AN EXAMINATION OF ETHNIC DIFERENCES IN BODY IMAGE AMONG MALE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

BODY IMAGE AND CULTURE
- Limited research examines body image in males and ethnic minorities.
- Appearance ideals are often defined by an individual’s membership in a given culture.
- Western cultures put considerable emphasis on physical appearance.
- There is variability across cultures with regards to male body image.

BODY IMAGE AND MEDIA
- Western media negatively influences body image.
- Media’s portrayal of male bodies have become more muscular over the years.
- Contemporary male ideal body is highly muscular, lean, and tall, with broad shoulders, a brawny chest, and a slim waist.

BODY DISSATISFACTION
- Negative body image: being dissatisfied with one’s appearance.
- Has been linked to obsessive exercise, the use of anabolic steroids, increased food supplement intake, eating pathology, depression, and low self-esteem.
- Numerous relationship between media exposure and body dissatisfaction in college men.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:
- Test mean levels of body image and ethnic identity.
- Examine whether ethnic identity influences body image.
- We hypothesized that ethnic identity would influence body image in men

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS
- 419 male college students: 71 Hispanics, 132 Asian Americans, 216 European Americans.
- Mean age = 21.13 (SD = 5.26)
- BMI = 25 (M: 24.95, SD: 5.22)

MEASURES
- Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992):
- 14-item assessing aspects of ethnic identity
- Affirmation and Belonging: Pride and content with ethnicity
- Ethnic Identity Achievement: Secure about their ethnic identity
- Ethnic Behavior: Involvement and social activities
- Muscle Appearance Satisfaction Scale (MASS; Mayville, Williamson, White, Netemeyer & Drahb, 2002):
- 19-item self-report measure for the assessment of muscle dysmorphic symptoms (intense preoccupation with lack of muscle size)
- BUILD: Excessive weight lifting tendencies
- CHECK: Muscle checking behavior

PROCEDURES
- Participants recruited from introductory psychology courses and flyby.
- Those from flyby did not receive credit.
- Measures completed through online data collection website (e.g., Survey Monkey).

DISCUSSION
- Preliminary results revealed that pride and feeling good about one’s ethnic membership were important aspects in males regarding muscle satisfaction and muscle checking, as hypothesized.
- More pride and content with their ethnicity, the better male participants felt regarding their muscularity.
- Ethnic identity achievement played a strong part in participant’s preoccupation to weight-lifting exercise (BUILD) and muscle checking tendencies (CHECK).
- Hispanic males in the study showed no relationship between ethnic identity components and body image concerns.
- Further analysis will test to whether results from the ethnic groups were statistically different.
- Higher levels of internalization of Western culture appearance ideals have been associated with more body image concerns in men.
- Ethnic identity has consistently been associated with a greater sense of psychological well-being among various cultural groups.
- Future research with test if ethnic identity play a part in mediating body dissatisfaction and internalization of Western media ideals.

RESULTS

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Possible Range</th>
<th>Actual Range</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18–46</td>
<td>20.60 (4.44)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>17–58</td>
<td>24.88 (5.27)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUILD</td>
<td>5–25</td>
<td>9.67 (3.84)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INJ</td>
<td>3–15</td>
<td>7.24 (2.71)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUB</td>
<td>4–20</td>
<td>6.57 (2.62)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHECK</td>
<td>4–20</td>
<td>7.87 (3.59)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>3–15</td>
<td>8.40 (2.70)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td>5–20</td>
<td>15.93 (2.91)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>7–28</td>
<td>18.70 (4.03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>2–8</td>
<td>4.78 (1.65)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF BIVARIATE CORRELATIONS FOR ALL MALES

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Correlation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>.14**</td>
<td>.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. BMI</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. BUILD</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. INJ</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. SUB</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. CHECK</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SAT</td>
<td></td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. AFFIRM</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. BELONG</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: BMI = Body Mass Index, BUILD = excessive weight lifting tendencies subscale of MASS, INJ = muscle injury subscale of MASS, SUB = substance use subscale of MASS, CHECK = muscle checking subscale of MASS, SAT = muscle satisfaction subscale of MASS, AFFIRM = affiliation subscale of MEIM, BELONG = belonging subscale of MEIM, AECHIEV = achievement subscale of MEIM, RESOLUTION = resolution and exploration of identity subscale of MEIM, BEHAV = Behavior subscale of MEIM.

P < .05 * P < .01

ASIAN AMERICAN:
Achievement subscale was significantly positively correlated with excessive weight lifting tendencies (BUILD), and muscle checking (CHECK). Ethnic Behavior was also significantly positively correlated with muscle checking. Higher the BMI of an Asian American male participant the less satisfied they were with their muscularity.

EUROPEAN AMERICAN:
Affirmation and belonging were significantly positively correlated with muscle checking tendencies and muscle satisfaction. Achievement was significantly positively correlated with body building tendencies and age.

ETHNIC BEHAVIOR:
Ethnic behavior was also significantly positively correlated with a participant’s age.

REFERENCES