00, .14
PAA path constrained	.372	1	.54	1.00	.004	.00	.00, .11

Note. SCP = Spanish Competency Pressure; ECP = English Competency Pressure; PTA = Pressure to Acculturate; PAA = Pressure Against Acculturation.

Fit indices for body appearance anxiety all indicated excellent model fit but no statistically significant differences of the pathways between the acculturative stress components (Table 3; Spanish competency pressure = CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .007; RMSEA: .002; χ^2/df : 1.00; English competency pressure = CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .006; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .99; pressure to acculturate = CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .004; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .31; pressure against acculturation CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .002; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .10).

Table 3: Summary of Fit Statistics for Body Appearance Anxiety

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	CFI	SRMR	RMSEA	90% CI for RMSEA
Paths unconstrained	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	.00, .00
Paths fully constrained	6.88	7	.44	1.00	.03	.00	.00, .06
SCP path constrained	1.00	1	0.31	1.00	.007	.002	.00, .13
ECP path constrained	.99	1	0.31	1.00	.006	.00	.00, .13
PTA path constrained	.306	1	0.58	1.00	.004	.00	.00, .11
PAA path constrained	.104	1	0.74	1.00	.002	.00	.00, .09

Note. SCP = Spanish Competency Pressure; ECP = English Competency Pressure; PTA = Pressure to Acculturate; PAA = Pressure Against Acculturation.

4. Discussion

Latina college students may encounter several adjustments while attending colleges and universities in the United States, which could adversely affect their mental health, including coping with certain facets of acculturative stress and the emergence of body image disturbances. Research to date has not examined the complexities of acculturative stress, particularly specific factors such as pressure one may experience to be proficient in a certain language or the strain one may feel to remain loyal to one's heritage culture. More specifically, there is hardly any literature on the relationship between four specific components of acculturative stress and body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety. As such, the present study's primary aim was to explore the relationships between body image variables and four components of acculturative stress. The study also sought to investigate whether university environment plays a role in how acculturative stress components impact body image.

Findings suggest HSI-attending Latina participants who reported pressure to be proficient in Spanish experienced poorer body image. Previous studies have highlighted female participants' tendency to internalize socio-cultural attitudes of physical appearance and personal desirability (Blow et al., 2010). Thus, the cultural norms and attitudes on beauty and appearance at HSIs may be rooted in demonstrating pride in one's Latino heritage culture, which could involve speaking proficiently in Spanish with peers, professors, and community members (Ojeda, Navarro, Meza, & Arbona, 2012).

Latina participants who encounter increased pressure to speak Spanish may view their physical appearances and lack of linguistic proficiency more critically, resulting in poorer body self-esteem and mental wellbeing, and increased social anxiety (Abdollahi & Talib, 2016). They could believe themselves to be ill-fitting with the environmental values on appearance and overall desirability, such as being a Latina student who speaks Spanish well, due to their inability to fully unite with other group members of their ethnicity (Castillo, 2009). Latina students may also feel pressured to be competent in Spanish to remain connected with family, friends, or other social networks who provide support and resources (Castillo, 2009). Future research can focus on examining what institutional and socio-cultural variables influence body self-esteem in Latina college students.

For body appearance anxiety, results showed participants attending PWIs who experienced the pressure to be competent speaking Spanish also reported pressure not to acculturate to White American culture. In comparison to White students, students of color are likely to encounter greater personal and social discomfort, hostility, and discrimination at PWIs, which studies suggest can lead to the development of strong ethnic pride within oneself and other members of the same cultural group (Ojeda et al., 2012). However, intragroup marginalization, defined as the rejection individuals may experience from members of one's heritage ethnic group, may arise as Latinas attempt to bind together with other members of their Latino heritage (Castillo, 2009).

This type of distancing and rejection may arise as heritage culture members perceive another group member to be displaying behaviors or characteristics of the dominant culture such as speaking more English than Spanish (Castillo et al., 2008). Thus, Latina participants are likely to experience greater pressure to remain loyal to their heritage culture, which could explain why participants reported greater anxiety about their appearances the more pressure they encountered to resist acculturating to White American culture and to speak Spanish competently (Castillo, 2009).

In addition, Rodriguez et al. (2000) contend that bicultural Latino college students report heightened levels of distress as a result of the conflict between their acculturation efforts and the family conflict arising from those efforts. This conflict can be defined as bicultural stress, which arises from the pressure to balance one's heritage culture with the dominant majority culture, or feeling "caught" between two cultures (Castillo, 2009). Latina participants, therefore, may experience personal shame, backlash from others, and greater insecurity if they are not proficient in Spanish, or if they begin to embody more White American characteristics, which may exacerbate their body image-related anxiety (Castillo, 2009).

At HSIs, Latina participants who felt pressured to speak both English and Spanish competently and to resist assimilating to the dominant White American culture reported stronger anxiety about their bodies and physical appearances. Results also showed that participants who experienced pressure to acculturate to White American culture also reported having body appearance anxiety. Overall, participants at HSIs experienced worse body-related anxiety when experiencing all four components of acculturative stress.

As previously mentioned, the effects of intragroup marginalization and bicultural stress may be contributing to heightened levels of self-reported acculturative stress. For example, Castillo et al.'s (2008) study found that bicultural Latino college students who readily embrace and identify with both Latino and White American cultures and encounter intragroup marginalization reported increased levels of acculturative stress. Moreover, Latino college students who attend predominately Hispanic universities in the U.S. are likely to experience interpersonal distancing from their peers and families as they attempt to negotiate two opposing cultural identities (Rodriguez et al., 2000; Castillo et al., 2008). Thus, Latina participants may have reported greater appearance-related anxiety and, consequently, higher levels of all four acculturative stress components due to the distressing nature of their bicultural identities (Castillo, 2009; Ojeda et al., 2012). This in turn may have increased levels of insecurity related to how one is being perceived by others so as to avoid rejection from fellow heritage culture and dominant culture members (Castillo, 2009).

Future studies could further examine the cultural predictors of Body Appearance Anxiety in Latina college students, as well as analyze institutional variables that could exacerbate body image disturbances. In addition, it would be valuable to further analyze if within-group or between-group factors may protect against or put Latina college students at risk for developing body image disturbances.

Although the present study hypothesized that PWIs would influence the relationship, results showed that university environment did not moderate the strength of the correlations between body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety and the four components of acculturative stress. In other words, neither HSIs nor PWIs appear to lessen or exacerbate the symptoms reported by the present study's participants in regards to body image disturbances and acculturative stressors. This may be due to the pervasiveness of body image disturbances across all college campuses in the United States, especially since research has repeatedly identified college women to be at an increased risk for disordered eating and body image issues (Smith & Davenport, 2012). Additionally, previous literature suggests non-White college women experience poor body image at comparable rates to White female students, and acculturation to American cultural values appears to be a strong mediating variable (Smith & Davenport, 2012). It is suggested for future studies to continue examining whether certain educational institutions impact the emergence of poor body image in Latina college students.

4.1 Limitations and Future Research

There are a few limitations for this study. First, since the current study focused on Latina college students at four-year educational institutions, findings may not be representative of Latinas attending two-year community colleges. Second, the study's Latina college student sample is not representative of most Latina emerging adults given that not all Latinas enroll in college.

Another limitation is that specific Latino subgroup information was not acquired nor examined. Due to the heterogeneity of the Latino culture, acculturative stress and body image concerns may impact Latino subgroups differently. Future research may examine the differences among female college students from different Latino subgroups regarding the impact of acculturative stress on body image. Furthermore, it is difficult to ascertain the applicability of these results to Latinas who do not reside within the United States.

Although age was not a focus of the study, acculturative stress may impact body image differently in older Latinas who are past the typical college age. As such, future research may consider investigating the role of age in the relationship between acculturative stress and body image for Latinas. Fourth, the self-report measures may not be accurate, as participants may have under- or over-reported their responses. Fifth, the differences between Latinas who are fair-skinned and those who have darker skin tones were not taken into account. The present study focused on comparing Latinas with darker skin tones and physical features that are different from the White American female body aesthetic; thus, future research should integrate this White Latina intersection to investigate the possible differences and similarities in body image pathology and general well-being.

The findings from the study provide important clinical implications for Latina college students who participate in therapy at both PWIs and HSIs. Clinicians may overlook the connection between body dissatisfaction and acculturative stress, especially if the presenting problem is focused on clients' difficulties with acculturation or general adjustment to college life. However, Latinas who are experiencing acculturative stress, such as strains focused on language competence or on resisting acculturation, may also be experiencing difficulty with body dissatisfaction, which could be addressed with treatment (Kroon Van Diest, Tartakovsky, Stachon, Pettit, & Perez, 2014). It is also suggested for clinicians to approach therapy with a sensitive, critical eye for cultural variables that may put Latinas at risk for body image disturbances (i.e., their ideal physical appearance and body shape are not congruent with the majority group's or their ethnic minority group's ideals; Gordon et al., 2010). Creating a safe space for clients, characterized by empathy, non-judgment, & a willingness to learn about the clients, to discuss their struggles with cultural variables and body image disturbances can help prevent the onset of eating disorder pathology and other psychopathology (Claudat et al., 2015). Additionally, practitioners should be aware of cultural differences between their understandings of beauty standards and that of clients. Given the varying socio-cultural contexts from which beauty norms and standards arise, practitioners must avoid making assumptions. It may also be helpful to incorporate psycho-education regarding the consequences of internalizing unattainable and unrealistic body ideals, in addition to having discussions on the potential value of maintaining one's culture of origin's values (Gordon et al., 2010). Psycho-education can take place in therapy groups or workshops offered at counseling centers.

Additionally, the knowledge gained from this study can assist in institution-wide prevention efforts by providing university personnel with information to devise workshops or programs that promote healthy body image in their Latina students. For example, Franko et al. (2012) suggest the creation of an integrated prevention program centered on healthy body image for Latina college students. The program may include media literacy interventions where Latinas can learn how to decode harmful messages related to body image and the thin-ideal, as well as media exposure to Latina women so they can have healthy role models. Also, discussions focused on processing and exploring discrepant cultural messages Latinas receive from the media, their families, peers, or environments are also important (Franko et al., 2012). These discussions may provide support for young Latinas who are struggling with anxiety about their appearances as they attempt to maintain culturally ideal physical appearances for both the dominant American culture and their heritage culture. This type of preventative program could be implemented in college residence halls, university counseling centers, and student health centers.

To help increase awareness and sensitivity of cultural issues across college campuses, it would be helpful to increase Latino representation, especially Latina women, across academic systems such as by hiring Latina faculty and increasing Latino administrators. Campus administrators and faculty play a critical role in cultivating and maintaining a certain climate on college campuses, as well as providing valuable mentorship and face time with students of ethnic minorities (Contreras & Contreras, 2015). Having faculty, administrators, and staff who are Latino or from ethnic minority groups would help support Latinas and other students of color by giving them access to leaders who have direct experience in working with minority communities, and who possess cultural awareness of unique factors that can impede wellbeing, academic success, and physical and mental health. Moreover, increased ethnic minority representation in campus leadership may help change the way university health services, counseling centers, and college administrators in general incorporate diversity in women's health (Hesse-Biber, Livingstone, Ramirez, Barko, & Johnson, 2010).

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