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Partner-Objectification and Relationship Satisfaction in Gay Male Relationships

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kerry S. Donaldson

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Partner-Objectification and Relationship Satisfaction in Gay Male Relationships

by

Kerry S. Donaldson

MS, Walden University, 2015

BS, The University of Texas at Arlington, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Walden University

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Abstract

Objectification theory explains how media-driven ideals can be internalized and lead to the development of eating disorders, poor body image, depression, anxiety, a desire to achieve a thin ideal, and lowered rates of relationship satisfaction. Research on objectification theory, until recently, has focused primarily on a female population and heterosexual couples. As nontraditional sexual identities have become more accepted in society, media influences have begun to impact other populations, including the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender community. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of these media-driven ideals on a gay male population and determine how objectification may lead to lower rates of relationship satisfaction. A multiple linear regression analysis was used in this study to determine if the predictor variables of self-objectification, partner-objectification, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and education adequately predict the criterion variable of relationship satisfaction in a sample of 81 gay males. Results of the study support the theory that higher levels of reported objectification predicted relationship satisfaction. In other words, the more a gay male objectified himself, the less satisfied he was in romantic relationships. The findings of this study are significant because this is one of the first studies to investigate this topic among a gay male population. The results speak to the impact that media-driven messages can have on an individual, not only in terms of self-concept, but in terms of how those beliefs impact relationship satisfaction. In terms of positive social change, the results may allow for more education at younger ages to teach adolescents the impact of objectification.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Objectification theory has historically been used to provide evidence for the negative effects of media-driven ideals on females. While women are perceived as targets of sexual objectification, male objectification is also prevalent. While women strive to achieve a thin ideal, men tend to want to gain weight and look more muscular (Kozak, Frankenhauser, & Roberts, 2009). Additionally, gay males also have ideals to which they are pressured to conform, which likely also impacts emotional functioning. Recent research has investigated how this problem impacts romantic relationships in heterosexual couples (Zubriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between objectification and media-driven ideals as it pertains to possible relationship satisfaction among a gay male population. The results of this study will provide insight into how media-driven messages can impact a male's self-concept and possibly interfere with interpersonal relationships.

In terms of practical application, it is likely this knowledge can be put to use in understanding the dynamics of romantic relationships and offer insight through couples counseling, premarital counseling, and individual counseling. Additionally, as this change in media climate has evolved over time, it may be possible to reverse these trends and encourage positive social change by providing awareness. In this chapter, I will provide background information pertaining to the scope of literature and gap in knowledge, explain the problem and purpose of the study, and discuss research questions. The theoretical foundation of the study will be discussed and definitions of the constructs

and assumptions critical to the study will be provided. Finally, the scope of boundaries for the study will be explained, limitations will be addressed, and the potential significance will be examined.

Problem Statement

The impact of sexual objectification has been evaluated for several decades. Researchers have learned that the internalization of messages resulting from viewing of sexually objectifying material can result in emotional dysregulation, poor body image, and disordered eating for women (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). Previous researchers have also investigated the impact of media-driven ideals on gay males, with similar findings (Martins, Tiggermann, & Kirkbride, 2007). Males who view objectifying material that promotes ideals often develop disordered eating behaviors, have poor body image, and experience shamefulness when being compared to societal standards (Martins et al., 2007). Zurbriggen et al. (2011) began to investigate the impact this problem could have on romantic relationships in heterosexual couples and found that individuals who consume objectifying material tend to objectify their partners, resulting in lowered relationship satisfaction. Until the past 2 years, research was primarily concerned with heterosexual couples, leaving a large gap for the gay male population. Additionally, previous literature has done little to examine how level of education and socioeconomic status may be predictive factors.

Purpose of the Study

As I stated previously, previous research has established the effects of media-driven ideals on heterosexual couples in regard to objectification and resultant

relationship satisfaction. However, these constructs have not been examined among a gay male population. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the extent to which gay males' self-objectification and demographic variables predict relationship satisfaction among individuals who view objectifying media.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Do gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, Socioeconomic Status (SES), and race/ethnicity predict objectification of their partners among individuals who view objectifying media material?

H₀1: Gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will not significantly predict objectification of their partners as measured by the Male Assessment of Self-Objectification and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale.

H₁1: Gay males' self-objectification, as measured by the Male Assessment of Self-Objectification, and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will significantly predict objectification of their partners as measured by the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale.

Research Question 2: Do gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict relationship satisfaction among gay males who view objectifying media material?

H₀₂: Gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will not significantly predict relationship satisfaction as measured by the Relationship Satisfaction Scale.

H₁₂: Gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will significantly predict relationship satisfaction as measured by the Relationship Satisfaction Scale.

Nature of the Study

With this study, I attempted to determine if one or more of five predictor variables (i.e., self-objectification, partner-objectification, SES, race/ethnicity, and education) adequately predict the criterion variable of relationship satisfaction. This study was conducted using web-based data collection through the use of surveys and rating scales, including the Male Assessment of Self-Objectification (MASO), the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS), and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). Previous studies investigating similar constructs have relied on rating scales to obtain data, which were evaluated in a quantitative manner (Zubriggen et al., 2011). In this study, I used a similar approach.

Individuals who chose to participate met the specific requirements of being gay males ages 18 years old and older. Participants completed a questionnaire to evaluate their consumption of objectifying material, which was included in the demographic questionnaire. Participants completed the Male Assessment of Self-Objectification to

measure levels of self-objectification (MASO) (Daniel, Bridges, & Martens, 2014); the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale to measure partner objectification (McKinley & Hyde, 1996); and the Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988) to measure relationship satisfaction.

Definitions

Gay male: Someone who has a sexual attraction and/or relationship with a person of the same sex.

Media: An outlet for various elements of advertising and entertainment. Examples of media include television and print advertisements, television shows, movies, and music videos (Pardun, L'Engle, & Brown, 2005).

Objectification: The act of treating a person as an object. For the purposes of this study, the term objectification was used to describe the portrayal of individuals in the media in a sexually suggestive manner. When objectification occurs, individuals are valued more for their physical qualities than their internal attributes (Zubriggen et al., 2011). Objectification can also create an illusion of perfection, which is perpetuated by the media and advertising. This often gives individuals a false ideal that is not realistically attainable.

Objectifying media material: Media that promotes or portrays individuals in a sexually objectifying manner. This may include portrayal of thin ideals, provocative clothing, and/or illusions of unattainable physical perfection. Examples include television and print advertisements, music videos, television programs, and movies.

Partner-objectification: When individuals objectify their partners in romantic relationships (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997).

Self-objectification: When individuals see themselves as valued only for their physical attributes and may consequently develop poor body image, appearance anxiety, depression, and disordered eating behaviors (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997).

Assumptions

In this study, I was primarily concerned with individuals who view objectifying media material. Therefore, requirement for participation in this study was that the participants had all viewed objectifying material. Furthermore, I assumed that there was an agreement between me and the participants as to what constituted objectifying media material.

Limitations

One possible limitation of this study was that not all participants may have shared similar beliefs about their definition of objectifying material. I assumed that objectifying media material can result in negative outcomes, such as poor body image, the development of eating disorders, and depressed mood. Other individuals may view objectifying media material as positive or even enjoyable.

Another possible limitation of the study was that participants may not have been willing to be honest and forthright when responding to personal questions about their relationship satisfaction. In regard to the data analysis strategy, I was not able to determine cause and effect because I did not perform a true experiment. Finally, as this is a topic that has historically been investigated primarily among women, it is possible I had

certain biases regarding the outcome of the study. It was necessary for me to remain objective when analyzing data.

Significance

This study is significant for several reasons. Primarily, it is one of the first to investigate objectification and relationship satisfaction among gay males. Additionally, the information obtained from this study could be helpful in further understanding the impact of media-driven messages among gay male couples. Specifically, it may provide insight as to how these messages may predict relationship satisfaction. The results of this study may be useful for clinicians who provide couples counseling to address during therapy. Finally, from a social change perspective, the findings of this study may allow advertisers and those who use objectification in their work to see how their messages impact individuals on a personal level as well as in relationships. In Chapter 2, I will discuss the evolution of research on this topic and explain how researchers have built on this information and come to the knowledge available in the field today.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Previous researchers have identified the maladaptive patterns of behavior that can occur in relationships when one or both parties consume objectifying media (Zurbriggen et al., 2011). While this has been established among heterosexual couples, little is known about the impact on gay males with researchers only beginning to explore this problem among the population. In this chapter, I will outline previous research on the effects of media-driven ideals on females and follow the evolution of the topic to its current focus--LGBT populations. I will identify the methods used to locate the current literature, provide a theoretical explanation for the basis of the study, and explain the impact of sexual objectification on both males and females as well as the impact on relationship satisfaction.

Literature Search Strategy

I searched the following databases in the Walden University Library for historical and current literature: Academic Search Complete, LGBT Life, PsychARTICLES, PsychEXTRA, and PsychINFO. The following key search terms were used to find relevant journal articles: *sexual objectification, media, relationship satisfaction, objectification theory, gay males, self-esteem, eating disorders, partner objectification, self-objectification, advertising, body image, social comparison theory, and LGBT*. The literature review spanned approximately 20 years in order to provide a timeline of the scope of research in this area and to identify the gaps in the current literature. Not much research exists on these themes among a gay male population; therefore, I devoted a

significant amount of review to the female and heterosexual populations in order to make comparisons and create hypotheses.

Theoretical Foundation

Objectification Theory

Historically, what have been considered socially desired ideals have been used in various avenues of media, including advertising, music videos, television, and the movie industry, in its portrayal of individuals. Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) sought to understand how these ideals have been internalized, resulting in various maladaptive behaviors, negative body image, faulty thinking, and an unstable sense of self-worth. They proposed the objectification theory as a way to understand and conceptualize this problem. The objectification theory states that females who encounter objectification tend to take the societal view and internalize this as a way of perceiving themselves (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). Furthermore, objectification results from the perception of females being valued primarily for their bodies (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). When this occurs, women often internalize this perception and begin to view themselves as valued only for their physical attributes (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). Resultantly, they engage in behaviors and seek to achieve this ideal, feeling that they are less valued when they do not meet these societal standards (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). These females often experience shame, anxiety, and depressive symptoms when their actual self does not align with this ideal (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). Some research has shown that the decrease in self-esteem after exposure to media-driven thin ideals occurs in both women with and without a history of disordered eating behavior (Hawkins et al., 2004).

They may develop eating disorders, sexual dysfunction, or experience less satisfaction in relationships (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997).

Partner-Objectification

Researchers have used objectification theory to explain the internalization of objectification and the resultant increase in susceptibility to disordered eating, poor body image, and low self-esteem among individuals who self-objectify (CITE). However, some researchers provided evidence stating that men and women who self-objectify are more likely to objectify other men and women (Lindner, Tantleff-Dunn, & Jentsch, 2012). This provides more evidence for the theory on partner-objectification, which states that individuals who consume objectifying material tend to objectify their partners (CITE).

Objectification Theory in a Male Population

Rohlinger (2002) set out to examine objectification theory as it may apply to males, believing that the representations of ideals in the media, particularly in advertising, can lay the foundation for a negative self-image. The portrayal of men in advertising suggests a masculine individual who is in control, generally attractive and muscular, and with a commanding presence (Rohlinger, 2002). This idealized man is generally depicted as having achieved a high status and as being highly desired by the ideal woman (Rohlinger, 2002).

Researchers investigating the overarching themes of advertising in the domain of alcohol and sporting events have suggested that in addition to selling a product, advertisers also promoted a desirable lifestyle and attached emotion to their products

(Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005). Investigation into particular commercials suggested that masculine men were favored, and women tended to reject men who were less muscular or had a lower perceived status (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005). These results suggested that in order to achieve this lifestyle, men must achieve this ideal image and status (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005).

As social acceptance of the gay lifestyle has increased, so has research in the area of advertising with this population. Some researchers suggested that gay males tend to experience more pressure than heterosexual males to be attractive and remain youthful (Beren, Hayden, Wilfley, & Grilo, 1996). Additionally, Martin et al. (2007) found that gay men report higher levels of body shame, body dissatisfaction, and eating restriction as a result of higher levels of self-objectification than heterosexual men. The gay male population is often found to evidence more symptoms of eating disorders than the heterosexual population (Bosley, 2011). Some research has identified as much as 10% of individuals with an eating disorder are men (Wiseman & Moradi, 2010). An investigation of advertising in gay magazines found the media-driven, ideal, gay male depicted as shirtless, hairless, muscular, with a low body fat content, and under the age of 30 years old (Saucier & Caron, 2008). Lifestyle was also identified as being an important factor in advertisements, with approximately one quarter of content being devoted to fashion, travel, and popular culture or entertainment (Saucier & Caron, 2008). This thought process was posited to result in higher rates of eating disorders, body dysmorphia, and lower rates of relationship satisfaction among this population, similar to previous findings

investigating women and objectification (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Steer & Tiggemann, 2008; Vandebosch & Eggermont, 2012).

Several researchers have used objectification theory as a theoretical base by which to investigate the minority male population in order to offer further insight into body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, and internalization of media-driven ideals. Kozak et al. (2009) compared objectification among heterosexual and gay males and measured the varying degrees to which they viewed appearance of themselves and others through the use of an objectification scale. Their results indicated that gay men objectified themselves and other men more so than heterosexual men, while heterosexual men objectified women more marginally than gay men. The authors identified a growing emphasis on appearance and an identification with an ideal body style. Wiseman and Moradi (2010) offered support for objectification theory as it applies to gay males by focusing on the recall of childhood harassment and gender nonconformity. They discovered that the resultant body shame, cultural standards of attractiveness, and body surveillance were closely correlated with body dissatisfaction and the development of eating disorders, which was linked with media-driven messages.

In support of the relationship between experiences during adolescent development and resultant sexual attitudes, some researchers have investigated the messages that are linked to media exposure and internalized by adolescents (Pardun, L'Engle, & Brown, 2005). Findings indicated that at a young age, children are exposed to sexual media (Pardun, L'Engle, & Brown, 2005). This is relevant because it infers that these body ideals are learned at a young age, and therefore, incorporated into their belief system.

Similarly, there is evidence that the sexual content in hip-hop music videos is influential in sexual attitudes among college students (Kistler & Lee, 2010). Kistler and Lee (2011) revealed that exposure to music videos with sexual content correlated with higher rates of female objectification, giving support to the link between media-driven ideals and objectification. Bosley (2011) investigated body dissatisfaction and eating disorders among gay and bisexual men and identified potential risk factors, suggesting that family of origin, gay culture, social factors, and media were strong influences on the development of eating disorders and body dissatisfaction.

Social Comparison Theory

One way to understand the impact of media-driven ideals on emotional and behavioral functioning is to examine the social comparison theory. Festinger's (1954) theory of social comparison states that individuals have a desire to self-evaluate and that this evaluation is often subjectively based on societal standards. Social comparison theory has been used by multiple researchers to explain poor body image, low self-esteem, and disordered eating (Lew, Mann, Myers, Taylor, & Bower, 2007; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010; Tylka & Sabik, 2010).

Researchers have investigated the internalization of media-driven images, such as those portrayed in fashion magazines and advertisements, on females (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). They hypothesized that women who engage in social comparison would have higher rates of body dissatisfaction and found a correlation between the viewing of thin ideals and negative mood as well as body dissatisfaction. Women see these ideals as something they should aspire to and assume that others expect them to also display those

ideals (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). Additionally, the prevalence of highly altered media images is rampant among advertising and magazines (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). Women's photos are altered to make them appear thinner with a thigh gap, smaller waist, and other general features that are portrayed as ideal (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). This is important because it identifies how women may evaluate themselves based on thin ideals that are unrealistic and unattainable. The internalization of these unattainable goals likely results in the prevalence of disordered eating, poor body image, and negative mood states (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010).

Based on the vast research in this area, it is reasonable to assume that the same comparison would take place in a male population. Recall Zubriggen et al.'s (2011) study, which identified partner-objectification as a result of the consumption of media-driven ideals among heterosexual partners. Therefore, it may also hold true that this comparison could result in partner-objectification in a gay population, when an individual's partner does not meet those standards of perfection.

Media

Westernized society is an appearance-focused culture; this is evident in images portrayed by the mass media (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010). Media has a multitude of outlets by which it reaches its audience, including television programs, commercials, music videos, movies, and print ads. A great deal of these media outlets present visual cues of objectification in some form with actors and models that are attractive, thin, with few flaws and women that are often scantily clad and portrayed as peripheral, or secondary, to men while men are considered the prominent gender (Messner & Montez

de Oca, 2005). This makes the viewer assume that these women are valued for their physical attributes. Alcohol advertisers are prime culprits of this behavior, often sexually objectifying women for the sole purpose of being prized. Emotion and meaningful relationships are rarely, if ever, portrayed (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005).

These messages often impact men in a similar manner. Winners and losers are often compared, with the losers never attaining the prized female (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005). Losers are portrayed as being the average guy, who may dress less impressively, and present without confidence (Messner & Montez de Oca, 2005).

In order to understand the messages portrayed by the media, a look at the content and images in gay advertisements is necessary. Saucier and Caron (2008) analyzed the content in gay men's magazines and found that the objectification of men and specific body parts was evident, similar to previous studies looking at the objectification of women. They found that over the past 30 years, advertisers have moved toward using a more specific body type. The ads they analyzed suggested that an ideal attractive gay man is youthful, shirtless, hairless, and White, with a low percentage of body fat and lean muscle tone.

Although well-documented among the female population, increased pressure to achieve media-driven ideals has been linked to poor body image and body dissatisfaction in males (Schwartz, Grammas, Sutherland, Siffert, & Bush-King, 2010). Recent research has found that ads and media literature portraying muscular body types was correlated with perceived pressure to achieve those body types (Cafri & Thompson, 2004). This was also linked to psychological distress because internalization of these ideals were linked to

negative body image, engagement of self-objectification, and the development of eating disorders (Morry & Staska (2001). Self-objectification occurs when these internalized beliefs result in the negative evaluation of the self, leading to preoccupation with how appearance is perceived by others and a desire to alter that appearance (Morry & Staska (2001).

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction has been shown to be another area affected by objectification. Similar to previously-mentioned areas of research, relationship satisfaction was primarily investigated among traditional gender and relationship roles. Steer and Tiggemann (2008) focused on objectification theory and the resulting internalization of ideals to examine the impact on sexual functioning, a component of relationship satisfaction. Their results suggested that self-objectification was a predictor of poor body image and appearance anxiety, resulting in sexual dysfunction. However, they failed to investigate a direct link between these constructs and relationship satisfaction, instead focusing on self-consciousness and resulting sexual dysfunction.

Downs et al. (2006) found a correlation between relationship satisfaction and body shame among a sample of female exotic dancers. Body shame can be one of the results of internalization of objectification; however, this study did not address partner-objectification. Other research investigated self-objectification, with evidence for reduced relationship satisfaction (Sanchez & Broccoli, 2008).

Soon researchers began looking at direct relationships between media consumption, self- and partner-objectification, and relationship satisfaction. Zurbriggen

et al., (2011) armed with evidence that men who hold objectifying views of their partner tend to feel less satisfaction in relationships (Brooks, 1995), set out to investigate the effects of partner-objectification on relationship satisfaction. Theirs was the first study to reach beyond the scope of self-objectification and sexual dysfunction. They partially based their assumptions on previous research by Strelan and Hargreaves (2005) which revealed that women are more likely to objectify other women to a stronger degree than themselves. If this were the case, it could be hypothesized that similar objectification could take place in romantic relationships. Furthermore, they believed relationship satisfaction among these couples was likely to be negatively correlated with self-objectification and partner-objectification, which could be predicted by the consumption of objectifying media material (Zubriggen et al., 2011). Results of their study largely supported their predictions and suggested that partner-objectification negatively impacted relationship satisfaction. This study also provided support for the correlation between objectifying media messages and partner objectification.

Since the Zubriggen et al. (2011) study, researchers have attempted to evaluate the impact of objectification on close relationships, although in a slightly different context. Keefer et al. (2014) found that when individuals feels that their partner is unable to commit to a relationship, they begin to objectify their partner and become less able to establish a close bond. This concept, subjective uncertainty, looks at objectification as a result of low relationship satisfaction. As of 2014, research continued to focus on heterosexual couples in regard to media consumption, partner-objectification, and relationship satisfaction. Finally, in 2014, researchers focusing on a bisexual population

were able to begin to explore the impact of objectification, body consciousness, and sexual satisfaction in male versus female partners (Kashubeck-West, Zeilman, & Deitz, 2014). Results indicated that females with female partners reported higher levels of body-consciousness than females with male partners. Research on relationship satisfaction with the gay male population has largely focused on minority stress, sexual behavior, and sexual risk (Darbes, Chakravarty, Neilands, Beougher, & Hoff, 2014; Kamen, Burns, & Beach, 2011; Hosking 2014).

Methods Related to Previous Research

Historical Approaches

In order to study this issue, researchers have relied on similar methods to obtain data. The primary method of collection was through the use of rating scales. Researchers used various instruments such as measures of body image, objectification, eating behaviors, and relationship satisfaction scales. Additionally, researchers used examples of objectifying media to operationally define the constructs of media driven images. In their approach to address the problem, researchers have primarily relied on quantitative methods. This type of approach is effective because it allows the problem to be evaluated using the same objective means over various populations. However, when the scope of the study turned toward a male population, researchers needed a tool designed to examine this gender, as previous tools were geared toward females (Daniel et al., 2014).

Current Approaches

This Self-Objectification Questionnaire (SOQ) was the primary measure of self-objectification; however, this measure found significance between disordered eating and

women. Men's issues were not being addressed. Daniel et al. (2014) developed the MASO to address this discrepancy. This instrument targets specific male body concerns including appearance-based and competency-based factors.

We now know that body image issues are relevant for both female and male populations. Viewing of objectifying material, including sexually suggestive material, representation of thin ideals, and portrayal of unattainable perfections, and resultant internalization of these messages can lead to poor body image, disordered eating, and emotional problems. It has further been shown that there is an impact on relationship satisfaction when these media messages result in partner-objectification among heterosexual and bisexual female populations. Examination of these constructs within a gay male population of self-selecting participants from across the United States is the current focus.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has outlined the literature reviewed for purposes of the current proposed study. Strategies for research were identified. The theoretical foundation and basis for research was explained. Key terms related to the current study were identified and defined. Finally, methods related to previous research were explained. Chapter 3 will identify and explain the research methods for the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In this chapter, I will outline the design of the study, population, instruments used, method of analysis, and ethical considerations. A rationale for the use of the design will also be explained. The selection of participants will be discussed as well as the sample size. Finally, I will explain the process of data collection and method of analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the extent to which gay males' self-objectification; partner-objectification; and the demographic variables of SES, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity predict relationship satisfaction. I used a multiple linear regression analysis to test the ability of the independent variables to predict relationship satisfaction among gay males. This type of method allowed me to operationalize the variables in numeric format. Data were collected using survey research methods.

This quantitative survey design was appropriate because it allowed me to study behaviors that naturally occur in the environment and with variables that did not need to be manipulated. The advantages of this type of research include the ability to collect data from a large sample covering a large geographical area and the ability to investigate several variables at one time (Couper, 2017). One advantage of using a nonexperimental design for this study was that the goal of the study was to investigate these constructs as they exist in society today (see Couper, 2017). The variables studied, including age, SES, and race/ethnicity, were not variables that can be manipulated. The goal was not to

control, manipulate, or alter the subjects in any way but instead to interpret, observe, and make conclusions based on findings in order to predict levels of relationship satisfaction.

Methodology

Sample

I sought available, self-selecting participants that self-identified as a gay male and were between the ages of 18 and 65 years old. As an Internet data collection procedure was used, self-selecting participants could have resided any place in the United States. Participants were included based on meeting certain inclusion criteria, including gender, sexual orientation, and exposure to media. All participation was voluntary.

Sampling Procedures

Requirement for participation in the study was that participants had been exposed to media in the form of television, movies, music videos, and/or advertising in general. Any participants who reported lack of exposure to media was not included in the analysis. I conducted a power analysis using G*Power 3.1 software to determine the appropriate sample size for the study. A moderate effect size of 0.15 was chosen based on previous research investigating objectification theory (see Engeln-Maddox, Miller, & Doyle, 2011). An alpha level of 0.05, a power level of 0.80, and five predictors were chosen based on the number of variables I selected for investigation, including self-objectification, partner-objectification, SES, race/ethnicity, and education (see Faul, Buchner, Erdfelder, & Lang (2008). The calculated minimum sample size for a multiple regression analysis was 92 participants, although a minimum of 92 participants could not

adequately represent an entire gay population. Therefore, I recruited as many participants as possible for the study.

Procedures for Recruitment and Participation

I sent advertisements for participation in the study to online social media groups for LGBT individuals (see Appendix F). These groups were selected through the use of a website search engine, such as Google, and through Facebook. Advertisements were further distributed through my personal contacts, and those personal contacts were encouraged to distribute the link to the survey to their contacts as well to increase the survey sample size. This type of recruitment is referred to as snow-ball sampling. Additionally, participants who had previously voluntarily participated in research studies through Survey Monkey's sampling pool were invited to participate in the study. Data were collected using the survey host service Survey Monkey (see SurveyMonkey Inc., 2017). Participants had to provide informed consent prior to being granted access to the survey.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

Demographic Data

Participants who did not meet criteria for the study, including gender and sexual orientation, were excluded from the study upon review of all completed demographic surveys. In other words, I selected only gay males to participate in the study. Participants were provided with information regarding their consent for the study in the participant solicitation letter (see Appendix A). Participants were asked to complete a demographic survey designed by me and provide their age, level of education, race/ethnicity,

employment status, income level, and relationship status (see Appendix B). They were also asked to state how many hours of television they watch per week, state how many hours per week they watch music videos, and state how many hours per week they spend viewing paper or online magazines in order to ensure they had viewed various forms of potentially objectifying media. Participants who did not view any type of media were excluded from the study.

The Male Assessment of Self-Objectification

I used three scales to evaluate the variables in this study. The first scale, the MASO was developed by Daniel et al. (2014) in order to assess the importance of specific body attributes as they are perceived by each individual. This 20-item questionnaire uses a 7-point Likert scale that asks participants to rate each body attribute according to how important it is in the way they view their bodies, where 0 = *not important* and 6 = *very important* (Daniel, et al., 2014). This scale consists of 18 body attributes that are separated into two subscales, with 11 of the items being appearance-based (e.g., “Physical Attractiveness”) and seven items based on competency (e.g., “Agility”) (Daniel, et al., 2014). The MASO provides three scores: a mean appearance-based score; a mean competence-based score; and a total objectification score, which is derived by subtracting the competency score from the appearance score (Daniel, et al., 2014).

This scale was necessary for me to use to determine levels of self-objectification among a male population in this study. In this study, I used the total score, which is calculated by subtracting the competency-based attributes mean score from the

appearance-based mean score, for purposes of analysis because one of the main goals of the study was to determine the presence of objectification overall and not the subtypes of objectification (see Daniel et al., 2014). This use of the MASO was consistent with previous methods of research (see Zurbriggen et al., 2011). The developers have granted permission for use of the test content for noncommercial research and educational purposes without seeking written permission (see Appendix C; Daniel et al., 2014).

The results of previous researchers support the use of the scale and found acceptable internal consistency (.90) and 1-week test-retest reliability ($r = .79$) (Daniel et al., 2013). This scale was validated through three phases of studies and analyzed using an exploratory factor analysis against scales that were in use during that time but were created for use with a female population (Daniel, et al., 2014). The purpose of this was to create a version that would evaluate the same constructs with a male population (Daniel, et al., 2014).

The MASO was tested against the SOQ, the Body Esteem Scale (BES), the Drive for Muscularity Scale (DMS), and the OBCS and found to be a valid measure of self-objectification in a male population (Daniel et al., 2014). Pearson's correlation analyses indicated significant correlations between the MASO score and scores from all four measures (i.e., SOQ, BES, DMS, and OBCS), demonstrating convergent validity. The results included significant correlations to drive for muscularity (DMS; $r = .18, p < .05, r^2 = .03$); body surveillance (OCBS-SURV; $r = .40, p < .01$); body shame (OCBS-SHAME; $r = .24, p < .01$); and self-objectification (SOQ; $r = .63, p < .01$) on the MASO because they were compared to the same constructs on the SOQ, BES, and OBCS. These

findings were consistent with the hypotheses of Daniel et al. (2014). Subsequent researchers using the MASO estimated internal consistency at .85 for the appearance-based scale and .88 for the competency-based scale (Heath, Tod, Kannis-Dymand, & Lovell, 2016).

The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

The OBCS, the second instrument used in this study, is a 24-item scale used to measure partner-objectification (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). It measures objectification and resultant maladaptive cognitive beliefs using a 1 to 6 Likert scale (i.e., *disagree strongly/disagree/disagree mildly/agree/agree mildly/agree strongly*), with higher scores indicating higher levels of partner-objectification (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). There are three subscales including a Self-Surveillance Subscale, a Body Shame Subscale, and a Control Beliefs Subscale. In this study, I utilized the total score for purposes of data analysis because my aim was to investigate the presence of overall partner-objectification among the participants and not the subscales. This use was consistent with previous research (see Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Scoring procedures include the reverse scoring of items (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Reliability of the instrument included Cronbach's alphas of .89 for surveillance, .75 for body shame, and .72 for control beliefs (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Subsequent studies have demonstrated Cronbach's alphas of .80 for surveillance, .75 for body shame, and .78 for control beliefs (Smedburg, 2014). Heath et al. (2016) utilized this scale in their research investigating objectification theory and muscle dysmorphia and demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha of .82. Subsequent use of this scale in similar research demonstrated convergent validity via correlations with body

esteem and public body consciousness as measured against the BES (Franzoi & Shields, 1986) and the Public/Private Self-Consciousness Scales (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975), respectively (McKinley & Hyde, 1996; Zurbruggen et al., 2011). Discriminant validity was established via the lack of correlations with body competence and private body consciousness as measured by the BES and the Public/Private Self-Consciousness Scales (McKinley & Hyde, 1996).

The Relationship Assessment Scale

The final published instrument I used in this study was the RAS, which was developed to improve on the Marital Assessment Questionnaire in order to generalize beyond marital relationships to romantic relationships in general (Hendrick, 1988). Changes made by previous researchers include word substitution (e.g., “relationship” instead of “marriage”) and the inclusion of two items from an earlier version of the scale (Hendrick, 1988). The development of the RAS indicated high internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of .86 and correlated highly with the previous version of the Marital Assessment Questionnaire (Hendrick, 1988). The RAS includes seven items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, which range from 1 (*low satisfaction*) to 5 (*high satisfaction*); (Hendrick, 1988). Items 4 and 7 are reverse scored, with items being added and divided by seven to obtain a mean score (Hendrick, 1988). Higher scores represent higher levels of relationship satisfaction (Hendrick, 1988). Sample questions include “How well does your partner meet your needs?” and “How much do you love your partner?” (Hendrick, 1988). This scale was tested for convergent validity against the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Villeneuve et al., 2015), which is another global measure of relationship

satisfaction, and the results indicated consistency between the measures (Vaughn & Baier, 2000). Researchers have used two separate *t* tests to detect any gender differences and none were detected (Vaughn & Baier, 2000). They then calculated a zero-order correlation coefficient on the total scores for each instrument (Vaughn & Baier, 2000). Finally, a multiple regression of DAS subscales onto the RAS was also performed, with internal consistencies found to be in acceptable range with a Chronbach's alpha of .91 (Vaughn & Baier, 1999). The zero-order correlation was significant at .84 ($p < .01$), suggesting content validity (Vaughn & Baier, 2000). The highest correlation was found between the DAS Satisfaction subscale and the RAS total score, suggesting that the RAS could be used as a measure of an individual's attitude toward a relationship (Vaughn & Baier, 2000). Subsequent use of the scale indicated a Cronbach's alpha of .89 (Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999).

Restatement of Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: To what extent do gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict objectification of their partners?

*H*₀1: Gay males' self-objectification, as measured by the MASO, and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will predict objectification of their partners as measured by the OBCS.

*H*₁1: Gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will not predict objectification of their partners as measured by the MASO and the OBCS.

Research Question 2: Does gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict relationship satisfaction among gay males?

H₀₂: Gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will predict relationship satisfaction as measured by the Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RAS).

H₁₂: Gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will not predict relationship satisfaction as measured by the Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RAS).

Data Collection

Three self-administered surveys and a demographic questionnaire were made available via Survey Monkey to various individuals that meet the requirements for participation. Participants were invited to complete the study through advertisements sent to online groups as well as those in my personal contacts. Informed consent was provided which introduced myself, provided a background of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, and discussed any risks involved in participation. Data collection continued until the required number of responses were met, for approximately 6–8 months. Data was collected, analyzed for accuracy and completeness, and analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Incomplete surveys were not included in the data set.

Data Analysis

The variables investigated in this study were self-objectification, partner-objectification, relationship satisfaction, race/ethnicity, SES, and educational attainment. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the ability of the independent variables, self-objectification, partner objectification, educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity, to predict relationship satisfaction, the dependent variable. A simultaneous method of data entry using SPSS's default criteria was used; all five variables were entered into the model as independent variables at the same time in the first block. This type of analysis was used because previous research has utilized similar methods, and this aligned most consistently with the research questions (Zubriggen et al., 2011). Categorical variables were dummy coded in the model such that each category for race became a variable and an individual received a 1 if they are a member of that racial group and 0 if they were not. I determined if the model was statistically significant and assessed the amount of variance accounted for by the predictor variables using R^2 . This strategy was used to test the hypotheses for each research question.

Statistical Assumptions

There are several key assumptions made by a multiple linear regression analysis. The assumption of linearity assumes that there will be a linear relationship between the outcome variable and the independent variables (Allison, 1999). This was tested with Pearson correlations and scatterplots. The assumption of homoscedasticity states that the independent variables will be equal in variance of error, which was tested using scatterplots via the regression function (Allison, 1999). Another assumption of this

analysis is the assumption of no multicollinearity, meaning that the variables are uncorrelated with each other (Allison, 1999). This was tested with Pearson correlation and the tolerance and variance inflation factors statistics, which was generated in the regression in SPSS. In this study, there is no way of controlling for relationships between participants; therefore, it is possible this assumption could be violated. For example, if two participants complete the study who are in a relationship together, this may cause a confound. The assumption of multivariate normality assumes that the variables are normally distributed (Allison, 1999). This was tested using skewness and kurtosis and Shapiro-Wilk test of normality. If data were not normal, they were transformed to normal.

Threats to Validity

There are many advantages to using self-administered survey instruments. One, respondents could take the survey at their convenience. Second, there was minimal bias, as the examiner was not present to directly ask the questions. They are also cost effective and can reach a large number of people. Maturation, testing factors, and history effect were likely not applicable. However, mortality may have been a concern should participants have lost interest while completing the study and fail to complete all questions. Additionally, due to the nature of an online survey approach, participants were not observed while completing the study. Therefore, it is uncertain whether or not the participant actually completed the entirety of the study. Also, the researcher was not present to clarify should there have been any confusion about the questions presented. As the study related to interpersonal relationships, participants may not have been willing to

be forthright and honest if they completed the survey in the company of others. External validity is the ability of the research to generalize to other populations (Creswell, 2009). As this study primarily targeted a convenient sample of self-selecting gay male participants, it cannot be assumed that the findings can be generalized to a female population, the general gay male population, or heterosexual male population.

Ethical Procedures

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Walden University IRB. Consideration to the nature of this study and its possible effects on participants were evaluated by myself. United States Federal Regulations Relevant to Informed Consent Procedures was reviewed to ensure participants are adequately informed about their participation in the study. No physical or psychological risks were identified. Informed consent was provided through Survey Monkey in the survey to explain participation procedures, the voluntary nature of the study, the risks and benefits of participation, confidentiality issues, and contact information for me and my advisor.

There were no physical risks or benefits related to study participation. Possible psychological risks include concern that negative ratings regarding relationships may somehow be disclosed. Participants were made aware that the surveys are confidential and anonymous, in effort to counter this concern. Neither names nor e-mail addresses were collected; therefore, participation was anonymous. Participants had no obligation to complete any portion of the study with which they may have been uncomfortable. All data will be kept anonymous in password-protected files for a period of five years. At the end of this period, the files will be destroyed.

SurveyMonkey.com was used to collect data and they ensure that they act as a custodian of the data and do not sell or release any information except to myself. The data was downloaded by the researcher as a SPSS file in order to perform the analysis. Survey Monkey will hold information securely and comply with the U.S Privacy Shield framework. Data will be stored on servers in the United States. Data will be destroyed by Survey Monkey after I close my account; this may take up to 12 months. Should I maintain an account with Survey Monkey, data will be deleted upon completion of the study. I will store downloaded data in a password protected SPSS file for five years, which complies with Walden University guidelines.

Summary

In conclusion, the purpose of this present quantitative study was to examine the extent to which gay males' self-objectification and demographic variables predicted objectification of their partners and relationship satisfaction. A linear multiple regression analysis was conducted using data collected through surveyMonkey.com, including demographic information and three scales assessing self-objectification, partner-objectification, and relationship satisfaction. Reliability and validity of these instruments were discussed, as well as any threats to validity. Finally, any ethical issues related to the study were identified and discussed. The next chapter describes the results of my study.

Chapter 4: Results

Restatement of Purpose

Self-objectification is the attitude that the appearance of an individual's body exerts greater influence on their self-worth than the body's ability to functionality physically (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997). The purpose of this study was two-fold: (a) to measure gay males' self-objectification and the objectification of their partner and (b) determine the extent to which objectification, standard demographic characteristics, and exposure to objectifying media predicted relationship satisfaction. The aim of this study was to provide information for a greater understanding of the impact of media-driven objectification messages on gay male relationships.

This chapter is presented in five sections and a summary. In the first section, I list the research question, and in the second section, present demographic characteristics. The third section is a presentation of the media exposure descriptive statistics, while the fourth section includes the results for Research Question 1 and the fifth section for Research Question 2. The chapter ends with a summary.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: To what extent do gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict objectification of their partners?

*H*₀1: Gay males' self-objectification, as measured by the MASO, and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will predict objectification of their partners as measured by the OBCS.

H₁₁: Gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will not predict objectification of their partners as measured by the MASO and the OBCS.

Research Question 2: Does gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict relationship satisfaction among gay males?

H₀₂: Gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will predict relationship satisfaction as measured by the Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RAS).

H₁₂: Gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity will not predict relationship satisfaction as measured by the Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RAS).

Demographic Characteristics

Personal Demographics

A total of 81 gay men who characterized their sexual orientation as LGBT participated in this study. The following demographic results show that the average participant was a White, 40-year-old, gay man who held a bachelor's degree, was employed, and averaged \$90,000 in annual income. At the time of participation in this study, he was in a relationship that was less than five years in length and his longest relationship was 48+ months. See Table 1 for demographic information.

For age, the averages ranged in the 30s and 40s. For ethnicity, the majority were White ($n = 65$, 80%). The remaining 20% involved a 2-to-1 ratio of Hispanic men ($n = 11$, 14%) to African American men ($n = 5$, 6%).

For education, half of the men held bachelor's degrees, ($n = 38$, 47%). The other half included approximately equal proportions of men who held graduate degrees ($n = 18$, 22%) and men who had attended but not finished college ($n = 23$, 28%). Two men had a high school diploma or GED ($n = 2$, 3%).

For employment, the majority of men were employed ($n = 73$, 90%). One man each was not employed or retired, ($n = 1$, 1%). Six men were students, ($n = 6$, 7%).

For SES, the average annual income was close to six figures (i.e., $M = \$93,049$). However, the large amount of variability in the data (i.e., $SD = \$79,291$) indicated an outlier. The maximum annual income reported was \$600,000. Without the high outlier, however, the average was still high (i.e., $M = \$85,641$) and variable (i.e., $SD = \$55,922$).

Table 1

*The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants***Statistics**

		Age	Annual Income
N	Valid	81	81
	Missing	0	0
Mean		40.41	93049.38
Std. Deviation		9.117	79291.377
Minimum		20	0
Maximum		62	600000

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	HS Grad or GED	2	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Some College	23	28.4	28.4	30.9
	Bachelor's Degree	38	46.9	46.9	77.8
	Graduate Degree	18	22.2	22.2	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Ethnicity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African American	5	6.2	6.2	6.2
	Hispanic	11	13.6	13.6	19.8
	White	65	80.2	80.2	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Employment Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed	73	90.1	90.1	90.1
	Not Employed	1	1.2	1.2	91.4
	Retired	1	1.2	1.2	92.6
	Student	6	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	81	100.0	100.0	

Relationship Demographics

For relationship status, the men were asked to characterize their current romantic relationship by choosing one of four options. The largest proportion of the men, not quite half, were in relationships that were less than 5 years in length at the time of participation ($n = 35, 43\%$). Approximately equal proportions of the remaining men were single at the time of participation in this study ($n = 14, 17\%$); were in long-term relationships that were over 5 years in length ($n = 14, 17\%$); or were partnered or married ($n = 18, 22\%$).

The men were further queried about the length of their longest relationship. Two thirds reported that the length of their longest relationship was 48+ months ($n = 51, 63\%$). A quarter of the men reported that their longest relationship was 25–48 months in length ($n = 20, 25\%$). One in 10 responded that their longest relationship lasted 13–24 months, ($n = 8, 10\%$). Two men said their longest relationship to date lasted less than 12 months (3%).

I cross-tabulated these data and examined them in tabular form (see Table 1). Cross-tabulated frequencies are illustrated on Figure 1. The cross-tabulated data showed that the longest relationship was 48+ months for a majority of the men; however, their current relationship status did not reflect this directly.

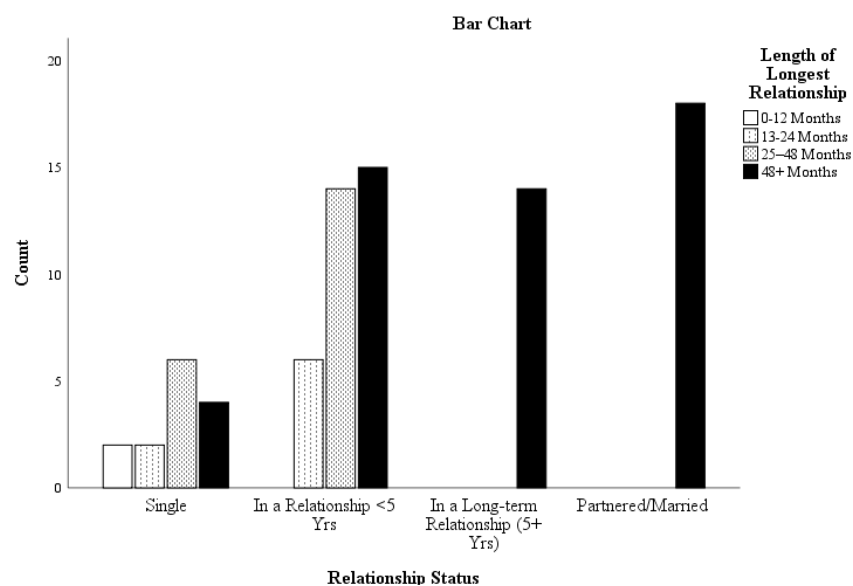


Figure 1. Numbers of participants by relationship status and length of longest relationship.

Table 2

Relationship Status x Length of Longest Relationship Crosstabulation

Relationship status	Length of Longest Relationship (Months)				Total
	0–12	13–24	25–48	48+	
Single	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	6 (8%)	4 (5%)	14 (17%)
Relationship <5 years	0	6 (8%)	14 (17%)	15 (18%)	35 (43%)
Relationship 5+ years	0	0	0	14 (17%)	14 (17%)
Partnered/married	0	0	0	18 (23%)	18 (23%)
Total	2 (2%)	8 (10%)	20 (25%)	51 (63%)	81 (100%)

Media Exposure Summated Scale (SS)

To ensure that participants viewed various forms of potentially objectifying media and to quantify relative exposure to it, participants were asked three questions that measured the numbers of weekly hours they spent viewing television, music videos, and online magazines. Scoring was based on a 4-point scale of time spent (1 = 1–5 hrs, 2 = 6–10 hrs, 3 = 11–15 hrs, and 4 = 16+ hrs). The numeric values of each participant's responses to these three items were added together to generate his unique Media Exposure Summated Scale (SS). The possible range was 3–12. For example, a participant whose Media Exposure SS = 3 (the minimum) viewed various forms of potentially objectifying media between 3 and 15 hours a week. On the other end of the spectrum, a participant whose Media Exposure SS = 12 (the maximum) viewed various forms of potentially objectifying media 48+ hours a week. Participants who did not view any type of media were excluded from the study. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for media exposure. The average media exposure was 4, which suggested that the men were exposed to objectifying media about 20 hours a week on average. On the extremes, the sample included men who were exposed as little as 3–15 hours a week to as much as 48 hours a week or more.

Table 3

Media Exposure SS Descriptive Statistics

Mean		4.35 (.09)
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.17
	Upper Bound	4.53
Median		4.00
Variance		.66
Std. Deviation		.81
Minimum		3
Maximum		6
Range		3
Interquartile Range		1
Skewness		.42

Results for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was addressed in two parts. In the first part of this section, I present descriptive statistics. In the second part, the results concerning Research Question 1 based on correlation and regression are presented.

MASO Self- and Partner-Objectification

I used the 20-item scale MASO survey, developed by Daniel et al. (2014), to assess each participant's ratings of the importance of two different attributes of the body: its physical appearance and its physical ability to perform. Daniel et al. called the physical ability to perform *competence*. The MASO survey includes 13 appearance-based survey items (e.g., "well-defined abdominal muscles") and seven competence-based

survey items (e.g., “agility”; Daniel et al., 2014). Participants used a 7-point Likert scale of importance (0 = *not important* to 6 = *very important*). For each participant, I calculated the mean of the numeric values of his responses to each subscale as his Appearance Summated Score and his Competence Summated Score, respectively. Then, each participant’s total objectification summated score was generated by subtracting the Competence Summated Score from his Appearance Summated Score. The higher the difference, the more the participant valued physical appearance over physical competence.

Two sets of MASO appearance-versus-competence objectification scores were generated. One set was generated from the participant about himself; this was the Self-Objectification Summated Score. The other set was generated from the participant about his romantic partner; this was the Partner-Objectification Summated Score. Higher positive scores indicated higher levels of self-objectification, whereas scores near zero in value indicated a balance between physical appearance and physical competence. Negative scores indicated greater emphasis on physical competence than appearance.

Descriptive Statistics on Self-Objectification

Table 4 lists the descriptive statistics for the Self-Objectification Summated Score ratings and the two component measures from which it was generated. The descriptive statistics for the two component measures were strikingly similar to each other. The minimum and maximum statistics revealed that the ratings for both physical appearance and physical competence spanned the possible range from men who reported that both attributes were only somewhat important to men who reported that both attributes were

very important. Because of the striking similarity of ratings of appearance and competence, the corresponding difference between physical appearance and physical competence (i.e., Self-Objectification Summated Score) was minimal.

Table 4

Participant Self Ratings of Importance of Physical Appearance, Physical Competence, and Difference between Them (Self-objectification)

		Appearance SS	Competence SS	Self-objectification SS
Cronbach's alpha		.89	.87	.88
Mean		3.57 (.08)	3.35 (.08)	.21 (0.07)
95% CI	LB	3.41	3.18	.06
	UB	3.72	3.53	.36
Median		3.53	3.28	.25
Variance		.50	.61	.46
Std. Deviation		.70	.78	.68
Minimum		1.77	1.71	-1.82
Maximum		6.00	6.00	1.52
Range		4.23	4.29	3.34
Interquartile Range		.81	.86	.84
Skewness		.29	.55	-.72

Note. 95% CI = 95% confidence interval of the mean. LB = lower bound of the 95% CI. UB = upper bound of the 95% CI. IQR = Interquartile range. Skew SE = 0.27.

Descriptive Statistics on Gay Males' Partner-Objectification

Table 4 lists the descriptive statistics for the Partner-Objectification SS ratings and the two component measures from which it was generated. As with the Self-Objectification SS, the descriptive statistics for the two component measures were strikingly similar to each other. The minimum and maximum statistics revealed that physical appearance and physical competence ratings spanned the possible range, from men who reported that both attributes were only somewhat important in their partners to men who reported that both attributes of self-objectification were very important in their partners. Again, due to the striking similarity of ratings, the corresponding difference between partners' physical appearance and physical competence (i.e., Partner-Objectification SS) was minimal. The identical values of the Partner-Objectification SS mean and 5% trimmed mean indicated that the mean was not unduly influenced by values on the highest and lowest ends of the data's range.

Table 5

Participant Ratings of Importance of Physical Appearance, Physical Competence, and Difference Between Them in his Partner (Partner-Objectification)

	Appearance SS	Competence SS	Partner-objectification SS
Cronbach's alpha	.92	.91	.92
Mean	3.46 (.08)	3.09 (.09)	.37 (.06)
95% CI			
LB	3.30	2.90	.25
UB	3.63	3.28	.48
Median	3.38	3.14	.39
Variance	.54	.72	.28
Std. Deviation	.74	.85	.52
Minimum	.08	.00	-1.66
Maximum	6.00	6.00	1.92
Range	5.92	6.00	3.58
Interquartile Range	.62	.79	.62
Skewness	-.48	.30	-.41

Descriptive Statistics on Objectified Body Consciousness

The objectified body consciousness scale (OBCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996) was used to measure self-objectification and resultant maladaptive cognitive beliefs by relative agreement with 24 survey statements; responses were based on a 7-point Likert scale of agreement (1 = Disagree Strongly, 7 = Strongly Agree). A sample statement is “I

feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best.” A sample of a reverse-scored statement is “I rarely compare how I look with how other people look.” After reverse scoring some items, an Objectified Body Summated Scale was generated as the mean of the numeric values of all 24 survey items for each participant. Higher scores indicated higher levels of self-objectification.

On Table 5, the Objectified Body SS mean showed that the average response reflected the category of “neither agree nor disagree” and that minimum and maximum statistics indicated a range of responses between “disagree mildly” and “agree.” The similarity of values between the mean and 5% trimmed mean indicated that the mean was not unduly influenced by values on the highest and lowest ends of the data’s range.

Table 6

Participant Ratings of Agreement with Objectified Body Consciousness

	Objectified Body SS	Relationship Satisfaction SS
Cronbach's alpha	.79	.91
Mean	3.98 (0.06)	6.54 (0.23)
95% CI		
	LB	3.86
	UB	4.10
Median	4.00	7.00
Variance	0.28	4.31
Std. Deviation	0.53	2.07
Minimum	2.71	0.00
Maximum	6.08	9.00
Range	3.37	9.00
Interquartile Range	0.46	2.63
Skewness	0.63	-1.30

Descriptive Statistics on Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction was measured with four survey items about relationship fulfillment and contentment (i.e., How committed are you to your partner? How satisfied are you, overall, with your partner?, How sexually satisfied are you with your partner?, and How emotionally satisfied are you with your partner?). It used a 9-point Likert-type

scale (0 = Not At All, 9 = Extremely). The Relationship Satisfaction SS was the mean of the four responses.

On Table 5, the mean reflected the category of “very committed” to my partner. The median reflected the same interpretation. The similarity of values between the mean and 5% trimmed mean indicated that the mean was not unduly influenced by values on the highest and lowest ends of the data’s range.

Correlations

In order to answer RQ1 and RQ2 about the factors that predicted partner objectification (RQ1) and relationship satisfaction (RQ2), a correlation matrix was generated and inspected to identify correlations that were sufficient to include in regressions to predict partner objectification and relationship satisfaction, respectively. A number of moderate to large, statistically significant correlations emerged between measures of body objectification, relationship satisfaction, and demographic variables. These are listed on Table 6, shown in bold and marked with asterisks for ease of recognition.

MASO self-objectification and partner objectification were strongly, significantly, and positively correlated. Self-objectification was negatively correlated with age. Self-objectification was unrelated to perceptions of the objectified body, relationship satisfaction, the amount of media exposure, SES, or education.

Of note, age was significantly associated with self-objectification, partner-objectification, the objectified body, and relationship satisfaction, as well as SES and education. The only variable that age was unassociated with was media exposure. The

direction of the relationships between age and the variables with which it correlated varied. Age was inversely or negatively correlated with self-objectification, partner-objectification, and the objectified body. In contrast, age was directly or positively correlated with relationship satisfaction. Finally, age was also strongly and positively correlated with SES and education, which were also strongly correlated with each other.

The Objectified Body SS did not correlate with either MASO measure, self-objectification or partner-objectification. It correlated negatively with relationship satisfaction, age, and SES. In contrast, the Objectified Body SS correlated directly with media exposure.

Table 7

Pearson Correlation Matrix of Potential Predictors of Partner Objectification and Relationship Satisfaction

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7
V1 Self-Objectification SS	1						
V2 Partner-Objectification SS	.62**						
V3 Objectified Body SS	.11	.10					
V4 Relationship Satisfaction SS	-.05	.05	-.25*				
V5 Age	-.32**	-.26*	-.23*	.26*			
V6 Media Exposure SS	-.16	-.16	.30**	-.17	.14		
V7 SES	-.11	-.14	-.38**	.40**	.66**	-.19	
V8 Education	-.16	-.21*	-.01	.33**	.65**	-.01	.72**

Note. V = variable. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). (Significant Correlations in bold) *N* = 81 men.

RQ1 Multiple Regression

Recall that the aim of RQ1 was to identify the factors that predicted partner objectification among gay men. This aim fit with multiple regression. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2019), regression is a technique that allows the researcher to quantify the change in the predicted variable (also known as the dependent or criterion variable) that results from changes in one or more predictor (independent) variable(s), and to explain the relative contribution that each predictor variable makes to prediction by quantifying its “weight” compared to other predictors.

For the multiple regression, RQ1 listed the predicted variable as partner objectification. It listed the predictor variables as self-objectification, educational attainment, SES, and ethnicity. The strong correlation between SES and education (Table 6) would have introduced multicollinearity in the regression (i.e., correlation between predictor variables) so both variables could not be used in the regression. The only demographic variable that correlated with partner-objectification was age, which also correlated strongly with SES and education, so age was entered into the regression as a potential predictor and representative of education and SES. Also recall that 80% of the participants were White. Due to this substantial skew, the demographic variable of ethnicity was excluded from inferential analyses for answering the research questions presented below. Finally, media exposure was included in the regression because one aim of this study was to understand if or how exposure to objectifying media influenced objectification among gay men. Therefore, the predictor variables for RQ1 were self-objectification, media exposure, and age.

The data were first screened to ensure that they met the assumptions of multiple regression. There are several assumptions to be met (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Results of assumptions testing are briefly described below.

Adequate sample size. One, the sample size rule of thumb is at least 20 cases per independent variable in the analysis (Warner, 2013). There were 81 participants in the current study and three independent variables. Sample size was sufficient.

Linear relationships between predicted and predictor variables. Two, multiple linear regression is based on a linear relationship between each independent variable (self-objectification, media exposure, and age) and the dependent variable (partner objectification). The linearity assumption was checked with visual inspection of individual scatter plots with superimposed lines of best fit for each pair of variables (scatter plots not shown). All relationships were linear.

Univariate normality. Three, variables were screened for univariate normality. Skew statistics for the variables fell close to the ± 2 criterion for univariate normality (Warner, 2013). Similar mean/trimmed mean values suggested that the univariate normality assumption was met.

Residual normality and absence of outliers. Fourth, the data were screened to verify that the errors between observed and predicted values (i.e., the residuals of the regression) were normally distributed, outliers were absent, and the data were homoscedastic (Warner, 2013). These assumptions were checked with visual inspection of the residual histogram (Figure 2), the normal P-P plot (Figure 3) and plot of

the standardized residuals and predicted values (Figure 4). These plots showed that the data met these assumptions.

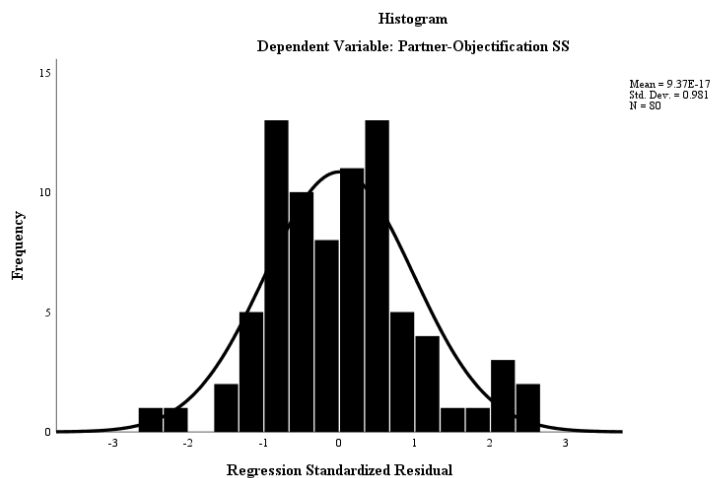


Figure 2. Histogram of RQ1 regression residuals.

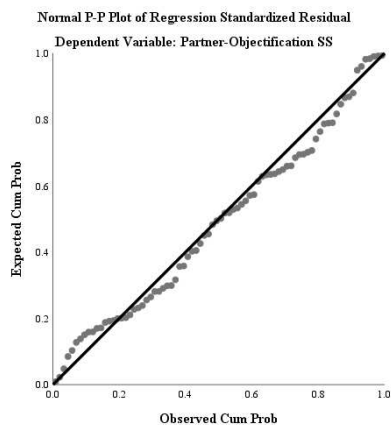


Figure 3. Normal P-P plot of the standardized residual predicting partner objectification plotted against the normal curve.

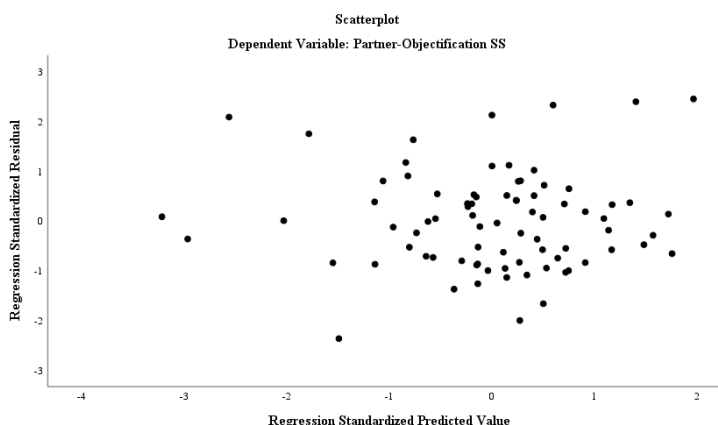


Figure 4. Scatter plot of the standardized residual against the standardized predicted value.

Multivariate normality. Fifth, data were screened for multivariate normality.

Screening involved generating and comparing Mahalanobis distances to the critical value of the chi-square distribution based on the number of predictor variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). In the regression for RQ1, there were three potential predictor variables, so the critical value was $X^2 = 12.84$. Participants whose Mahalanobis distances were greater than the critical value were substantially outside the swarm of data points in multivariate space. Case 74 emerged as a multivariate outlier, so it was removed. The regression was run again.

Absence of multicollinearity. Sixth, multiple regression assumes that predictor variables are not strongly correlated with one another, that is, do not show collinearity or multicollinearity. The data met this regression assumption based on several criteria. One, the intercorrelations on Table 6 suggested that multicollinearity was not an issue among the variables that met Hair et al.'s (2010) criterion value of correlations less than $r = .70$ and which were entered into the regression. Two, the tolerance statistics on Table 7 are medium to large. Tolerance reflects the proportion of variance in a listed predictor

variable that is not shared with or predictable from other predictor variables in the regression already (Warner, 2013). Minimum tolerance is zero. Zero tolerance indicates that the predictor variable contains no additional variance besides that already present in other predictor variables; it represents perfect multicollinearity. The variable with zero tolerance had no new predictive information to add to the regression. Tolerance less than 0.20 (20%) suggest multicollinearity. Tolerances less than 0.01 (10%) reveal multicollinearity. On the other end, maximum tolerance is one, which indicates that the predictor variable is completely uncorrelated with the other predictor variables in the regression. Tolerances that are substantially larger than zero are evidence that the predictor variable contains new information that is not already provided by the other predictor variables. The tolerance values on Table 7 show that all three predictor variables had the potential to explain a large and unique proportion of partner objectification unaffected by other predictors. Three, the variance inflation factors (VIF; calculated with the formula $1 \text{ divided by tolerance}$) were less than 10; multicollinearity is present when VIF statistics have values greater than 10 (Warner, 2013).

Absence of autocorrelation. Seventh, the data met the multiple linear regression assumption of little or no autocorrelation among the residuals, Durbin-Watson $d = 2.27$.

RQ1 Regression Results with MASO. The correlation between MASO self-objectification and partner-objectification was strong, direct, and statistically significant (Table 6). This section shows the results of regressing partner objectification onto MASO self-objectification, media exposure, and age.

The regression model is used to test two sets of hypotheses. The first set tested the hypothesis that the addition of self-objectification, media exposure, and/or age, (i.e., the regression model) was no better at predicting partner objectification than was the mean of the partner objectification. The specific hypotheses were:

$$H_0: R^2 = 0$$

$$H_1: R^2 > 0$$

Results showed that the addition of self-objectification, media exposure, and age explained a statistically significant 38% of partner objectification. The hypothesis ($H_0: R^2 = 0$) was rejected, $R^2 = .38$, $F(3, 76) = 15.26$, $p < .001$.

The second set of hypotheses tested the prediction that self-objectification, media exposure, and/or age each made a unique and statistically significant contribution to predicting partner objectification. That is, that the slope of the individual regression lines something other than zero (i.e., is not horizontal). The specific hypotheses were:

$$H_0: \text{Beta} = 0$$

$$H_1: \text{Beta} \neq 0$$

The t statistics and associated p values on Table 7 show that the only significant predictor of partner objectification among LGBT men was self-objectification. The hypothesis that the slope of the regression line was something other than zero ($H_0: \text{Beta} = 0$) was rejected for self-objectification but retained for media exposure and age.

Table 8

Regression Statistics for Predicting Partner-Objectification

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		Correlations		Collinearity		
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>pr</i>	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.46	.28		1.64	.10				
S-O SS	.41	.06	.58	6.10	.00	.60	.57	.89	1.11
Media	.00	.04	-.001	-.01	.99	-.09	-.01	.97	1.02
Age	-.004	.005	-.07	-.78	.43	-.25	-.09	.89	1.11

Note. S-O SS = Self-Objectification SS. Media = Media Exposure SS

When the regression model was respecified with self-objectification as the only predictor, the regression line for predicting partner objectification was: Predicted partner objectification = 0.25 + 0.53(self-objectification). Figure 5 illustrates the relationship between self-objectification and partner-objectification.

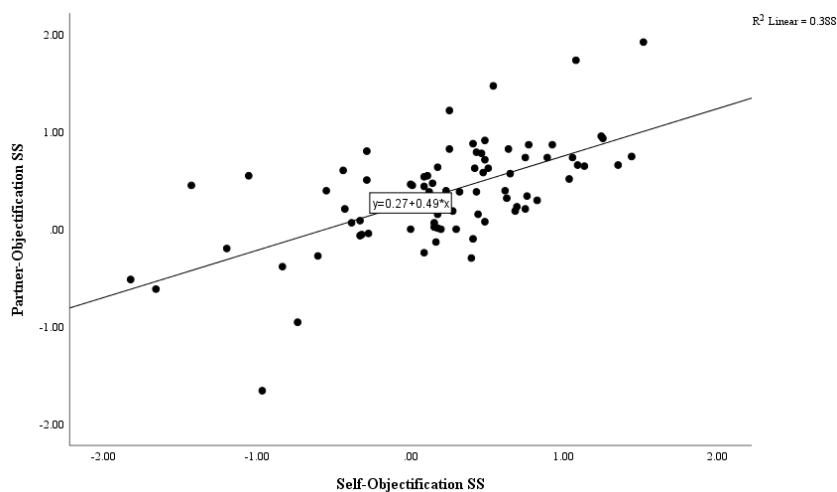


Figure 5. Scatter plot of Self-Objectification SS and Partner-Objectification SS.

RQ1 regression results with OBCS. The correlation between OBCS self-objectification and partner-objectification was statistically non-significant (Table 6). As a result, the regression was not run when self-objectification was measured with the OBCS survey.

Answer to Research Question 1

RQ1 asked if partner objectification was predicted by self-objectification, educational attainment, SES, and ethnicity. Therefore, technically, the specific answer to RQ1 was yes for self-objectification. The research question could not be answered for educational attainment, SES, and ethnicity, as those variables could not be included in the regression due to multicollinearity.

However, also based on correlations, a different set of predictor variables that were listed in RQ1 were tested. Two measures of the objectification of the self (i.e., of the gay man taking the survey) were generated. The measure generated from the MASO survey was a significant predictor of partner objectification. The measure generated from the OBCS was a nonsignificant predictor of partner objectification. The answer to Research Question 1 (To what extent do gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict objectification of their partners?) was that the only significant predictor of gay males' partner-objectification was their level of self-objectification.

Results for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was, Does gay males' partner objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict relationship satisfaction among gay males?

For the multiple regression, RQ2 listed the predicted variable as relationship satisfaction. It listed the predictor variables as partner objectification, education, SES, and ethnicity. The correlations on Table 6 showed that relationship satisfaction and MASO partner-objectification were insufficiently correlated to warrant using partner-objectification to predict relationship satisfaction. Table 6 also showed that relationship satisfaction was the most strongly correlated with SES and, to a lesser extent, with age and education. The same concerns about multicollinearity as in RQ#1 required that only one of the three variables (SES, education, or age) be chosen to serve as a potential predictor variable. Because the correlation between relationship satisfaction and SES was the strongest, SES was chosen. Recall that 80% of the participants were White. Due to this substantial skew, the demographic variable of ethnicity was excluded as a predictor variable. However, relationship satisfaction was correlated with the OBCS Objectified Body SS measure. The Objectified Body SS was directly correlated to media exposure, so although media exposure was not correlated to relationship satisfaction, entering the Objectified Body SS data as a predictor variable incorporated media exposure into prediction. Therefore, the predictor variables were the Objectified Body SS and SES.

The regression model hypothesis was that the addition of Objectified Body SS and/or SES (i.e., the regression model) was no better at predicting relationship satisfaction than was the mean of relationship satisfaction. The specific hypotheses were:

$$H_0: R^2 = 0$$

$$H_1: R^2 > 0$$

The addition of Objectified Body SS and SES explained a small but statistically significant 12% of relationship satisfaction, $R^2 = .12$, $F(2, 77) = 5.22$, $p = .007$. The regression model hypothesis ($H_0: R^2 = 0$) was rejected.

The second set of hypotheses was that the individual regression line slopes were different than zero (i.e., not horizontal). That is, it predicted that Objectified Body SS and SES each made a unique and statistically significant contribution to predicting relationship satisfaction. The specific hypotheses were:

$$H_0: \text{Beta} = 0$$

$$H_1: \text{Beta} \neq 0$$

The t statistics and associated p values on Table 8 show that relationship satisfaction among LGBT men was predicted by the Objectified Body SS and SES. The hypothesis that the slope of the regression line was something other than zero ($H_0: \text{Beta} = 0$) was rejected for both. I reject the null hypothesis.

Table 9

Regression Statistics for Predicting Relationship Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized		Collinearity				
	Coefficients		Coefficients		Correlations		Statistics		
	<i>B</i>	<i>Error Std.</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>pr</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
(Constant)	10.34	1.71		6.01	.000				
OB SS	-1.09	.42	-.27	-2.56	.012	-.27	-.28	1.00	1
SES	0.01	.00	.21	2.00	.049	.21	.22	1.00	1

Note. OB SS = Objectified Body SS

The regression line for predicting relationship satisfaction among gay men was:
 $10.34 - 1.09 (\text{Objectified Body SS}) + (0.01) \text{SES}$.

Answer to Research Question 2

RQ2 asked if relationship satisfaction was predicted by partner objectification, education, SES, and ethnicity. Therefore, technically, the specific answer to RQ2 was yes for SES. The research question could not be answered for partner objectification, education, and ethnicity as those variables would have introduced multicollinearity into the regression. However, also based on correlations, a different set of predictor variables was tested than were listed in RQ2, the Objectified Body SS and SES as predictor variables. Using these predictors, the answer to Research Question 2 was that levels of objectifying your body and SES each made unique, statistically significant inverse contributions to predicting relationship satisfaction.

Summary

The purpose of this study was two-fold: measure gay males' self-objectification and the objectification of their partner, and determine the extent to which objectification, standard demographic characteristics, and exposure to objectifying media predicted relationship satisfaction. The average participant was White, 40 years old, held a bachelor's degree, was employed, averaged \$90,000 in annual income, in a relationship that was less than 5 years and longest relationship 48+ months, $N = 81$ gay men. The men were exposed to objectifying media about 20 hours a week on average.

Answer to RQ1.

RQ1 asked if partner objectification was predicted by self-objectification, educational attainment, SES, and ethnicity. The specific answer to RQ1 was yes for self-objectification. The research question could not be answered for educational attainment, SES, and ethnicity because those variables could not be entered into the regression due to multicollinearity. However, also based on correlations, a different set of predictor variables that listed in RQ1 were tested. The self-objectification measure generated from the MASO survey was a significant predictor of partner objectification. The measure generated from the OBCS was a non-significant predictor of partner objectification. The answer to Research Question 1 (To what extent do gay males' self-objectification and the demographic variables of educational attainment, SES, and race/ethnicity predict objectification of their partners?) was that the only significant predictor of gay males' partner-objectification was their level of self-objectification. The regression line for

predicting partner objectification was: Predicted partner objectification = $0.25 + 0.53(\text{self-objectification})$.

Answer to RQ2.

RQ2 asked if relationship satisfaction was predicted by partner objectification, education, SES, and ethnicity. The specific answer to RQ2 was yes for SES. The research question could not be answered for partner objectification, education, and ethnicity because entering those variables into the regression would have introduced multicollinearity. However, also based on correlations, a different set of predictor variables was tested than were listed in RQ2, the Objectified Body SS and SES as predictor variables. Using these predictors, the answer to Research Question 2 was that levels of objectifying an individual's body and SES made statistically significant and unique contributions to predicting relationship satisfaction. The regression line for predicting relationship satisfaction among gay men was: $10.34 - 1.09 (\text{Objectified Body SS}) + (0.01) \text{SES}$. The next chapter will provide a discussion of the results, identify limitations, and provide recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was two-fold: (a) to measure gay males' self-objectification and the objectification of their partner and (b) to determine the extent to which objectification, standard demographic characteristics, and exposure to objectifying media predicted relationship satisfaction. The aim of this study was to provide information for a greater understanding of the impact of media-driven objectification messages on gay male relationships. The results of this study suggest that, in this case, media played less of a role in objectification in general than expected. The findings supported the theory that the more a gay man self-objectifies, the more likely he is to objectify his partner. The findings further supported the theory that higher levels of objectification were negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction (i.e., the more a man objectified himself and his partner, the less satisfied he was in relationships). The results of this study further confirmed the theory that certain demographic variables were instrumental in impacting these constructs. For example, I found that age was negatively correlated with objectification. The more a participant objectified himself, the younger he was. Similarly, the older the participant, the less he objectified himself. This holds true for partner-objectification as well. The findings further supported age as it impacts relationship satisfaction. The older the participant, the more satisfied he was in his relationship.

Interpretation of the Findings

Previous studies have examined Objectification Theory among heterosexual couples with similar findings (Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) examined the internalization of media messages and resultant maladaptive behaviors, negative body image, and an unstable sense of self-worth, leading to the proposal of objectification theory. Researchers found that the more individuals began to view themselves as valued primarily for their physical attributes, the more likely they were to objectify others, including their romantic partners (Lindner et al., 2012). Subsequent research led to the discovery that this objectification extends to the male gender and found that media messages were linked to perceived standards of attractiveness and resultant body shame and body dissatisfaction (Wiseman & Moradi, 2010).

At the beginning of this study, I could find no other research that investigated gay males' relationship satisfaction, objectification, and media messages. During the process of this study, a study was published in which the researchers examined the internalization of media imagery on gay males (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2016). These researchers found that the internalization of objectifying media material leads to lower body satisfaction and body shame. Their results are very similar to that of previous researchers which examined these theories among females. The results of the present study support the findings of previous research, which largely found that the more an individual self-objectifies, the more likely he was to objectify his partner and the less relationship satisfaction he reported (Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010; Zurbriggen et al., 2011). Therefore, the results of

this study may serve to extend the knowledge that is currently held in this area and better generalize to the gay male population.

The findings of the present study are consistent with social comparison theory, which states that individuals have a desire to self-evaluate based on societal standards (see CITE). This theory has been used in previous research to examine body image, low self-esteem, and disordered eating behaviors, which are known to be the maladaptive behaviors associated with objectification (Lew et al., 2007; Tiggemann & Polivy, 2010; Tylka & Sabik, 2010). In this study, I found that the more an individual viewed media, the more likely that individual was to self-objectify and objectify his partners.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was that race and ethnicity could not be examined as they pertained to the research questions. As stated in Chapter 4, certain demographic variables were excluded from the regression. White males were found to be the prominent race/ethnicity of the sample; therefore, I excluded race/ethnicity from analysis of the survey data.

Another limitation of the study was that SES and education could not both be used as potential predictors. Additionally, SES and education were highly correlated. This makes sense, because the higher the education an individual may hold, the higher earning potential they may have. As such, I excluded education from the analysis and used SES as a predictor.

Another limitation of the study was that the scales used to measure objectification, the MASO (Daniel et al., 2014) and the OBCS (McKinley & Hyde,

1996), were not positively correlated with each other. In other words, I expected that the results of each assessment would be similar when, in fact, they were not. Both scales were used in the current study to replicate the methods of previous publications on objectification to make comparisons of results easier. I further believed that having two scales would strengthen the study. There are possible reasons to explain why the scales did not yield similar results in this study. One constituted a unique contribution of the current research to the body objectification literature. For gay men, the two objectification scales elicited considerable differences in perceptions. Previous studies, which examined objectification among straight men and women, found that body shame and body surveillance were closely correlated with body dissatisfaction. The MASO rates the importance of looks versus competence; in contrast, the OBCS asks survey takers to rate their feelings about their bodies, using such terms as feeling ashamed when an individual's body does not measure up to an ideal. It is possible that while a man may rate a specific aspect of his body as low in terms of importance, his feeling toward that deficit may not be similarly reflective. Furthermore, the terms used in the OBCS were highly negative in connotation, while the MASO simply asked men to rate body parts and attributes on a scale of importance. Less importance does not necessarily equate a negative view toward that body part or attribute. For example, a man may rate his arm size as unimportant, but he may not believe that it devalues him or that he views his arm size as a negative attribute. Furthermore, the MASO was the instrument that asked participants to rate the importance of their body attributes versus importance of their

partner's attributes. The positive correlation between these ratings suggests that they tend to choose partners with similar attributes.

Previous research using similar methods found that the MASO and OBCS provided consistent results (Zubriggen et al., 2011). This result came from a study that examined objectification and relationship satisfaction among heterosexual females; therefore, women who viewed their body parts as unimportant also held the belief that it devalued them (Zubriggen et al., 2011). In contrast, the findings of the present study suggest that gay men have a different psychological perspective on their body image and its impact on their social lives compared to other studies which examined straight people (see Frederickson & Roberts, 1997; Zurbriggen et al., 2011).

Should the two scales have been positively correlated with each other, it could have strengthened the relationships between the other variables. For example, self-objectification and partner-objectification were positively correlated using the MASO. The more a participant objectified himself, the more he objectified his partner. The OBCS, on the other hand, was not correlated positively with self-objectification or partner objectification. The OCBS was negatively correlated with the RAS. In other words, the more a man held negative feelings about his body, the less satisfied he was in relationships. In contrast, even when men viewed their personal attributes as unimportant, it did not impact their relationship satisfaction. This is likely because unimportant does not equal negative. In summation, it is the feeling, or attitude, a man has toward his body that can predict whether he will be satisfied in a relationship.

One assumption I made in this study, prior to data analysis, was that the MASO ratings would reflect negative feelings toward the participants' body attributes. The MASO instead reflected ratings of importance; therefore, it did not actually measure the level of objectification that I was expecting. Should the scale have measured the level of negative feelings by each participant, it would have correlated with the OBCS. Since this was not the case, the scale did not predict relationship satisfaction, which I was expecting.

I did not ask participants to qualify the types of media viewed, which was another limitation of the study. Watching primarily news television is quite different from watching programs where objectification is more prevalent. The results of the present study are intriguing because they combine the results of typical types of exposure, such as television and magazines, but fail to include currently relevant types of media. I did not allow for other types of media to be included in the participants' report of media viewing. For example, social media was not included. In current society, social media plays a huge part in people's daily lives. Individuals who view social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, etc.) but do not watch a great deal of television may not have adequately reported their media exposure.

I relied heavily on the snowballing technique to solicit participants. For this reason, another limitation of the study was that the participants were not stratified, so to speak. The participants were likely of the same socioeconomic background with similar professional backgrounds and similar demographics. This may explain why the

population largely consisted of White males with a high income. As a result, the findings of the present study may not generalize to the gay population at large.

A final limitation of the study was that I did not ask participants to provide specific numbers to report demographics. For example, instead of asking them to provide their age, income, or length of relationships in brackets, they should have been asked to provide a specific number. This would have provided more specific data for the analysis.

Recommendations

There are many avenues that could be pursued for future research. One would be examining the factors of race and ethnicity more thoroughly. As stated previously, the modal participant was a White male. As such, future research could examine the constructs under study among other races. It is possible that cultural differences could greatly impact the current findings. Future research may also examine the distribution of race across the gay community. This may help answer the question as to why White males were the predominant race. Furthermore, religion was not factored into the present study. It is possible that different religions may be more or less accepting of a gay lifestyle, and this may have impacted the self-perceptions reported in the current study.

Future research could also further examine how society defines objectification in general. In this study, I relied on surveys that had been used in previous studies but did not appear to adequately describe objectification. For example, one survey asked participants to rate the importance of various physical attributes and abilities. Another survey asked participants to respond to their feelings about their physical self-perceptions. When examined after the fact, it appears that an individual could respond to

these questions from different viewpoints. For example, an individual not rating a specific body attribute as important to his self-concept does not mean he views that attribute as negative, which would be suggested by the surveys used in this study.

Positive Social Change

The implications for social change are significant. The results speak to the impact that media-driven messages can have on an individual, not only in terms of self-concept, but in terms of how those beliefs impact relationship satisfaction. In the United States, freedom of speech is protected; therefore, it is unlikely that results could impact change on a policy-type level. However, in terms of the individual level, the results of this study may help explain and explore how these media-driven messages impact a man's self-concept and examination of personal attributes. For example, the findings of this study revealed that the younger a man is, the more likely he is to internalize those perceived ideals. One opportunity for social change may be increasing education in schools to teach adolescents the impact of objectification. The results of this study may also help men examine how objectification could create false expectations of not only themselves but their partners. The results of this study found that men who self-objectified were more likely to objectify their partner. This examination could lead to improving relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships and among platonic relationships. Clinicians who engage in psychotherapy may use the findings to explain the impact that media-driven messages can have on an individual in terms of individual growth as well as in couples therapy.

Conclusion

In this study, I examined media messages, objectification, and relationship satisfaction. Current society promotes thin ideals, perfectionism, and physical attributes that are not likely to be obtained by the general population. As a result, individuals tend to internalize these standards for perfection, which can often result in poor body-image, lower self-concept, and lower relationship satisfaction (CITE). In this study, I examined these constructs as they pertain to gay males. The findings supported previous research among other populations (i.e., heterosexuals and females) and give credence to the belief that these messages often negatively impact self-image and relationship satisfaction in gay males (see CITE). The results of this study provide evidence for the support of the examination of the currently held beliefs regarding ideals and challenges the negative impact these ideals and standards can have on all individuals.

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9933-4.

Appendix A: MASO Use Permission and Items

Male Assessment of Self-Objectification Version Attached: Full Test

PsycTESTS Citation: Daniel, S., Bridges, S. K., & Martens, M. P. (2014). Male Assessment of Self-Objectification [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t29551-000>

Instrument Type: Rating Scale

Test Format: The 20-item Male Assessment of Self-Objectification uses a 7-point Likert scale where participants are asked to rate each body attribute according to how important it is in the way they view their body and its abilities, where 0=not important at all and 6=very important.

Source: Daniel, Samantha, Bridges, Sara K., & Martens, Matthew P. (2014). The development and validation of the Male Assessment of Self-Objectification (MASO). *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, Vol 15(1), 78-89. doi: 10.1037/a0031518

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credit line that contains the source citation and copyright owner when writing about or using any test.

PsycTESTS

Items

MASO 2–Upper arm diameter

MASO 4–Flexibility

MASO 5–Sexual appeal

MASO 6–Endurance (e.g., stamina)

MASO 7–Coordination

MASO 8–Body weight

MASO 9–Balance

MASO 12–Well-defined abdominal muscles

MASO 14–Chest size (e.g., measurements)

MASO 15–Penis size (e.g., length and girth)

MASO 16–Agility

MASO 18–Body hair (e.g., face, arms, chest, etc.)

MASO 19–Head hair (e.g., balding, thinning, graying, etc.)

MASO 20–Physical attractiveness

MASO 22–Skin tone (NOT race, but shades: pale, tan, brown, etc.)

MASO 23–Height

MASO 24–Energy level

MASO 26–Reflexes

MASO 27–Complexion (including facial or body breakouts)

MASO 28–Teeth (e.g., color, size, straightness, spacing, etc.)

PsycTESTS™ is a database of the American Psychological Association

Appendix B: Objectified Body Consciousness Scale Items

Surveillance Scale

1. I rarely think about how I look *
2. I think it is more important that my clothes are comfortable than whether they look good on me. *
3. I think more about how my body feels than how my body looks. *
4. I rarely compare how I look with how other people look. *
5. During the day, I think about how I look many times.
6. I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good.
7. I rarely worry about how I look to other people. *
8. I am more concerned with what my body can do than how it looks. *

Body Shame Scale

1. When I can't control my weight, I feel like something must be wrong with me.
2. I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best.
3. I feel like I must be a bad person when I don't look as good as I could.
4. I would be ashamed for people to know what I really weigh.
5. I never worry that something is wrong with me when I am not exercising as much as I should. *
6. When I'm not exercising enough, I question whether I am a good enough person.
7. Even when I can't control my weight, I think I'm an okay person. *
8. When I'm not the size I think I should be, I feel ashamed.

Control Scale

1. I think a person is pretty much stuck with the looks they are born with. *
2. A large part of being in shape is having that kind of body in the first place. *
3. I think a person can look pretty much how they want to if they are willing to work at it.
4. I really don't think I have much control over how my body looks. *
5. I think a person's weight is mostly determined by the genes they are born with. *
6. It doesn't matter how hard I try to change my weight, it's probably always going to be about the same. *
7. I can weigh what I'm supposed to when I try hard enough.
8. The shape you are in depends mostly on your genes. *

Note: *Reverse score item: Items are rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Appendix C: Relationship Satisfaction Scale

Relationship Satisfaction Scale Version Attached: Full Test

Note: Test name created by PsycTESTS

PsycTESTS Citation: McKibbin, W. F., Bates, V. M., Shackelford, T. K., Hafen, C. A., & LaMunyon, C. W. (2010). Relationship Satisfaction Scale [Database record].

Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t10303-000>

Instrument Type: Rating Scale

Test Format: Relationship Satisfaction Scale items are rated on a scale from 0 (not at all) to 9 (extremely).

Source: McKibbin, William F., Bates, Vincent M., Shackelford, Todd K., Hafen, Christopher A., & LaMunyon, Craig W. (2010). Risk of sperm competition moderates the relationship between men's satisfaction with their partner and men's interest in their partner's copulatory orgasm. *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol 49(8), 961-966. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2010.08.005, © 2010 by Elsevier. Reproduced by Permission of Elsevier.

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