



Social Media Use and Disordered Eating Behaviors Among Adult Latina Women

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Introduction

- People in the U.S spend an average of 30 minutes to an hour per day on social media.
- Although social media may appear a relatively safe activity, greater use has been linked to a higher risk for disordered eating behaviors and negative body image.
- Unfortunately, most of the literature focuses on the experiences of non-Hispanic women, making it unclear to assess how social media impacts the Latina population and whether excessive use increases their risk for disordered eating

Purpose

- To explore the relationship between social media use and disordered eating in adult Latina women living in the United States.
- Specifically, to investigate whether higher social media use is associated with disordered eating behaviors such as dieting, bulimia, preoccupation with food, oral control, and extreme weight loss behaviors.

Methods

Design

- Correlational study design

Sample

- Participants were recruited from Facebook and Instagram pages run by registered dietitians and nutrition professionals through an invitational flyer Figure 1.

Procedure

- Participants completed an online survey answering questions about their demographics, social media use, and disordered eating behaviors

Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics to assess participant demographics
- Linear regression examining relationships between social media use and EAT-26 scores
- Logistic regression assessing relationships between social media use and 5 different self-reported weight loss behaviors
- Independent samples T-tests and Chi square analyses to identify other trends

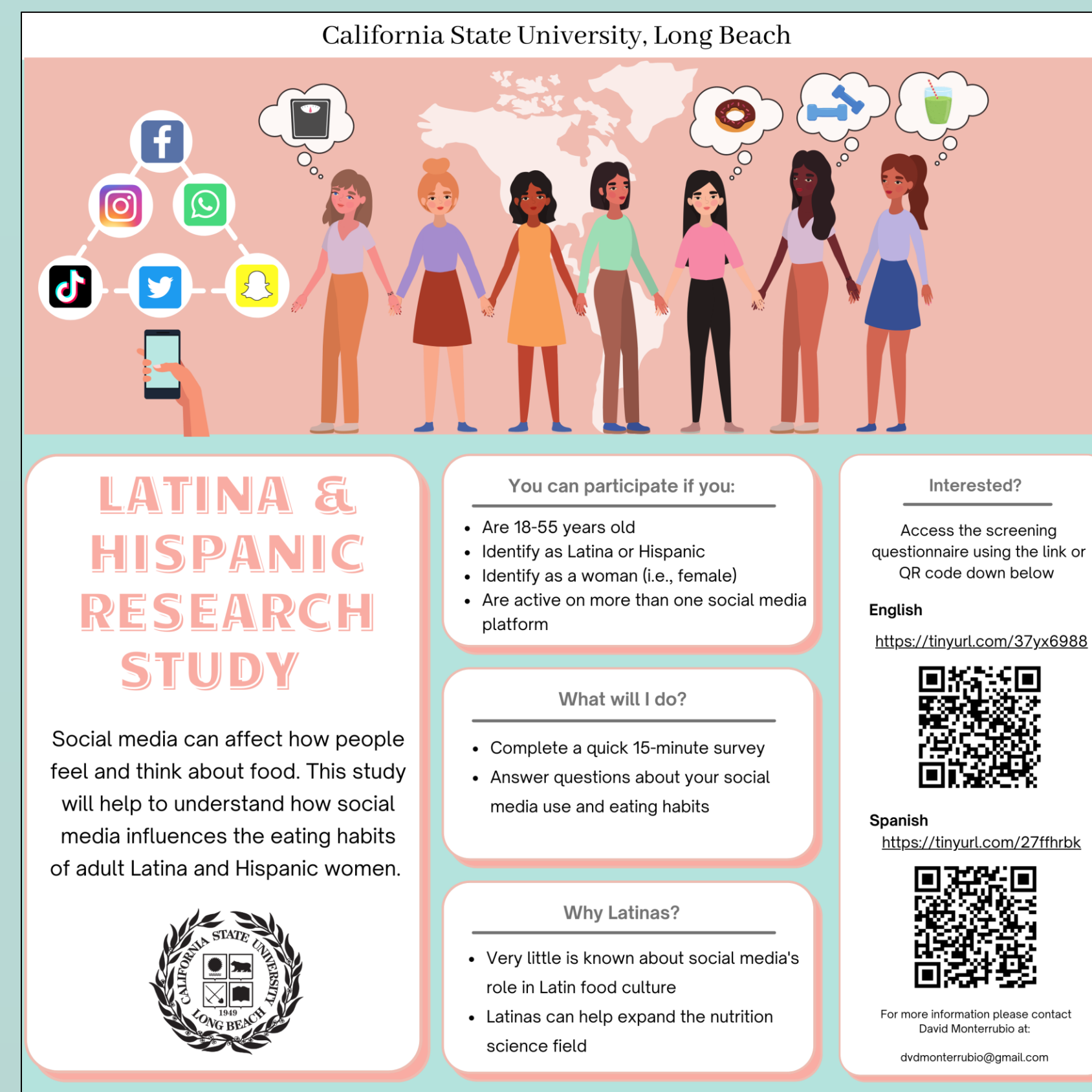


Figure 1. Invitational flyer uploaded on Facebook and Instagram

Variables	Main Instrument
Social Media Use	Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS) + 2 additional questions
Disordered Eating	Eating Attitudes Test-26 (EAT-26)
Self-reported extreme weight loss behaviors	Part C of the EAT-26

Results

Demographics

- 40.7% of participants were ages 18-24
- Around 44% held a bachelor's degree
- Roughly 74.1% identified as Mexican/Mexican American/Chicana

Social Media Use

- Participants would use social networking sites an average of 43.1 times per week
- Participants spent an average of 53.7 minutes each time they used social networking sites
- The average SMUIS score was 4.2

Demographics	Total Sample N=27	% of Sample
Age		
18-24	11	40.7
25-34	11	40.7
35-55	5	18.5
Annual Income		
Under \$25,000	5	18.5
\$25,001 - \$50,000	6	22.2
\$50,001 - \$75,000	7	25.9
\$75,001 or more	8	29.6
Decline to State	1	3.7
Educational Level		
High school Plus some college	5	18.5
Bachelor's degree	12	44.4
Master's degree or higher	10	37
Employment Status		
Employed	19	70.4
Student	7	25.9
Decline to State	1	3.7
Marital Status		
Single	19	70.4
Married/Domestic partnership	7	25.9
Decline to State	1	3.7
Latino Identity		
Mexican, Mexican American, Chicana	20	74.1
Puerto Rican/Central/Southern American	6	22.2
Other (Mexican/Salvadorian)	1	3.7

Figure 2. Descriptive statistics of all 27 participants

Characteristics	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total SMUIS Score	27	4.2	0.8
Frequency of Social Media user per week	27	43.1	11.8
Average number of minutes spent on social media per visit	27	53.7	58.2

Figure 3. Mean values for Social Media Use Integration Scale scores, frequency of social media use per week, and number of minutes spent on social media

Relationship Between Social Media use and Disordered Eating Behaviors

- No correlations were found between social media use or disordered eating behaviors
- Emotional engagement and attachment to social media, frequency of social media user per week, and average minutes spent on social media per visit did not significantly predict disordered eating or self-reported weight loss behaviors

Model	Dependent Variable (EAT-26 Score)	
	Std β	P-value
Total SMUIS Score	0.010	0.963
Frequency of social media use per week	0.511	0.484
Average number of minutes spent on social media per visit	0.484	0.266

Figure 4. Linear regression results table *p<.05

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Bingeing	Self-Induced Vomiting	Laxative/Diuretic Use	Excessive exercise	Bingeing	Self-Induced Vomiting	Laxative/Diuretic Use	Excessive exercise
Social Media Use^a	χ ² 4.776	P-value 0.189	χ ² 3.309	P-value 0.346	χ ² 4.499	P-value 0.212	χ ² 0.994	P-value 0.803

Figure 5. Results of forced entry logistic regression assessing the probability that social media use significantly predicts self-reported weight loss behaviors
^a includes Total SMUIS Score, frequency of social media use per week and number of minutes spent on social media per visit
 * P<.05

Discussion

- Results from this study demonstrate a lack of association between Latina women's use of social media sites and disordered eating behaviors
- Although higher social media use is linked to greater disordered eating, this sample of Latina women did not have an increased risk for eating disorders
- Regardless of how social media was assessed, use of social networking sites by Latinas did not put them at significantly greater risk for engaging in restrictive or purgatory behaviors

Implications

- Studies should continue to assess how social media use among Latinas affects dietary behaviors given the increasing prevalence of disordered eating among Latina populations
- Though no correlations were noted in this study, registered dietitians should continue to have a social media presence to combat health misinformation posted online by non-nutrition experts that may promote negative behaviors

Limitations

Several limitations for this study were noted, including:

- A small sample size with limited diversity in Latino ethnicity and age
- The use of having registered dietitians promote the invitational flyer
- Violations of normality for the linear regression data set
- No use of a Bonferroni's correction to decrease the probability of a type 1 error

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