1979

The frequency of self-disclosure among Mexican American and Anglo American women

Anthony Zamudio

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THE FREQUENCY OF SELF-DISCLOSURE AMONG MEXICAN AMERICAN
AND ANGLO AMERICAN WOMEN

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State College
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Psychology

By
Anthony Zamudio
August 1979
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Approved by:

Date 9/5/79

Chairperson
ABSTRACT

The frequency of self-disclosure was measured among 20 Mexican American and 20 Anglo American women. Subjects were randomly paired with someone of the same ethnic group and asked to discuss family problems for 15 minutes. In addition, subjects were given an acculturation scale. From transcribed audio tapes, two raters counted the frequency of personal and total words used during the last 5 minutes of the interview. Because of cultural differences, it was hypothesized that the Mexican American women would disclose less than Anglo American women. A one-way analysis of variance, using ethnicity as the independent variable and self-disclosure as the dependent variable, revealed nonsignificant differences between groups even when using acculturation as a covariate. Findings suggest that Mexican American women disclose outside of the family at the same frequency as Anglo American women when in situations with someone of the same sex and ethnic group. Limitations of the study are also discussed.
I would like to dedicate my thesis to Dr. Christopher O'Hare whose patience, trust, and caring were all significant towards my own personal and professional growth. Para él, con todo respeto (for him, with all my respect).
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Peter Levin, committee chairperson, whose guidance and friendship gave me the confidence not only to complete the masters' program, but also to continue my training at UCLA. I am also grateful to Dr. Gloria Cowen and Dr. Christopher O'Hare who served as committee members.

I would also like to thank Rosemary Binney who offered unlimited time coding tapes and editing my writing. Also, Dr. Richard Mendoza's statistical knowledge in the data analysis was especially helpful. I am grateful for the emotional support offered by my clinical practicum, 1977, and Olga Carranza.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to my sister, Margaret O. Cristofol, brother-in-law, Jimmy Cristofol, and niece and nephew, Ann Marie and Kristofer, who provided me with 2 months of summer residence, food, patience, and love during the final stages of this project.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The process of self-disclosure is the discussion and sharing of personal information about family background, weaknesses, fears, conflicts, and concerns. Verbal therapies rely on clients' disclosing their feelings, attitudes, values, and experiences. The amount of self-disclosure is an important variable for successful therapy and may have some relationship to a healthy personality, successful marriage, and satisfying sex life (Jourard, 1971). The individual's sex, social class, and ethnicity influences the amount and extent of self-disclosure (Jourard, 1961a; Jourard & Lasakow, 1958; Melikian, 1962; Plog, 1965). Consequently, the identification of ethnic groups whose members are less likely to self-disclose to others would be especially helpful for psychotherapists. This additional information could help facilitate therapy sessions when interviewing Chicano/Chicana clients.

Definition of Self-Disclosure

According to Jourard and Lasakow (1958) self-disclosure is "the process of making the self known to other people; 'target persons' are persons to whom information about the self is communicated" (p. 91). The aim is to have one's self known personally by other individuals. The target person may be a parent, a friend
of the same sex or opposite sex, or a spouse. The categories of information may
deal with different aspects of the self such as personal attitudes, tastes and
interests, money, and personality (Jourard, 1971).

Cozby (1973) defines self-disclosure as "any information about himself which
Person A communicates verbally to a Person B" (p. 73). The interaction between
both A and B results in Person B becoming more familiar with Person A. There are
three parameters of self-disclosure that affect the quality of interaction. Breadth
is the amount of information disclosed. Depth is the intimacy or level of intensity
of the information disclosed. Duration is the amount of time spent discussing each
subject of information.

Hekmat and Theiss (1971) define affective self-disclosure as those statements
initiated with the pronoun "I" and followed by an expression of affect and
reference. The definition restricts itself to a particular language form and
requires a re-evaluation of the self; however, it limits re-evaluation to self-related
feelings.

Thus, self-disclosure is the process of sharing personal information where
some aspect of the individual's self is revealed. The breadth, depth, and duration
of shared information affects the interaction with the target person. Jourard and
Lasakow (1958) and Cozby (1973) generally define self-disclosure as sharing some
personal information with others. Hekmat and Theiss (1971) give a much more
operational definition of the term by narrowing personal information to statements
beginning with "I" and stating self-related feelings, thereby making the term better
for use in research studies where self-disclosure and non-self-disclosure statements
can be reliably discriminated.
Jourard (1971) reported that knowing the self and remaining authentic and genuine can lead to the development of a healthier personality, successful marriage, and the enjoyment of everyday life. He states that neurotic and psychotic symptoms function as "smoke screens" that are interposed between patients' real selves and others to avoid becoming known. Thus, the resolution of these problems are dependent upon individuals knowing their real selves through self-disclosure to other persons.

In psychotherapy, self-disclosure is an important variable in counseling (Jourard, 1971). The therapist's main purpose is to prevent clients from closing themselves off. Acosta (1977) states that "self-disclosure tendencies greatly affect participation in psychotherapy since it is primarily through self-disclosure that patients communicate their thoughts, feelings, and problems to the therapist" (p. 225). Therefore, the identification of variables that may promote or inhibit self-disclosure is valuable information for the therapist and worthy of continued research.

In conclusion, open and honest individuals are thought to experience life more fully and enjoy health, marriage, and life to a greater extent than people who are unable to self-disclose to others. Neurotic and psychotic patients seem to be alienated and unknown, not only to other people, but to themselves. Since psychotherapy is dependent upon clients' sharing fears and experiences, clients can ultimately better know themselves through the experience of self-disclosure.

**Sex, Race, and Cultural Factors**

Self-disclosure has been found to be related to the sex, race, and cultural background of the client and therapist (Acosta, 1975; Carkhuff & Pierce, 1967;
Jourard and Lasakow (1958) investigated the differences in self-disclosure between men and women. Self-disclosure was measured by the Jourard's Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ). The scale consisted of 60 items; there were 10 items in each of six content areas: attitudes and opinions, tastes and interest, work, money, personality, and body. Subjects indicate the extent to which (0—no disclosure, 1—disclosure in general terms, and 2—full and complete disclosure) they have discussed each item with four target persons: mother, father, friend of same sex, and friend of opposite sex. A disclosure score is calculated by summing the items checked across the target persons. Results indicated that females disclosed more than males on the JSDQ. Jourard (1971) attributes sex differences of self-disclosure to the differences in training. Females learn a function that involves comforting and engaging and receiving more self-disclosure through their "training toward motherhood" whereas men are trained to related impersonally to others. Men are trained to ignore their own feelings, whereas women are more sensitized to their inner experience.

Dimond and Munz (1967) had similar findings with high school students. Both male and female students were administered the JSDQ. Females disclosed more than male high school subjects. Females indicated on the JSDQ that they disclosed most with their mother and female friends than to father and male friends. However, Dimond and Hellkamp (1969) were unable to find significant differences between sexes on the JSDQ. Their study assessed the effects of birth order, sex, and race on self-disclosure among high school students. However, females did indicate more self-disclosure to mother and female friends as target persons than
to father and male friends, which partially supports the findings of Dimond and Munz (1967).

Plog (1965) also reported that self-disclosure scores between sexes were not significantly different. American and German college students were administered a 40-item test of self-disclosure with eight topics: habits and interests, political views, interpersonal relationships, view on morality and sex, self-doubts and anxieties, religious beliefs, occupational goals, and marriage and family. As mentioned on the JSDQ, subjects rated on a 4-point scale their willingness to disclose to six target persons. Although there were no significant differences between sexes, women indicated more willingness to self-disclose to mother and female friends than to father and male friends as target persons, which again partially supports the findings of Dimond and Munz (1967). These studies suggest that the target person is a more significant factor in amount of self-disclosure for women than for men.

The ethnicity and social class of the client and therapist is reported as having an impact on the client's depth of self-exploration (Carkhuff & Pierce, 1967) and an effect upon the client's attitude toward self-disclosure (Wolkin et al., 1973). Carkhuff and Pierce (1967) reported that patients who were similar in race and social class to the counselor tended to explore themselves the most, while patients most dissimilar to the counselor explored themselves the least. In terms of race, Wolkin et al. (1973) compared self-disclosure scores of lower- and middle-class Blacks with middle-class Whites and found that Blacks scored lower on self-disclosure than Whites, consistent with the findings of Jourard and Lasakow (1958) and Dimond and Hellkamp (1969). Jourard and Lasakow (1958) administered the
JSDQ to college students and found that White college students disclosed more than Black college students and that Blacks disclosed more to mother as a target person than did Whites. Dimond and Hellkamp (1969) also reported that White high school students disclosed more than Black high school students. However, the data did not support Blacks as disclosing more than Whites to mother as a target person, but did indicate that Blacks disclosed significantly less to father than Whites. These differences regarding target persons could be attributed to the age groups of the sample. Jourard and Lasakow (1958) sampled college students, while Dimond and Hellkamp (1969) sampled high school students. Dimond and Hellkamp also speculated that the fathers of White subjects may be in the home situation a greater proportion of the time than Black fathers. This would create a tighter family structure and provide more opportunities for White subjects to know and disclose to a father.

In an earlier theoretical paper, Lewin (1948) discussed cultural differences between American and German interpersonal relationships. He states that Americans disclose a great deal more and make friends easier than Germans; however, they do not develop highly personal relationships. On the contrary, although Germans do not disclose themselves to others in general, they do become quite intimate with a few. The difference is attributed to the social distance between people and the peripheral and central regions of personality that are determined within the cultures. Investigating Lewin's theory, Plog (1965) administered the JSDQ to American and German college students. German college students were less willing to disclose than American college students and American men and German women were more variable than German men and American women in their disclosure patterns. Jourard (1961a) also conducted a
study to determine whether different nationalities would vary in their disclosure patterns. British and American female undergraduates were administered the JSDQ. The lower self-disclosure scores of the British females indicated that they were more reserved in interpersonal transactions than the Americans.

Melikian (1962) examined self-disclosure among college students in the Middle East. The students were from nine different countries and were of two major religions. No significant differences were found between the groups with regard to the target person (parents, siblings, peers) or the aspect of self that was disclosed on the JSDQ. Within the groups, there appeared high and low levels of self-disclosure topics that were consistent with Jourard and Lasakow's (1958) findings. Attitude, taste, and work were topics more frequently self-disclosed than money, personality, and body.

In summary, the literature suggests that sex, social class, and ethnic background affect the amount and type of self-disclosure. The JSDQ is a popular scale used to measure self-disclosure in many studies. There are inconsistent findings regarding the amount of self-disclosure among men and women. Jourard and Lasakow (1958) and Dimond and Munz (1967) report that women disclosed significantly more than men, whereas Dimond and Hellkamp (1969) and Plog report no sex difference in self-disclosure. The similarity of the client and therapist in social class and ethnicity seems to affect the attitude and extent of self-disclosure. Disclosure is effected by culture, which dictates the amount of social distance in the interaction. The literature suggests that ethnic groups and nationalities vary in the amount and extent of self-disclosure. Whites are reported as disclosing more than Blacks, and Americans are reported as disclosing more than the British and Germans.
Self-Disclosure and Mexican Americans

The present study investigates self-disclosure among Mexican Americans, or Chicanos, as they are more popularly termed. Very little empirical study has been conducted on this group of people. The literature suggests that the discussion of feelings and open communication outside the family is not encouraged among Chicanos/Chicanas since the family is regarded as the source of emotional support (Acosta, 1975; Heiman, Burruel, & Chavez, 1975; Murillo, 1976). Chicanos/Chicanas develop strong family loyalty and display some reservations about disclosing outside the family. Consequently, there is a reluctance to participate openly in psychotherapy (Heiman et al., 1975).

Murillo (1976) states that Chicanos/Chicanas view themselves as a representative of, and second in importance to, the family. Therefore, the actions of Chicanos/Chicanas reflect upon the family, and negative actions could bring shame and dishonor upon the entire group. The family is expected to provide emotional support, guidance, food, and money for the individual. Only in rare instances will the family seek help from others; assistance from outsiders comes only at great expense to the pride and dignity of both the individual and the family. For this reason, Murillo (1976) states that it is difficult for an individual from a Mexican American family to seek professional help for emotional problems.

Acosta (1975) compared self-disclosure styles of Mexican American and Anglo American college students in relation to therapists' ethnicity and professional identification. Students listened to one of two matched tapes of a therapist working with an anxious, depressed, and angry young man. In the study, the therapist's ethnicity and professional identity were manipulated by the
therapist's accent, name, family background, and title. On one tape, the therapist spoke English with a slight Spanish accent, was identified by a common Spanish name, and informed subjects that his parents came from Mexico. On the other tape, the therapist spoke English with a standard American accent, had a common Anglo American name, and stated that his ancestors came from Northern Europe. The therapist in both tapes was introduced as either a professional (Dr.) or as a nonprofessional (Mr.). Thus, the subjects were assigned to one of four categories where the therapist was identified as either an (a) Anglo American professional, (b) Anglo American nonprofessional, (c) Mexican American professional, or (d) Mexican American nonprofessional. After listening to one of the two tapes, the subjects then reported their willingness to talk to the therapist they had just heard on a 20-item self-disclosure sentence-completion form. Subjects thought about each item in a personal way and indicated the degree to which they would be willing to disclose on a 4-point scale (not at all, almost nothing, in general, or fully). Subjects then rated their feelings about the therapist and client on eight items on a scale from 1 to 6 for strength of agreement. The items dealt with the subjects' opinions about the therapist's competence, trustworthiness, and understanding.

Results showed that Mexican Americans generally had significantly less willingness to self-disclose than Anglo Americans. Socioeconomic status did not affect the results, nor were there important sex differences. However, in contrast to Murillo's (1976) view, Acosta (1975) found that Mexican Americans reported a more positive attitude toward the therapist and psychotherapy than Anglo Americans. Both groups showed a positive willingness to disclose to the therapist. Acosta's findings are contrary to the commonly held assumption that Mexican Americans are least likely to self-disclose to therapists. Nevertheless, Mexican
American scores on self-disclosure, in general, were lower than Anglo Americans, which suggests some reservation about disclosing to a therapists regardless of ethnic identity.

However, Acosta's study has several shortcomings. First, it did not include an acculturation scale (E. Olmedo, J. Martinez, & S. Martinez, 1978) measuring the degree to which Chicanos/Chicanas assimilated mainstream sociocultural characteristics. Sociocultural characteristics include language spoken at home, nationality, socioeconomic status, and educational level of the head of the household. It has been suggested that these sociocultural variables contribute to variability in terms of intelligence scores (Mercer, 1977), cognition (Martinez, 1977), and mental health (Go, 1975). There is a strong possibility that the reported willingness of college students to self-disclose to therapists could be attributed to their assimilation into the Anglo American culture through the educational process (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974).

Second, self-disclosure in Acosta's study was ascertained not by direct observation, but by the use of a scale somewhat similar to the JSDQ. There is little evidence for the predictive validity of the JSDQ (Cozby, 1973). The scores on the JSDQ reflect subjects' past history of disclosure with parents or persons labeled as friends but do not predict nor directly measure actual self-disclosure.

Purpose of Study

The foregoing review of the literature suggests that cultural identity is related to amount of self-disclosure. Traditional Mexican culture discourages Chicanos/Chicanas from disclosing personal concerns to individuals outside of the nuclear or extended family (Murillo, 1976). Chicanos/Chicanas, who are the second
largest minority group in America (Karno & Morales, 1976), are exposed to a number of emotional stressors, including poverty, discrimination, unemployment, and assimilation factors (Karno & Edgerton, 1969; Morales, 1976). Yet, despite these stressors, the population is underrepresented in many mental health facilities (Karno & Edgerton, 1969). This underrepresentation might be attributed to a cultural reluctance to seek emotional support for problems or concerns from institutions or professionals outside of the family. Investigating whether Chicanos/Chicanas are less likely to self-disclose than other ethnic groups could be especially helpful for psychotherapists working with Chicanos/Chicanas in therapy. The following questions require further examination: Do Chicanos/Chicanas actually disclose less in analogue therapy? How do factors such as sex and degree of acculturation affect self-disclosure among Chicanos?

The purpose of this study is to determine whether Chicanas (Mexican American women) are less likely than Anglo Americans to self-disclose under specific circumstances. Women were used as subjects in order to achieve high enough levels of self-disclosure for analysis, since women appear to disclose more than men (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). It was hypothesized that ethnicity, controlling for the acculturation level, would affect the frequency of self-disclosure. Specifically, it was expected that Anglo American women would have a significantly higher frequency of self-disclosure than would their Mexican American counterparts. These assumptions are consistent with Murillo's (1976) view of the family position regarding self-disclosure and Acosta's (1975) report of Mexican Americans scoring lower than Anglo Americans in their willingness to self-disclose.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The sample consisted of 20 Chicanas and 20 Anglo American women attending California State College, San Bernardino. The ages of the Chicanas ranged from 18 to 43 years. The mean age was 21 years. The mean of the Anglo American women was 25 years, and their ages ranged from 19 to 46 years. The 20 Chicanas and 9 of the Anglo American women were students recruited from the Educational Opportunity Program (a program developed to help disadvantaged students through college). A master list of the students in the program provided the students' name, telephone numbers, and ethnic identity. The experimenter randomly made contacts and selected those students who were available on the dates the study was conducted. The additional 11 Anglo women students were randomly recruited from two psychology classes, a college dormitory, and offices in the Student Services building at the college campus.

Materials

The acculturation index (see Appendix A) was administered to all subjects after the 15-minute discussion. The scale, developed by Olmedo et al. (1978), makes use of Osgood's semantic differential constructs (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957) and various sociocultural factors to determine the level of similarity that an ethnic minority has with the dominant mainstream culture. The scale was empirically developed through discriminant function analysis and makes use of semantically different cultural beliefs involving various familial terms to distinguish between cultural groups. For example, Olmedo et al. (1978) and his
co-workers have found that considerable cross-cultural differences exist in the affect that is associated with such familial terms as "mother," "father," "self," "male," and "female." Their research indicates that the traditional Mexican culture perceives the self as being far more active and mature, whereas members of the dominant culture tend to ascribe more youthful and inactive qualities to the self. Similarly, Mexican and Mexican American members perceive the mother figure as being stronger, harder, more tenacious, and unique than do their Anglo American counterparts (Martinez, 1977). Similar cross-cultural differences in affect are also demonstrated for the concepts of male, female, and father.

Subjects taking the acculturation index are assessed for their affective and sociocultural similarity to the dominant culture as measured by a standardized continuum. Validity coefficients using double cross-validation procedures indicate reasonable stable coefficients ranging from .73 to .80. Moreover, test-retest reliability coefficients of .84 have been reported for both Mexican American and Anglo American samples.

Procedure

Subjects were randomly paired with someone of the same ethnic group and scheduled for a half-hour session. It was required that the subject had had no personal knowledge of her partner since previous knowledge could contribute to the frequency of self-disclosure. Paired subjects were then assigned to meet in one of three interview rooms that were furnished with a table, two chairs, a time clock, and a cassette recorder that was placed on the table. Instructions (see Appendix A) were read by the experimenter who requested the subjects to discuss problems, conflicts, and concerns of their families for 15 minutes. Before leaving the interview room, the experimenter assigned a number to both subjects and asked
them to state their number after the recorder began and then again before the session ended. The assigned numbers of the subjects paired self-disclosure scores with acculturation scores, and assured the subjects of confidentiality. Also, the numbers attempted to create an impersonal atmosphere, which Heiman et al. (1975) state exists in many mental health out-patient services.

After the 15-minute sessions, the experimenter returned and administered instructions to the acculturation scale (see Appendix B). Because the acculturation scale was standardized using high school students, it was necessary to clarify the term "home"; therefore, additional instructions (see Appendix C) had to be added since many subjects were either living away from their parents' home or were married. After completing the acculturation index, the subjects were debriefed by the experimenter (see Appendix D).

**Scoring**

The acculturation index was scored according to the procedures described by its authors (Olmedo et al., 1978). A self-disclosure score was computed from transcribed tapes. Two raters performed two word counts of the last 5 minutes of each interview. In the first word count, personal words such as "I," "me," "mine," "we," "our," and "us" as well as any derivatives of these words were each counted as having a value of one. Next, the total amount of words used were counted. All words including contractions, slang, and hyphenated and abbreviated words were scored a value of one. Sounds made such as "hmm," "ah," and "ah huh" were deleted from the count. A percentage score of self-disclosure was figured for each subject by dividing the amount of personal words used by the amount of total words used and then multiplying by 100.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Rating Reliability of Words

Two raters recorded the frequency of self-disclosure words and the total amount of words used by all 40 subjects during the last 5 minutes of the session. One rater was a reading specialist employed through San Bernardino State College, and the experimenter served as the second rater. A Pearson's interrater correlation of .96 was achieved for the frequency of self-disclosure words and .995 for the total amount of words counted.

Statistical Analyses

A number of statistical techniques and procedures were used to test the hypothesis that ethnicity, controlling for acculturation, would significantly affect the frequency of self-disclosure.

First, a regression analysis between the covariate (acculturation score) and the dependent variable (rate of self-disclosure) was performed. It was anticipated that this procedure would give an indication of the amount of variance in the dependent variable (self-disclosure) that could be accounted for by the covariate (acculturation). Results from the analysis indicates that acculturation, as a covariate, has very little effect on the rate of self-disclosure accounting for less than 1% of the variance ($R^2 = .00068$).

Second, a test for homogenity of slopes was conducted as a precursor to the analysis of covariance. This procedure involves the examination of interaction effects between the covariate and the independent variable. If significant results are evident at this level, subsequent anovas are generally not performed (Nie, Hull,
In effect, significant findings indicate that the effects of the covariate are different across the treatment levels of the independent variable and, as such, will produce misleading analysis of covariance results. On the other hand, nonsignificant interaction effects, a necessary precondition for ANCOVA designs, indicate that the covariate has similar effects for all the treatment groups in the independent variable. In this study, the relative interaction between acculturation and ethnicity was not significant ($p = .12$), and therefore satisfied the preconditions of homogeneity of slopes.

The third step involved an analysis of variance using ethnicity as the independent variable and frequency of self-disclosure as the dependent variable. As depicted in Table 1, no significant differences in the amount of self-disclosure were found between Mexican American women and Anglo American women. ($p = .999$).
Table 1

Analysis of Variance
Effects of Ethnicity of Self-Disclosure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main effects</td>
<td>0.536</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.536</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnicity</td>
<td>0.536</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.536</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>0.536</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.536</td>
<td>0.095</td>
<td>0.999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>213.348</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.614</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>213.884</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.484</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final step involved the actual analysis of covariance using ethnicity as the independent variable, acculturation as the covariate, and frequency of self-disclosure as the dependent variable. As depicted in Table 2, the main effects of ethnicity, controlling for acculturation, were not significant (p = .75998).
Table 2
Analysis of Covariance
Using Acculturation as a Covariate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariate (acculturation)</td>
<td>.14532</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>.87468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main effects (ethnicity)</td>
<td>.54580</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>.75998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>.69113</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.94188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>213.19246</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>213.88359</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the mean rate of disclosure for the Mexican American sample was in fact lower than that of the Anglo American sample (6.89 to 7.12, respectively). When adjusted for acculturation, the independent variable accounted for only .0025% of the variance in the dependent variable.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The results of the study did not support the hypothesis that the frequency of self-disclosure, controlling for acculturation, is significantly lower among Mexican American women than Anglo American women.

Contrary to Heiman's et al. (1975) and Murillo's (1976) assumptions, Mexican American women discussed and disclosed issues and concerns about their families at the same frequency as Anglo American women, as measured by the percentage of personal words. It should be noted, however, that individuals paired in the self-disclosure sessions were of the same ethnic background. The similarity of ethnicity and background may have affected the frequency of self-disclosure. It is very possible that social interactions, guidance counseling, and psychotherapy that include members of the same ethnic background tend to foster more self-disclosure, whereas members of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds may perhaps inhibit self-disclosure (Carkhuff et al., 1967). Although this particular study did not explore the impact of ethnic differences on self-disclosure, further research could investigate the effects of self-disclosure from pairing Mexican Americans with Anglo Americans. If ethnic composition has little or no influence on self-disclosure, then self-disclosure levels would be the same across all three treatment groups (Anglo American/Anglo American, Mexican American/Mexican American, Mexican American/Anglo American).
Both Mexican American and Anglo American women demonstrated a willingness to self-disclose, as in Acosta's (1975) sample. However, Acosta also found Mexican Americans significantly less willing to self-disclose than Anglo Americans. In contrast to these findings, the Mexican American women in the present study did not significantly differ from the Anglo American women's frequency of self-disclosure. These results indicate that Mexican American women do, in fact, self-disclose with the same sex and ethnic group who are outside of the family. Therefore, they should be able to enjoy life, health, and marriage according to Jourard's (1971) analysis of the role of self-disclosure.

Although Mexican Americans have been reported as underutilizing many mental health facilities (Karno & Edgerton, 1969), this study suggests that the underrepresentation is not attributed to the inability of Mexican Americans to self-disclose. However, it is important to note that the mean self-disclosure score of the Mexican American women (6.89) was somewhat lower than the Anglo American women's mean score (7.12). Although the differences between the means were not significant, the mean scores were in the predicted direction. Sampling groups of Mexican Americans outside of the college campus (i.e., adolescents, older age groups not attending college, Mexicans who are not native born) could show some significant differences between groups.

It will be important to follow up and investigate whether the intensity levels of the topics discussed were different between ethnic groups. The present study only compared the amount of breadth of information disclosed. Jourard and Lasakow (1958) noted that topics dealing with attitude, taste, and work were more frequently disclosed than money, personality, and body. Although the difference in frequency between groups was not significant, it is essential to examine whether
Mexican Americans focus on topics of lower intensity. Individuals who are inhibited about discussing their financial concerns, experiences of depression or distress, and bodily discomforts may not receive the full potential of psychotherapy (Jourard, 1971).

Furthermore, future studies might utilize a different method of measuring self-disclosure. Although the approach was highly reliable when scoring, there were a number of instances where words such as "I think" were used by the subjects on several occasions when they appeared to be developing a thought or statement. Each "I" had to be counted as a self-disclosure even though the subject did not necessarily communicate an attitude or feeling. The definition needs to be expanded in order to reliably and validly score self-disclosure.

Future studies should also control for the age differences between the paired subjects. Age differences ranged from 10 to 20 years between some subjects. This age difference could have had an impact on the results (Jourard, 1961b). In addition, subjects who were recruited from the EOP program might have had more experiences sharing personal information than non-EOP subjects. Since the EOP program offers counseling services, those subjects who participated in counseling may have increased their frequency of self-disclosure as a result of the program. Thus, those subjects used from the EOP program were not necessarily an adequate sample of the general population.

Finally, future studies that include a measure of acculturation might broaden the measures. Olmedo's et al. (1978) instrument surveys only sociocultural background information and affective modalities. However, an instrument that also includes behavioral and cognitive items in the survey might more accurately
measure the extent of acculturation. This expanded perspective could help better control for the complex differences that exists within group members.

In conclusion, the frequency of self-disclosure, controlling for acculturation, was not significantly different between Anglo American and Mexican American women. However, the mean scores of self-disclosure were somewhat lower for Mexican American women than Anglo American women. Results indicate that when in situations with someone of the same sex and ethnic group, Mexican American women do self-disclose outside of the family at the same frequency as Anglo American women. Also, self-disclosing may not appear to be a factor for the lack of Mexican Americans participating in psychotherapy. Further empirical research is needed regarding Chicanos/Chicanas and the mental health system. Such studies could help prevent clinicians from assuming stereotypic assumptions about ethnic minorities in therapy.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEW SESSION
INSTRUCTIONS TO INTERVIEW SESSIONS

The purpose of this study is to learn more about families today. For the next 15 minutes, I would like for the both of you to discuss your families. Include any type of concerns, conflicts, and problems which might be occurring.

I would like for the both of you to discuss the topic in any way you feel comfortable with. The session will be recorded on cassette, but you will only be identified as a number to the experimenter. No one except the experimenter shall have access to the tape. Everything shall be kept in strict confidence.

Once again, you'll have 15 minutes to discuss your family and include any concerns, conflicts, and problems that might be occurring.

Any questions?
APPENDIX B

ACCULTURATION SCALE
THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY IS TO MEASURE THE MEANING THAT CERTAIN CONCEPTS HAVE FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE. ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES YOU WILL FIND A CONCEPT PRINTED ON TOP OF EACH PAGE. BELOW THAT CONCEPT THERE IS A SET OF SCALES. YOU ARE ASKED TO RATE EACH CONCEPT IN RELATION OF THOSE SCALES.

HERE IS HOW TO USE THESE SCALES:

IF YOU FEEL THAT THE CONCEPT AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE IS VERY CLOSELY RELATED TO ONE OR THE OTHER END OF THE SCALE, PLACE A CHECK MARK AS FOLLOWS:

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Personal Background Information

Please answer with a ✓ mark whenever possible, in the spaces provided for. Try not to skip any items and answer as accurately as you can.

1. Sex: M ___ F ___

2. What is your ethnic background?
   - ___ Chicano/Mexican American
   - ___ Anglo
   - ___ Black
   - ___ Asian
   - ___ Other

3. Year of birth: __________

4. Where were you born?
   - ___ U.S.
   - ___ Mexico
   - ___ Other

5. Who lives at home? (You may check more than one)
   - ___ 1-3 brothers
   - ___ 4-6 brothers
   - ___ More than 6 brothers
   - ___ 1-3 sisters
   - ___ 4-6 sisters
   - ___ More than 6 sisters

6. What language do you speak at home?
   - ___ Spanish only
   - ___ Mostly Spanish
   - ___ Mostly English
   - ___ English only
   - ___ Other
7. What kind of job does the head of the household have?
   ___ Blue collar
   ___ White collar
   ___ Other

8. What is the citizenship of the head of your household?
   ___ U.S.
   ___ Mexican
   ___ Other

9. Where did the head of your household grow up?
   ___ Farm
   ___ City

10. How many years of education does the head of your household have?
     ___ 0-8 years
     ___ 9 or more
APPENDIX C

ADDED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ACCULTURATION SCALE
ADDED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ACCULTURATION SCALE

Now I would like you to complete this form. Please make sure that your assigned number is correctly written on top. Take as much time as you need and answer each question as best as you can. It is critical that you answer every question. Please read the directions while I read them aloud: (instructions from the acculturation scale, see Appendix A).

Regarding the word "home" used in Questions 5-10, think of the household in which you grew up.

Any questions?
APPENDIX D

DEBRIEFING OF SUBJECTS
DEBRIEFING OF SUBJECTS

The experimenter is interested in learning how much personal information people share with one another. He is especially interested in whether there are cultural groups that share more or less information than other groups. Results from this study should be available in 5 weeks. Please contact the Educational Opportunity Office at (714) 887-7395 or the Student Services building, Room 172, for these results. The experimenter will be happy to speak with you and answer any further questions. Please do not share the experiment with anyone for approximately 4 weeks. Other students will be participating in the study, and discussing it could interfere with the results. Thank you very much for your cooperation.
REFERENCES


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Jourard, S. M. Age trend in self-disclosure. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 1961, 7, 191-197. (b)


