AN EXAMINATION OF ETHNIC DIFFERENCES 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 puts 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 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 brassy 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.
- Stronger relationship between media exposure and body dissatisfaction in college men.

GOALS OF THIS 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 & Drah, 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 flyers
Those from flyers did not receive credit
Measures completed through online data collection website (i.e., 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 masculinity.
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 as 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEASURES</th>
<th>POSSIBLE RANGE</th>
<th>ACTUAL RANGE</th>
<th>MEAN (SD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18 - 46</td>
<td>20.60 (4.44)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>17 – 58</td>
<td>24.88 (5.27)</td>
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</tr>
<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>
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</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>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>5 – 20</td>
<td>15.93 (2.91)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>7 – 28</td>
<td>18.70 (4.03)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnic</td>
<td>2 – 8</td>
<td>4.78 (1.65)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
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REFERENCES