LATINAS AND BEAUTY AS WE AGE: A CULTURAL REFLECTION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summary

The COVID19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted women and Latinas in particular. According to McKinsey & Company, “women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to this crisis than men's jobs.”¹ In our study, Latinas were most likely to have been laid off or furloughed due to the pandemic - 11% versus 6% of all women. Latinas over age 40 experienced job loss at twice to five times the rate of White or Black women in their same age cohorts. In addition to the economic impact, the Latino community has had outsized COVID cases and fatalities since the pandemic began.^{2,3} In the midst of these stressors, Latinas are changing their priorities and focusing on self-care.

- The pandemic has caused stress that has contributed to **physical and emotional symptoms** in a substantial number of Latinas.
- While most continue to feel pressure to maintain the way they look, Latinas are **prioritizing health over beauty** and focusing **more on inner peace than outer beauty**.
- Latinas say they have become **more relaxed with their appearance** and have implemented changes to their routines they wish could persist after the pandemic is over.
- Latinas across all ages **do not see themselves reflected in the media**, and most say there are not enough beauty and grooming products geared toward their skin and hair types. Many rely on DIY products.

There is an opportunity to provide Latinas with tailored wellness resources that reflect their values of prioritizing health and inner peace over appearance to help them cope during the pandemic and beyond. Offerings that accurately represent Latinas are needed to support their self-care as the backbone of many households.

¹ Anu Madgavkar, Olivia White, Mekala Krishnan, Deepa Mahajan, "COVID-19 and Gender Equality: Countering the Regressive Effects," McKinsey & Company, July 15, 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects#>.

² https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid19/health_disparities.htm

³ <https://www.cbsnews.com/video/the-economic-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-latinas/#x>

EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL TOLL OF THE PANDEMIC

Many Latinas make a connection to their emotional well-being when asked about the negative impact of the pandemic on their beauty and personal grooming routines.

Among all Latinas, 33% report that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their beauty and personal grooming routines.

Sometimes I didn't feel like getting all dressed and going nowhere.
(Latina, age 65)

Caring less about myself instead of glamming up like I used too.
(Latina, age 37)

I'm very anxious, very scared and very depressed. I feel less energized to get ready which has caused me to feel more self conscious. (Latina, age 34)

People telling me I look like I don't feel well.
(Latina, age 49)

I feel unkempt, have lost motivation, and feel incredibly self conscious about camera angles on video conferencing in ways I don't suffer from in person. (Latina, age 32)

Feeling more depressed and not doing too much personal improvements to myself like I used to. (Latina, age 56)

I don't take care of myself anymore. I given up on trying to look good.(Latina, age 27)

I created a beauty routine... to increase a sense of well-being, stress relief, and increase happiness. (Latina, age 29)

Not feeling pretty, my hair is all grown out, my nails need some love and care. I've gained a lot of weight most of all and not to mention depression and stress. (Latina, age 36)

Q21. And thinking about your own beauty and personal grooming routine, have you experienced anything negative because of the pandemic? Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

Q21A. What is the most negative thing you have experienced? Base: Respondents who have experienced something negative because of the pandemic

Pressures regarding appearance have remained unchanged for the majority of Latinas.

Millennial Latinas (**28%**) are twice as likely to feel more pressure to post good photos on social media than Gen X (**14%**) and Boomers (**14%**).

Change in pressure to do the following
Since the coronavirus pandemic began

Q11. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, have you felt more pressure, less pressure, or experienced no change in pressure to do each of the following?
Base: Total respondents (n=1,890), Millennials (n=586), Gen X (n=599), Boomers (n=518)

Seeing themselves on screen has made many Latinas more self-conscious and a majority say they have felt pressure to keep up their physical appearance.

Close to a third (29%) of Latinas have become more self-conscious about their physical appearance during the pandemic and many (41%) of those who use videoconferencing feel more self-conscious about themselves on video calls. The pressure to keep up with their looks comes mainly from themselves, social media, and friends and family.

Change in self-consciousness about the following
Since the pandemic began

Sources of pressure to keep up physical appearance
During the coronavirus pandemic

Q9. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, would you say you have become more self-conscious about your physical appearance, less self-conscious, or there is no difference? Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

Q18. Compared to when you meet with people in-person, does using video conferencing applications make you more self-conscious about your appearance, less self-conscious, or is there no difference? Base: Respondents that use video conferencing (n=1,452)

Q10. Have you felt pressure from any of the following to keep up with your physical appearance during the coronavirus pandemic? Base: Total respondents (n=1,890) * Base: All respondents who are employed (n=874)

A woman with dark, curly hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a light blue blazer over a white shirt. Her eyes are closed, and she has a serene expression, suggesting a moment of mindfulness or meditation. The background is a blurred city street with buildings and trees.

FOCUS ON HEALTH AND POSITIVE MINDSET

Previously a priority, the importance of beauty and grooming has diminished for one in three Latinas.

Before the coronavirus, personal beauty and grooming routines were extremely or very important for Latinas regardless of their age, employment, country of origin, or education. Now, 36% of Latinas say their routine has become less of a priority. Millennial aged Latinas are most likely to say their routine has become less important. Although a smaller proportion, nearly one-fourth of all Latinas say their routine for beauty and grooming has become *more* important.

Change in importance of beauty and personal grooming routine
Since the coronavirus pandemic began

Q2. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, would you say your beauty and personal grooming routine has become more important to you, less important, or has there been no difference? Base: Total respondents

The strain of the pandemic has contributed to a shift in focus from physical appearance to inner peace and health.

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, a third of Latinas (36%) say they care less often about what people think of their appearance. A majority (57%) have focused more often on their inner peace than outer beauty and 61% of Latinas have focused on their health more often than their appearance.

Change in frequency of doing the following
Since the pandemic began

Q3. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, have you done each of the following more often, less often, or about as often as before?
Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

Latinas have shifted their attention to media that emphasizes health over beauty.

More than one-third of Latinas of all ages are more likely to focus on media that emphasizes health over beauty.

Change in likelihood on focusing on media that emphasizes health over beauty
Since the coronavirus pandemic began

Q27. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, are you more likely to focus on media that emphasizes health over beauty, less likely, or has there been no change? By media, we mean print, online, social media, TV, etc.
Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

CHANGING BEAUTY ROUTINES

A majority of Latinas have changed their beauty routine since the pandemic — and many intend to keep it that way.

About a third of all Latinas (36%) plan to keep at least some of the changes after the outbreak is over. Younger women are more likely to have made changes that they intend to retain.

Percent who have changed their beauty routine, and if they will keep changes
Since the coronavirus pandemic began

Q4. Which of the following statements is closest to your opinion? Base: Total respondents

During the pandemic, you changed your personal grooming of beauty routine but will go back to the way it was when the outbreak is over

During the pandemic, you changed your personal grooming of beauty routine and will keep at least some of the changes even after the outbreak is over

You haven't changed your personal grooming or beauty routine during the pandemic.

The pandemic has resulted in saving money and time on beauty and personal grooming products and routines.

Percent of women spending **less** or **more** money and time on beauty and personal grooming
Since the pandemic began

Q28/Q29. *Since the coronavirus pandemic began* how much money do you think you spend in a typical month on beauty/personal grooming products for yourself not for other people? Would you say this amount is more, less, or about the same as you spent in a typical month on beauty or personal grooming products for yourself before the pandemic began? Base: Latinas who spent money (n=1,801)

Q32. Overall, would you say the average amount of time you spend per day, that is morning and evening, on your beauty or personal grooming regimen is more, less, or the same as you spent in a typical day before the pandemic began? Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

Acceptability of casual styles is unchanged for most Latinas, but some feel more comfortable since the pandemic began.

Millennials report higher comfort levels across these behaviors except when it comes to dying their hair.

Change in comfort with doing the following
Since the pandemic began

Q12. *Since the coronavirus pandemic began, have you become more or less comfortable with each of the following, or has your comfort level not changed?*
Q13. *When doing errands outside your house since the coronavirus pandemic began, have you become more or less comfortable with each of the following, or has your comfort level not changed?*
Base: Total respondents (n=1,890).

Some employed Latinas have become relaxed about their appearance while working.

About 1 in 3 Latinas feel more at ease wearing loungewear, not having their hair done, or wearing make-up in work settings. Millennials are more at ease with these relaxed standards than Gen X and Boomers.

Percent who feel more comfortable with the following when going to work or joining video calls with work colleagues
Since the coronavirus pandemic began

Q14. When going to work or joining video calls with work colleagues since the coronavirus pandemic began, have you become more or less comfortable with each of the following, or has your comfort level not changed? Base: Employed respondents

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Latinas are more likely to have increased use of skincare products and decreased use of styling tools, lipstick and eye makeup.

While almost one-third (30%) of Latinas are using more facial and body skincare products, substantial shares have *decreased* their use of lipstick (51%), eye makeup (43%), hair styling tools (40%) and sunscreen (34%).

Change in use of the following products
Since the pandemic began

Q16. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, would you say you have used each of the following more often, less often, or neither more or less often?
Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

One-fifth of Latinas want to see lowered standards of beauty persist post-pandemic.

One-third (36%) of Latinas say the standards of beauty for women in the United States have been lowered since the start of the pandemic. Of them, fifty-five percent (55%) – or 20% of all Latinas - want to see such standards persist after the pandemic.

Change in beauty standards for women
Due to the pandemic

Q5. *Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, do you think the standards of beauty for women in the U.S. have been raised, lowered, or remained the same?*
Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

Q6. *Which of the following statements is closer to your opinion? These new standards of beauty for women established during the pandemic should go back to the way they were before the pandemic began or These new standards of beauty for women established during the pandemic should continue after the pandemic ends.*
Base: Respondents who say standards of beauty have been lowered somewhat or lowered at lot in Q5. (n=680)

A close-up portrait of a woman with short, dark hair and freckles, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a small nose ring and has a soft smile. The background is a light, neutral color, and the image is framed by delicate, green baby's breath flowers on thin stems.

MEDIA AND MARKETPLACE DESIRES

Latinas are skeptical of the motives of big beauty companies marketing to diverse women.

Overall, four in ten Latinas are more likely to buy from inclusive traditional beauty companies. However, half of Millennial Latinas say expanded products for diverse people from traditional beauty companies are still too limited.

Percent who agree with the following statements
About traditional beauty companies

Q23. Many big, traditional beauty companies are now making and marketing products and services to include people with different hair types and skin tones. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Total respondents.

Many Latinas across all age groups want more products and services tailored to their age, skin tones, hair types and for menopause.

Boomers are most likely to think there should be more beauty and grooming products specifically designed for people their age (58%). More than half (54%) of Latinas across all generations would like to see more products tailored to women going through perimenopause or menopause.

Percent who agree there should be more beauty and personal grooming products and services tailored to...

Q25. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about beauty and personal grooming products and services? Base: Total respondents

About 4 in 10 Latinas rely on home remedies to meet their beauty and grooming needs.

The lack of targeted products makes Latinas likely to use home remedies and DIY products to cover their needs. This is particularly the case for those who do not speak English fluently. YouTube, Social media, friends and family, and TV are the main sources for information about beauty products.

Percent who rely on home remedies for beauty needs

Sources of beauty and personal grooming information

Q24. Do you rely on any home remedies to meet your beauty and personal grooming needs, or not?
Q26. What sources of information do you use to find out about beauty and personal grooming?
Base: Total respondents (n=1,890)

Most Latinas, and especially Boomer women, feel women their age are underrepresented in advertising, reinforcing outdated stereotypes.

Older Latinas are more likely to think women their age are underrepresented in advertising and most women who appear in ads perpetuate outdated stereotypes.

Percent who strongly or somewhat agree with the following statements
About ads in general

Q35. Now think about ads in general – not just for beauty and personal grooming – how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base: Total respondents

Nearly all Latinas think most ads show unrealistic portrayals of women.

Across all generations, Latinas want more authentic images of women in beauty product marketing and think there is a bias toward showing younger women in ads – even for products intended for older women. There remains an unmet opportunity to represent real women in advertising.

Percent who strongly agree or somewhat agree with the following statements
About ads in general

Q34. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about beauty and personal grooming adds?
Base: Total respondents.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology

- The survey of 1,890 Latina women is part of a larger study of 4,851 women age 18 and older that was designed by AARP Research and conducted for AARP by NORC at the University of Chicago November 17 - December 15, 2020.
- Data were collected using the probability-based, nationally representative AmeriSpeak® Panel, supplemented with nonprobability sample from Dynata. AmeriSpeak Panel members selected for this study were scientifically selected to represent women age 18 and over in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Overall, there were 2,457 AmeriSpeak respondents completing the survey and 2,394 respondents from the Dynata panel. Data was collected via the web (4,572 interviews) and via telephone (279 interviews).
- The data were weighted using the TrueNorth methodology to socio-demographic benchmarks derived from the March 2020 Current Population Survey to reflect U.S. women age 18 and older, as well as predicted values of survey variables from small area estimation models. The socio-demographic characteristics include: race/ethnicity by age, race/ethnicity by region, race/ethnicity by education, age by education, age by English proficiency, and age by country of birth. For more information on TrueNorth visit amerispeak.norc.org/our-capabilities/Pages/TrueNorth.aspx.
- Interviews were offered in English and Spanish. In the Latina sample, 1,778 interviews were conducted in English and 112 in Spanish.

Methodology (cont.)

- The margin of sampling error for the Latina sample is +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level for a 50% survey statistic, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.
- For analysis purposes, age oversamples were also included in the sample design. Age cohorts are represented in the report using the generational definitions shown below:
 - 586 Millennial (age 23-39) with a margin of sampling error of +/- 6.1 percentage points
 - 599 Gen X (age 40-55) with a margin of sampling error of +/- 8.2 percentage points
 - 518 Boomer (age 56-74) with a margin of sampling error of +/- 10.3 percentage points

About AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation's largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

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Headquartered in downtown Chicago, NORC works in over 40 countries around the world, with additional offices on the University of Chicago campus, the DC metro area, Atlanta, Boston, Silicon Valley and San Francisco. Please visit www.norc.org for more information.

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