A Comparison Between Male and Female Latino Americans on Perception of Spaying and Neutering Pets

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Abstract
The primary goal of this study was to investigate the relationship between male and female Latino American attitudes and awareness on spaying and neutering pets and dogs.

We examined whether the attitudes differed among male and female Latino American adults, along with multi-generation members of the population to determine if any significant differences could be identified. Participants completed a Spanish-language questionnaire and responded to various survey items inquiring about their perception on spaying/neutering.

Our results provide support of the multi-generational differences in awareness and knowledge of the importance of spaying/neutering, with later generations of Latino-Americans showing greater awareness and knowledge. Gender attitudes have been shown to be a significant predictor whether or not contraceptive procedures will be administered to their pets (Favor, 2006). No support was found for the belief that the process of neutering would be embarrassing. This evidence provides the foundation for an educational program that incorporates the distribution of the Spanish language pamphlet developed as a Service-Learning project to provide the Latino community with accurate information regarding the positive effects of spaying/neutering.

Background & Rationale
- Spay and neuter research has shown that a major reason behind pet overpopulation, free-ranging pets, and associated community health problems, are due to pet owners’ absence of knowledge and understanding of these problems (Selby, Rhoades, Hewett & Inn, 1979).
- Spaying and Neutering has been shown to provide several benefits to the well-being of cats and dogs, these entail: overall health, behavioral, and environmental issues.
- Large percentage of the current literature links gender attitudes to whether or not contraceptive procedures will be administered to their pets (Favor, 2009).
- Limited research has been done to differentiate generational knowledge about the importance and beneficial factors involved in spaying/neutering pets.

Hypotheses
- We predicted that female participants would report greater likelihood to favor spaying/neutering than male participants.
- We predicted male Latinos’ reasoning for unrelated pets would be prominently due to personal belief that the procedure is embarrassing.
- We expected a positive correlation between duration of residency and perception of benefits of spaying/neutering.

Methods
Participants
- 102 Latino American participants from a small southeastern community.
- 80% female.
- Age range: 18-69 years-old
- 59% first generation, 20% second generation, 8% third generation, 14% fourth generation

Materials
- Spanish Language Spay and Neuter Survey
- The survey and neuter survey was self-developed Likert scale-based questionnaire written in Spanish containing 15 questions concerning age, gender, socio-economic status, generation, pet ownership, alteration of pets, knowledge of health, behavioral, and environmental aspects of spaying and neutering cats and dogs.
- Spanish Pamphlet
- The Spanish language pamphlet, a translation of the English version of the Spay and Neuter survey was provided by the Latino population for the beneficial knowledge and information. The information pertaining to services offered by the Humane Society of South Coastal Georgia (HSUGC) and spayed the importance of spaying and neutering pets.

Procedure
Participants were asked to give voluntary consent to complete a Survey and Neuter questionnaire. Upon completion of the survey the participants received a Spanish language informative pamphlet pertaining to services offered by the Humane Society of South Coastal Georgia (HSUGC) and specific material on the importance of spaying and neutering pets. Participants had the assistance of a bilingual translator to clear up any confusion or questions that participants had.

Results
H1: Non-significant ($p > .05$)
H2: We conducted an independent samples directional t-test ($p < .05$) to determine whether males perceived neutering to be more embarrassing than females: ($t_{99} = 2.128$, $p = .039$). We ran a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test to verify the t-test results. Consistent with the t-test, the Mann-Whitney U indicated the perception of Neutering was embarrassing was lower for Latino males ($M = 2.23$) than for Latino females ($M = 3.08), $U = 1429.50$, $p = .019$.

Discussion
Male Latino participants were originally hypothesized to believe neutering a dog was embarrassing and would most likely be the reason for not getting their dogs spayed or neutered. Our data, however, suggests that is not the case. We found that male Latino participants were more likely than their female counterparts to report that their pets were too young or healthy to be spayed/neutered. The results of the study suggest that the greater the number of reproductive years a pet has, the greater the awareness of the benefits of being altered. Therefore, the longer the family has been in the U.S., the greater the awareness and knowledge. See values below:

- Thousands of stray/ homeless cats and dogs are put to sleep (killed) each year. ($t_{90} = .03$, $p = .001$)
- Spaying/neutering pets can increase lifespan of dogs/cats. ($t_{90} = .19$, $p = .049$)
- Male dogs/cats should be neutered. ($t_{20} = 2.0$, $p = .05$)
- Female dogs/cats should be spayed. ($t_{20} = 2.0$, $p = .05$)
- Spaying/neutering is better than euthanizing (putting to death) stray, killing guards. ($t = 2.0$, $p = .05$)
- Educating children would help to relieve overpopulation of dogs/cats. ($t = 2.0$, $p = .014$)

References