

# The Effect of Ethnic Identification and Social Group Affiliation on Body Image Satisfaction among Asian-American College Students

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**Abstract :** This study focuses on the relationship between ethnic identity of Asian-Americans and their appreciation of their ethnic body features, based on reference group theory. A convenience sample of 60 male and 52 female students from various Asian ethnicities attending a mid-western university was used for the study. A 2 (gender) by 2 (ethnic identification) by 2 (socializing group) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on body image satisfaction as dependent variable and Body Mass Index score as a covariate was conducted. A significant main effect of ethnic identification was found, which indicates the more respondents identified with their ethnic group, the more likely they were to be satisfied with their appearance. The social group affiliation main effect was not significant. The impact of ethnic identification was significant only for those respondents who socialize more with Americans than with Asians. The results support the idea that one's ethnic group functions as a reference group, which influences body image appraisals.

**Key Words :** Asian-American, college students, ethnic identification, reference group, body image satisfaction

## I. Introduction

The U.S. population is composed of people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, yet the society is Caucasian-dominant in many respects. Because physical appearance can be an indication of ethnic identity, minorities are often subject to stereotyping and discrimination that are based on appearance. For some minorities who have experienced this type of discrimination, their appearance can be of focal importance. In many cases the attitudes of the Caucasian majority towards the appearance of ethnic minorities are not favorable, and there is often malicious stigmatization of ethnic characteristics. The norm of beauty that the society holds is not consistent with the body features of minorities. The media predominantly present images of

the majority while under-representing minorities, and as a result, images of minorities are unfamiliar and exotic.

Since many features of Asian-Americans' bodies are different from those of Caucasians, few Asian-Americans can achieve a socially ideal appearance. Researchers (Kaw, 1991; Arkoff & Weaver, 1966; Fujitomi & Wong, 1973; Sue & Sue, 1971) have found some Asian-Americans experience self-hatred or feelings of inferiority because their appearance deviates from societal ideals. Some of them have gone through potentially harmful practices such as cosmetic surgery. Despite these harmful responses, little research has been conducted to understand the body images of Asian-Americans [e.g., how they see their bodies and how they feel about what they see (Fallon, 1990)]. This lack of research is partly due to ethnocentric trends in body

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image research, and this has resulted in investigations that focus predominantly on the size problem, which is significant for Caucasian-Americans. Most of the few studies that have dealt with body image dissatisfaction resulting from societal attitudes toward ethnic features have focused on African Americans (Bond & Cash, 1992), and little research has been conducted related to other ethnic groups.

One of the important topics unexplored is the body image held by Asian-American college students, who experience more discrimination once they leave high school and are no longer sheltered from society. Because this change occurs while many of them are still in adolescence, which is a critical stage in identity formation, many suffer an identity crisis (Yeh & Huang, 1996). Discrimination and stigmatization are not directed only toward those who are newly-immigrated, but even toward those who are born in the United States and have never been to their mother country (Schaefer, 1996; Yoo, 2005). Surrounded by Caucasian students and also by predominantly-white media images, the students often have to deal with an unfavorable social view of their physical appearance.

The current study focuses on the relationship between ethnic identity of Asian-American college students and their appreciation of their ethnic body features. This topic holds importance for Koreans not only because some of them can become ethnic minorities when they immigrate to other countries, but also because they are witnessing a noticeable increase in ethnic diversity within South Korea. With the increased diversity, appearance-based social discrimination may become an important social issue in Korean society, because it may influence ethnic minorities' perception of and attitude toward their appearance.

Certainly, not every Asian-American or ethnic minority suffers from body image disturbances. As is the case for many stigmatized (or less privileged) groups, they have their own mechanisms for maintaining self-worth. However, some of them may not be able to filter out the social messages and they then internalize the

stigma, which in turn may expose them to potential risk. For practitioners of counseling or nutrition, understanding the perceptions and attitudes of Asian-American students toward their ethnic body features might be important in that it will help them better understand the lives of Asian-American college students, so they can develop programs to prevent and treat any related psychological disorders. Knowledge of the perceptions and behaviors of these consumers with regard to their appearance could help consumer scientists to develop strategies to protect these students from falling prey to unhealthy consumption, and to suggest an alternative, sound means for satisfying their needs.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Beauty as a Social Concept: Normalization of Ethnic Appearance

The ideals of beauty in the United States are narrowly defined in favor of the appearance of the dominant group, i.e. Caucasians, and the concept of beauty is based on racially discriminatory criteria (Hall, 1995). The society, employing many cultural systems such as the mass media, has over-represented the images of the dominant group, defining these images as norms. The under-represented people of color, therefore, become something alien and exotic. Rather than being regarded as natural, racial differences or the distinct body features of minorities have been treated as deviant. This notion of racial features as problematic has been fostered by the media, by the medical establishment, and by marketing systems, all of which have presented various means that 'help' ethnic minorities 'fix the problem.' Those features that mark the Asian-American body as distinct from the Caucasian body are also treated as inferior, and in turn are used to stigmatize Asian-Americans.

Asian-Americans are a diverse group of people from several different ethnicities. They have different languages, different customs and traditions, and different

clothing and foods. However, they have been seen as homogeneous and treated as a single group by the general public in U.S. society (Min, 1995). In terms of physical aspects in particular, variations may exist among Asian ethnic groups, although it is true that when compared with Caucasians they do have much in common (Min, 1995). Most Asians have skin with a yellowish undertone, and they have dark eyes and black hair. Compared to the eyes of Caucasians, which have double eye folds with long and full eye lashes, Asians' eyes are smaller with single folds. And their nose-bridges are usually wider than Caucasians,' making their noses look flat (Hall, 1995).

Eyes and noses have been a focus of Asian women's concern about their appearance (Kaw, 1991). Facial differences are not limited to the eyes and noses: cheekbones, chin, and jaw also have a different appearance than those of Caucasians. Even the shape of the face is different for Asian-Americans. While Caucasians have smaller and narrower faces, Asians' faces tend to be rounder and flat. In addition, the Asian body structure is quite distinct from Caucasian body structure. Asians are relatively short in general and have different body proportions. Asians have a larger head, a longer waist, and shorter and stockier legs and arms than Europeans (Hall, 1995).

The ethnographic study of Kaw (1991) is one of the few studies that have examined Asian-American body image from a critical point of view, and Kaw found that a crucial element is the idealization of Caucasian body type. Kaw studied the significance of cosmetic surgery for Asian-American women by conducting ethnographic interviews with physicians and patients who had cosmetic surgery. She proposed that the medical system, unintentionally or intentionally, has medicalized and profited from ethnic Asian features by suggesting cosmetic surgery as a cure. She points out that the associations interviewees made between their features and personality characteristics resonate with stereotypes created by the dominant U.S. culture, suggesting that the aspirations of Asian-American women for larger eyes or

high, sharp nose-bridges have cultural and social meanings. She concludes that her interviewees have internalized the social stereotypes and have viewed their facial features negatively. Opposing the view that cosmetic changes are an enchantment of the body, Kaw asserts that these types of cosmetic surgeries are in fact mutilations of the ethnic body, or what Bordo (1993) would call a disciplinary practice of normalizing the ethnic body.

Kaw (1991) also criticizes how surgeons in this consumption-oriented society have exercised their authority based on expertise for the sake of their own profit, and to achieve this they have medicalized racial features and reinforced cultural stereotypes. Kaw demonstrates how the dominant society, through its systems such as media or even the medical system, has worked to perpetuate an ideology of gender and race, and this process has influenced individuals' experience and understanding of themselves.

## **2. Body Image and Reference Group Influence**

Body image refers to the mental view one has of one's own body, which includes the feelings and attitudes individuals have toward their own physical attributes (Fisher & Sidney, 1968). Although body image pertains to the subjective experience of individuals, i.e., the view from the inside, as opposed to how one objectively looks from the outside (Cash, 1990), it also reflects the expectations and values of the surrounding culture, because people tend to think and evaluate themselves based on what other people would see and think. From this perspective, Fallon (1990) asserted that one's body image includes a perception of cultural norms of beauty, an evaluation of how well one matches the norm, and the salience of that match to the individual.

For the current study, reference group theory (Jones & Gerard, 1967) seems to bear potential as theoretical bases for understanding the body image experience of ethnic minorities. This theory deals with the formation

of social norms, especially for those traits which may not be judged physically. Reference group theory suggests that there are mutual interactions between the individual and his/her surroundings, and that these interactions provide a standard point for comparison and also for information as to the ideal or normative images.

One of the main topics of interest in reference group theory is the determinant of the reference groups. With regard to the selection of comparison reference groups, Festinger (1954), who was the first to suggest the theory of social comparison, proposed what was later called the similarity hypothesis. This hypothesis states that people select those who are similar to themselves to make comparisons for the sake of accurate evaluation. Based on reference group theory, Jones and Gerard (1967) have also proposed that individuals are more likely to compare themselves with other individuals (or groups) that are at about the same level on given attributes, than with an individual who is considered by them as either greatly superior or inferior to themselves. The difference between the two groups of theorists is that the reference group theorists focus on value orientation. Social comparison theories, as represented by Festinger (1954), propose an accurate self-evaluation as the primary motive for social comparison. On the other hand, reference group theorists view comparisons with similar (reference) others as being more than simply the instrumental means. Reference group theory focuses on individuals' evaluation of their comparative standings, particularly in relation to those others with whom they identify or feel a bond. Jones and Gerard (1967) term the likely social comparison referent a "co-oriented peer" (p.320), that is, an individual or group whose outlook and values are similar to one's own. The co-oriented peer, by virtue of his/her similarity in value perspective, functions as a reference person (or group) for evaluating one's own behavior.

Most scholars agree on the domain-specificity of reference groups. In other words, referents selected for body image appraisal may be appearance-specific and not applicable for comparisons on other aspects (Franzoi

& Klaiber, 2007). Ethnic groups can function as a reference group for the appraisal of appearance because the group members are relatively similar to each other in terms of physical appearance, and they also share some cultural values. Some Asian ethnic groups are very cohesive in nature, especially those who are new to the country and who are less assimilated regionally, and are segregated into a residential area (Min, 1995). College students from Asian ethnic groups tend to have organizations that bind the group members together through many group activities and events (Min, 1995). Asians in general hold collectivistic values, as opposed to Western individualistic values (Yeh & Huang, 1996), although the degree may differ among ethnic groups. They are also prone to unite as a group.

Two basic processes have been suggested regarding reference group influence, through which a person can acquire information about her/his own beliefs, abilities, and emotions: reflected appraisal, and comparative appraisal (Jones & Gerard, 1967). Reflected appraisal is any evaluation of the self that is inferred from the behavior of other persons during interaction with them (Jones & Gerard, 1967). During this process, an individual can infer the other person's evaluation of his/her values from subtle cues revealed by that person in a face-to-face confrontation. When using the reflected appraisal process, the evaluation seekers are likely to be the most sensitive to the judgments of someone on whom they rely for direct satisfaction of their needs. Alternatively, comparative appraisal is the evaluation of one's own relative standing with respect to an attitude, belief, ability, or emotion, by observing the behavior of appropriate reference persons (Jones & Gerard, 1967). These observations can be made at a glance, and do not require interaction between the reference person(s) and the evaluation seeker, as in the process of reflected appraisal.

The referents who serve as the bases of reflected appraisal may or may not be the same as the referents for comparative appraisal. For body image appraisal, referents are likely to be different. The referents for



comparative appraisals might be friends or peers who are of the same sex and who are physically close to the individual. In addition to these referents, individuals might also be influenced regarding reflected appraisals by socializing agents such as parents or romantic partners. Co-orientation in values might have less influence on comparative appraisals than it does on reflected appraisals, which means the individuals might compare themselves to others who are physically close, yet not necessarily similar in terms of value orientation. Therefore, the ubiquitous media images, or people they interact with in social settings, might influence individuals regardless of their ethnic value orientation due to the proximity and pervasiveness of those images and interactions.

### 3. Research Hypotheses

Reference group theory suggests that the individuals conform to the norm of a certain group of people with whom they identify and want to associate. Therefore, it is expected that the more importance an individual assigns to his/her ethnicity, the more likely it is that the person will have a positive attitude toward his/her ethnic appearance. Reference group theory also suggests that the group whose norms an individual is willing to conform to (referents for reflected appraisal) may be different from the group they compare themselves to (referents for comparative appraisal). This may occur if the group they identify with differs from the group with which they have direct contact. Based on these conceptions, the following research hypotheses are posited:

- H1. The more an individual identifies with his/her own ethnic group, the more likely it is that the person is satisfied with his/her appearance. (Ethnic identification main effect)
- H2. The more an individual socializes with people from his/her own ethnic group, the more likely it is that the person is satisfied with his/her appearance. (Social group affiliation main effect)

- H3. If an individual identifies herself/himself with her/his own ethnic group, yet socializes more with those who are not of her/his own ethnicity, the less likely it is that the person is satisfied with her/his appearance. (Ethnic identification by social group affiliation interaction effect)

## III. Research Method

A convenience sample of Asian-American undergraduate or graduate students attending The University of Wisconsin at Madison was used for the study. The data were collected in 1998 using a self-administered questionnaire. Most data were collected through Asian-American student organizations, at Asian-American student events, or by the use of mailing lists provided by such groups. Out of 190 questionnaires administered, 112 usable questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 58%. There were 60 male and 52 female respondents who ranged in age from 17 to 32 ( $M = 20.6$  years,  $SD = 2.30$  years). Of the total respondents, 19.4% were native U.S. born, 50% immigrated to the U.S. when younger than six, and about 19.4% immigrated when they were older than 18. The respondents were from various ethnic groups including Korean (16.1%), Chinese (8.9%), Filipinos (12.6%), and South Asians (12.6%) such as Hmong, Vietnamese, or Cambodian.

The survey instrument consisted of questions to measure the self-identification of ethnicity, ethnic behaviors, and some appearance-related attitudes or behaviors. Other items addressing age, sex, height, weight and number of years lived in the U.S. were included for background information. Using the weight and height provided by the respondents, Body Mass Index (BMI), which is an index for a person's body size, was calculated for each individual.

The measure for ethnic identification was a single item seven-point scale that asked the degree to which the respondents consider themselves to be Asian (7 = 100%

Asian and 1 = 100% American). The ethnic behavior and attitude measure included questions asking what percentage of the group of people they socialize with are from their own ethnic group. These groups included (a) the neighborhood in which they were raised, (b) their friends, (c) their date partners or spouse, (d) the organizations to which they belong, and (e) the people around whom they feel comfortable. These questions were also answered on a 7-point scale, where 1 was 0% with members from their own ethnic group, and 7 was 100% from their own ethnic group. The respondents were also asked to rate how important they consider different body aspects. The 10 body areas included in the Body-Image Ideals Questionnaire by Cash and Szymanski (1995) were used, i.e., height, skin complexion, hair texture and thickness, facial features, muscle tone and definition, body proportion, weight, chest size, physical strength, and physical coordination. However, instead of using the scoring system suggested by Cash, the importance was measured on an ordinary 4-point scale. An overall satisfaction with appearance was measured by a question, "How satisfied are you with your appearance?" on a seven-point scale (0 = very dissatisfied, 6 = very satisfied). Although body image is a multi-dimensional concept that includes various other aspects such as coordination or fitness of the body, only appearance will be considered in the current study, as it is most relevant.

This paper has a limitation in that the self-evaluation data are relatively old. Nevertheless, the results have implications because the magnitude of reference group

influence on an individual's body image appraisal is a concept that is rather enduring and not very likely to have changed. However, with the increased awareness of diversity issues in U.S. society, discriminatory practices based on ethnic appearance may have been reduced, and the ideal appearance features may have changed. Therefore, caution is needed in interpreting the results.

## IV. Results

### 1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics indicate that many respondents identified themselves as being purely Asian or purely American, in that 30% of them marked 'four' on the seven-point scale ( $m = 3.72$ ;  $t = -1.93$ ,  $p = .056$ ). One of the respondents wrote in the margin that he is 100% Asian and 100% American at the same time. Their responses to social interaction questions indicated that Asian-Americans interact more within their ethnic group than with people from another ethnicity (Table 1). Except for the neighborhood they were raised in, the mean of responses to each of these questions was significantly higher than 4, which is the median score on the 7-point scale.

The average height of male respondents was 5 feet 8 inches (SD = 8 inches), and female was 5 feet 3 inches (SD = 6 inches). The average weights were 151 lbs (SD = 23.5) and 119 lbs (SD = 12.4), respectively. The mean

<Table 1> Social group affiliation

<i>Q. How many people of the following groups are composed of people of your own ethnicity?</i>	Mean (SD) 1 = 0%, 7 = 100%	t-test of $H_0 : m = 4$
Neighborhood raised in	3.95 (2.23)	.26
Friends	4.82 (1.59)	5.41***
Date partners or spouse	5.08 (2.13)	5.02***
Socially comfortable around	4.91 (1.48)	6.48***
Organizations belong to	4.94 (1.76)	5.55***

Note. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

&lt;Table 2&gt; Body aspect importance for male and female respondents

Body Aspects	Male		Female		t-test
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
Height	2.47	.67	2.64	.74	1.20
Skin complexion	2.51	.71	2.86	.83	2.06*
Hair texture and thickness	2.49	.64	2.70	.69	1.42
Facial features	2.57	.65	2.84	.75	1.87
Muscle tone and definition	2.75	.69	2.79	.75	.29
Body proportion	2.66	.70	2.76	.66	.69
Weight	2.73	.74	3.02	.79	1.88
Chest size	2.70	.73	2.59	.63	-.80
Physical strength	2.71	.78	2.69	.62	-.17
Physical coordination	2.94	.83	2.74	.71	-1.25
Total	21.69	8.63	24.50	7.54	1.80

body mass index (BMI) score for the respondents was 21.99, which falls within the range of what is usually referred to as 'normal.' Approximately 25% of the respondents had a BMI of less than 20, which may be considered 'under-weight,' and 13% had a BMI higher than 25, which may be considered 'over-weight.' The mean score for the respondents' satisfaction with their appearance was  $m = 4.10$  ( $SD = 1.29$ ), which was not significantly different from the median or a neutral attitude ( $t = .884$ ,  $p = .379$ ).

The respondents were also asked to rate how important they consider different aspects of their bodies. The purpose of these questions was to identify those body aspects which they feel to be most important (Table 2). Male respondents rated physical coordination ( $m = 2.94$ ) and muscle tone and definition ( $m = 2.75$ ) higher than other body aspects, followed by weight ( $m = 2.73$ ), physical strength ( $m = 2.71$ ), and chest size ( $m = 2.70$ ). In comparison, female respondents rated weight most important ( $m = 3.02$ ), followed in turn by skin complexion ( $m = 2.86$ ) and facial features ( $m = 2.84$ ), muscle tone and definition ( $m = 2.79$ ), body proportion ( $m = 2.76$ ), physical coordination ( $m = 2.74$ ), and hair texture and thickness ( $m = 2.70$ ).

This result seems to confirm the common belief about

gender differences. Even though women were higher overall than men in rating their body aspects, the two groups were not statistically different except for their ratings of skin complexion importance. Women rated skin complexion significantly more important than men did.

## 2. Hypothesis Testing

Because research shows that men typically are more satisfied with their bodies than women, gender was included as an independent variable. To test Hypotheses 1 to 3,  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (gender by ethnic identification by social group affiliation) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) on body image satisfaction as the dependent variable, and Body Mass Index (BMI) score as a covariate was conducted (Table 3). BMI was used as a covariate because the social norm of beauty includes specification regarding body size as well as racial features, and thus it was believed the personal satisfaction with body image would be influenced by both these norms. Although the main effect of BMI was not statistically significant, when this variable was not included, the model itself was not significant. It seems this variable suppressed the effects of independent

&lt;Table 3&gt; Summary table for the 2 × 2 × 2 analysis of covariance

Source	SS (d.f.)	MS	F
Covariate (BMI)	6.07 (1)	6.07	0.00
Main Effect	17.03 (3)	5.68	3.71*
Ethnic Identification	8.19 (1)	8.19	5.35*
Socializing Group	.19 (1)	.19	0.12
Gender	10.73 (1)	10.73	7.00*
2-Way Interactions	13.00 (3)	4.34	2.83*
Ethnic Identification X Socializing Group	7.04 (1)	7.04	4.60*
Ethnic Identification X Gender	3.41 (1)	3.41	2.23
Socializing Group X Gender	5.44 (1)	5.44	3.55*
3-Way Interaction (Ethnic Id X Soc Grp X Gender)	.27 (1)	.27	0.18
Model	28.00 (8)	3.50	2.28*
Residual	137.83 (90)	1.53	
Total	165.78 (98)	1.69	

note. \*  $p < .05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < .001$

variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, BMI was kept as a covariate.

According to the results, the ethnic identification main effect [ $F(1, 90) = 5.35, p < .05$ ] was significant. Those who identify more with Asians than with Americans showed higher satisfaction with their bodies. Therefore, Hypothesis One (H1) was supported. There was also a significant main effect for gender, although it was not the focus of this study [ $F(1, 90) = 7.00, p < .05$ ]. This result is consistent with the findings of previous research that men are more satisfied with their bodies than women. The main effect for social group affiliation was not significant, thus Hypothesis Two (H2) was not supported.

The two-way interaction of ethnic identification by social group affiliation [ $F(1, 90) = 4.60, p < .05$ ] was also significant. Although those who interact more with Asians have moderate body image satisfaction regardless of their ethnic identification, it seems those who interact more with Americans are influenced by the group with whom they identify. Social group affiliation thus appears to influence individuals through a comparative appraisal process, and this result indicates that if a person identifies more with Americans, and his/her socializing group is composed more of Americans,

the individual is less satisfied with his/her ethnic appearance because it deviates from what his/her reference group idealizes. On the other hand, when a person identifies more with Asians yet her/his social group affiliation is composed more of Americans, they feel proud of their appearance and thus are satisfied with them. The third hypothesis (H3) was therefore supported. The three-way interaction of the three factors was not significant.

## V. Discussion & Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the body-related experience of Asian-American college students as ethnic minorities in a multiethnic yet Caucasian-dominant context of the United States college campus. A survey was conducted with 62 male and 52 female students on a midwestern college campus. To summarize the results, male respondents rated physical coordination and muscle tone and definition as most important regarding their body, whereas women rated weight and skin complexion as most important. To examine the effects of ethnic identification and social group affiliation, a 2 (gender) by 2 (ethnic identification)



by 2 (social group affiliation) analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted on body image satisfaction with BMI as a covariate.

As hypothesized, ethnic identification influenced body image satisfaction of Asian-American college students. The more they identified with their ethnic group, the more likely they were to be satisfied with their own appearance. This result suggests that one's ethnic group influences the individual's body image appraisal through a reflected appraisal process, and that the ethnic group functions as a co-oriented peer group that has a normative influence.

Although the main effect for social group affiliation was not statistically significant, the interaction between ethnic identification and social group affiliation was significant. When the group with whom the individual identifies is discrepant from his/her actual social environment, the environment seems to influence the person through a comparative appraisal process. If an individual identifies more with mainstream American culture, the person might hold an ideal regarding appearance that reflects the norms of beauty of the society. Therefore, comparison with Caucasians becomes an upward comparison. However, when Asians identify more with Asian culture, they define their ethnic body appearances as ideal, which leads to an appraisal in which they view themselves as looking better than those surrounding them (downward comparison), leading to satisfaction with their appearances.

The main effect of BMI was not significant for individual body image satisfaction. However, when the influence of this variable was not covaried out, the effects of the independent variables were concealed. This indicates that BMI functions as a suppressor variable on the effects of ethnic identification and social group affiliation regarding body image satisfaction. It seems that because body size concern is almost universal in the United States, the respondents of the current study also were influenced by their body size. This result suggests the need for a more systematic examination of the interaction between individuals'

concerns about their ethnic body features and their body size.

The results of the current study support the idea that one's ethnic group functions as a reference group which influences body image appraisals. It was also apparent in the findings that the more individuals identify as 'American' and interact with Caucasians, the more likely they are to be dissatisfied with themselves. This tendency was observed irrespective of the gender of respondents. This has implications to the practitioners, such as multiethnic student counselors. As Asian-Americans try to be acculturated within the mainstream culture, they might undergo a negative response to their appearance because the mainstream norms of beauty are not fully compatible with their ethnic features. This might be a crucial problem for those people who think of this country as their permanent home, or were born in America.

One of the feasible solutions to the problem suggested in this study may be to guide individuals in ethnic minorities to appreciate their own ethnicity and to find beauty in their own appearance. For this, educators and practitioners may try to remind them, as well as the general public, that the ideals of beauty are in fact socially and culturally constructed.

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