The background is a vibrant blue watercolor wash. A white, arched shape, resembling a window or a decorative frame, is positioned on the right side of the image. Inside this white shape, the title and author information are written in a black, serif font. The text is centered within the white area.

La Pieza Que Falta: How
Gender Roles and Cultural
Norms impacts how
Latinas learn about Sex

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Who am I?

- Toni is a first-generation Mexican American student who is a first year PhD Student at the University of Texas at Arlington.
- Focused on IPV, motherhood, maternal-infant bonding, sexual trauma, and sex education programming for Latinas.
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How did you learn about
sex?

Key terms

- Latina was used as an umbrella term, but it includes: *Chicana, Mexicana, Boricua, Afro-Latina, Hispanic, Latine, or Latinx.*
- Sexual Safety- condoms, consent, birth control, proper bodily care after intercourse, sexually transmitted infections (STI), sexually transmitted diseases (STD) knowledge, and resources for the possibility of pregnancy.

Purpose of the study

PURPOSE

to explore what Latinas wish they would have learned about sex education. The second purpose is to create a better foundation of research as it pertains to Latinas and sexual safety using the information learned from participating Latinas.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT

- Fortuna's 2017 study, her results showed that using sexual protection lowers chances of sexual trauma. Having a foundation of sexual safety could limit these Latinas from undergoing further sexual trauma that ultimately leads to lifelong, lasting effects in the lifespan.
- Sexual victimization
- Teen Pregnancy
- Intimate Partner Violence

Methods used



Results

Themes

Theme

Finding their way to Religion on their own

Complex Maternal Relationships

Let them be who they want to be

Deafening Silence

If we do not learn from you, we will learn from somewhere else

Subthemes

1) Mi Familia es mi vida

1) How we sacrifice everything for our loved ones, 2) "It made me feel I wasn't respected as a person"

1) Let's talk about sex...please? ,2) "I don't think I had a relationship with my body at all because it was looked down upon", 3) We need to break the silence

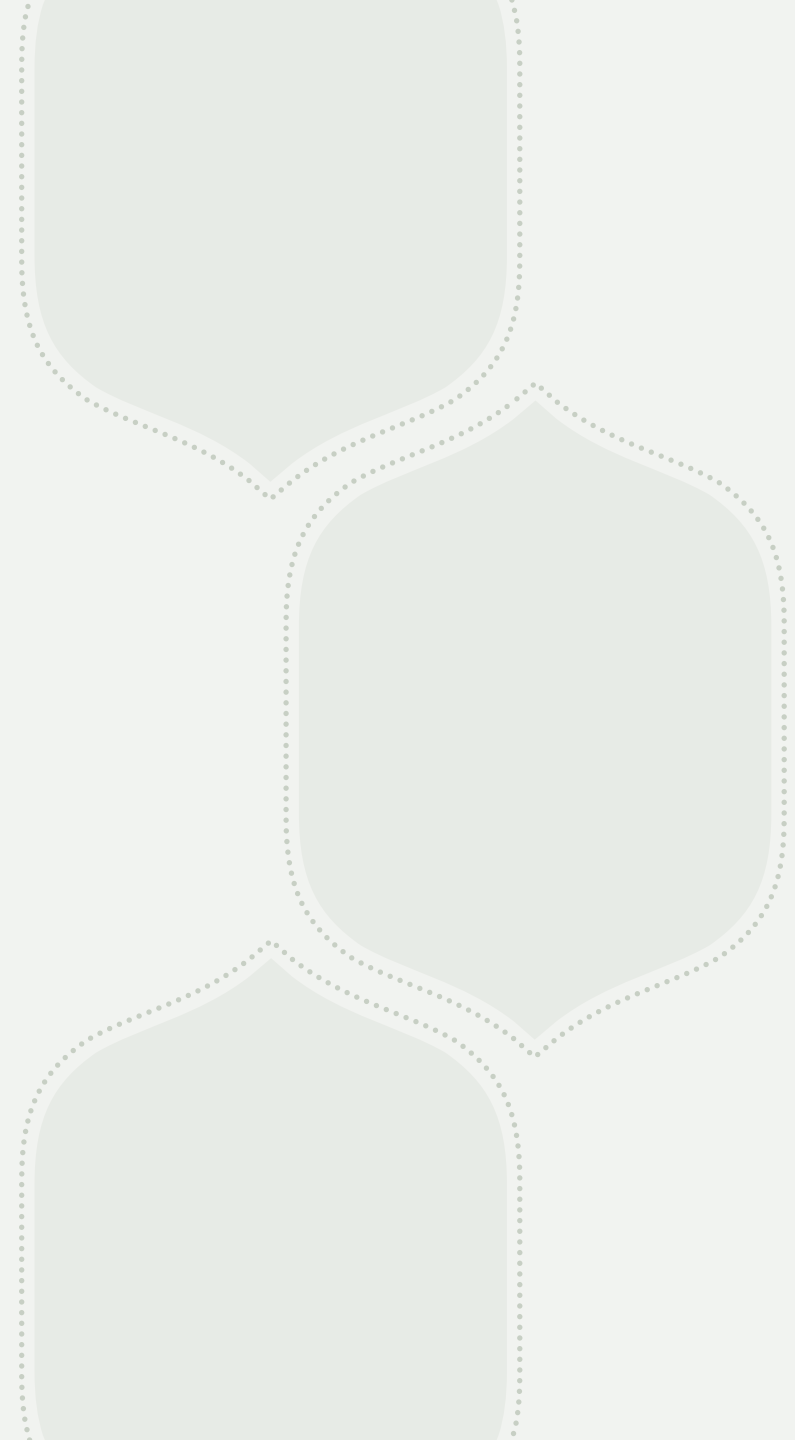
1) "That it (sex) needs to be valued as more than it is and the precaution.": It's a big deal but let's not be dramatic.

QUANTITATIVE

- 18 to 46 years old
- Seventy-five percent of participants held Latina heritage from Mexico
- Eighty-seven and a half percent were raised with Christianity/Catholicism

Theme 1: Finding their way to religion on their own time

“they don't really know that I'm not consistently going anymore. But I do believe. in God, I do believe in...I do hope to, hopefully be able to get closer to it, but as for right now, I guess I'm practicing it in my own my own version.”
(Natalia, 21)



Theme 2: Complex Maternal Relationships

- “I remember this day specifically I was growing pubic hair and I was panicking. I was like, what is this? And I remember asking my mom, my mom, what is this? She just looked at it. She started laughing and she walked away. So I thought I instantly felt rejected in that moment so, I just started crying” (Yesi, 21)

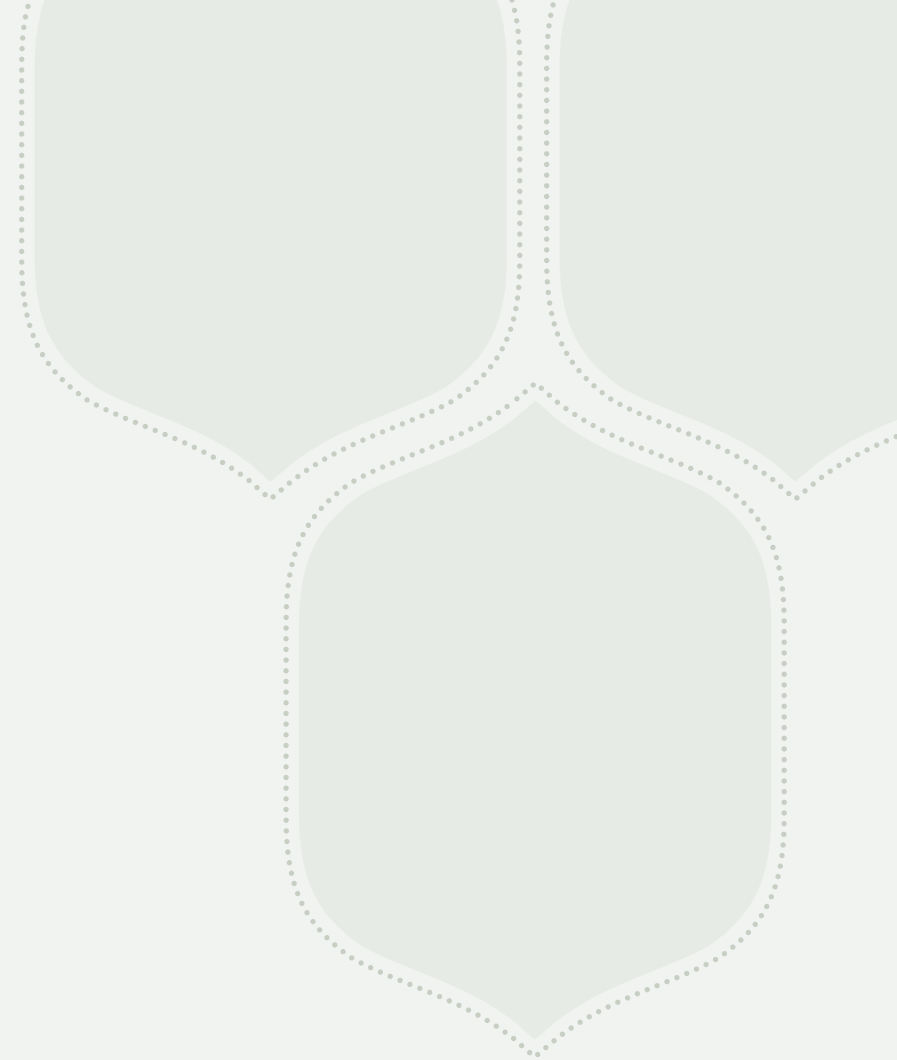


Subtheme 1: Mi Familia es mi Vida

“Now it's good, but in the past, it wasn't the best. I think my parent's sufferings were so big that they didn't really pay a lot of attention to me because they were not mentally there. Now I can see a big growth in them that I feel comfortable around them, and I can talk to them about a lot of things, especially my mom.” (Cheri, 20)

Theme 3: Let them be who they want to be

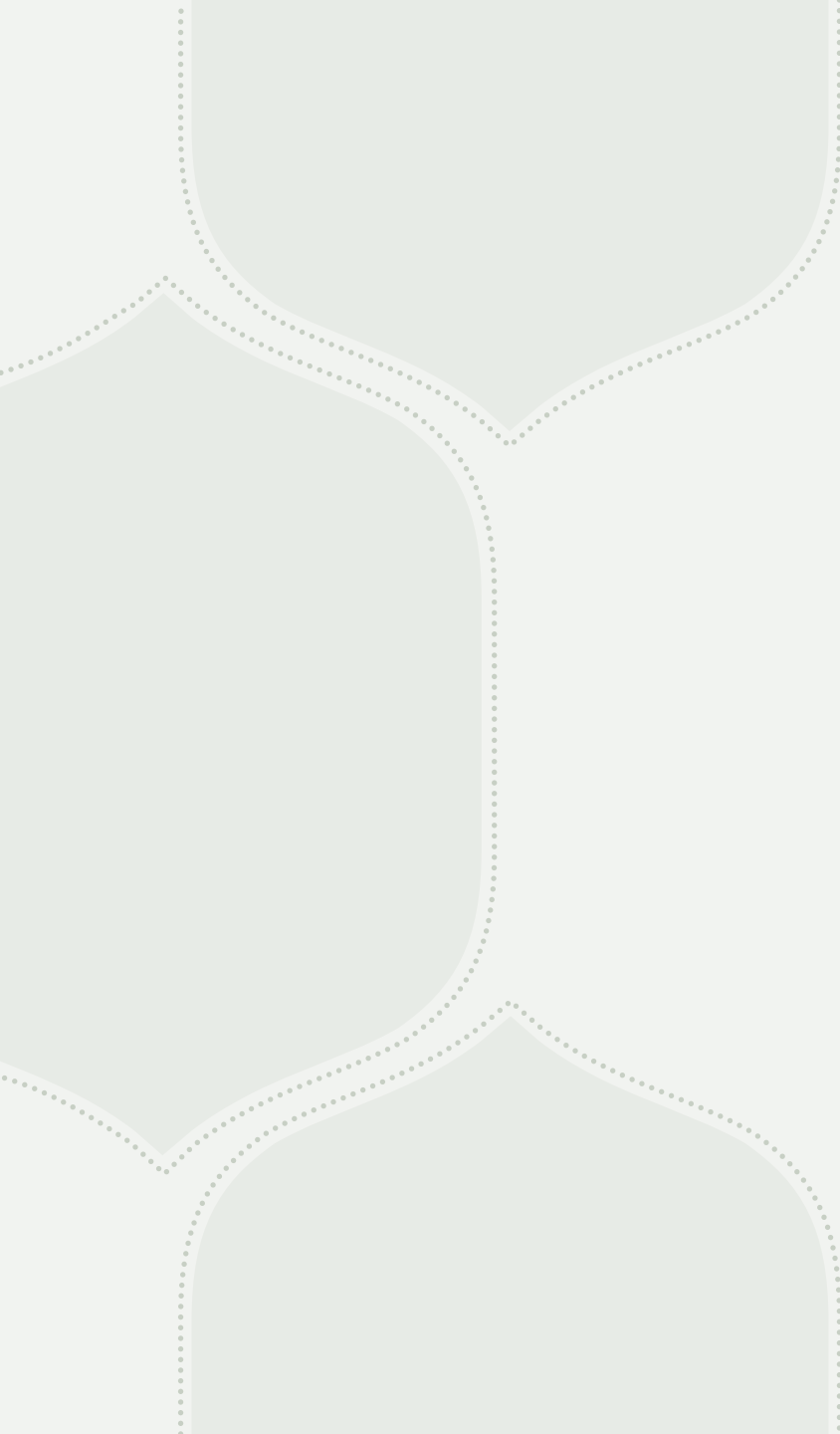
“When I was raped in high school, I didn't know that I was raped until after the fact that the police officer asked me this like, is that what you wanted?” (Dahlia, 33)





Subtheme 1: How we sacrifice everything for our loved ones

“Until I got to college, where they knew that I could do handle myself and provide for myself but in the back of my mom's mind, it's like I still want you to marry someone rich as a backup kind of thing So there's like the doubt that us woman can't provide for ourselves, especially being immigrants, it's like this country has nothing to offer for you. So that's like the negativity that surrounds my status and also how, as women were portrayed in the Mexican culture.” (Yesi, 20)



Subtheme 2: “It made me
feel I wasn’t respected as a
person”

“I saw myself as something less than a man. I believed that I had to always praise men and do as they say because they are the ones who rule over me.” (Ale, 20)

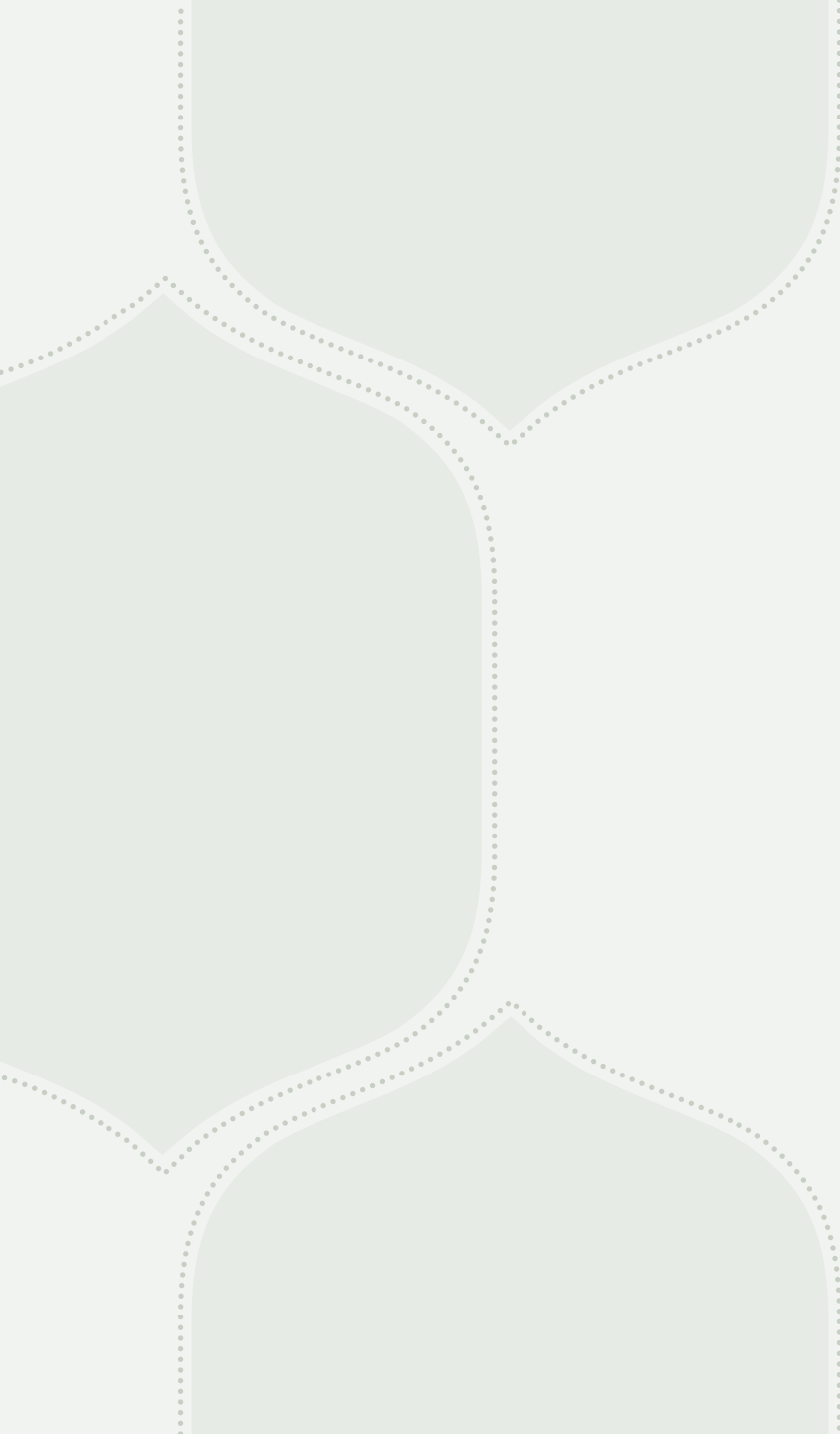
Theme 4: Deafening Silence

”I feel Latino parents make sex so bad, when we obviously like to have sex; we have the highest birth rate! But I believe because this is generational trauma passed on when men controlled their women and women did not have consent to have sex, sex is a taboo. If we educate our children that sex is very natural, we could provide a safe space for our children to come talk to us, ending this generational trauma that surrounds sex.” (Selena, 47)

Subtheme 1: Let's talk about sex...please?


“I was a teenager when I started having sex. It was very taboo and I wish I had someone to talk to that would have given me good advice on how to handle the emotions that come along with having sex. A safe space to talk about how I felt making this decision.” (Selena, 47)





Subtheme 2: “I don’t think I had a relationship with my body at all because it was looked down upon”

“I remember one time like I traveled to the DR (Dominican Republic) ...So I remember one time like we were all basically like just playing around in the water outside with my aunt and she was on her period and I freaked out. And I was like, what the hell is that? And that was like the first time ever that I saw somebody on their period...like that's how I learned about it, period, which was like very traumatized. And I'm like, what's that? Why (is) she bleeding...They just kind of like brushed it off. Like laughed it off. It wasn't like a whole...It wasn't like a conversation about it.” (Dahlia, 33)

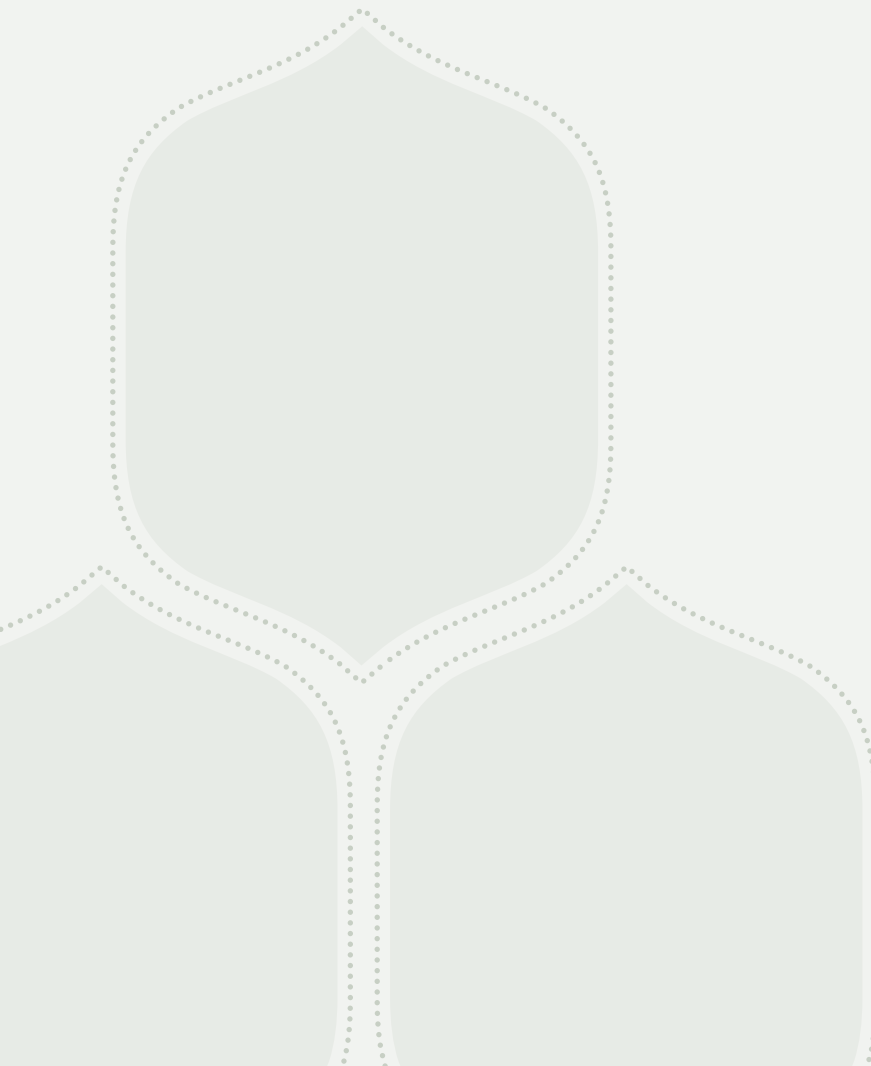


Subtheme 3: We need to break the silence

“Sex education is something that plays a major role in our lives, but not many people see it that way because of the lack of information they receive. Women need to be educated on every little detail when it comes to sex education from protection to after care, after they have been sexually active.” (Hedi, 20)

Theme 5: If we
don't learn
from you, we
will learn from
somewhere
else

“I guess I learned about it through my own research. Some through my doctors, but it was super vague. My mom had only touched about like me getting my period, but as far as like everything now, I feel like I've. Researched it on my own. Before I feel like I couldn't name you everything, all of the parts of my reproductive system, like, I couldn't tell you. I didn't know what a uterus was, I didn't know what an ovary like, I didn't know any of that. And I feel like I had to do all the research myself.” (Natalia, 21)



Subtheme 1: “That it (sex) needs to be valued as more than it is and its precaution”: it’s a big deal but let’s not be dramatic

“That sex does not define me as a woman.” (Lia,25), “That sex isn’t everything” (33), “to not feel rushed into it.” (20), and “It is not the end all be all.” (Kim,21)

Discussion



LIMITATIONS

- ♦ Small sample size
- ♦ Mostly made up of Mexican origin Latinas
- ♦ Time constraints
- ♦ Coding fatigue
- ♦ Personal biases



Implications for practitioners

Family therapy for the Latine community

Building trust with clients and their families

Combining culture and sex ed.

Having transparency when educating and counseling

Helping build literacy around health and mental health while respecting and embracing cultural traditions





Conclusion

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