

Team publishes work on Asian American and white women's views on face image

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Researchers at Chapman University have published work on how Asian American women and white women feel about their faces, their weights, and their overall appearances. The researchers surveyed 303 Asian American women and 367 white women at universities in Hawaii and California.

"We found that Asian American women reported overall lower evaluations of their attractiveness and less comfort with their [appearance](#) than white women," said David Frederick, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at Chapman University and lead author on the study. "The differences in satisfaction with appearance were due primarily to the fact that Asian American women felt worse about their faces than white women—most notably, Asian American women felt significantly worse than white women with the appearance of their eyes, noses, and faces in general."

A great deal of research has focused on ethnic differences in "[body image](#)," or the feelings and thoughts people have about their bodies, which is widely studied. The research team coined the term "face image," or the feelings and thoughts people have about their [faces](#), which is much less studied.

In Study 1 conducted in Southern California, the researchers found that Asian American women were less likely than white women to report high satisfaction with the appearance of their face (44 percent Asian American vs. 60 percent white), eyes (59 percent Asian American vs. 88

percent white), nose (43 percent Asian American vs. 66 percent white), and shape of face (44 percent Asian American vs. 66 percent white).

In Study 2 conducted in both Southern California and Hawaii, the researchers found that Asian American women were more likely than white women to report feeling "sometimes to always" dissatisfied with their face overall (59 percent Asian American vs. 34 percent white) and eye appearance (38 percent Asian American vs. 6 percent white).

Dr. Frederick stated that, "Asian American women experience several pressures not experienced by white women, including potential stigma and discrimination because of their ethnicity, which may increase concerns with facial features related to their ethnicity. They also face two sets of appearance standards, both the white ideals common in mainstream media, as well as comparisons with Asian media, as well as with their own peers. This creates pressure to fulfill two sets of appearance ideals."

Asian American women in the study also reported a greater tendency than white women to have an "interdependent sense of self," meaning their feelings about themselves and their identity are drawn relatively more from group norms and social roles. The study revealed that Asian American women with an interdependent sense of self reported more concern with their physical appearance.

The ultimate conclusion of the study is that Asian American women living in areas of the U.S. with a sizable population of Asian Americans report more concern with their appearance and facial features than [white women](#). This is particularly true when it comes to concerns over eye appearance.

"The results highlight the importance of incorporating measures to address face dissatisfaction in body image interventions, and to address

concerns that ethnic minorities living in the U.S. have about how their [facial features](#) are judged," concluded Dr. Frederick.

More information: The paper appears in the journal, *Body Image: An International Journal of Research*. A link to the full article can be found here: authors.elsevier.com/a/1SQMN6BgRthAmu

Provided by Chapman University

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