

Exploring the Relationship Between Body Functionality and Mindful Self-Care

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Introduction

- Body image extends beyond appearance to include functionality appreciation or valuing what the body can do (Alleva et al., 2017).
- Practices that promote mindful self-care: attending to one's physical, emotional, and relational needs; support positive embodiment and well-being (Cook-Cottone & Guyker, 2018).
- Emerging adulthood is a key stage for identity and body image development, yet Hispanic emerging adults remain underrepresented in this research (Borrell & Viladrich, 2024).
- Cultural and psychological factors may influence how self-care relates to body functionality.
- This study examined whether mindful self-care predicts functionality appreciation, and whether acculturation, depression, anxiety, or stress moderate this relationship.

Hypotheses

- H₁: Higher levels of mindful self-care will be associated with greater functionality appreciation.
- H₂: The association between mindful self-care and functionality appreciation will be stronger at lower levels of acculturation.
- H₃: The association between mindful self-care and functionality appreciation will be stronger at lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Method

- University students (N = 413; 73% female; 87% Hispanic; M_{age} = 20.2) were recruited via SONA, a university research participation system.
- After providing informed consent, participants completed an online Qualtrics survey assessing demographics, functionality appreciation, mindful self-care, mental health, and acculturation.
- Participants received course credit upon completion of the survey.

Approach to analysis

- Preliminary analyses: Descriptive statistics and variable correlations; excluding <5% missing data.
- Hierarchical regressions were conducted in which sex and age were controlled; six MSCS subscales were entered as predictors ($p < .05$); predictors were mean-centered.
- Moderation analyses: 54 regression were tested using a Bonferroni correction ($p < .008$), and PROCESS Macro for SPSS was used to visualize and probe significant interactions.

Results

Table 1
Hierarchical Regression Results for Functionality Appreciation

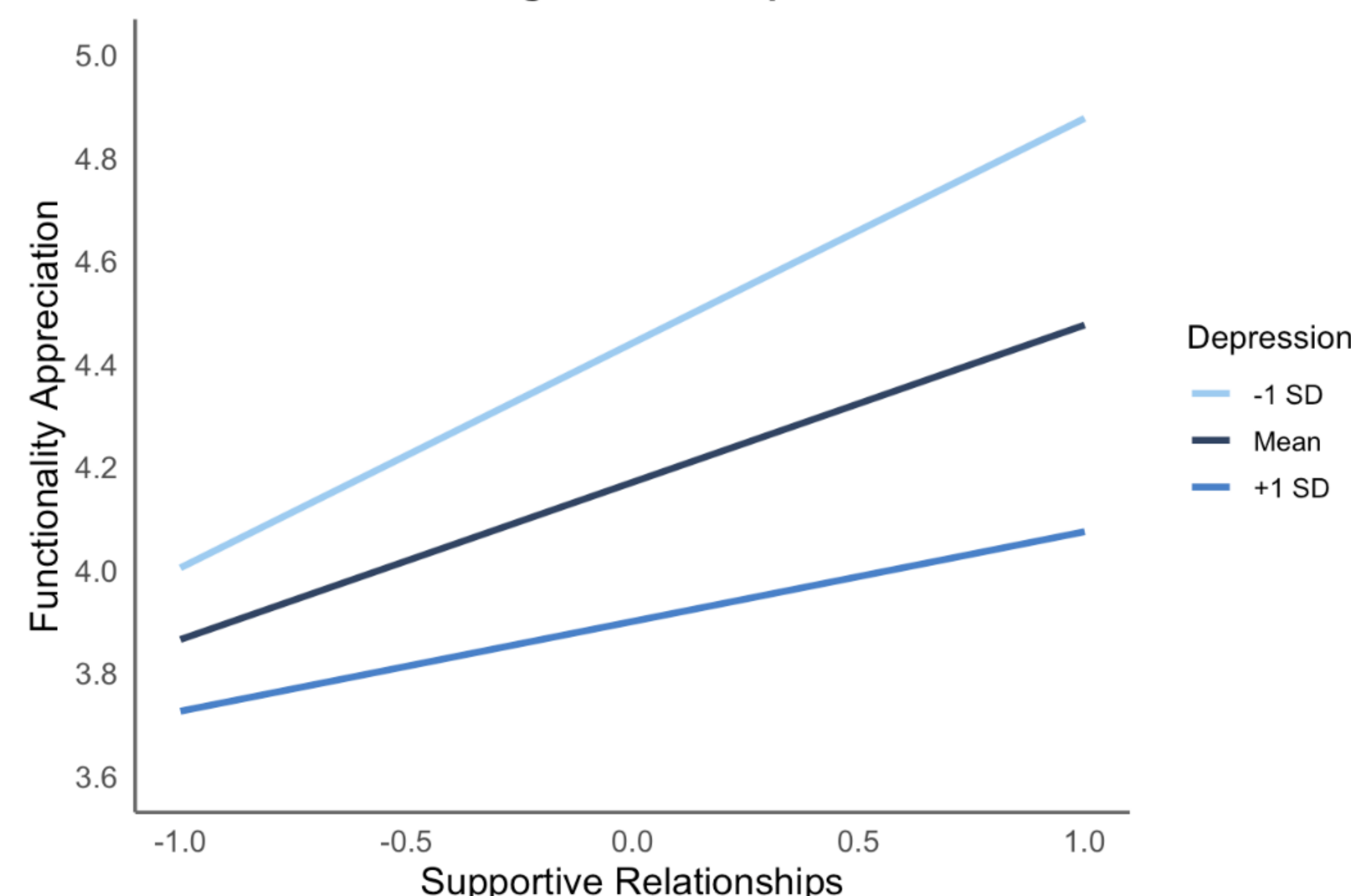
Variable	B	95% CI for B		SE	β	R ²	ΔR^2
		LL	UL				
Step 1							
constant	4.40	4.10	4.70	.15		.00	.00
Age	.00	-.05	.05	.02	.00		
Sex	-.10	-.27	.07	.09	-.06		
Step 2							
constant	4.33	4.07	4.59	.13		.31	.32
Age	.01	-.03	.05	.02	.01		
Sex	-.06	-.21	.08	.07	-.04		
Physical Self-Care	.14	.06	.23	.04	.15		
Supportive Relationships	.18	.08	.27	.05	.19		
Mindful Awareness	.16	.06	.25	.05	.19		
Self-Compassion & Purpose	.19	.09	.28	.05	.23		
Mindful Relaxation	-.10	-.19	-.01	.05	-.11		
Supportive Structure	.04	-.05	.13	.05	.04		

Note: Bold indicates significance at $p < .05$.

Table 2
Participant Characteristics and Descriptives

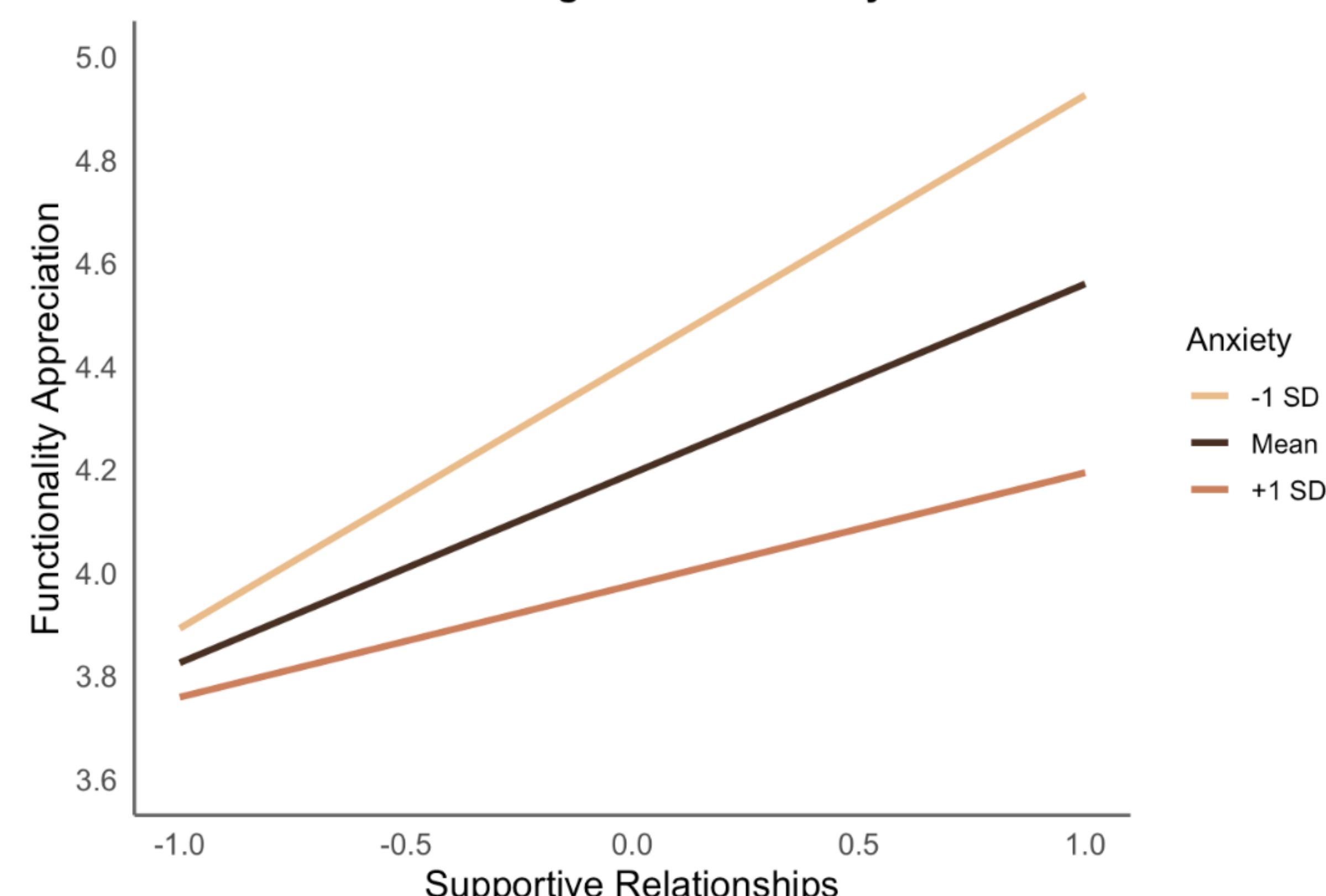
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Functionality Appreciation	1.00	5.00	4.23	.76
Depression	.00	42.00	10.06	9.45
Anxiety	.00	42.00	10.64	8.84
Stress	.00	42.00	13.30	9.20
Physical Self-Care	1.00	5.00	2.29	1.06
Supportive Relationships	1.00	5.00	4.15	.83
Mindful Awareness	1.00	5.00	3.74	.92
Self-Compassion & Purpose	1.00	5.00	3.48	.95
Mindful Relaxation	1.00	5.00	3.23	.83
Supportive Structure	1.00	5.00	3.59	.93
U.S. Identity	1.00	4.00	2.94	.88
U.S. Knowledge	1.00	4.00	2.86	.72
English Language	1.00	4.00	3.78	.45
Origin Identity	1.00	4.00	3.12	.83
Origin Knowledge	1.00	4.00	2.67	.85
Native Language	1.00	4.00	3.37	.90

Moderating Effect of Depression



Depression as moderator:
 $F(5, 400) = 31.91, p < .001, R^2 = .53; \Delta R^2 = .025, \beta = -0.18, p < .001$

Moderating Effect of Anxiety



Anxiety as moderator:
 $F(5, 403) = 30.12, p < .001, R^2 = .52; \Delta R^2 = .029, \beta = -0.18, p < .001$

Discussion

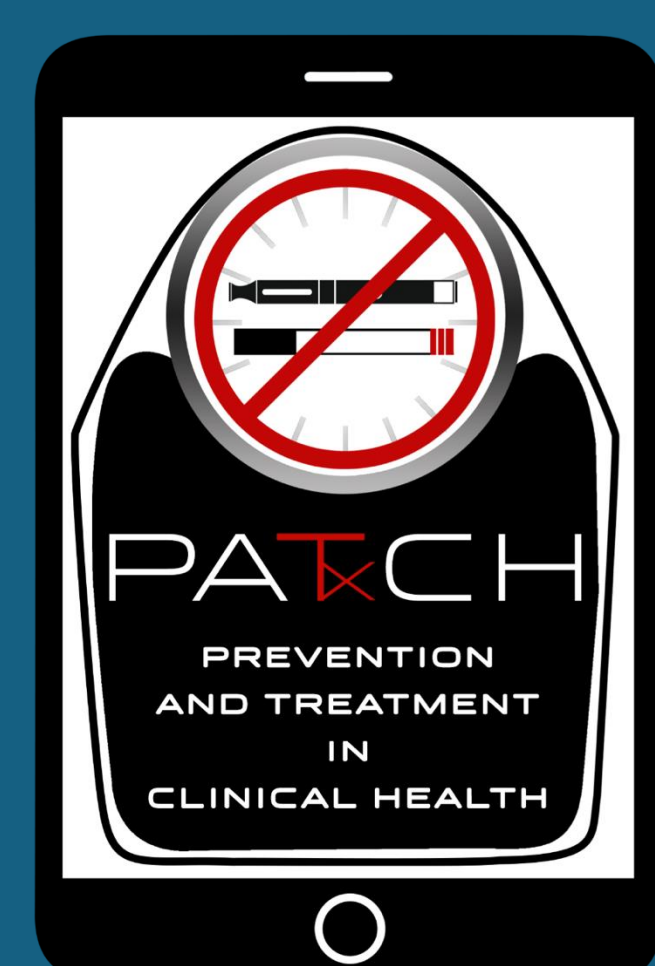
- Findings supported H₁, partially supported H₃, and did not support H₂.
- Social support from mindful self-care is associated with functionality appreciation, yet high depression and anxiety weaken this relationship, which is consistent with prior research particularly in collectivist cultures (Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2019; Johnson-Esparza et al., 2021).
- Mindful self-care is a potential pathway for promoting positive body image among Hispanic emerging adults.

Limitations/Future Directions

- Given the cross-sectional design, temporal relationships cannot be determined, and reliance on self-report measures may increase self-report bias.
- Future research is needed to establish directionality of effects, and future work should also consider the role of cultural influences (e.g., perceived discrimination).

References

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