

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCULTURATIVE STRESS COMPONENTS AND
BODY IMAGE FOR LATINA COLLEGE STUDENTS AT PREDOMINATELY WHITE AND
HISPANIC SERVING INSTITUTIONS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

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. As such, the present study focused on investigating the relationships between four components of acculturative stress – Pressure to Acculturate, Pressure Against Acculturation, English Competency Pressure, Spanish Competency Pressure – and two components of body image: Body Self-Esteem and Body Appearance Anxiety. The study also sought to analyze whether institution type – Predominately White Institutions and Hispanic Serving Institutions – plays a role in how acculturative stress components impact body image. Data for the study was collected as part of the Multi-Site University Study of Identity and Culture (MUSIC), a national collaborative research project including 31 U.S. colleges and universities. The MUSIC study included measures on body image and acculturative stress.

Results showed no statistically significant correlations between Body Self-Esteem and the acculturative stress variables for participants at PWIs; however, there was a statistically significant inverse correlation between Body Self-Esteem and Spanish Competency Pressure for participants at HSIs. For Body Appearance Anxiety, results showed statistically significant positive correlations with Spanish Competency Pressure and Pressure Against Acculturation for participants at PWIs. At HSIs, there were statistically significant positive correlations between Body Appearance Anxiety and all four acculturative stress variables. In addition, neither institution was found to moderate the relationship between acculturative stress components and the body image variables.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Adriana Lezama, who has never doubted my ability to succeed. If I know what unconditional love and support is, it is because of you.

Gracias por la vida que me has dado, mamá. Esto es para ti.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The college years are characterized by a whirlwind of different experiences, numerous transitions, and rapid growth as students traverse new academic and social environments. Exposure to a variety of people, ideologies, and experiences can be beneficial as students learn more about themselves and the world around them; however, college can also cause students, particularly women, to feel vulnerable and insecure as they navigate new environments (Dill & Henley, 1998; Warren, 2014; Duarte, Ferreira, Trindade, & Pinto-Gouveia, 2015).

For college women, research suggests there is an increased susceptibility for developing negative health concerns including low self-esteem, body image disturbances, depression, and anxiety (Webster & Tiggeman, 2003; Mintz, O'Halloran, Mulholland & Schneider, 1997). Numerous studies indicate women are generally more susceptible to body image concerns during college and report poor body image and greater anxiety about their appearances (Webster & Tiggemann, 2003; Mellor et al., 2010; Warren, 2014; Dill & Henley, 1998; Mintz, O'Halloran, Mulholland, & Schneider, 1997). Body dissatisfaction and body image disturbances among women and girls are strong predictors of depression and other health concerns such as eating disorders, low self-esteem, and low self-efficacy, and research shows body dissatisfaction affects more than 80% of women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Duarte et al., 2015). 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 for female college students (Mintz & Kashubeck, 1999; Duarte et al., 2015).

College and university environments have been found to reflect White American culture that emphasizes values such as individualism, self-reliance, and idealization of the thin female body type (Castillo, Conoley, & Brossart, 2004; Castillo et al., 2015; Menon & Harter, 2012; Warren & Rios, 2013). Research describes how White American culture's emphasis on one's appearance as a determinant of personal worth and social standing is associated with disordered eating patterns and body image concerns (Claudat, White, & Warren, 2015). The preferred physical appearance for women in American culture involves long legs, fair skin tones, narrow hips, slim waists, large breasts, light-colored eyes, and an overall thin body shape (Harrison, 2003; Zones, 2005; Claudat, White, & Warren, 2015). Latinas, therefore, are vulnerable to experiencing higher stress levels as they attempt to navigate disparities between White American culture and their Latino heritage culture in terms of physical appearances, beauty standards, body shape, weight, eating patterns, dietary norms, and emphasis placed on one's appearance (Claudat, White, & Warren, 2015; Evans & McConnell, 2003). The discrepancies Latinas encounter between their heritage culture and White American culture can lead to worse stress that raises their risk of developing body image concerns, emotional distress, and eating disorders (Warren & Rios, 2012). Due to the unique stressors Latina college students encounter that negatively impact their body image and overall psychological health, this study analyzed the relationship between four acculturative stress components and two components of body image at two different types of institutions of higher education.

Body Image & White American Culture

Culture heavily influences physical appearance ideals and standards of beauty (Warren, 2014; Thompson et al, 1999). The emphasis placed on female beauty as a determinant of value

and worth depends on the specific norms and values of a particular culture (Warren, 2014). In White American culture, for example, it is well documented that there is significant value placed on one's physical appearance, particularly for women since their beauty is viewed as an indicator of worth and social status (Thompson et al, 1999; Warren 2014; Buss and Shackelford, 2008). In White American culture, the ideal woman is described as having an overall youthful appearance with fair skin, light hair and eyes, long legs, and a thin body, in addition to being preoccupied with physical beauty and losing weight (Warren, 2014; Harrison, 2003; Zones, 2005; Claudat, White, & Warren, 2015). Moreover, scholars argue that within the context of physical appearance, weight loss, and beauty, White American cultural values (e.g., self-reliance, individualism, competition, and independence) suggest one is wholly responsible for controlling one's weight and appearance (Brownell, 1991; Warren, 2014). Having the ideal body, therefore, mistakenly represents that a woman is in control of her body and working hard to maintain her physical appearance (Brownell, 1991). Consequently, women in White American cultural contexts who are not meeting the cultural beauty standards by being overweight, for example, may experience feelings of guilt and self-loathing; they may believe they are failing at looking attractive and fitting in with White American cultural beauty norms (Thompson et al., 1999; Warren; 2014).

Body image disturbances have become more prevalent in the White American female college population (Nasser, 1988). Overall dissatisfaction with one's body and appearance affects more than 80% of college women (Duarte, Ferreira, Trindade, & Pinto-Gouveia, 2015). In a study by Rucker and Cash (1992) which compared African-American and White college women, White female students reported greater distress about their body weight, tried to hide their body size more frequently, had a stronger motivation to be thin, and engaged in more frequent dieting

and restrictive eating behaviors. In addition, the researchers argued that White female students were judged against White standards of beauty, which have harsher beauty criteria and greater social consequences for being overweight and unattractive (Rucker & Cash, 1991). In another study, female participants who identified with or interacted more with White American culture were found to adopt damaging attitudes and beliefs regarding thinness and excessive dieting (Baugh, Mullis, Mullis, Hicks, & Peterson, 2010). Moreover, White female college students are more likely to engage in greater body checking and body avoidance behaviors, such as wearing clothing that hides specific body parts (White & Warren, 2013).

Body Image & Latina College Students

Existing body image research has predominately focused on examining White women, and few studies have implemented samples consisting of ethnic minority women as the primary experimental group (Demarest & Allen, 2000). This lack of research on ethnic differences is concerning since White women and ethnic minority women may experience body image concerns differently, given varying cultural and social group contexts, customs, and attitudes (Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Crago & Shisslak, 2003).

Some studies suggest White women report greater issues with body image than their ethnic minority counterparts, whereas other research indicates there are comparable levels of dissatisfaction and concerns between ethnic minority women and White women (Grabe & Hyde, 2006; Demarest & Allen, 2000). For example, in a study by Altabe (1998), both Latinas and White women were found to have greater weight-related body image disturbances in comparison to African Americans and Asian Americans. Similarly, a sample of Latinas was found to have worse binge eating symptoms than Black or White women (Fitzgibbon et al., 1998), and

Mexican American women who internalized White body image ideals were at a greater risk for disordered eating (Chamorro & Flores-Ortiz, 2000). 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, Coen, Roehrig, Rodgers, Jenkins, Lovering, Dela Cruz, 2012).

As more studies implement experimental samples consisting of Latinas, the prevalence and severity of body image disturbances will become more evident. In a study that implemented focus groups with 27 Latina college students, researchers found 4 main themes related to body image issues (Franko et al., 2012). The first theme was related to experiencing differences in cultural body-ideals. The second theme pertained to messages the students received from family, peers, and society about weight and body shape. The third theme focused on the difficulties they experienced in making healthy diet-and exercise-related choices while transitioning to college life. The last theme centered on the influence the students' peers and potential male partners had on their body-ideals and overall body satisfaction (Franko et al., 2012). The wide-ranging themes further illustrate the multitude of factors and influences that impact Latina women's body image, self-esteem, and overall health.

As previously mentioned, the mainstream White American standards highlight the importance of being thin as a determinant of social value and self-worth for women (Warren, 2014). In contrast, scholars suggest traditional Latino culture views a curvier, larger body to be more desirable, and the cultural values of prioritizing family relationships (*familismo*), interconnectedness, and collectivism take precedence over one's physical features (Warren, 2014; Chamorro & Flores-Ortiz, 2000). As Latina women navigate a new college culture and become accustomed to dominant White American values, attitudes, and behaviors, the exposure

to mainstream American values for physical beauty may lead to experiencing greater insecurity (Baugh et al., 2010). In particular, receiving mixed messages about how one should evaluate self-worth (e.g., physical beauty vs. emphasis on relationships) can exacerbate the typical stress a college student experiences and create an unhealthy appraisal of one's physical image and self-worth (Webster & Tiggeman, 2003). Thus, Latina women become increasingly vulnerable to developing poor body image, eating disorders, and other health concerns during the college years (Franko et al., 2012).

Claudat, White, and Warren (2016) suggest exposure to American ideals of appearance can result in higher levels of stress and insecurity since ethnic minority women have to learn how to negotiate cultural differences in attitudes, behaviors, beauty ideals, and physical appearance. In addition, continuously comparing one's physical appearance to the dominant culture's physical standard can be harmful since the White American ideal appearance is likely unattainable for ethnic minority women, based on skin tone, facial features, physical body shape, and eye color (Claudat, White, & Warren, 2016; Evans & McConnell, 2003; Harrison, 2003; Stein, Corte, & Ronis, 2010). On the other hand, some studies suggest Latinas who continue to identify strongly with their heritage culture may be protected from developing poorer body image and have fewer tendencies to restrict their eating (Cordero & Gutierrez, 2016). Similarly, Rubin, Fitts, and Becker (2003) found that African American and Latina participants reportedly valued the care and presentation of their bodies more than a particular set of physical appearance ideals rooted in American standards. In other words, the participants endorsed a comprehensive view of beauty, one that included spirituality, personal style, and self-care, as opposed to only focusing on physical body characteristics (Rubin, Fitts, & Becker, 2003).

Body Self-Esteem

Body image is the subjective perception of one's physical appearance, consisting of beliefs, assumptions, and feelings related to one's image, which can range from negative to positive in nature (Warren & Rios, 2013). It is a multi-dimensional concept comprised of cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements, and it has been viewed as being a reflection of a person's attitude towards his or her body in comparison to cultural ideals and norms (Warren & Rios, 2013). 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, which can result in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Trautmann, Worthy, & Lokken, 2007).

Two prominent components of body image are body self-esteem and body appearance anxiety (Latner, Knight, & Illingworth, 2011). Body self-esteem, also known as body esteem, can be defined as the feelings and perceptions individuals have about their bodies; it involves the evaluation and attitudes one has about his or her physical appearance (Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001; Warren & Rios, 2013). Although body image and self-esteem are viewed as multi-dimensional concepts, the same cannot be said for body self-esteem, which has been treated globally. Mendelson, White, and Mendelson (2001) suggest body self-esteem is similar to body image and self-esteem in that there are different domains of body self-esteem. The three main factors Mendelson et al. (2001) argue for include (1) weight satisfaction, (2) general feelings about one's physical appearance, and (3) evaluations attributed to others about one's physical appearance. This demonstrates the complexity of body self-esteem and the various influences Latinas, and women in general, encounter that impact their health and body image.

Abdollahi and Talib (2016) argue body self-esteem may even be more crucial to overall health and well-being than a person's actual weight and body size, which is problematic

considering research continues to showcase women's higher susceptibility to developing poorer body image (Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001; Miller, Coffman, & Linke, 1980). In a study analyzing 1,334 students (763 participants were female) between the ages of 12 and 25-years-old in Montreal, Quebec, Mendelson et al. (2001) found female participants to have lower body self-esteem and lower weight satisfaction. Studies also show women feel more preoccupied and 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 (Crocker et al., 2003; Mendelson et al., 2001; Pilafova, Angelone, Bledsoe, 2007). Thus, it can be posited that if a Latina college student feels her physical appearance is in accordance with the cultural standards of attractiveness at her respective educational institution, then she may report higher body esteem and well-being.

Similar to eating disorders, body image disturbances have been found to be culturally-bound, with these issues affecting more females in White American culture (Akiba, 1998; Cogan, Bhalla, Sefa-dede, & Rothblum, 1996). White American culture has been blamed for creating unrealistic standards of beauty and thinness, as well as viewing physical attractiveness and body size as markers of social status and worth (Thompson et al, 1999; Warren 2014; Buss and Shackelford, 2008). To test the hypothesis that people exposed to White American beauty norms experience worse body esteem, Akiba (1998) conducted a comparative study between Iranian college students (20 women and 22 men) and American college students (26 women and 27 men). Overall, the Iranian participants reported higher body esteem than the American college students. However, all female participants from both nationalities reported lower body esteem, with American women reporting the lowest body esteem of all. Akiba (1998) argued that the

lowest body esteem reported by female American students showcases the detrimental effects White American culture has on one's general feelings about his or her physical appearance.

In another study, body self-esteem among other body image variables were examined in a sample of 163 Hispanic college students (Blow, Taylor, Cooper, & Redfearn, 2010). Research suggests women overall appear to experience greater concern about how others are evaluating their bodies and are more likely to experience greater dissatisfaction with their appearances (Webster & Tiggemann, 2003). In accordance with previous literature, Blow et al.'s (2010) 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. Using the aforementioned conceptualization of body self-esteem, speculations can be made that Latina students have poorer body self-esteem since they participate more in weight-loss activities (less weight satisfaction) and internalize socio-cultural attitudes on physical attractiveness (concern about how others are evaluating their appearances).

Poor body self-esteem has also been found to be related with social anxiety. Abdollahi and Talib (2016) examined the relationships between self-esteem, body self-esteem, emotional intelligence, and social anxiety in 520 college students (275 females) between the ages of 18 to 22 at a university in Malaysia. They hypothesized that low self-esteem, low body esteem, and low emotional intelligence would predict higher levels of social anxiety. The study revealed that low body esteem and low self-esteem predicted significant higher levels of social anxiety, which supports prior research on the negative impact low self-esteem and low body esteem can have on personal well-being (Abdollahi & Talib, 2016; Pinto & Phillips, 2005). Abdollahi and Talib (2016) posited that individuals with poor body self-esteem may engage in more avoidance behaviors due to a salient concern that others are viewing their appearances negatively. This

avoidance can manifest in a variety of ways for college students such as not attending classes or social events, refraining from participating in student organizations, becoming isolated, and developing additional mental health concerns such as depression or disordered eating.

Body Appearance Anxiety

Just as it is important to hold a positive evaluation about one's physical appearance, it appears it is equally critical to perceive favorable evaluations from others (Mendelson et al., 2001). Body appearance anxiety is the second component of body image examined in this study. It is defined as the concern one experiences about how other people perceive and evaluate his or her body and physical appearance, and it also involves a fear of being negatively evaluated by others (Sahin, Barut, Ersanli, & Kumecagiz, 2014). Body appearance anxiety is believed to be a specific situational fear that is crucial to further understanding body image concerns and eating disorders. As such, references to anxiety in this section should be understood within the context of social situations.

Eating disorders are associated with body image disturbances and a certain degree of social anxiety, underscoring the importance of understanding the negative impact body appearance anxiety can have on Latina college students' wellbeing (Hart, Flora, Palyo, Fresco, Holle, & Heimberg, 2008; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Hart et al. (2008) argue that physical 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).

Anxiety, specifically within the social domain, has been found to be highly comorbid with eating disorders (Levinson, Rodebaugh, White, Menatti, Weeks, Lacovino, & Warren, 2013). 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%) and female (74%). Results showed a strong positive relationship between social appearance anxiety and both social anxiety and eating disorder symptoms (Levinson et al., 2013). The other component of body appearance anxiety – fear of being negatively evaluated – was also found to be associated with social anxiety, but not with eating disorder symptoms. Further, Levinson and Rodebaugh (2012) examined a clinical sample of 118 undergraduate students (who were mostly White women) to investigate social appearance anxiety and fear of negative evaluation as possible vulnerabilities for social anxiety and disordered eating. Results determined appearance anxiety as a predictor for bulimic symptoms, body dissatisfaction, and anxiety regarding one's body shape and eating patterns.

Both studies highlight college women's susceptibility for developing body appearance anxiety and eating disorders as a result of experiencing a fear of their bodies being negatively evaluated by others (Levinson et al. 2013; Levinson & Rodebaugh, 2012). Since women appear to hold harsher standards for their physical appearances, they experience greater concern about how their peers evaluate their body appearances (Mendelson, White, & Mendelson, 1996; Sahin, Barut, Ersanli, & Kumcagiz; 2014). Thus, one can speculate Latinas attending a college or

university comprised primarily of White students may experience body appearance anxiety as a result of the evident disparities between their appearances and the ideal White female body type seen in their White female peers. Latina college students may also perceive flaws in their body appearances that can exacerbate disordered eating symptoms and negatively impact their body image (Moscovitch, 2009).

A component of body image and a possible predictor of eating disorders, body appearance anxiety also appears to be influenced by cultural factors. For example, Brownell (1991) argues that media images advertising weight-loss and body-altering services reflect and promote the cultural value of achieving thinness, the ideal body type in White American society. Thus, women who are exposed to media-portrayed images of idealized body size report greater dissatisfaction with their bodies and greater fear that they are not meeting the cultural standards (Monro, 2005). Moreover, since White American culture and the media focus specifically on scrutinizing and enhancing women's appearances, researchers believe women overall experience more frequent and pervasive body shame and appearance anxiety (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Monro, 2005). In support of this notion, Monro (2005) investigated the effect of media images on body shame and appearance anxiety in 39 college women and found that women reported greater appearance anxiety and body shame the more they were exposed to idealized images. It can be postulated that Latina college students also experience greater body shame and appearance anxiety the more they are exposed to messages about obtaining the idealized thin body type and overall White American physique. These messages may come from the media, peers, social groups, and other experiences, and may be vastly different from the messages they received from their heritage Latino culture.

Acculturative Stress

Acculturative stress can be detrimental to psychological, emotional, and academic outcomes for Latino students (Warren & Rios, 2013). Acculturative stress occurs when a minority group member adapts to a new dominant culture and experiences hardships or difficulties while adapting. It also involves the inner conflict and distresses one can experience while attempting to meet the demands of both the dominant and heritage cultures (Menon & Harter, 2012; Berry, 1997; Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987). A multi-faceted concept, scholars suggest acculturative stress arises from a variety of sources such as discrimination, differences in cultural values and attitudes, and language barriers, which can all contribute to a negative environment and cultural experience for minority members (Paukert, Pettit, Perez, & Walker, 2006; Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder, 1991; Casro-Olivo, Palardy, Alberg, & Williamson, 2014; Rodriguez, Myers, Mira, Flores, & Garcia-Hernandez, 2002).

Acculturative stress has been evaluated from different perspectives to understand the impact it has on cultural minority members. Rodriguez et al. (2002) conceptualized acculturative stress as consisting of four primary components: Pressure to Acculturate, Pressure Against Acculturation, English Competency Pressure, and Spanish Competency Pressure. Pressure to Acculturate refers to the pressure one experiences from the dominant culture to acculturate. On the other hand, Pressure Against Acculturation involves feeling pressure from one's heritage culture to refrain from acculturating to the dominant culture. English and Spanish Competency Pressure both refer to deficits in language competency that cultural minority members may experience while navigating two different cultures (Rodriguez et al., 2002).

Studies have shown how acculturative stress can be a significant contributing factor for the development of psychological maladjustment, including anxiety, depression, body image,

and disordered eating behaviors (Williams & Berry, 1991). Although research on body image consequences for minority group members is mixed, studies show Latinos are as equally vulnerable to body image disturbances and maladaptive eating tendencies as Caucasian individuals (Menon & Harter, 2012; Gordon, Castro, Sitnikov, & Holm-Denoma, 2010) For example, a study by Perez, Voelz, Pettit, and Joiner (2002) discovered a strong relationship between bulimic symptoms in Latina college students and acculturative stress, and the relationship was stronger for those students who reported greater acculturative stress. Gordon, Castro, Sitnikov, and Holm-Denoma (2010) also found that for Latina college women, eating disorder symptoms, such as body image dissatisfaction, were associated with experiencing acculturative stress. Similarly, Henrickson (2006) found that one was at a heightened risk for disordered eating if they experienced acculturative stress, since acculturative stress was found to moderate the relationship between environmental pressure to be thin and the internalization of the dominant culture's thin ideal. Further, although acculturative stress generally does not seem to vary across gender, some studies suggest that women are at greater risk for experiencing acculturative stress than men (Krishan & Berry, 1992; Liebkind & Jasinaskaha-Lahti, 2000). Kempa and Thomas (2000) suggest that ethnic minority women are actually more vulnerable to developing eating disorders and poor body self-esteem when they attempt to cope with acculturative stress, specifically the stress linked to experiencing discrepancies between one's heritage culture and the dominant culture. Thus, disordered eating as a coping mechanism, and other unhealthy coping strategies, may arise from the distress a woman of color, particularly a Latina, experiences from the acculturation process in college (Claudat, White, & Warren, 2016).

As Latina women navigate a new college culture and become accustomed to new ideals, values, attitudes, and behaviors, the exposure to mainstream American values for physical beauty

may lead to significant distress (Claudat, White, & Warren, 2016). Adding on to the normal stress a typical college student experiences, feeling insecure about one's physical appearance and how it does not fit the typical physical norm could be very detrimental for Latina college student well-being (Kroon Van Diest, Tartakovsky, Stachon, Pettit, & Perez, 2014). Claudat, White, and Warren (2016) suggest exposure to American ideals of appearance can exacerbate stress levels in minority women as they navigate two opposing cultural conceptualizations of beauty and physical appearance. An example of this can be how White American culture values a thinner female body type while Latino culture prefer a curvier female body shape. For impressionable Latina college students, these conflicting messages can create unnecessary confusion, stress, and dissatisfaction.

The distressing quality of social comparison between a Latina's appearance and a White female's appearance can be damaging due to White American body ideas potentially being unattainable for a woman of color (e.g., based on skin tone, facial features, physical body shape, eye color, etc.; Claudat, White, & Warren, 2016; Evans & McConnell, 2003; Harrison, 2003; Stein, Corte, & Ronis, 2010). Consequently, a Latina college student may not only experience typical stress associated with navigating an entirely new environment and harder coursework, but additional anxiety, stress, and insecurity related to their overall physical appearance and body image. Moreover, colleges and universities may not be fully equipped to assist Latina students and other ethnic minority women who suffer from acculturative stress, body image disturbances, and other culturally-specific concerns (Stachon, Pettit, & Perez, 2014). Due to previous body image research primarily focusing on examining White female college students, there is no certainty that implications drawn from those studies are applicable to Latina students, especially those attending institutions that traditionally serve minority populations.

University Environment

Since college is a new experience for all students, the interaction of various factors in this entirely different environment can positively or negatively impact psychological wellbeing. As opposed to only analyzing individual variables, an ecological framework encompasses the variety of factors that can play into a Latina's body image such as by examining family, social, cultural, and educational influences (McLeroy, Steckler, Bibeau, & Glanz, 1988). Since no college or university is identical to another, students are likely to encounter different experiences and, as a result, develop differing opinions, attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics (Dill & Henley, 1998). Therefore, an ecological framework serves to underscore the relationship between individual factors and environmental factors as determinants of behavior (McLeroy et al., 1988). McLeroy et al. (1988) suggest behavior can be viewed as being determined by intrapersonal factors (e.g., characteristics of the individual such as body self-esteem), interpersonal processes (e.g., acculturative stress), institutional variables (e.g., PWIs vs HSIs), community factors (e.g., location of the community), and public policy (e.g., local, state, national, and global policies). As such, this study sought to utilize the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional components of the ecological framework to study how such variables contribute to poor body image in Latina college students.

Hispanic Serving Institutions

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are colleges and universities that were established with the purpose of boosting Hispanic access to higher education. They are defined as degree-granting and accredited public or private nonprofit higher education institutions, community colleges and 4-year postsecondary institutions, that have at least 25% Hispanic student

enrollment (Chun, Romero Marin, Schwartz, & Pham, 2016; Nuñez, Sparks, & Hernandez, 2011). HSIs enroll more than 1.4 million Hispanic students, educating nearly 50% of all Hispanic college students in the United States (Laden, 2001). They are generally located in geographical areas where Latinas/os are highly represented in comparison to other regions (i.e. Texas, California, New Mexico), and these institutions, along with other minority-serving institutions, are more likely to serve women (Malcom-Piqueux & Lee, 2011; Flores & Park, 2013).

Research suggests that Latino students enrolled at HSIs have better experiences and outcomes than those Latino students not attending HSIs (Nuñez, Sparks, & Hernandez, 2011). For example, an annual report analyzed the number of degrees granted to Hispanics at postsecondary institutions compared to those granted by HSIs in 1997 and revealed a marked difference in completion rates (Wilds, 2000). That year, Hispanics enrolled at HSIs earned 46% of all associate degrees, 23% of all bachelor's degrees, 19.5% of all master's degrees, 4.4% of all professional degrees, and 6.1% of all doctoral degrees in the United States. In contrast, Hispanics attending other institutions earned only 7.6% of all associate degrees, 5.3% of all bachelor's degrees, 3.7% of all master's degrees, 4.6% of all professional degrees, and 3.7% of all doctoral degrees in the country (Wilds, 2000). In addition, HSIs have higher numbers of Hispanic faculty who can mentor students and have enhanced sensitivity and understanding for cultural backgrounds and considerations (Laden, 2001). Laden (2001) also suggests that HSIs offer holistic approaches to boosting Hispanic student successes, aspiration, and retention and completion rates such as by offering academic and student support programs. Close proximity to home and lower cost options also influence Latina/o students in their decisions to attend an HSI,

especially if the family, a critical component of Latino culture, is able to provide support and encouragement while the students are attending school (Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012; Laden, 2001).

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 a HSI in order 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 Predominantly White Institutions report more minority-status stresses (Smedley, Myers, & Harrel; 1993). Rodriguez et al. (2000) found that despite being at an institution where Latinos are the largest ethnic group, Latino students reported experiencing acculturative stresses in addition to generic college demands. These results were surprising given that one would expect Latino students to experience less acculturative stress in an environment where there are more members of their ethnic group; however, these findings could be a result of the factors beyond that of ethnic group majority status. As previously mentioned, acculturative stress is a complex concept stemming from a variety of sources, and Rodriguez et al. (2000) contended that the stresses can arise from self-consciousness regarding English language proficiency, having a thick accent, experiencing family conflicts that takes one's focus away from academics, a lack of culturally sensitive curriculums, and not physically fitting the overall American beauty aesthetic.

Remembering what acculturative stress entails - the emotional and psychological distress that can occur when individuals attempt to navigate a new dominant culture while maintaining their heritage culture - Latinas may be more vulnerable to developing poorer body image as a result of the conflict they may experience from attempting to meet the demands of both the

American dominant culture and their own heritage culture with Latino peers and families (Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Menon & Harter, 2012). The discrepancies between Latinas' physical appearances and what they see on televisions and textbooks, or experience through social media and peers, may be a contributing source of acculturative stress not otherwise experienced by White female students. For example, these messages may foster maladaptive beliefs that one's thick accent, lack of English proficiency, or darker skin could make them appear undesirable to their peers and community members. On the other hand, Latinas at HSIs may also experience more pressure from their fellow Latino students to retain their heritage culture, which can also result in psychological distress, insecurity, and overall poorer well-being (Ojeda, Navarro, Meza, & Arbona, 2012). This could be due to the development of strong ethnic identity and pride among people of color, such as Latinos, to cope with threats and negative evaluations of their heritage (Wright & Littleford, 2002). According to Phinney, Chavira, and Tate (1993), the aforementioned ethnic identity development can manifest in a variety of ways such as by focusing on positive characteristics of one's ethnicity (while still remaining aware of unfavorable qualities) or by internalizing negative stereotypes and beliefs about one's ethnic group. Latina students at HSIs, therefore, may encounter individuals who pressure fellow Latino students to be prideful in their ethnicity by being proficient in Spanish, resisting acculturation, and adhering to Latino socio-cultural norms and values for behavior and physical appearance.

Predominantly White Institutions

Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) is the term used to describe colleges and universities where 50% or more of student enrollment is accounted for by students who racially identify as White or Caucasian (Brown & Dancy, 2017; Lopez, 2005). PWIs may also be viewed

as historically White institutions due to the historical context from which predominantly White colleges and universities were established. Brown & Dancy (2017) note that the patterns and overall traditions of PWIs are rooted in Western European practices and ideals, and access to an education to early institutions was reserved for upper-class members of society. Overall, PWIs were designed to uphold the established social class hierarchy (Brown & Dancy, 2017; Lopez 2005). As time passed, PWIs loosened their highly selective admittance requirements to include individuals from lower social classes, but only White males until after the Civil War were enrolled in these higher education institutions (Brown & Dancy, 2017). Once women were allowed to enroll in PWIs, Brown & Dancy (2017) comment on how PWIs sought to preserve higher education for White males, which resulted in numerous institutions between the 1920s and 1930s limiting their class sizes and seeking to enroll more upper-middle-class students instead of seeking to increase the diversity of student bodies. Despite contemporary admission policies and an increase in racial, social, and gender diversity now seen at most colleges and universities, PWIs continue to lead the way in being among the most selective colleges and universities (Brown & Dancy, 2017; Lopez, 2005).

A large body of literature continuously underscores the underrepresentation of Latinos, and ethnic minority groups in general, in higher education institutions (Flores & Park, 2013). Regarding PWIs, Latino student enrollment is even lower in these highly selective institutions, and the distinct campus climates of PWIs may be a potential cause of low Latino enrollment (Lopez, 2005; Quintana, Vogel, & Ybarra, 1991). The traditions, norms, and overall campus climate of PWIs were shaped by early homogenous, White, upper-middle-class populations, leading to a distinct campus racial culture and climate (Lopez, 2005; Hurtado 1992). Studies have shown that ethnic minority students reportedly experience higher instances of racial and

ethnic tensions at PWIs (Hurtado, Faye-Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). Smedley, Myers, and Harrell (1993) reported that African-American and other non-Asian minority students enrolled at PWIs were more likely to have lower grade point averages and are less likely to graduate within five years than White students and other student counterparts at predominately Black or minority institutions. Past and current research continues to highlight the detrimental effects perceived discrimination and racism have on psychological and emotional wellbeing, and students who experience racism and discrimination have greater difficulties with academic success, social integration, and healthy psychological development (Lopez, 2005; Hurtado, Faye-Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). Thus, Latina/os and other minority students are at a higher risk of experiencing additional stress during their enrollment at PWIs because of their minority status (Hurtado, Faye-Carter, & Spuler, 1996). Lopez (2005) contended that Latina/o students are likely to experience a more hostile racial campus, frequent personal and social discomfort in comparison to Caucasian students, and feelings of doubt related to their academic abilities at PWIs than at other higher education institutions.

On top of navigating a new environment and adapting to the college culture, minority students of color carry the additional burden of navigating an environment that is unwelcoming to their heritage cultures (Lopez, 2005). Due to the norms and values of PWIs being rooted in White, middle-class, male ideals, Latinas may experience higher rates of acculturative stress (Hesse-Biber, Livingstone, Ramirez, Barko, & Johnson, 2010; Lopez, 2005). Gloria & Kurpius (1996) identified cultural congruity, which can be defined as the fit between students' personal cultural values and university values, as an important predictive factor of Latino student success in higher institutions. The perceived lack of cultural fit between students' heritage culture and

university cultures, therefore, can lead to higher rates of stress and poor mental health (Cano, Castillo, Castro, de Dios, & Roncancio, 2014).

Incongruence between a student's heritage cultural values and the institution's cultural norms and values also extends to body image. 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 (Joiner & Kashubek, 1996). Root (1990) stated that ethnic minority women become increasingly vulnerable to developing eating disorders when they perceive a pressure from mainstream dominant culture standards. Thus, it can be posited that Latina students at PWIs run a greater risk of developing poor, distorted body images from continued socialization with White peers and persistent exposure to mainstream media messages about the ideal American woman body type. Dolan (1991) also suggested that ethnic minority women who had been exposed to Western societies reported higher rates of disordered eating and distorted body images. Studies support the notion that American culture's increased preoccupation with attaining a thin body is negatively impacting women and girls, and accepting the American standards of beauty and physical attractiveness can lead to greater distortion in body images and unhealthy eating patterns (Joiner & Kashubek, 1996).

Not only are Latina students at a greater risk for developing body image disturbances, eating disorders, and poorer self-esteem, students of color in general are much more likely to encounter ethnicity-related stressors, such as discrimination or stereotype threat, in environments where there are few cultural minority groups, like PWIs (Contrada et al., 2001). In the face of

these types of stressors and the associated consequences, research suggests people of color, such as Latinas, may turn to other cultural minority group members for support, positive socialization, and coping resources (Ojeda et al., 2012; Wright & Littleford, 2002). This ethnic group membership and social support system may result in the development of strong ethnic pride within oneself and others, but it can also lead to ethnic group conformity pressure (Contrada et al., 2001; Ojeda et al., 2012). According to Contrada et al. (2001), ethnic group conformity pressure arises when one experiences pressure to adhere to his or her ethnic group's behavioral expectations. It can involve overt or covert reminders to abide by the heritage ethnicity's norms and values for attire, attitudes, relationships, and behaviors, and it can lead to group members feeling pressure to demonstrate loyalty to their heritage to avoid accusations of acting "White" (Lopez, 2005).

Purpose of Study

The current study expands upon existing research centered on exploring how different factors impact body image in Latina college students. This study explores 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 (Predominately White Institutions and Hispanic Serving Institutions). 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 the potential influence different higher education institutions may have on how acculturative stress components impact Latina students' body image. 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).

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participant Sample

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 (Castillo & Schwartz, 2013; Weisskirch et al., 2013). Survey data was preexisting at the time of the current analysis with de-identified information; participants cannot be re-identified during this study.

The data consisted of 10,573 (M age = 20.3 years, SD = 3.37 years) racially diverse undergraduate college students who were enrolled in social sciences courses between September 2008 and October 2009 at 30 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 = 495) and HSIs (n = 349). Institutions were cross-referenced with the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU; 2017). HACU classifies colleges and universities as HSIs if Hispanic students constitute at least 25% of the total student body enrollment (2017). Table 1 lists the number of participants at each institution. Cases not meeting study criteria were deleted [age criteria = 59 cases removed; undergraduate status = 3 cases removed]. Thus, the final sample included 779 participants from PWIs (n = 420) and HSIs (n = 359).

Demographic Information

Participants' ethnicities were determined with the question *My ethnicity* and is followed with a list of ethnic categories from which participants chose their answers. The ethnic categories included the following Latina/o ethnicities: Latina/o, Hispanic, Spanish, Latin American, and Spanish-speaking South American/Caribbean heritage, and Other in this category. If participants identified as biracial or multiracial, they were able to report which racial/ethnic group to which they believe they belong or identify with most. Participants were also asked to report their parents' or guardians' ethnicities, whether they and their parents were born in the United States, and how they identified their immigration generation status. In addition, the survey included items on current weight and desired weight (e.g., "*What is your current/actual weight?*"; "*What is your most desired (or ideal) weight?*"), the grades they have achieved in classes (e.g., "*What kinds of grades do you mostly get in your classes?*"), how far their respective colleges and universities were from their hometowns (e.g., "*How far is your university from where you primarily grew up?*"), and how often they translated or interpreted for their parents (e.g., "*How often do you translate or interpret for your parents because they don't speak English or don't speak it well?*"). 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 ($M = 2.38$; $SD = 1.42$).

Measures

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 4 subscales: 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 ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .54$) subscales were used to assess for body self-esteem and appearance anxiety respectively. Participants who report higher scores on the Body Esteem subscale likely experience higher body self-esteem as they are strongly agreeing with the subscale items (i.e., *I have a good figure*). On the other hand, high scores for the Appearance Anxiety subscale suggest participants reported an increased dislike for their appearances and greater concern about how others perceive their physical appearances. Alphas for Body Esteem and Appearance Anxiety Scales for the current study were 0.865 and 0.739, respectively.

Acculturative Stress. The Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (MASI; Rodriguez et al., 2002) assesses participants' stress related to the acculturation process. The measure contains 4 subscales: 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*). Higher scores for all four subscales indicate participants had experienced higher instances of acculturative stress related to demonstrated

language competencies (or lack of), pressure to assimilate to the dominant American White culture, or pressure to retain their heritage culture. Alphas for Pressure to Acculturate, Pressure Against Acculturation, English Competency Pressure, and Spanish Competency Pressure were 0.840, 0.846, 0.914, and 0.895, respectively. The inventory was found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = 0.908$).

Table 2 lists the means and standard deviations for participants' responses on all scales used in the study.

CHAPTER III

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 (See Table 3).

Hypothesis 1

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.

Hypothesis 2

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 appearances.

Hypothesis 3

Using Mplus 8.0 (Munthen & Munthen, 1998-2017), a multiple group analysis using path analytic techniques was conducted to test Hypothesis 3 that institution type would moderate the relations between the independent variables and dependent 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.

In accordance with Kline's (2005) procedures, the model was fit across both institution types and tested with increasingly restrictive parameters. First, the hypothesized model was analyzed without any parameter constraints; this model included both dependent variables. In other words, participants' scores at both institutions varied across all the parameters in the hypothesized model (see Figure 1). The unconstrained model fit the data very well based on the above guidelines (CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .00; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : 0). Next, the model was tested by

fully constraining all pathways so that they were held equal across institution type. The constrained model had poor fit (CFI: .76, SRMR: .04, RMSEA: .39, and χ^2/df : .157) and there were no significant pathways between the exogenous and endogenous variables (see Figure 2). Table 4 summarizes the fit indices for the unconstrained and fully constrained models.

Body Self-Esteem and Body Appearance Anxiety were modeled separately and all paths were constrained across institution type 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 3 and Figure 4 show identical path weights.

One pathway was constrained at a time to determine if institution type 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.

Fit indices for Body Appearance Anxiety all indicated excellent model fit but no statistically significant differences of the pathways between the acculturative stress components. [(a) Spanish Competency Pressure = CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .007; RMSEA: .002; χ^2/df : 1.00; (b) English Competency Pressure = CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .006; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .99; (c) Pressure to Acculturate = CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .004; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .31; (d) Pressure Against

Acculturation CFI: 1.00; SRMR: .002; RMSEA: .00; χ^2/df : .10]. Table 5 and Table 6 summarize the fit indices for each parameter constraint.

Overall, results suggest there is no institutional influence on Latina students' overall perception of their bodies and the anxiety associated with maintaining a desirable appearance and physique that may arise from acculturative stress.

CHAPTER IV

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 institution type plays a role in how acculturative stress components impact body image.

Findings were Hypothesis 1 were interesting because they suggest Latina participants at HSI who experienced more pressure to be proficient in Spanish reported poorer body image, respectively. Previous studies have highlighted female participants' tendency to internalize socio-cultural attitudes of physical appearance and personal desirability (Blow et al., 2010; Webster & Tiggemann, 2003). 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 et al., 2012; Wright & Littleford, 2002).

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, mental wellbeing, and 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 (Phinney et al., 1993). 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; Castillo, Cano, Chen, Blucker, & Olds, 2008). 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 positive statistically significant correlations with Spanish Competency Pressure and Pressure Against Acculturation at PWIs, partially supporting Hypothesis 2. 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 (Contrada et al., 2001; 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, Conoley, Brossart, & Quiros, 2007). 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 (Oshri et al, 2014). 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 Body Appearance Anxiety to have a positive statistically significant relationship with Pressure to Acculturate. 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 brewed increasing 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 institution type 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 of acculturative stressors. This may be due to the pervasiveness of body image disturbances across all college campuses in the United States, especially since research as 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 appear to be a strong mediating variable (Smith & Davenport, 2012; Davis & Katzman, 1999). It is suggested for future studies to continue examining whether

certain educational institutions or environments impact the emergence of poor body image in Latina college students.

Limitations

There are several limitations for this study. The first limitation is the generalizability of the results. 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 roughly 47% of Hispanic high school graduates, ages 18-24, enroll in college (Gramlich, 2017). 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 the 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. Another limitation is the unequal distribution of Latina participants from PWIs and HSIs. As Table 5 shows, there were less Latinas participants at various HSIs, with the majority of participants being clustered in three or four universities, as opposed to Latina participants at almost every PWI.

Implications

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 on 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 et al., 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-judgement, & 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, White, & Warren, 2015). Additionally, practitioners should be aware of cultural differences between their own understandings of beauty standards and that of clients. Given the varying socio-cultural contexts from which beauty norms and standards

arise, it is imperative for practitioners to 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 in 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 et al., 2010).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The present study focused on analyzing the relationships between four acculturative stress components – Pressure to Acculturate, Pressure Against Acculturation, Spanish Competency Pressure, and English Competency Pressure – and two components of body image – Body Self-Esteem and Body Appearance Anxiety – at two different types of higher education institutions – Predominately White and Hispanic Serving institutions. Body image is a critical component for optimal physical, mental, and emotional health. It has been linked to psychosocial stressors and mental health disorders such as social isolation, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and eating disorders. Acculturative stress is also a socio-cultural phenomenon that negatively impacts students of color who are assimilating to the dominant White American culture at their respective universities.

This study had three hypothesis: (1) there will be positive correlations between Body Self-Esteem and the acculturative stress components; (2) there will be negative correlations between Body Appearance Anxiety and the acculturative stress components; and (3) PWIs will exacerbate the effect of acculturative stress components on body image. Results showed an inverse correlation between Body Self-Esteem and Spanish Competency Pressure at PWIs. In addition, Body Appearance Anxiety was positively correlated with Spanish Competency Pressure and Pressure Against Acculturation at PWIs, and with all four components at HSIs; thus, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were supported. The present study proposes that practitioners, researchers, and educational administrators need to be aware of the potential negative influence acculturative stress can have on Latina college students' body image.

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APPENDIX

Table 1
Number of Participants by Institution

University	PWI	HSI
Florida International University	0	227
University of Connecticut	7	0
University of Texas at Austin	75	0
University of Missouri	4	0
California State University – Monterey Bay	0	9
Pomona College	1	0
Kennesaw State University	3	0
Sacramento State University	10	0
Williams College	1	0
University of San Francisco	1	0
Michigan State University	4	0
Arizona State University	0	51
University of Florida	87	0
University of South Florida	95	0
University of Notre Dame	15	0
St. Johns University	18	0
Brigham Young University	4	0
University of Massachusetts	4	0
University of North Carolina - Charlotte	2	0
Auburn University	1	0
University of Arkansas	4	0
University of South Dakota	2	0
Colorado State University	0	6
University of Minnesota	5	0
Penn State University	3	0
Texas A&M University	16	0
University of California - Riverside	0	66
University of California - Davis	58	0
Total	420	359

Note. PWI = Predominately White Institution;
 HIS = Hispanic Serving Institution.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of Measured Variables for Total Sample and by Institution Type

Variable	<u>HSI</u>		<u>PWI</u>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Body Self-Esteem	3.24	1.00	3.13	0.97
2. Body Appearance Anxiety	2.93	0.58	2.90	0.56
3. SCP	1.93	1.06	2.23	1.05
4. ECP	1.38	0.74	1.40	0.79
5. PTA	2.21	0.82	2.22	0.89
6. PAA	1.80	0.91	1.80	0.87

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

Table 3
Correlation Among Variables of Interest by Institution Type

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 4

Summary of Fit Statistics for Proposed Model Including Both Dependent Variables

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 constrained	23.61	15	0.72	0.76	.04	.039	.00, .068

Note. Dependent variables are Body Self-Esteem and Body Appearance Anxiety.

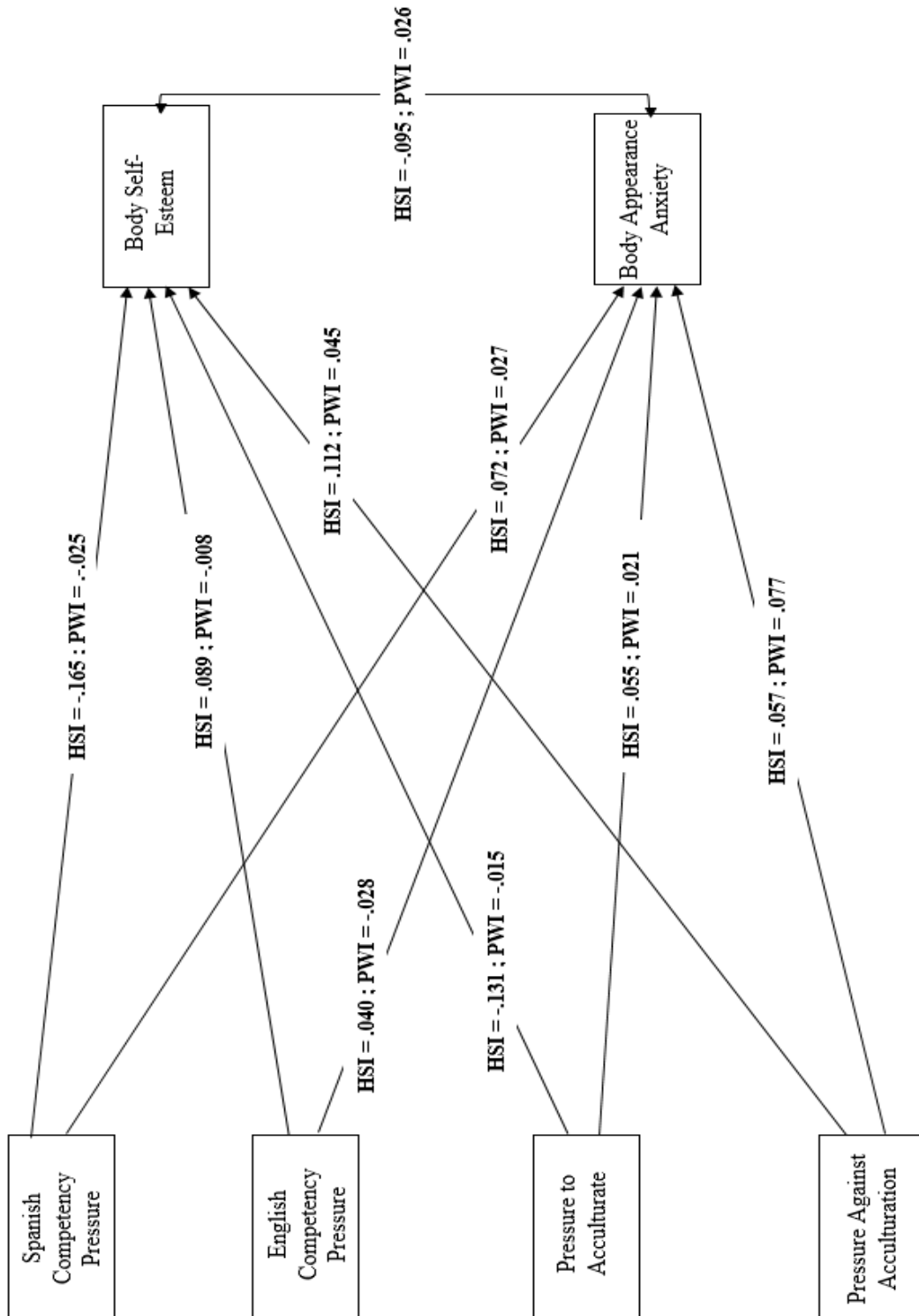


Figure 1. Unconstrained Path Model

Tests the associations between acculturative stress, Body Self-Esteem, and Body Appearance Anxiety with institution type as a moderator. No paths were significant.

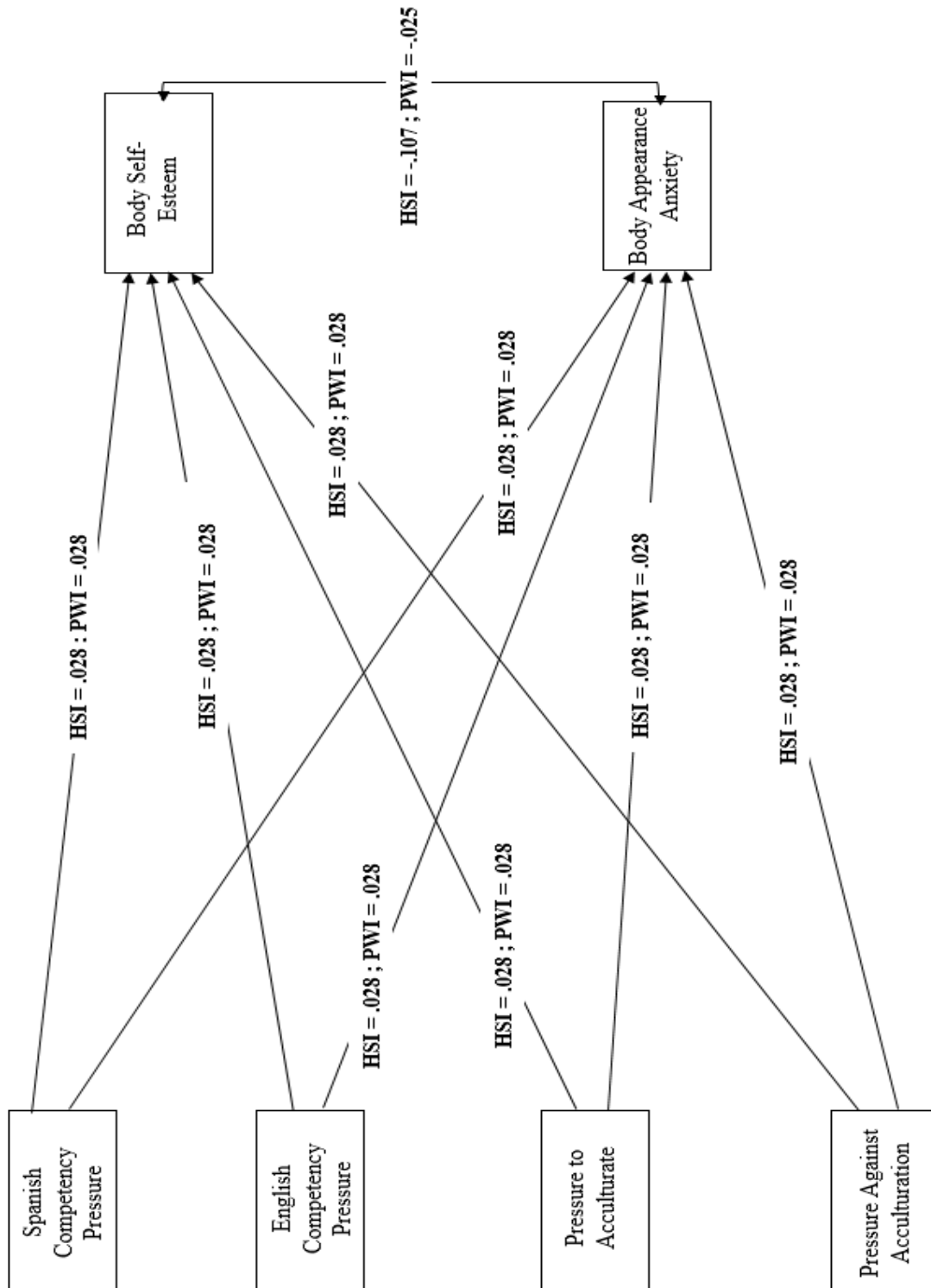


Figure 2. Constrained Path Model
 Tests the associations between acculturative stress, Body Self-Esteem, and Body Appearance Anxiety with institution type as a moderator. No paths were significant.

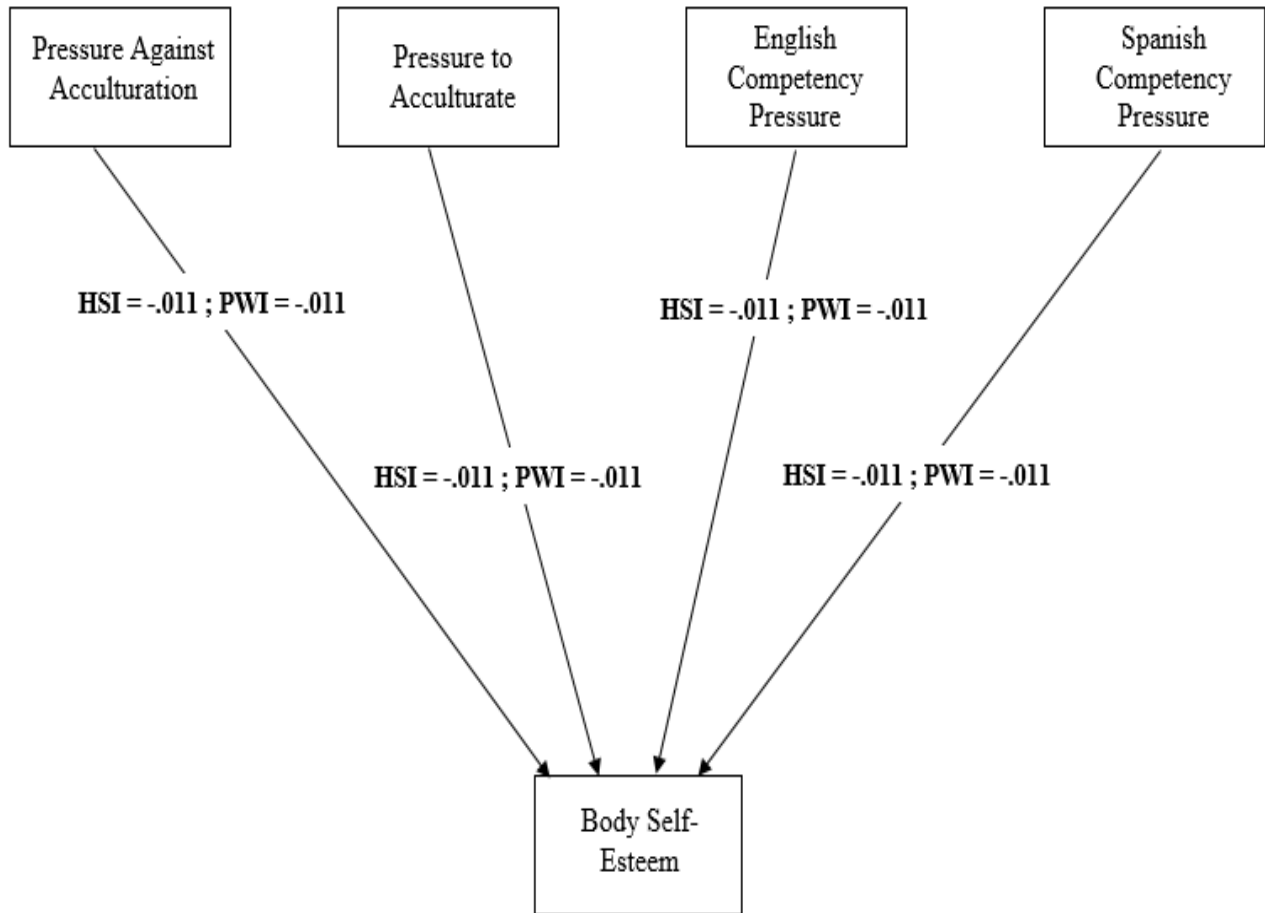


Figure 3. Constrained Body Self-Esteem Model
 Tests institution type as a moderating variable. No significant differences were found.

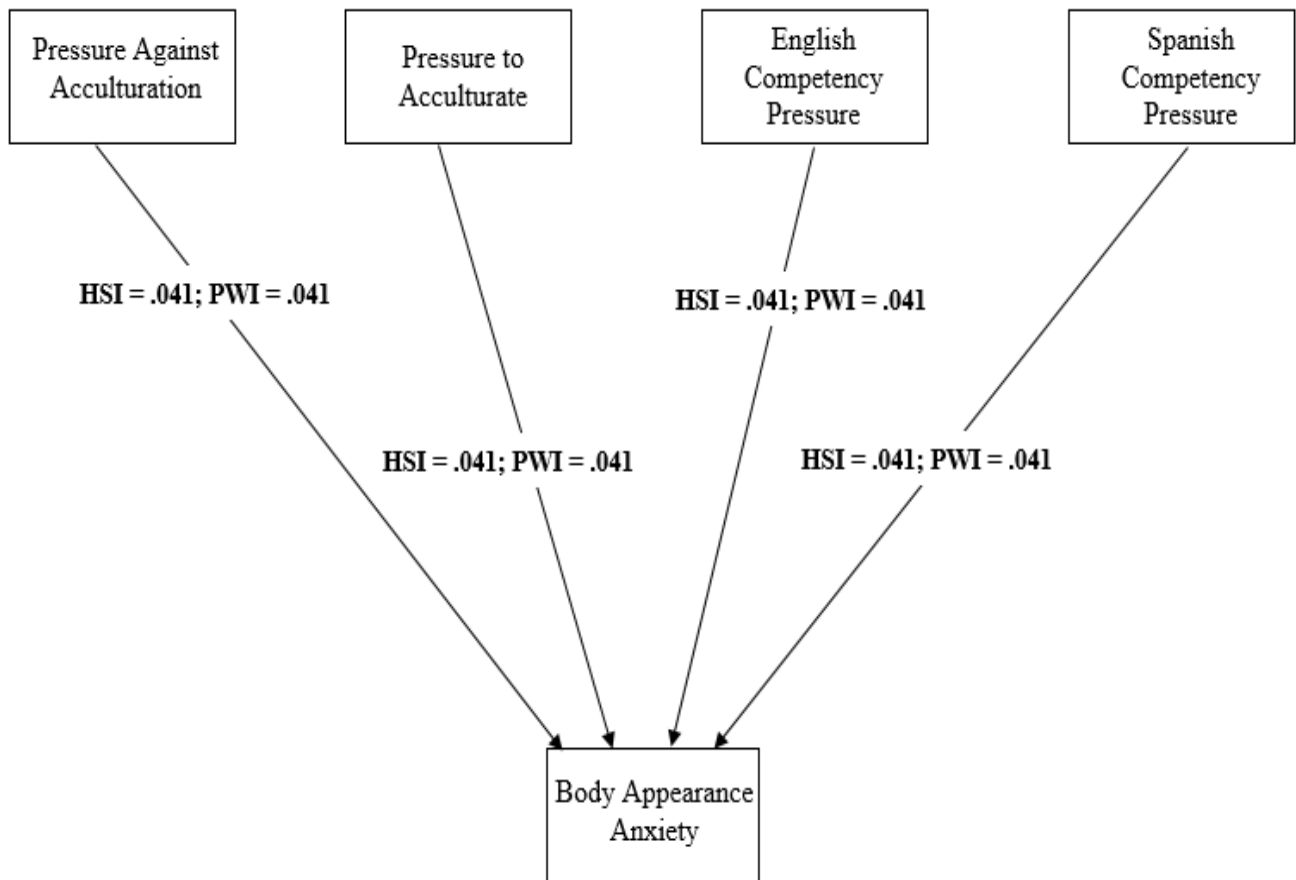


Figure 4. *Constrained Body Appearance Anxiety Model*
 Tests institution type as a moderating variable. No significant differences were found.

Table 5
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.

Table 6
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.