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Effects of an Intervention on Undergraduate Women's Knowledge of and Attitudes Related to Sexual Objectification

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EFFECTS OF AN INTERVENTION ON UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN'S KNOWLEDGE

OF AND ATTITUDES RELATED TO SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Psychology

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Title: Effects of an Intervention on Undergraduate Women's Knowledge of and Attitudes Related to Sexual Objectification

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This study responds to a call for interventions aimed at combatting the sexualization of girls and women in society, an increasing problem with numerous, negative consequences for women, men, and society in general (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). The current study involved the development, delivery, and evaluation of an intervention meant to educate women about sexual objectification and its consequences and decrease women's reported enjoyment of sexualization. The intervention was grounded in feminist theory and included components of media literacy. A total of 161 undergraduate women participated in this study. A control group of women was compared against a treatment group on measures of knowledge of sexual objectification, feminist identity, objectified body consciousness, and enjoyment of sexualization. Results indicated that the intervention was successful at increasing knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization, but it was not effective at decreasing enjoyment of sexualization. Furthermore, results of the evaluation showed that women rated the workshop highly. The current study extended on prior research of media literacy interventions for media sexualization (e.g., Reichert et al., 2007 and Moloney & Pelehach, 2013) by including a comparison group and measuring knowledge of and attitudes related to sexual objectification using several validated measures. Additionally, quotations and ideas expressed by college women during these workshops were reported, which can be considered a step toward adding college women's voices to the discussion on sexual empowerment for young women.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

We live in a society that consistently and persistently sexualizes girls and women. Sexualization occurs when a girl or woman is valued primarily for sexual appeal or behavior; when she is held to a narrow standard of beauty; when her physical beauty is equated with sexiness; when she is viewed as an object for sexual use; or when society inappropriately imposes sexuality on her (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). Sexualization is closely related to sexual objectification, which is when a girl or woman is viewed as an object, a body, or a collection of body parts (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). An advertisement that utilizes an image of a woman's breasts to sell fast food (e.g., Carl's Jr. Commercial, 2014) is an example of sexual objectification. The message inherent in both sexualization and sexual objectification is that a girl or woman's worth is limited to her appearance and/or sexual appeal. Essentially, her value is reduced to the pleasure derived by others from consumption of her appearance. The media is saturated with examples of sexualization of girls and women in TV, movies, music lyrics and videos, the Internet, video games, advertisements, and the list goes on (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). To interact with any one of these media sources in modern society for any length of time and not find an example of sexualization of girls or women would be difficult if not impossible.

Within the past ten years, the United States has begun to acknowledge that the increasing sexualization of girls and women in the media is a pervasive problem with numerous, negative consequences. The American Psychological Association responded to public concern and published a report about the sexualization of girls in 2007, documenting the harmful consequences for women including negative self-image and negative impact on cognitive functioning and sexual development (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). One negative consequence,

termed self-sexualization or self-objectification, refers to the process of internalizing societal standards that place value on women's appearance and sexiness. Essentially, exposure to sexualization and sexual objectification leads many women to develop a third person perspective of themselves. This is demonstrated in various ways, for instance when girls and women engage in "checking" behaviors (e.g., looking in the mirror to check one's hair or makeup), intended to gauge how they compare to cultural beauty ideals. Research indicates that self-objectification accounts for many of the adverse consequences of sexual objectification, such as disordered eating (McKinley & Hyde, 1996).

Despite the many negative consequences of sexualization, women often report enjoying being sexually admired by men (Liss & Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010). This contradiction has led to a debate in the feminist community regarding whether such enjoyment represents an "authentic empowerment" of women's sexuality (Peterson, 2010) or is related to traditional feminine norms and sexist beliefs (Lamb, 2010; Liss, Erchull & Ramsey, 2010). It is this author's belief that sexualization works to maintain the status quo and limit women's sexual empowerment, by perpetuating traditional gender roles and heteronormative sexual scripts of women as objects of desire, gatekeepers, and passive recipients of sexual behavior. Some research supports this idea, suggesting that enjoyment of sexualization relates to sexist attitudes and conservative beliefs among heterosexual women (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010) and less social activism and awareness of gender inequity among feminist heterosexual women (Erchull & Liss, 2013b). Therefore, it would be beneficial to decrease women's enjoyment of sexualization.

It is not clear to what degree college women in particular are aware of sexualization as a practice or its consequences. Though they have been immersed in this cultural phenomenon from the time of birth and have likely encountered it themselves, they may not have the language to

describe the experience of sexualization or sexual objectification. This is because much of sexual information is learned through parents, peers, the media, and sex education (Hyde & Delamater, 2013), which both create and reify stereotypical notions of sexuality and women's sexuality in particular (Bay-Cheng, 2003). For instance, though the media is rife with examples of sexualization and sexual objectification, there are few campaigns (e.g., Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2004) aimed at exposing these practices. School-based sex education has even been criticized as perpetuating sexist and heteronormative ideas about women and sexuality (Valenti, 2009). The results of one study (Moloney & Pelehach, 2013) aimed at educating college students about sexualization pointed out that pedagogical techniques for helping students recognize and combat sexualization are lacking at the college level as well. Therefore, it would be useful to find out what women already know about sexualization and its consequences and then give women the tools and language to recognize and expose examples of sexualization when they encounter them.

The current study aims to develop and deliver a workshop for college women intended to a) educate women about sexualization and sexual objectification, b) teach women to be critical consumers of sexualized media, and c) decrease women's reported enjoyment of sexualization. This study responds to a call for interventions aimed at counteracting the sexualization of girls and women (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). It is important to intervene at the college level since such interventions are not yet widespread and college women are likely to face decisions regarding sexual behavior.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a feminist and clinical psychologist-in-training, I am committed to women's issues, and the issues of all oppressed groups, broadly defined. Specifically, I am interested in the way societal issues manifest at the individual level, that is, the way individual's problems reflect larger social problems. Drawing on my own experiences as a woman who attended college in the 21st century in the United States (an appropriate starting place, given feminist ideology's assertion that "The personal is political"), one problem I became acutely aware of is what I will call women's sexual double-bind. I am referring to the conflicting messages women in the United States receive about our sexuality, such as "Be sexy," but "Don't have sex." This is especially evident in a college environment, where Greek life tends to reinforce and exaggerate traditional gender norms and the sexual double standard; where hook-ups are increasingly common (e.g., Paul & Hayes, 2002; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000) where the Walk of Shame seems to exist to shame women for engaging in sexual behavior (Pearlson & McHugh., 2010); and where sexual assault of women has long been rampant and is finally gaining mainstream media attention as the serious concern that it should be (e.g., The Hunting Ground, 2015).

In light of these conflicting messages and my observation of the negative impact of such messages on individual women, I became interested in the idea of positive sexuality for young women and in particular, sexual empowerment. Research into this term quickly demonstrated how convoluted an idea women's sexual empowerment is still today in Western society, where media is saturated with sexualized images of girls and women. For example, clothing stores market "sexy" clothing like thongs to 7- to 10-year-old girls and imprint thongs for adolescents

and women with characters from Dr. Seuss and The Muppets (Zurbriggen et al., 2007), effectively imbuing sexuality on young girls and infantilizing grown women.

What does it mean to be a sexually empowered woman in this kind of society? How can college women navigate such mixed messages and learn to embrace their own sexuality? To answer these questions, I believe a contemporary discussion of young women's sexual empowerment must include consideration of sexual objectification and sexualization. This is because girls today grow up in a culture that consistently sexualizes girls and women, teaching them from an early age that their appearance and sexuality is inextricably tied to their worth. One must consider the impact of culture and such messages on a young woman's developing attitudes toward sexuality and her idea of sexual empowerment. For instance, it's possible that some behaviors adopted by college women (e.g., posting sexy "selfies" on social media or engaging in repeated hook-up encounters) in pursuit of sexual empowerment may actually represent self-sexualization and lead to negative consequences as a result. In fact, recent research has demonstrated little support for positive effects of enjoying sexualization (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010).

Before describing the purpose of the current study, a review of the related literature is provided. A full discussion of women's sexuality is beyond the scope of this paper, however, in the next section several aforementioned ideas that impact college women's sexuality will be defined and reviewed. This includes an explanation of the sexualization of women, Objectification Theory, consequences of sexual objectification, women as sexual agents, and media literacy interventions aimed at combating sexual objectification.

Sexual Objectification of Girls and Women

Sexualization of Girls and Women

In 2007, the American Psychological Association (APA) formed a task force and published a report on the sexualization of girls in the United States in response to a growing concern from the public. The Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (Zurbriggen et al., 2007) documented that the media has increasingly depicted sexualized images of girls and women, which are thought to have negative consequences for girls and women as well as men and society in general. According to this report, sexualization differs from healthy sexuality. Sexualization is said to occur if a girl or woman is valued primarily for sexual appeal or behavior; if she is held to a narrow standard of beauty in which her physical beauty is equated with sexiness; if she is viewed as an object for sexual use; or if society inappropriately imposes sexuality on her (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). All four of these conditions need not be met, as any one is considered an example of sexualization.

Research has demonstrated that women are sexualized in nearly every media form that has been studied, including TV, music videos and lyrics, movies, magazines, sports media, video games, the Internet, and advertising. Furthermore, the sexualization of images of women in media is increasing in frequency and intensity (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). For instance, a 2008 study that examined 50 popular American magazines for evidence of sexualization of women found that half of the magazines depicted women as sex objects (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). A content analysis in 2013 of one popular magazine in particular (i.e., Seventeen magazine) found that the average number of sexualizing characteristics for women nearly tripled over the course of three decades (Graff, Murnen, & Krause, 2013). This study found that two specific characteristics that increased over time were tight-fitting clothing and low-cut tops. Recognizing

that there was a dearth of research on the prevalence of sexualization in the media, the Parents Television Council conducted a study in 2013 that examined sexual exploitation in the media. This study found that 63% of the scripted episodes from primetime TV that were examined contained sexual content in scenes associated with females and 33% of those episodes contained content that was considered sexual exploitation. The researchers also found that underage female characters were more likely to be presented in sexually exploitative scenes than adult women and the presence of an underage female character in a sexually exploitative scene increased the probability that the scene would be presented as humorous (Parents Television Council, 2013).

Research also demonstrates that women more often than men are portrayed in a sexualized manner and objectified in the media (Zurbriggen et al., 2007), regardless of whether content is non-explicit, semi-explicit, or sexually explicit (Peter & Valkenburg, 2007). For example, a recent longitudinal analysis of four decades of Rolling Stone covers examined over 1,800 magazine covers and found that although both women and men have become more sexualized since the 1960's, women continue to be more frequently and intensely sexualized than men (Hatton & Trautner, 2011). This study revealed that women were more likely than men to be "hypersexualized," meaning images showed a combination of sexualized characteristics.

Sadly, these findings are likely not surprising, as we are all bombarded with sexualized images of girls and women when we interact with such media forms in our everyday lives. It was estimated in 2005 that adolescents in particular spend an average of 8 hours a day consuming mass media (Pinkleton et al., 2008). A study conducted by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation in 2010 echoed these findings based on a national sample of over 2,000 children and adolescents ages 8 to 18 years old. This study revealed a large increase in the amount of media used by children and adolescents between 2005 and 2009; they reported that not only do young

people now spend nearly 8 hours per day consuming media, they pack nearly 10 hours and 45

minutes of media into those daily 7+ hours by multi-tasking. They reported that an "explosion"

in mobile and online media use accounts for a significant portion of this increase in overall

media consumption. Notably, visiting social networking sites was found to be the most popular

computer activity among 8 to 18 year olds (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Although it is not

known how much of this time is spent consuming sexualized images, the aforementioned

research regarding magazine and TV depictions of sexualization provide some indication. The

amount of sexualizing images adolescents view on a daily basis is likely quite high, given that

these studies don't take into account social media, a growing and popular form of media used by

adolescents today.

Pervasive sexualization of girls and women in society is problematic for many reasons. It

can perpetuate negative attitudes and views toward women. In an online survey of 745 Dutch

adolescents aged 13 to 18, a statistically significant relationship was found between exposure to

sexually explicit material in online movies and beliefs that women are sex objects; this was true

for both girls and boys (Peter & Valkenburg, 2007). Others have argued that the increasing

sexualization of women in the media (e.g., common to see more bodily exposure and more

emphasis on the size of women's breasts) has become normalized as a result of easy access to

such images (Graff, Murnen, & Krause, 2013). Therefore, frequently encountering sexualizing

images of women could result in blasé attitudes toward more extreme forms of sexualization

such as sexual violence; the study conducted by the Parents Television Council (2013) seems to

support this idea.

What happens to girls and women when they are bombarded with such images? Feminist

scholars and writers posit that by consuming sexualizing images throughout media, girls are

socialized to believe that they are sexual objects and their worth is inextricably linked to their sexuality (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Valenti, 2009). In fact, one study of 226 undergraduate men and women found that exposure to sexually objectifying television was related to an increase in viewers' definition of physical selves in terms of externally perceivable traits (i.e., exposure to sexually objectifying TV activated self-objectification; Aubrey, 2006). In addition to receiving these messages from the media and society, girls may also receive messages from parents, teachers, and peers (Zurbriggen et al., 2007), reinforcing the supposed link between their appearance and/or sexuality and their worth. For example, research has demonstrated that girls frequently monitor other girl's conformity to societal standards of thinness and sexiness (Eder & Parker, 1995). This type of "policing" of other girl's appearance and behavior is one way that girls and women come to internalize societal messages about the value placed on women's physical appearance and sexiness.

Consumption of sexualized images and internalization of underlying messages about women as sexual objects are harmful for girls and women and can have a myriad of negative effects (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). According to the Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, sexualization contributes negatively to girls' self-image and can negatively impact a variety of other domains for girls and women, including academic and career achievement, physical and mental health, sexual development, and attitudes and beliefs. The sexualization of girls and women also has negative consequences for boys and men as well as society more generally (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). These ideas will be discussed further in the section entitled Consequences of Sexual Objectification.

One question you may be asking yourself, is "Why are girls and women increasingly sexualized in the United States?" Some have argued that sexualized portrayals of women are a

way to "manage" and "contain" their power (e.g., Hatton & Trautner, 2011). In fact, since feminists first problematized the sexual objectification of women, its presence in mainstream media has only increased (Heldman & Wade, 2011). For instance, as women's presence and popularity in the music industry increased, they were increasingly sexualized and under-represented on the cover of Rolling Stone magazine (Hatton & Trautner, 2011). It is argued that this represents a backlash against women's gains in society. This has been observed in the political arena as well. For instance, a recent essay entitled Sexualizing Sarah Palin – that highlights language used to speak about Sarah Palin during her campaign for Vice President – argues that women's progress in politics has plateaued in recent years, at least partially due to the sexual objectification of women (Heldman & Wade, 2011). Sexual objectification and focus on appearance has been used as a way to dismiss women's credibility in politics. In some professions, women may even self-sexualize (e.g., portray themselves in a sexualized manner) in order to be successful as well as to "compensate" for their success. This is especially the case for traditionally masculine careers such as law and business (Hatton & Trautner, 2011).

Having identified sexualization as a growing problem by examining and summarizing psychological theory, research, and clinical experience regarding the sexualization of girls, the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls calls for future research, practice, education, training, and policy in response. Since the time the report was published in 2007, research on sexualization of girls and women, particularly in the fields of psychology, sociology, and education, has increased drastically. A large portion of this research investigates the consequences of sexualization for girls and women as well as interventions and prevention efforts intended to ameliorate such consequences (e.g., Choate & Curry, 2009 and Moradi & Huang, 2008). Before turning our attention to the outcomes and implications of such studies, a

review of the original theory that laid the groundwork for the Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (and, by extension, future research in this area) is warranted.

Objectification Theory

Feminist scholarship provided much of the foundation for contemporary research about sexualization of girls and women (Lerum & Dworkin, 2009). In the 1970's, feminists such as Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon problematized what they referred to as sexual objectification (Heldman & Wade, 2011). Recall that sexual objectification is one of the ways in which girls and women are sexualized according to the APA Task Force Report on the Sexualization of Girls. Feminists argued that sexual objectification dehumanized women and contributed to greater gender inequality and violence against women (Heldman & Wade, 2011). Later, feminist scholars Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) built on existing ideas to describe Objectification Theory, the theory linking the sexual objectification of women to a host of problems that unduly affect women in Western society. Objectification Theory places women in a sociocultural context; it helps to explain the consequences of being a woman in a culture that routinely sexually objectifies the female body (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

According to Objectification Theory, all women are susceptible to sexual objectification. When a woman is sexually objectified she is reduced to an object, in particular a body, or a collection of body parts to be used and/or consumed by the viewer (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Advertisements that highlight parts of women's bodies to sell products are common examples of sexual objectification. Because a woman's worth is limited to the pleasure derived by her viewers from consumption of her appearance, the message inherent in sexual objectification is that a woman's value lies solely in her physical appearance and sexual appeal.

Women learn these messages through interactions with the media and they are reinforced by interactions with peers and adults.

Although all women are prone to sexual objectification, that does not mean all women are impacted uniformly. The experience of sexual objectification intersects with women's unique sociocultural identities (e.g., sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, social class, age, and size), resulting in countless, distinct experiences for individual women. Accordingly, subgroups of women are portrayed differently in the media with regard to sexual objectification (Szymanski, Moffit, & Carr, 2010). For instance, Kimberly Springer wrote an essay about "the mammy and jezebel caricatures [which were] were forged in the complex and perverse race relations of the post-Civil war South" and persist today (Friedman & Valenti, 2008, p. 77). She is referring to stereotypes about Black female sexuality that equate Black women with either sexual promiscuity (i.e., jezebels) or morality and chasteness (i.e., mammies). Springer gives a modern example of the jezebel, the portrayal of black women serving as "props" in music videos, wearing skimpy clothing, and being shot at camera angles from above or zoomed in on parts of their bodies (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). Being likened to props, it is clear that women in such videos are sexually objectified. Although women of other races are also objectified in music videos, it does not elicit the same stereotypes or echo the same history of discrimination, and may impact women differently. Therefore, awareness of historical context and experiences unique to certain groups of women helps us to understand the ways in which sexual objectification may intersect with other forms of oppression such as racism or classism.

Sexual objectification of girls and women takes many forms and can be understood as existing on a continuum from sexualized evaluation to sexual exploitation. At all points on this continuum, women are treated as sexual objects. Beginning at one end of the continuum, women

are most subtly evaluated through sexualized gazing (i.e., visual inspection of their bodies). In entertainment and advertising, this phenomenon is referred to as "the male gaze." At the more extreme end of the continuum is sexual exploitation and violence, which could take the form of sex trafficking or sexual abuse (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Instances of sexual objectification on the less invasive end of the continuum should not be dismissed as harmless. The common experience of sexualized gazing is indicative of the almost inescapable experience of sexual objectification of women in Western culture. It is evident in social encounters, media depicting social encounters, and in various types of visual media (e.g., film, magazines, and pornography). Empirical data supports the pervasiveness of sexualized gazing in social encounters. For instance, research has revealed that women are gazed at more often than men, men direct more non-reciprocated gazing toward women, and such gazing by men is often accompanied by sexually evaluative commentary (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Though limited, research investigating street harassment (i.e., men demonstrating an entitlement to express their evaluation of female bodies) provides further evidence for the existence and pervasiveness of sexualized gazing. Results from surveys indicate that a majority of women have experienced harassment by male strangers in public at least once over the course of their lifetime and may even experience street harassment as often as every day. And, women of color are significantly more frequently harassed than White women (Sullivan, Lord, & McHugh, 2010). The experience of street harassment is not without consequence. Research has demonstrated that street harassment is positively related to women's fear and perceived risk of rape (Sullivan, Lord, & McHugh, 2010), a fear that may not be unwarranted.

It is believed that everyday forms of sexual objectification such as sexualized gazing actually contribute to more extreme forms of sexual objectification like sexual violence (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Some have argued that the frequency of, and blasé attitude toward, the sexual objectification of women in American society creates and maintains a rape culture (i.e., a culture in which violence against women is pervasive and normalized due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality; McHugh, Sciarrillo, & Watson, 2012). This is because sexual objectification in any form essentially dehumanizes women, leaving them more susceptible targets for sexual violence. That is, if a woman is viewed as a body or a collection of body parts it may be easier to demand or force her into a sexual act (Friedman & Valenti, 2008; Kilbourne, 1999). The cultural phenomenon of victim blaming also highlights the relationship between sexual objectification and sexualized violence. Questions such as, "What was she wearing?" shift the blame from the perpetrator of sexual violence to the victim, who is most often a woman (Ullman, 2010). Such questions suggest that men cannot inhibit their sexual drive when "provoked" by women's appearance, and therefore, women should behave (or not behave) a certain way in order to "avoid" sexual violence. Victim blaming dehumanizes women by overlooking the trauma and violence they have experienced and placing the focus and blame on women's appearance/sexual appeal. Therefore, instances of sexual objectification, no matter how small, cannot be viewed as isolated incidents as they are reflective of an overall permissive cultural attitude toward derogating women.

Objectification Theory asserts that sexual objectification is a form of gender oppression which likely contributes to a number of other oppressions women face, such as employment discrimination and sexual violence (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Today, sexual objectification has even been described as, perhaps, "the most pernicious manifestation of gender inequality,

because under a sexually objectifying gaze, women's bodies become – even if just for a moment – the property of the observer" (Calogero, 2013, p. 1). Sexual objectification perpetuates gender inequality by narrowing the focus to women's appearance, overlooking women's other attributes. This is exemplified by primetime TV. A recent study reported that sexist portrayals of women continue to dominate primetime television. In particular, the study found that female characters were sidelined, women were stereotyped and sexualized, female characters were less frequently employed in STEM fields, and female characters were less likely to be promoted than their male counterparts (Smith et al., 2013).

Objectification Theory argues that sexual objectification contributes both directly and indirectly to several mental health concerns that unduly affect women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It is argued that living in a society that sexually objectifies women leads women to engage in self-objectification. It is thought that self-objectification in turn negatively impacts women's mental health, contributing to issues such as depression, eating disorders, and sexual dysfunction (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), all of which disproportionately afflict women in the United States (American Psychological Association, 2013).

Objectification Theory posits that by living in a society that objectifies the female body, girls and women are socialized to treat themselves as objects. They internalize messages from society that their worth lies in their physical appearance and sexual appeal. These internalized messages are referred to as self-objectification. Self-objectification is demonstrated through behaviors such as constantly checking one's appearance in the mirror, and can lead girls and women to feel shame and/or anxiety if they believe that their physical appearance does not match societal standards of beauty. Objectification Theory suggests that self-objectification is related to

women's experience of depression and disordered eating as well as fear of and perceived risk of rape (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Consequences of Sexual Objectification

We have seen that researchers, theorists, and educators alike have called attention to the increasing frequency and intensity of sexualization of girls and women in our society, which is evident across all forms of media. We now understand that sexualization and sexual objectification (two closely related concepts, used interchangeably throughout the remainder of this paper) are processes by which women's worth are reduced to their appearance and/or sexual appeal. We began to explore the implications of living in such a society. In the next section we will see that empirical research lends support to many of the negative consequences of sexual objectification as outlined by Objectification Theory (Moradi & Huang, 2008). The following section is a summary of the literature on the consequences of sexual objectification for women, men, and society in general.

Consequences for Girls and Women

The groups most adversely impacted by sexual objectification in the United States are girls and women. They are impacted in similar and unique ways. The Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls summarizes evidence mostly based on research with women because this is the information that was available at the time and because many of the consequences of sexual objectification for women are applicable to girls (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). However, some researchers (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2009) have pointed out that it's important to attend to developmental factors when considering the impact of sexual objectification specifically for girls.

Sexual objectification has a negative impact on both girl's and women's emotional and mental health and well-being (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). This is because when girls and women are sexually objectified their worth is reduced to their sexual appeal and they are devalued as a result (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Whether objectified firsthand or observing sexual objectification of other women in the media or in real life, girls and women may internalize the idea that they are objects and their worth is based on their appearance (Choate & Curry, 2009). They may compare themselves to cultural ideals as well as other girls and women and feel bad if they do not "measure up." This can be especially harmful for girl's self-esteem during early adolescence, when, according to Erikson's (1963) psychosocial development theory, the main task is to understand and develop one's own identity (Choate & Curry, 2009). According to Erikson's theory, identity versus role confusion spans from the age of 12 to 18 years old, suggesting that some college students may still be struggling with this developmental task (Huffman, 2008), and therefore may also be susceptible to the harmful effects of sexual objectification on self-esteem. In fact, self-esteem is frequently an issue underlying and/or maintaining number of presenting concerns that cause college students to seek counseling.

Sexual objectification conveys the message that a thin female body is associated with success and power (Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglama, 2002). This can negatively impact mental health and well-being if women do not perceive themselves to fit the standard. In fact, research has established a link between sexual objectification, more specifically, self-objectification, and both depression and disordered eating.

McKinley and Hyde (1996) first looked at these factors in a study of 502 undergraduate women and 151 middle-aged women in which they developed a scale intended to measure objectified body consciousness; the researchers found associations between self-objectification,

body shame, and disordered eating. Extending on this research, Noll and Fredrickson (1998) tested a mediational model of disordered eating using self-report measures. In both of two samples of undergraduate women (N = 93, n = 111), they found that shame mediated the relationship between self-objectification and disordered eating. They also found support for a direct relationship between self-objectification and disordered eating.

Some studies have looked at both depression and disordered eating. Muehlenkamp and Saris-Baglama (2002) conducted a survey study with 384 undergraduate women who completed self-report measures. Results of structural equation modeling confirmed a significant, direct relationship between self-objectification and restrictive eating, bulimic symptoms, and depressive symptoms (Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglama, 2002). A recent survey study of 204 girls (M = 11.6 years old) in Australia replicated these findings; self-objectification was found to predict body shame, which in turn predicted dieting and depressive symptoms. This study also examined predictors of self-objectification, which included magazine and Internet exposure and appearance conversations with friends.

One survey study that examined depression sought to extend on previous research by utilizing a different measure of depression. Researchers found that self-objectification decreased with age and led to habitual body monitoring, which disrupted flow (i.e., full task engagement/immersion associated with enjoyment, and optimal experience) greater body shame, and greater appearance anxiety. These factors in turn led to depression (Szymanski & Henning, 2007). One study provides preliminary support for an indirect relationship between self-objectification and self-harm, which was accounted for by relationships with negative body regard and depressive symptoms (Muehlenkamp, Swanson, & Brausch, 2005). These are all important findings given the fact that depression and disordered eating are known to impact

women at a greater rate than men in the United States. And, these issues are also highly comorbid, meaning they often occur together (American Psychological Association, 2013).

According to Objectification Theory, self-objectification is also thought to disrupt women's attention because part of their attentional resources are devoted to viewing the self as an object (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Some research supports the idea that self-objectification disrupts performance. The first experimental study of self-objectification (Fredrickson, 1998) manipulated participant's state by asking them to wear swimsuits or sweaters. It was hypothesized that wearing a swimsuit would cause women to take on a third-person perspective (i.e., self-objectification). In fact, results indicated that women who wore swimsuits described themselves more in terms of their bodies, experienced greater body shame and self-related emotions, were more likely to exhibit restrained eating, and performed worse on a math test in comparison to women who wore sweaters. Men's math performance and emotions were unaffected by what they wore, suggesting the experience is more salient for women (Fredrickson, 1998). A more recent experimental study also found support for the disruptive effect of self-objectification on performance. In a study of 83 undergraduate women that also manipulated women's state by asking them to wear swimsuits or sweaters, results demonstrated that women in a state of self-objectification exhibited slower performance on a basic Stroop color-naming task. Results of these studies suggest far-reaching implications of sexual objectification. Consider, for example, how school or work performance could be impacted by sexual harassment and how this in turn could affect overall career achievement.

It's promising indeed that the model proposed by Objectification Theory has garnered so much research support with regard to negative consequences for women. However, unlike the attention given to investigating causal and mediational models between sexual objectification

and depression and disordered eating, there are no known research studies that examine the impact of sexual objectification on sexual dysfunction. Similarly, there is a dearth of research looking at the impact of sexual objectification on girl's and women's sexuality in general. Schooler & Tolman (2006) demonstrated a link between self-objectification and diminished sexual health in adolescents, which was measured by decreased condom use and weakened sexual assertiveness (as cited in Zurbriggen et al., 2007). This make sense, since sexual objectification teaches girls and women that the mature female body is a thing that belongs to and is evaluated by others (Muehlenkamp & Saris-Baglama, 2002).

In the absence of positive messages about their sexuality, sexual objectification teaches girls to construct their sexuality in terms of appearing sexy to attract the attention and approval of boys. Girls and women are depicted as commodities or property to be appraised by boys and men in terms of their appearance and sexual appeal (McHugh, Sciarrillo, & Watson, 2012). This can cause women to develop a narrow view of sexuality focused on male pleasure.

Given that sexuality is socially constructed, contemporary sexual scripts (i.e., unwritten "rules" for normative sexual behavior; Simon & Gagnon, 1986) in a society that sexualizes girls and women are likely to reflect constructions of women as sexual objects, which may not be personally fulfilling and certainly aren't empowering for women as a whole. Consider the growing prevalence of a modern sexual encounter on college campuses (i.e., "hook ups"). In general, hook ups are defined as casual sexual encounters (e.g., Paul & Hayes, 2002; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). Though some may perceive hooking up as challenging the conventional, gendered dating scripts on campus (i.e., sexual encounters for women are only acceptable within the context of an exclusive relationship), participating in such encounters may not be as sexually liberating for women as it would seem. Research that has been conducted on

hook ups demonstrates that the traditional sexual script associated with this type of sexual encounter is not radically different from the sexual script for a traditional romantic encounter. Men and women in heterosexual hook up encounters tend to act out traditional gender roles (Bogle, 2009), therefore the script for these encounters perpetuates the sexual double standard. Additionally, hook ups typically center on male pleasure and are often associated with shame for women (England, Shafer, & Fogarty, 2007).

Gavey (2005) argues that the sexual script for heteronormative sexual behavior (i.e., typical sexual encounters in a heterosexual dyad) is remarkably similar to the script for coercive sexuality, blurring the line between sex and sexual coercion or rape. For example, in the typical heterosexual script, men are cast as the pursuers while women are cast as the "gatekeepers" to either limit or allow a sexual encounter to progress. Similarly, in the typical rape script, men are the aggressors while women are cast as the victims who should "say no." This suggests that women's internalization of certain behaviors in the heteronormative sexual script as "normal" and "healthy" may be harmful.

Another potential consequence of growing up in a society where women are routinely sexually objectified is that women may learn to restrict their sexuality due to a perceived risk of sexual violence. That is, they may learn that expressing sexuality leaves them "targets" for the male gaze and, by extension, sexualized violence (Friedman & Valenti, 2008). Essentially, girls and young women are taught to fear being sexual lest it could be used against them (McHugh, Sciarrillo, & Watson, 2012). This can again result in women being unable to pursue a healthy sexuality that is pleasurable and personally fulfilling. Perhaps worse yet, it can result in women being blamed if and when they are victims of sexual violence (Ullman, 2010).

It has also been suggested that sexual objectification may impact girl's and women's interpersonal relationships (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). As previously mentioned, awareness of cultural beauty ideals and the value placed on women's appearance may lead girls and women to monitor others' conformity to beauty and sex ideals (Eder & Parker, 1995). This could in turn lead to derogating girls and women who don't conform to cultural standards. Or, it could even led to derogating others who do appear to conform, by triggering jealousy. A recent experimental study of 58 adolescent girls in middle or high school and 60 young adult women no longer in high school examined the perceptions of women portrayed in a sexualized manner on social media. Women viewed a mock Facebook profile with either a sexualized or non-sexualized profile photo; content of the profiles were identical. Results indicated that for a young woman, using a sexualized photo in her Facebook profile was related to negative evaluations of her physical attractiveness, social attractiveness, and task competence by female peers (Daniels & Zurbriggen, 2014). Therefore, it seems that sexual objectification and self-sexualization can harm relationships between women and their peers.

Self-Objectification

Self-objectification is defined by Objectification Theory as an internalized third person perspective of one's body, as a result of living in a society that objectifies women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). As we have seen, research on self-objectification has used two approaches to operationalizing this term (Moradi & Huang, 2008). In the first approach, experimenters measure situational self-objectification by exposing participants to either sexually objectifying (e.g., wearing a bathing suit) or control situations and observing the impact of this manipulation on specific outcome variables. The other approach relies on participants' self-reported levels of self-objectification as measured by standardized questionnaires (e.g., Objectified Body

Consciousness Scale; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). These approaches have traditionally been referred to as either state (i.e., situationally heightened) or trait (i.e., self-reported levels) self-objectification. Moradi & Huang (2008) point out that such terminology can be misleading (e.g., "trait" insinuates that self-objectification is inherent and long-lasting rather than sensitive to contextual experiences of sexual objectification) and instead use the terms self-reported and experimentally-heightened in their review. While acknowledging the importance of accurate terminology, this author argues that self-objectification is more stable than a temporary state. In fact, self-objectification, an internalized third-person perspective, is arguably characteristic of the experience of being female in the United States. It is both learned and reinforced through social interactions throughout the course of a woman's life. Recall, too, that it has been demonstrated to relate to a number of problems that disproportionately impact women across the lifespan, including depression and eating disordered behavior. This suggests that self-objectification may be long-lasting like a trait, even if it is not inherent.

Results of the previously mentioned studies support the idea that many of the negative consequences of sexual objectification on women are mediated by self-objectification. A 2008 review summarized the findings of this research: for women, self-objectification is associated with disruptions in flow (i.e., full task engagement/immersion associated with enjoyment and optimal performance) , lower internal bodily awareness, impairment on task performance, increased body shame, more appearance anxiety, and eating disorder and depressive symptoms (Moradi & Huang, 2008). They acknowledge that most research has been conducted with predominantly White college women and, therefore, there is a need to examine these ideas further with women of different backgrounds (e.g., race, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status; Huang & Moradi, 2008).

However, some have argued that our current understanding of sexualization (remember, these terms are often used interchangeably) is based on "an uncertain and overly deterministic model which makes the danger of sexualizing materials uniform, but their outcome gender specific" (Egan & Hawkes, 2008). Egan & Hawke do not intend to dismiss the negative consequences of sexualization of women in our society, but rather challenge the underlying assumptions (e.g., the idea that women will be uniformly affected) and implications (e.g., pathologizing women). This writer agrees that cultural assumptions should be considered but also believes in the importance and value of the current model and its potential to help both individual women and women as a whole in society.

But this poses an interesting question. Why do some women internalize sexual objectification to a greater degree than other women? That is, why do some women engage in self-objectification more than others? One reason is that women experience different levels of interpersonal sexual objectification within their relationships and the frequency of such encounters can fluctuate over the course of a woman's life (Kozee et al., 2007). These experiences can be detrimental; sexual objectification has been likened to other oppressive events, which stand out from common stressors because they are unique, socioculturally based, long-lasting, and cause excess stress (Szymanski, Moffit, & Carr, 2010). Research suggests that certain environments may be particularly harmful. One study investigated immersed forms of sexual objectification, or situations in which the sexual objectification of women is encouraged. Szymanski and colleagues (2010) defined Sexually Objectifying Environments as environments that are male-dominated where women typically hold less power than men, traditional gender roles exist, women's bodies are "on display," and the male gaze is viewed as acceptable. An example of a sexually objectifying environment is the Hooters chain of restaurants, where

servers are exclusively female, the majority of customers (about 68%) are male, women's physical appearance is emphasized, and the male gaze is approved of, perhaps even expected (Szymanski, Moffit & Carr, 2010). One can imagine how working in a sexually objectifying environment could relate to some of the consequences of sexual objectification previously discussed. Furthermore, some women may live, go to school, or spend free time in such environments. This writer argues that many fraternities, bars, and college parties constitute sexually objectifying environments.

Another question raised by Egan & Hawke's (2008) analysis is whether or not self-objectification is gender specific. Some research supports the idea that women engage in self-objectification more than men and the experience is different for women than for men. Strelan & Hargreaves (2005) conducted a survey study with 132 White, middle class students at an Australian university and found that women reported higher levels of self-objectification than men. They also found that higher self-objectification was related to lower body satisfaction for women, but not for men. Both men and women objectified other women more than they objectified men, though for women this difference was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that there is something unique (perhaps the cultural relevance) about women's experience of self-objectification.

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

Briefly mentioned above, the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) was developed in 1996 by McKinley and Hyde to measure objectified body consciousness. Though it was developed independently from Objectification Theory, they designed this scale around the same time, based on the same ideas (i.e., that the female body is constructed as an object, and as

a result, women learn to view their bodies from an outside perspective). Based on their findings, McKinley & Hyde (1996) concluded that objectified body consciousness creates

> …a situation in which a woman has a contradictory relationship to her body. On the one hand, we have seen behaviors such as loving the self through surveillance, "choosing" cultural body standards, and acquiring appearance controlling skills can appear to be positive, empowering experiences for women. On the other hand, each of these behaviors also has negative consequences for how a woman feels about her body and about herself. (p. 185)

The OBCS is comprised of 24 items and measures three major components of self-objectification: body surveillance, body shame, and control beliefs. Each of these components has its own subscale and score. The OBCS is a measure of self-reported self-objectification (which some refer to as trait self-objectification), and has been used in many of the aforementioned studies to examine the relationship between self-objectification and negative outcomes such as disordered eating (McKinley & Hyde, 1996).

Consequences for Men and Society

Boys and men are also impacted by the increasing sexualization of girls and women in our society. Awareness of cultural beauty ideals could make it difficult to find an "acceptable" partner, which could have an impact on relationships or relationship satisfaction (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). The sexual objectification of women also impact boys' and men's attitudes and behavior toward girls and women. Like girls, when boys are exposed to sexually objectifying media images of women, they begin to internalize the idea that a woman's appearance is linked to her value and worth. As a result, they may learn to view women as objects (Peter & Valkenburg, 2007) rather than people, which can result in believing it is acceptable to treat girls

and women with less respect, compassion, and empathy, and act in sexually degrading ways (Choate & Curry, 2009). This may limit boys' and men's ability to connect with women on a deeper level, thus impacting interpersonal relationships (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). This may also lead boys and men to feel entitled to sexually harass and/or derogate women. Perhaps the most visibly grave danger of sexualization of women is that, for some men, viewing women as objects may even serve to justify sexual violence (Beech, Fisher, & Ward, 2003).

The sexual objectification of women also serves to perpetuate sexist ideals and maintain women's oppressed status in society. As mentioned, research shows that men and women who view sexualizing media not only self-objectify, but they proceed to objectify others. This suggests that sexual objectification of women becomes a cycle that will be difficult to break without intentionality and enlisting the help of boys and men. One study (Calogero, 2013) investigated the relationship between self-objectification and gender-specific system justification (i.e., defending the status quo even if it goes against your own self-interest and maintains your disadvantaged status). Results suggest that these two variables may relate in a way that maintains gender inequality by decreasing the likelihood that women will pursue gender-based social activism (Calogero, 2013). Other sexist ideals such as traditional gender roles and the sexual double standard are also perpetuated through the sexualization of women since sexual objectification places the focus on women's appearance and overlooks their abilities or sense of agency in various realms (McHugh, Sciarrillo, & Watson, 2012). The increasing sexualization of women in media and society is posited to contribute to a host of other problems, including aging women's desire to look younger, repercussions for women's ability to succeed in the workplace, and women's under-representation in STEM fields (Zurbriggen et al., 2007).

Women as Sexual Agents

The first two sections of this paper focused on society's treatment of women as bodies or sexual objects. We have seen that the sexual objectification of women is prevalent and persistent across various forms of media and in women's everyday lives. We know that sexual objectification leads to a number of negative consequences both for women and society. We noticed a less robust area of the research relates to the impact of sexualization on women's sexuality. In the next section the focus will shift to women as sexual agents.

There is a growth of interest in young women's sexuality in the United States within academia stemming from both a public health concern, with regard to pregnancy and STD prevention, and from individuals with a political concern, who are attempting to describe a female adolescent sexuality that combats oppressive sexuality taught by sexual education and in the media (Lamb, 2010). Feminist researchers are among those who have extended how we study adolescent sexuality by actually asking adolescents about their experiences.

Desire, Agency, and Subjectivity

Desire, agency, and subjectivity are concepts put forth by feminist theorists, educators, and researchers as possible ways to combat the oppressive sexuality that is likely to exist in a society where women are sexually objectified. Desire can be understood as sexually embodied feelings, a term suggesting that girls are similar to boys in wanting sex (Lamb, 2010). Through interviews with girls, Fine first revealed a failure to discuss adolescent girls' desire in her 1988 article entitled, "A Missing Discourse of Desire." Fine (1988) asserted that women were positioned as potential victims of male sexual aggression in sex education. Her interviews with girls revealed that they overwhelmingly received negative messages about the dangerousness of sex. Fine believed the missing discourse of girls' desire could be detrimental to them in later

negotiations as sexual subjects and posited that a more comprehensive and positive sex education experience would allow girls to experience entitlement as opposed to victimization.

Others continue to share Fine's concern about the missing discourse of desire for adolescent girls. Tolman (2002) connected desire to subjectivity in her book "Dilemmas of Desire," in which she interviewed adolescent girls about their sexual experiences. The term subjectivity contrasts with objectification and refers to girls' ownership of their sexuality (Lamb, 2010). After interviews with adolescent girls, Tolman (2002) echoed Fine's (1988) conclusions that when girls speak about their sexuality they do so without mentioning their own desire. Tolman (2002) argues that this is reflective of the general oppression of women by patriarchal society. Third wave feminist and author Jessica Valenti blames the United States' obsession with female virginity for restricting women's sexual subjectivity. She argues that terms such chaste, virgin, pure, and innocent essentially equate inaction of women with morality, tying women's ethics to their bodies. She argues that these terms dichotomize women into categories (i.e., "good" versus "bad") and infer that women cannot be moral actors in sexuality because they are defined by "ethics of passivity" (Valenti, 2009, p. 24). This is the exact opposite of sexual agency or subjectivity, since it conveys the message that women must do *nothing* in order to be considered ethical or moral. Empirical researchers advocating a reform in sex education in the United States are also beginning to acknowledge the importance of desire, pleasure, and subjectivity (e.g., Bay-Cheng, 2003). They envision a sexuality in which girls learn to be sexual subjects, recognize feelings of desire, and experience pleasure.

However, some have cautioned against creating yet another idealistic standard for young women to achieve. Lamb (2010a) acknowledges that pleasure and desire have been useful concepts to counteract an oppressive society aimed at restricting women's sexuality, but she

argues that using pleasure and desire to mark healthy sexuality is problematic for several reasons. It dichotomizes subject and object, suggesting to girls that they must be one or the other; desire, pleasure, and subjectivity could have different meanings for women from different backgrounds; and using pleasure as a gauge for whether sex is "good" has moral implications (i.e., like abstinence-only education, it makes moral judgments about sexuality). Lamb (2010a) also contends that expecting girls to grapple with and prevail over the complex concepts of sexual desire, pleasure, and subjectivity is unrealistic.

Empowerment vs. Sexualization Debate

Feminist theorists in general support the importance of women, including young women, expressing themselves as sexual agents, but what constitutes sexual empowerment for young women and how to foster it is a point of contention. For instance, researchers that have examined the phenomena referred to as self-sexualization (i.e., internalizing society's view of women as sex objects) argue that self-sexualization is disguised as sexual subjectivity and interpreted by some women as empowering. From this perspective, a woman dressing "sexy" as portrayed by the media, is viewed as having accepted this perspective of female sexuality as the result of a dominant discourse that centers on male desire and the male gaze (Gill, 2003). This contrasts with a subjective sexuality as described above. In Lamb's (2010a) critique, she problematizes the focus on desire, pleasure, and subjectivity as a rubric for healthy female adolescent sexuality. She also raises the question: What is sexual empowerment? Like Gill (2008), Lamb (2010a) suggests that in modern society women's sexual empowerment and traditional (patriarchal) models of sexiness (e.g., lap dancing) have become conflated such that what is sexual closely resembles what is "pornographic" (p. 300). This critique elicited a number of responses from other feminist theorists and researchers, resulting in a debate about female adolescent sexual

empowerment and whether this refers to a subjective internal feeling of power and agency or an objective measure of power and control (i.e., Peterson, 2010; Lamb, 2010b; Lamb & Peterson, 2012; Murnen & Smolak, 2012, 2011; Bay-Cheng, 2012; Gavey, 2011; Gill, 2012; Tolman, 2012; Peterson & Lamb, 2012).

Peterson (2010) points out that although widely used and important to the feminist community, the term empowerment itself is poorly defined and subject to debate; typically, empowerment is used to refer to either a subjective and internal (e.g., internal feelings of efficacy and control) or objective and external state (e.g., power over resources). Peterson (2010) takes issue with her perception that Lamb (2010a) dismisses girls' subjective experiences of sexual empowerment as "pornified" versions of sexuality and argues that for some women, dressing sexy may be viewed as an expression of oneself as a sexual being. She also argues for a view of empowerment as a developmental process. Lamb (2010b) clarifies that although she contrasted authentic sexuality with self-sexualization (an idea which she credits to the theorists she was critiquing), she finds it problematic to refer to any specific type of sexuality as authentic. She also argues that she does not mean to invalidate girls' voices by questioning their empowerment, but rather to add her interpretation to what this might mean within a particular context (which she aptly compares to a feminist psychotherapist who seeks to do much the same). Peterson & Lamb (2012) discuss their disagreements and attempt to find common ground in a joint commentary. They agree on several points including the fact that the media conveys strong, widespread messages that women's main sex role is that of sexual object and that a complete sex education and media literacy interventions are important to optimize adolescent girls' sexual empowerment. An issue they are left unable to agree on is whether experts in this field or adults

interested in children's healthy development can ever truly say that a girl who feels empowered is actually not empowered.

Bay-Cheng (2012) argues that a subjective feeling of empowerment has replaced the idea of political empowerment. Similarly, Gavey (2011) argues that focus on subjective empowerment overshadows the influence of situational factors on women's lives. Both of these researchers caution against conflating sexual agency with sexual empowerment, pointing out that agency (i.e., having a choice) is necessary but not sufficient to be considered empowered.

Murnen & Smolak (2012) agree with Peterson & Lamb (2012) that media conveys a limited and problematic view of female sexuality. They provide evidence that media sexualization is even more damaging and pervasive than Peterson & Lamb's (2012) suggest in their commentary. For example, at the same time that women are presented as sex objects in media, equally problematic is the fact that men are depicted as sexual aggressors. They also point out that the media sends messages that women have achieved gender equality, suggesting that girls and women should embrace their sexiness as a form of empowerment (Murnen & Smolak, 2012). This is concerning and brings back Peterson & Lamb's (2012) original debate over the question: Can we ever truly say that a girl who feels empowered is actually not empowered?

Gill (2012) argues for a need to rethink the current conceptualization of the media and young women's engagement with the media. She asserts that the current conceptualization of the media in research on sexualization discusses the media as a single entity and downplays the differences within media content. She highlights her research with 10-13 year old girls, which suggests girls are not simply passive consumers of the media. Rather, Gill and colleagues (2011) found evidence of significant differences in the role media plays in individual girls' lives based on differences such as age, peer networks, and familial relations (as cited in Gill, 2012). She also

questions the utility of the term empowerment, pointing out that it has become co-opted by the media, used to sell a range of products and ideas.

Tolman (2012) suggests that Peterson & Lamb's (2012) question regarding adolescent girls empowerment can be answered by utilizing feminist (qualitative) research, which allows for analysis of both young women's spoken words and their underlying meaning. She points out that early research on young women's sexual desire and subjectivity (Fine, 1988; Tolman, 2002) are based on such methods. Though she doesn't adopt the language of empowerment, Tolman (2012) shares in the concern about the impact of sexualization and self-sexualization on young women's sexuality (Lamb, 2010a; Murnen & Smolak, 2012). Regarding the debate on young women's sexualization, Tolman (2012) concludes, "Perhaps the reason this debate has not been as full bodied as it can, and hopefully will, be is that it does not yet include the voices of diverse young women and girls living in this specific cultural moment with this particular array of technologies (p. 753)."

A separate, but related body of literature questions the current conceptualization of sexualization. Some have argued that discourse on sexualization reifies sexist ideas. As a part of an interdisciplinary commentary, Lerum & Dworkin (2009) argue that the Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls is at tension with feminist criticism of the sexual double standard and women's right to be sexual. Dutch sexologist, Vanwesenbeeck (2009), agrees that the report is one-sided, generalizing, and negatively toned. She also points out that there is no discussion in the report about if or how sex or sexualization can be empowering, which itself serves to inhibit female sexuality rather than encourage sexual agency. Elsequest & Hyde (2009) U.S.-based psychologists, disagree with the criticism of the report as overly negative; they contend that girls' sexuality needs to be considered through a developmental lens and that other

authors (i.e., Lerum & Dworkin) conflate girls' and women's sexuality. Outside of this commentary, Duits & van Zoonen (2007) argue that an underlying assumption of our current discourse on sexualization is the view of girls and young women as "victims" of sexualization in need of protection. This perspective, they argue, denies girl's agency and strength.

In summary, feminist theorists and researchers seem to agree that Western society and media cast women as objects of male sexual desire and that this is problematic. They also agree that girl's and women's sexuality deserves attention on their political agenda; however, they disagree on what constitutes positive sexuality for young women and how to foster it (Peterson & Lamb, 2012). One may walk away from this debate with more questions than answers. This speaks to the complicated state of women's sexuality and the pursuit of women's sexual empowerment in the United States contemporarily. Some have even suggested abandoning the term empowerment to describe women's sexuality since it has been commodified by sexualized media (e.g., Gill, 2012). However, this author agrees with Peterson & Lamb's (2012) assertion that it would feel like "giving up" (p. 762) and perhaps instead researchers should take Tolman's (2012) advice and bring young women's voices into the debate.

A new area of research has begun to test these ideas empirically. In response to the feminist debate, Erchull & Liss (2013a) developed and validated the Sex Is Power Scale (SIPS), intended to measure the extent to which women perceive that they and other women gain power through sexuality. They suggest this measure can facilitate future research into the psychological consequences of subjective feelings of empowerment. A survey study of 164 heterosexual women utilized this scale and found support for the idea that the relationship between sexualization and sexual empowerment is complex (Erchull & Liss, 2014). Some relationships between variables tested by the researchers suggest that subjective feelings of empowerment

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through sexualization might represent actual empowerment (e.g., the relationship with sexual esteem and sexual assertiveness), but other variables suggest that it's not actually empowering to feel empowered as a sexual object (e.g., the relationship with faking orgasm). The results suggest that although sexual subject and object have typically been contrasted (e.g., Tolman, 2002), it may be possible to experience these roles simultaneously. Of note, this research was conducted with primarily Caucasian women, which limits the generalizability of findings. Clearly more research in this area is warranted.

Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale

The Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS), a new scale developed by Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey (2010), was also intended to extend previous theory and offer a way to empirically examine the debate on sexual empowerment versus sexualization. The ESS is a self-report attitude measure comprised of eight items that examine the construct, enjoyment of sexualization. The researchers sought to measure this construct because although sexualization has documented negative consequences (Zurbriggen et al., 2007) some women report enjoying sexualization. In its development, the researchers examined the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and other variables. For example, they wondered, since some have argued empowered sexuality is a part of a third wave of feminism, is enjoying sexualization feminist? On the other hand, since some have argued sexual empowerment has become commodified and is based on a dominant male discourse, is enjoying sexualization sexist? (Liss et al., 2010). This study did not specifically measure feminist identity, but instead utilized the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973) to assess conservative beliefs. They also utilized the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996) to measure hostile and

benevolent sexism. Results indicated that women who enjoyed sexualization were also more likely to hold both conservative and sexist beliefs.

Another survey study of 326 self-identified heterosexual feminist women investigated the relationship between enjoyment of sexualization and beliefs about the need for social change (Erchull & Liss, 2013b). Feminist identity was measured using a dichotomous (i.e., yes/no) question and only women who responded "yes" were included in the study. On average, women in this sample reported significantly lower levels of enjoyment of sexualization than a general sample of women (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010). Results were mixed. For example, women who enjoyed sexualization felt personally empowered and believed in gender collectivity (i.e., working together with other women to create change), but they were also more likely to see the current gender system as fair and be unaware of gender inequity. This suggests that women's enjoyment of sexualization is not likely to lead them to engage in social change and activism (Erchull & Liss, 2013b).

Feminism and the Self-Reported Feminist Identity Scale

Feminism has been mentioned throughout this paper but not explicitly discussed. A brief description is warranted. Feminism is a social movement with no specific leader (though there are many well-known feminists), and a unifying goal of empowering women (Evans, Kincade, & Seam, 2011). Critiques of the feminist movement have pointed out that early feminism focused on straight, White women, to the exclusion of women of color and women with other sociocultural identities (e.g., sexual orientation, class, etc.). Contemporarily, feminism is still interested in empowering women, but is now understood as a movement rooted in seeking equality for all oppressed groups (Evans, Kincade, & Seam, 2011).

Feminism has a political agenda. In fact, one of the mantras of the feminist community is "the personal is political," which means the same issues that plague individuals are reflected in society as a whole (Worell & Remer, 2002, p. 6). The issues on the feminist agenda vary based on the time and context. For example, some third-wave feminists have focused on sexual empowerment for women in hopes it would lead to empowerment for women more generally (Erchull & Liss, 2013b). Feminists have played a vital role in bringing about social change for women and other oppressed groups. For example, feminists fought to bring the issue of sexual objectification of women to the forefront of discussions about health, education, the media, and society for many years before the APA recognized this concern (e.g., Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Therefore, feminist identity is an important construct to consider when investigating relationships between variables such as self-objectification, sexual empowerment, and enjoyment of sexualization.

Feminism has been measured as a construct in research in various ways. Like the study mentioned above (Erchull & Liss, 2013b), some research studies use a yes/no question to gauge feminist identity. Others (e.g., Petursson, 2013) have pointed out that some women are hesitant to identify with this label even if they hold feminist identity, whether because of negative stereotypes about feminism that exist in society today or the perception of oneself as not being involved enough in the community to claim the label. Another option for measuring feminist identity or attitudes is use of standardized feminist identity development models. However, progression through these models does not always follow a linear pathway, which can confuse data analysis and resulting conclusions (e.g., Erchull & Liss, 2013b). For these reasons, Petursson (2013) developed the Self-Reported Feminist Identity Scale, intended to measure feminist identity. This scale, comprised of 10 self-report items, measures feminist identity based

on statements that reflect the definition of feminism or attitudes in support of gender equality (e.g., "Women and men should have equal rights and opportunities.").

Media Literacy

To review, the media plays a significant role in teaching and reinforcing cultural ideas such as the sexual objectification of women (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). Media sexualization of women – which has numerous documented negative effects for women – has increased over time, both in frequency and intensity (Zurbriggen et al., 2007; Hatton & Trautner, 2011). Therefore, one potential way to combat the sexual objectification of women is to address the influence of the media. The following sections will provide an overview of media literacy as an intervention and review several studies of media literacy interventions aimed at teaching individuals about sexual objectification.

Media Literacy Interventions

Media literacy interventions are designed to teach specific ideas in order to increase awareness and understanding of the meaning underlying media messages (Byrne, 2009). The ultimate goal is to change the way individuals think about the media, in order to buffer against the potential negative effects of the media. Media literacy interventions are aimed at teaching individuals to identify, evaluate, and resist harmful media messages. Choate & Curry (2009) describe this as a four-step process that includes: identifying harmful cultural images, exploring and deconstructing underlying messages, resisting the messages being sent, and engaging in social activism to challenge these messages. It is thought that by providing individuals with the tools for media literacy, they will build on these skills over time as they interact with media, and they will learn to process media in a more active way (Byrne, 2009).

Media literacy is a skill that can be taught at the group level, which makes it a useful intervention strategy for reaching a wide audience (Choate & Curry, 2009). Media literacy interventions that have been designed for children and adolescents have shown some success at reducing aggressive thoughts and behaviors in response to violent media (Byrne, 2009), increasing awareness of myths about sex and reducing the desirability of sexual media imagery (Pilketon et al., 2008), combatting negative body image and disordered eating associated with media images that convey cultural beauty ideals (Tiggemann & Slater, 2015), and raising and maintaining feminist consciousness (Reichert et al., 2007). Results of such interventions suggest that media literacy can influence interpretations and attitudes toward media and protect against potential negative consequences. Though they demonstrate effectiveness in the short-term, in some instances the effects of media literacy interventions have been shown to fade over time (Byrne, 2009).

Researchers have investigated the components of effective media literacy interventions. Byrne (2009) summarized results from various media literacy interventions and concluded that interventions are more effective at achieving their stated goals when they are evaluative (i.e., ask individuals to make a judgement about the media), when they increased emotional involvement with media characters, when they are taught in a fun tone, and when they encouraged participants to be active learners. Byrne (2009) added to this body of research with a study of 156 children in fourth and fifth grade to examine the effectiveness of an intervention aimed at reducing negative consequences of media violence. Children were randomly assigned to one of two treatment groups or a control group, Results indicated that when the children participated in a cognitive activity that instructed them to write a paragraph about what they learned in the media literacy intervention, they were less willing to use aggression after exposure to violent

media. Children in the treatment group without the cognitive activity were more willing to engage in aggressive behavior after exposure to violent media than they were prior to the intervention. It's possible that exposure to the violent clips without the cognitive exercise increased attention to the violence without requiring children to process and learn the important concepts. This highlights the importance of including a cognitive exercise in media literacy interventions. Byrne (2009) concluded based on these findings that media literacy interventions can be helpful or harmful. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider and design the components of media literacy interventions.

Media Literacy to Combat Sexual Objectification

It is clear that sexual objectification and sexualization are harmful for society and, in particular, can be damaging for women. However, disrupting the status quo regarding the sexual objectification of women in society is not a straightforward or easy task. Even women who self-identify as feminist may enjoy sexualization and fail to engage in social activism to fight gender inequality (Erchull & Liss, 2013b). Therefore, feminists, scholars, and researchers have suggested changes are needed both at the societal level, in terms of reducing instances of sexual objectification, and at the individual level (e.g., reducing self-objectification; Moradi & Huang, 2008). Given the strong influence of the media in socializing girls and women to believe that their worth is tied to their appearance and sexual appeal, many have suggested that interventions aimed at fostering critical skills for consuming the media are one potential way to combat sexual objectification of women at the individual (group) level (e.g., Zurbriggen et al., 2007, Peterson & Lamb, 2012; Choate & Curry, 2009, Tiggeman & Slater, 2015).

The Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls calls for controlled studies aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of such programs (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). At the

time of this writing, few such programs are known to exist and only one of these programs

involved a live intervention. Choma, Foster, & Radford (2007) investigated positive and negative

effects of a 30-minute media literacy video aimed at exposing the thin ideal portrayed in

advertising. In their first study of 50 undergraduate Canadian women, the researchers analyzed

and coded effects of the video based on participant's self-reported experiences; participant

demonstrated critical thinking (e.g., increased awareness about media) and experienced a mix of

positive (e.g., increased self-confidence) and negative (e.g., anger) emotions after viewing the

video. In their second study of 366 undergraduate Canadian women, the researchers compared

women in a media literacy intervention group to women in a control group on various outcome

measures. Results provided additional support for positive and negative effects of the media

literacy intervention. One negative outcome was situationally heightened self-objectification

(Choma et al., 2007). This study provides support for the positive effects of media literacy

interventions aimed at exposing the thin ideal in advertising. However, results also suggest that

even though they are well-intended, interventions with a focus on women's bodies may

unintentionally lead to negative effects such as negative emotions and heightened self-

objectification. Future research should bear this in mind.

Another study of 145 male and female undergraduate students investigated the effects of

a 10-minute media literacy video that demonstrated how women are sexually objectified in

music videos (Reichert et al., 2007). The researchers tested responses to ads (i.e., beliefs

regarding portrayal of woman in the image, attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and

purchase intention) as a function of exposure to the media literacy video. Results demonstrated

that females were more aware of and reacted more negatively to advertisements featuring

sexualized images of women, as compared to male participants. This study provides support for

the effectiveness of media literacy interventions aimed at exposing the sexual objectification of women for an audience of women (Reichert et al., 2007).

Moloney & Pelehach (2013) developed and reported on a 75-minute teaching module intended to define and illustrate the sexualization of women. The module was taught to two different groups of undergraduate students (N = 20 in 2010, N = 40 in 2011) who were majority (74%) female, juniors and seniors. The study utilized a post-test only design; students completed an anonymous online survey comprised of scale and open-ended questions either 3 or 15 months after the module. The module teaches students about sexualization of girls and women through a multimedia presentation and large group discussion, based on four theories (i.e., socialization, sociocultural, cognitive, and objectification) discussed in the Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (Zurbriggen et al., 2007). The module included a pre-class reading from the APA report and a PowerPoint presentation with definitions of key concepts and illustrations, and links to news articles and video clips. Though relevant media was included, the module was not specifically designed as a media literacy intervention. Results revealed that all students remembered the lessons, the majority identified sexualization as an issue they thought of prior to the lesson, less than half said they received formal education on sexualization before this lesson, and very few said they were exposed to this topic since the lesson. In additional, all participants responded that they would recommend this lesson be taught to introductory level sociology classes (Moloney & Pelehach, 2013). Results of this study provide support for the need for and the value of teaching undergraduate students about the sexualization of women. In summary, there are no known interventions aimed at teaching children or adolescents about sexualization. There have been few documented interventions designed to teach college students about sexualization, despite the identified need (e.g., Zurbriggen et al., 2007) and value (e.g.,

Moloney & Pelehach, 2013) of doing so. Each of these studies had strengths as well as notable limitations. Two of the three known studies utilized video interventions (Choma et al., 2007 and Reichert et al., 2007) and one of those studies examined a effects of an intervention aimed at educating women about the thin ideal in particular (Choma et al., 2007). Therefore, only two studies specifically investigated interventions aimed at educating young adults about sexualization (Reichert et al., 2007 and Moloney & Pelehach, 2013). Neither of those studies included a comparison group and only one of the studies included measures of attitude change (e.g., attitude toward sexualizing ads; Reichert et al., 2007). However, no data was collected on attitudes related to potential negative outcomes of sexualization, meaning the efficacy of such interventions at buffering the negative effects of sexualized media cannot be inferred from these studies. Therefore, there is still a need to design and evaluate interventions aimed at educating college students about sexual objectification and sexualization.

Purpose of Study

The current study focused on college women's knowledge of and attitudes related to sexual objectification. Women were chosen as a focus because many of the documented negative consequences of sexual objectification impacts girls and women (e.g., Moradi & Huang, 2008), and the potential consequences for girls and women are arguably more far-reaching than the consequences for boys and men. The purpose of the current study was to design, implement, and evaluate an intervention (i.e., workshop) meant to educate college women about sexual objectification and its consequences, teach women to challenge sexually objectifying media, and decrease women's reported enjoyment of sexualization. Specifically, the study involved a treatment group that received the intervention, and a control group. The treatment group was comprised of several different groups of women who participated in a live workshop and then

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completed an online anonymous survey. The control group was comprised of women who completed only an online anonymous survey. The surveys completed by women in the treatment and control groups were nearly identical. Both surveys included standardized outcome measures of feminist identity, objectified body-consciousness, and enjoyment of sexualization. The treatment group survey also included a workshop evaluation. The control group survey included a section for demographic information.

The research questions guiding this study were: What knowledge do women have about sexual objectification? What is the impact of an intervention on college women's knowledge about sexual objectification and its associated negative consequences? What is the impact of an intervention on college women's reported enjoyment of sexualization? Inferences drawn from this last question were meant to contribute to the debate regarding sexual empowerment for young women (e.g., Peterson & Lamb, 2012).

Consistent with much of the research calling for an alternative view of women's sexuality, the current study was conceptualized from a feminist framework. As discussed, feminist theory takes issue with patriarchal society in which women are oppressed and seeks to understand the impact of the social and political environment on women's lived experiences (Worell & Remer, 2002). Feminist therapists seek to empower women and promote social change rather than adjustment to the status quo, as a way to improve individual well-being and mental health (Evans et al., 2011). In line with these ideas, the workshop intended to highlight for women the individual impact of living in a society that routinely sexually objectifies women. This study also sought to empower college women by giving voice to their experiences of sexual objectification and ideas about sexual empowerment. Quotations and ideas expressed by college women during these workshops were recorded and reported in this study, which can be

considered a step toward adding young women's voices to the discussion on sexual empowerment for young women (Peterson, 2010; Tolman, 2012). The workshop followed an interactive format, which was preferred to a didactic format so that consciousness-raising and self-reflection could occur (Evans et al., 2011). In this type of format, as with historical, feminist consciousness-raising groups, women are able to learn from other women's comments and/or questions. Women can also serve as catalysts to others' consciousness and understanding of the concepts discussed.

In the workshop, women were taught information about sexual objectification drawn from Objectification Theory and the Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Zurbriggen et al., 2007). Recommendations based on research of media literacy interventions were also followed. The workshop progressed through three overarching topics: sexual objectification, sexualization and consequences, and sexual empowerment. Women were shown a PowerPoint presentation containing information, definitions, and images to highlight these concepts. Each topic involved didactic information and at least one exercise. Women were encouraged to ask questions and share personal experiences throughout the workshop. Women were guided through a series of media literacy exercises intended to teach them to be critical consumers of sexualizing media, including social media. Each exercise in the workshop was followed by a discussion intended to engage women in critical thinking about the topics and encourage them to be active learners, which has been demonstrated to increase the efficacy of such interventions (Byrne, 2009). The first exercise involved privately completing a survey to help women reflect on their personal experiences of sexual objectification. This activity was intended to increase women's emotional connection to the topic, which research suggests increases the efficacy of media literacy interventions (Byrne,

2009). The next exercise involved searching a popular social media app for examples of sexualizing or objectifying images of women. Another exercise involved close examination of lyrics from a popular party song by a female artist. The final exercise involved critiquing a series of potentially sexualizing and objectifying images, by answering questions such as, "Whose idea of sexy is this?" and "Who produced this image and why do they want me to consume it?" The exercises were designed based on research findings that indicate media literacy interventions are more effective when they ask individuals to evaluate the media (Byrne, 2009). The post-workshop online survey doubled as a cognitive exercise – which has been demonstrated as an important component of media literacy interventions (Byrne, 2009) – by asking women to recall what they learned and reflect on their experience.

The workshop format also follows the four-step process used by media literacy interventions, which includes identifying harmful cultural images, exploring and deconstructing underlying messages, learning to resist the messages being sent, and engaging in social activism to challenge these messages (Choate & Curry, 2009). The PowerPoint slides aided in identifying harmful images and the exercises encouraged women analyze underlying messages in the media. Women were also encouraged through discussion to resist the messages being sent (e.g., women's worth is based on their sexiness) and consider engaging in social activism to challenge these messages. The last slide of the workshop contained information about positive alternatives to sexual objectification, such as limiting the use of objectifying media and joining or following campaigns on social media that challenge sexual objectification and sexist stereotypes.

This study extends on previous research in several ways. There are only three known studies that examine media literacy interventions aimed at sexual objectification (i.e., Choates & Curry, 2009, Reichert et al., 2007, and Moloney & Pelehach, 2013) and only one of these studies

included a comparison group (Choates & Curry, 2009), which limits the conclusions that can be made about the other two interventions. Moloney & Pelehach (2013) measured the efficacy of their intervention using a quantitative and qualitative evaluation. Their intervention was highly rated by students, but they did not measure the effectiveness of the workshop in conveying the intended knowledge. The current study seeks to do this. Because such interventions are not widespread, it is unclear exactly what women know about sexual objectification. It was predicted that women in the treatment group would demonstrate greater knowledge of sexualization and sexual objectification than women in the control group (Hypothesis 1), as a result of the intervention.

Choates & Curry (2009)'s study specifically focused on the thin ideal in advertising; they found that a media literacy intervention meant to educate college women about the thin ideal led to heightened self-objectification. For this reason, the current study included a measure of self-objectification to test whether the intervention unintentionally heightened self-objectification. Unlike Choates & Curry's (2009) study, this study does not focus solely on women's bodies, rather it includes discussion of women's sexuality more broadly, suggesting that this intervention would not trigger an increase on scores of objectified body consciousness. Additionally, the author contends that self-objectification is less fluid than a state, suggesting that scores on a measure of objectified body consciousness would not decrease for the treatment group. Therefore, it was predicted that objectified body consciousness would remain stable, that is, scores would not significantly differ between the control and treatment groups in this study (Hypothesis 2).

Though Reichert et al., (2007) examined attitudes after their media literacy intervention which was aimed at media sexualization, they looked at participant's attitudes toward

advertisements and brands as well as intent to purchase those brands in the future. Therefore, past research has not investigated the efficacy of media literacy interventions at changing attitudes that could relate to potential negative consequences of sexual objectification, such as enjoyment of sexualization. Enjoyment of sexualization has been linked to sexist attitudes and conservative beliefs among heterosexual women (Liss et al., 2011) and less social activism and awareness of gender inequality among feminist-identified heterosexual women (Erchull & Liss, 2013b). Enjoyment of sexualization has also been linked to subjective feelings of empowerment (Erchull & Liss, 2013b). Since research on this construct is new and results of studies are mixed, it is not clear whether enjoyment of sexualization is empowering for women. It is also unknown whether this attitude is responsive to outside impacts. It is this researcher's belief that enjoyment of sexualization is not actually empowering for women and that it would be responsive to outside impacts for women in this age group, since their sexuality is likely still forming. The researcher anticipated that a media literacy intervention aimed at increasing awareness of sexual objectification would lead to lower levels of enjoyment of sexualization. Therefore, it was predicted that women in the treatment group would endorse lower levels of enjoyment of sexualization than women in the control group (Hypothesis 3).

A fourth variable of interest in this study was feminist identity. Given the feminist goal of promoting social change rather than adjustment to the status quo, it was predicted that feminist identity would mediate the relationship between knowledge of sexual objectification and enjoyment of sexualization (Hypothesis 4).

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The current study focused on developing and delivering a theoretically-grounded workshop for college women about sexual objectification and sexualization, then to evaluate the workshop presentation as well as women's knowledge and attitudes after the workshop. The goals of workshop were two-fold: to educate women about these topics and to change women's attitudes. Specifically, it was hoped that participation in the workshop would increase women's knowledge of sexual objectification and decrease their reported enjoyment of sexualization.

Participants

The participants for this study were 161 female students at a rural university in the Pennsylvania. Gender was measured using a dichotomous (i.e., male/female) question and only women were included in the study. The researcher recruited participants from the university's subject pool to participate in the current study. The subject pool consists of Introduction to Psychology students at the university who receive course credit for completing research studies. Participants were not reimbursed in any other way for their participation in the current study. The current study consisted of two parts, corresponding to two groups: a treatment group and a control group. Female students were able to sign up for one of the two parts of the study through the subject pool, but were not able to participate in both. The treatment group consisted of 52 female students who participated in an in-person workshop and completed a post-workshop evaluation. The control group consisted of 109 female students who completed an online survey.

Control group

For the control group, the researcher recruited 120 female participants through the university's subject pool to complete an online survey, accessed through the university's

department of psychology research participation system. Of those 120 participants, 11 discontinued the survey after the first question. Those participants were excluded from data analysis. Thus, the researcher was able to analyze data from the remaining 109 participants.

Because all participants in the study came from the same subject pool, it is reasonable to assume that control group participants are a representative sample of undergraduate women at this university for this study and in general. Therefore, demographic information was only collected from the control group participants. The control group was comprised of 109 undergraduate women who completed the study in Fall 2015. Ninety-four of the women (86.2%) identified as White/Caucasian, 5 (4.6%) as Hispanic/Latina, four (3.7%) as African American/Black, three (2.8%) as Asian American/Asian, two (1.8%) as biracial/multiracial, and one (.9%) as Pacific Islander. According to Enrollment data for Fall 2015, approximately 72.81% of the total student body at this university is White compared to 86.2% in this sample. Therefore, it's possible that this sample is less racially diverse than the general population at the university. It's also possible that inclusion of graduate students and male students in the enrollment data increases the percentage of non-White students. Additionally, an "international" category accounts for 7.03% of the non-White students at the university; it's possible that some of those students may also identify as White.

In terms of sexual orientation of the sample, ninety-eight of the women (89.9%) identified as heterosexual, 7 women (6.4%) identified as bisexual, and four women (3.7%) self-identified as "other" (i.e., 2 pansexual, 1 questioning, and 1 asexual). The majority of the women (70.6%) were freshman, 22% were sophomores, and 7.3% were juniors. Participants' age ranged from 18 to 25 years old, with the mean age being 18.62 (SD = 1.078). Additionally, 83 women (76.2%) identified as feminist by responding *agree*, *somewhat agree*, or *maybe* on this

demographic item; 26 women (23.8%) responded *somewhat disagree* or *disagree*, indicating they did not identify as feminist.

Regarding sexual activity, 86 women (78.9%) identified as sexually active, meaning 23 women (21.1%) were not sexually active. Women were also asked about where they learned information about sex and were able to select multiple choices. In response to this question, 83 women (76.1%) indicated they learned from peers/ friends, 74 women (67.9%) from their mom or dad, 74 women (67.9%) from school sex education, 56 women (51.4%) from TV, 15 women (13.8%) from porn, and 11 women (10.1%) from the Internet ($N = 11$, 10.1%). Of those who indicated they got information about sex from the Internet, 5 specified Google, one specified "pop up ads," and one specified Tumblr. Three women (2.8%) said they got information about sex from other sources; two women specified books, one specified her sister, and one specified "on the school bus." Note that the last response is probably already accounted for by her endorsement of the item "peers/friends."

Treatment Group

The researcher listed a total of 6 time slots (i.e., workshops) with room for up to 20 participants each on the department of psychology research participation system (used by the subject pool) during Fall 2015. Originally, 65 women signed up through the online system to participate in the workshops. Of those women, 59 actually showed up and participated. Two time slots with small samples ($N = 5$ and $N = 2$, respectively), were excluded from data analysis both because the samples were small and because they were considered pilot data (i.e., the first two workshops run by the researcher). The remaining 52 women completed workshops in one of four groups consisting of 18 participants, 15 participants, 12 participants, and 7 participants. All 52 women filled out the post-workshop evaluation, but four women did not complete the entire

survey. As a result, for questions pertaining to knowledge, data from all participants were analyzed. However, for questions related to attitudes (i.e., self-reported feminist identity, objectified-body consciousness, and enjoyment of sexualization), data for 48 participants was analyzed.

Measures

Multiple measures were combined into two separate questionnaires, the online survey, which was administered to the control group, and the post-workshop evaluation, which was administered to the treatment group. Some measures were previously developed standardized measures, while others were composed of questions designed by the researcher to assess specific domains of information. The standardized measures included in the questionnaires assessed feminist identity, objectified body-consciousness, and enjoyment of sexualization. The measures developed by the researcher assessed demographic information, knowledge about sexual objectification and sexualization, and the quality of the workshop. Individual measures are described below in the order in which they appear in the questionnaires.

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire consisted of 8 items meant to assess demographic information such as race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and year in college. Questions about race/ethnicity and sexual orientation included a range of potential responses for participants to choose from as well as a "self-identify" category for participants to share an identity not already listed. One question assessed feminist identity by asking participants to rate how much they agreed with the statement "I identify as a feminist" on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from agree (1) to disagree (5). Additionally, information about whether or not participants were sexually active, where they learned about sex, and whether they received formal sex education in school

were also collected. Only participants in the control group completed this portion of the questionnaire. Demographic questions were omitted from the treatment group questionnaire in order to allow space for a workshop evaluation (see below), without lengthening the size and time that the survey would take to complete.

Workshop Evaluation

Only participants in the treatment group completed this portion of the questionnaire. The workshop evaluation consisted of 7 items intended to measure the quality of the workshop. The purpose of measuring the quality of the workshop is to be able to improve upon future presentations of the workshop for new audiences. These items were adapted from an evaluation used to measure the quality of workshops presented by the counseling center at this university. For 5 items, participants were asked to rate the workshop on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from disagree strongly (0) to agree strongly (5), in terms of organization, clarity, relevance of topics to personal life, whether or not they would recommend the workshop to a friend, and whether or not they would attend similar workshops in the future. The final two items were open-ended and allowed participants to identify "the most valuable aspect of the workshop" and provide "suggestions for future workshops on this topic."

Sexual Objectification and Sexualization Questionnaire

Participants in both the control and treatment groups completed this and all subsequent portions of the questionnaire. This particular questionnaire consisted of 10 items (five fixed-response and five open-ended) meant to assess knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization. Since there is no relevant standardized measure of knowledge of sexual objectification or sexualization, the researcher created these items to assess for knowledge in order to test the hypothesis that women in the treatment group would score significantly higher

on knowledge of sexual objectification than women in the control group. The items correspond directly with the workshop objectives. In particular, two items assessed recognition of sexualizing and objectifying images. One item assessed understanding that sexual objectification is harmful. Three open-ended items assessed participant's ability to list details of sexual objectification theory and consequences of sexual objectification. Two open-ended items assessed deeper understanding the concepts and required participant's to critically examine sexualizing media images of women and identify underlying messages. Two follow-up items assessed whether participants recognized these images as harmful to women.

Self-Reported Feminist Identity Scale

The purpose of measuring feminism in the current study was to assess the degree to which women identify with feminist identity in order to examine the relation between feminist identity and other variables in the study (e.g., enjoyment of sexualization). Given that past research has linked enjoyment of sexualization to sexist attitudes and suggested that future research examine the relationship between feminism and enjoyment of sexualization (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010), including this measure allowed the researcher to test this relationship.

The Self-Reported Feminist Identity Scale (SRFIS; Petursson, 2013) was chosen since it was developed to closely align with the definition of feminism, whereas other scales (e.g., Feminist Identity Composite (FIC); Fischer et al., 2000) are based on feminist identity stage model. The current study was only interested in whether or not participants endorsed attitudes related to feminism.

The SRFIS is comprised of 10 items on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (5). Possible scores range from 0 to 50, with 50 representing a high degree of feminist attitude. The SRFIS was developed using a sample of 274 women (84.3%

White, 69.7% heterosexual) with a mean age of 32.53 years (SD = 16.14). and demonstrated

good internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of .86. The current study consisted of a younger

sample (M = 18.62, SD = 1.078) and the measure demonstrated good internal consistency

(Cronbach's α) of .85, similar to the original study.

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS), was included in this study to assess

sexual objectification. Previous studies that have attempted to teach women about sexual

objectification found that exposure to these ideas could heighten participant's self-objectification

(Choate & Curry, 2009). Thus, it was important to the researcher to measure and compare levels

of self-reported objectified body consciousness between the treatment and control group to

determine if the intervention significantly increased self-objectification.

The OBCS, developed by McKinley & Hyde (1996) is a 24-item self-report measure of

objectified body consciousness, which consists of three subscales comprised of 8 items each:

Body Surveillance, Body Shame, and Control Beliefs. Items are endorsed using a 7-point Likert

scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Participants have the option to

choose NA for items that are not applicable to them. The current study modified the OBCS by

removing the middle option, "Neither agree nor disagree" (4), in order to force a choice and keep

the response scale consistent among other measures used in this study. This resulted in use of a

6-point Likert scale; an NA option was also included. The three subscales represent distinct

dimensions of objectified body consciousness: body surveillance (viewing the body as an

outside observer), body shame (feeling shame when the body does not conform to cultural body

standards), and the control beliefs (beliefs about one's ability to control her body weight and

shape).

The OBCS, which was developed using samples of young and middle-aged women, demonstrated good reliability and validity. In its development, the subscales demonstrated moderate to high internal consistencies for undergraduate women (α), ranging from .72 for control beliefs, to .75 for body shame, to .89 for body surveillance. Furthermore, the OBCS was demonstrated as a valid measure to connect body objectification to body esteem and eating behaviors (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The current study also consisted of undergraduate women and the overall Cronbach's α was .78. Cronbach's α for the surveillance, body shame, and control beliefs subscales were: $\alpha = .84$, $\alpha = .84$, and $\alpha = .80$, respectively. Therefore, the current study demonstrates good internal consistency like the original study.

Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale

The Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS), developed by Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey (2010) was used to assess sexualization. Distinct from a conceptually similar questionnaire that measure behaviors (i.e., Sexualizing Behavior Scale; Nowatski & Morry, 2009), this new assessment measures attitudes. The researcher was interested in whether the information and ideas presented in the workshop would lead to attitude change (i.e., reported enjoyment of sexualization), which could be measured immediately following the workshop. Therefore, the ESS was selected for use in this study.

The ESS is an 8-item self-report measure of enjoyment of sexualization. Items are endorsed using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from disagree strongly (1) to agree strongly (6). The ESS was created using a sample of undergraduate women (M = 18.72 years old, 83.5% Caucasian, 97.2% heterosexual) and is demonstrated to have good reliability and validity. In its development, the items on the ESS demonstrated an internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of .85. Additionally, scores on the ESS were found to be correlated, but distinct from, conceptually

related constructs, including objectified body consciousness, self-objectification, interpersonal objectification, self-sexualization, and holding one's appearance as central to one's self-esteem (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010). The current study also used a sample of undergraduate women and the Cronbach's α was .83. Therefore, this measure demonstrates good internal consistency, like the original study.

Procedure

The current study compared a control group of college women against a treatment group on measures of knowledge (i.e., related to sexual objectification and sexualization) and attitudes (i.e., feminist identity, objectified body consciousness, and enjoyment of sexualization). Participants in both the treatment group and the control group completed informed consent prior to their participation in the study. Informed consent explained that participation is voluntary, that information that is collected will be used for a dissertation aimed at creating and evaluating the workshop, that identifying information (e.g., if names are discussed) will not be tied to specific comments or evaluations in the research study, and that all information collected for the research study will be kept confidential. There were two versions of informed consent forms (see Appendices H & I), each including the general information above and also information specific to the treatment or control group participants.

Participants in the control group completed the entirety of the study online through a link in the university's subject pool research portal. After signing up for the study, they were able to access a link to the survey and complete it at any time during the one-week period it was available online. The survey was made available online for a one week period coinciding with scheduled workshop presentations. The previously discussed measures (i.e., demographics, knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization, SRFIS, OBCS, and ESS) were integrated

into a computerized survey designed by the researcher using Qualtrics, an online survey design software program. See appendices for the complete list of questions included in the survey. In addition to the measures listed above, the online survey also included informed consent and a debriefing statement. The online survey was designed to take approximately 30 minutes to complete and participants received 1 credit of research participation for their involvement in the study.

In addition to providing demographic and background information about women in the study, information collected from the control group also demonstrated women's baseline knowledge about sexual objectification and sexualization. Because the questions about sexual objectification and sexualization are identical to questions participants in the treatment group answered during the post-workshop evaluation, comparison of scores on those questions enabled the researcher to test the hypothesis that women in the treatment group would score significantly higher on a measure of knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization than women in the control group. Additionally, administering the online survey during the same time in the semester as the workshop presentation helped to rule out time differences (i.e., knowledge of sexuality is assumed not to be a result of learning over time or changes in the environment, etc.) strengthening support for this hypothesis.

Participants in the treatment group participated in an in-person workshop and completed a post-workshop online survey. The workshops were presented on six different occasions by the researcher (a clinical psychology doctoral student at this university) in order to recruit a sufficient sample to compare with participants in the control group. The workshop was 60 minutes in length and was comprised of didactic presentation of information related to sexual objectification and sexualization, individual exercises to facilitate learning, and group discussion,

much like a typical university seminar course. Throughout the workshop, the researcher took notes on ideas and experiences shared by participants, which will be reported in the Results section. See Appendix A for the Workshop Outline.

Immediately after the workshop, participants received an email from the researcher with a link to the online survey, which they were asked to complete before exiting the study. Like the online survey for the control group, this survey was created by the researcher using Qualtrics and designed to take approximately 30 minutes to complete. However, this computerized survey integrated slightly different measures (i.e., post-workshop evaluation, knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization, SRFIS, OBCS, and ESS). Participants were instructed to use their laptop or mobile device to complete the survey. Additional devices were available for participants who did not have a computer or device of their own. Participants received 3 credits of research participation for their involvement in the study.

There appeared to be a problem with the design of the online survey as a large number of women in the treatment group (n = 41) uniformly discontinued the survey after the first section of questions. Participants were contacted in a follow-up email 8 weeks later and asked to complete the missing portion of the survey (i.e., the SRFIS, OBCS, and ESS measures). These participants were offered an additional ½ credit towards their research requirement to complete the computerized survey. Subsequently, 48 of 52 workshop participants (92.3%) completed the post-workshop survey.

At the conclusion of the study, both control group and treatment group participants received debriefing information about the study, including a brief explanation about the purpose of the study, suggested related reading, and contact information for the researcher. Participants in the control group viewed the debriefing online at the end of the survey and treatment group

participants received a debriefing handout after completing the online survey portion of their

study. The debriefing information was identical for both groups and can be found in the

appendices.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results are organized into two sections entitled Primary and Secondary Analysis. Primary Analysis consists of results of data analyses that focused on the hypotheses put forth in this study. This includes a report of descriptive statistics for the control group representing baseline knowledge of sexual objectification and results of five between-group one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) significance tests. The first ANOVA examined potential differences between the four workshop groups of differing sizes (i.e., $N = 18$, $N = 15$, $N = 12$, and $N = 7$) on the outcome variable knowledge of sexual objectification. The next four ANOVAs examined differences between the two groups (i.e., control and treatment) on the specified outcome measures (i.e., knowledge of sexual objectification, OBCS, ESS, and SRFIS). The final analysis in this section is a multiple regression that further investigated the relationship between three of these measures (i.e., knowledge of sexual objectification, ESS, and SRFIS). The section entitled Secondary Analysis includes results of data analyses that focused on examining workshop evaluations and observations from workshops.

Primary Analysis

Though the researcher attempted to recruit an equal number of participants for each workshop presentation, the actual number of women in each workshop presentation differed. Thus, prior to planned analyses a one-way ANOVA significance test was conducted to determine whether any differences existed between the four workshop groups of differing sizes (i.e., $N=18$, $N=14$, $N=12$, and $N=7$) with regard to women's knowledge of sexual objectification. For this analysis, knowledge was again measured based on a total score derived from the ten items on the sexual objectification and sexualization knowledge questionnaire. Results of a one-way ANOVA

revealed there were statistically significant differences between group means, ($F(3, 45) = 3.078$, $p = .037$; $\eta^2 = .170$). Post Hoc tests indicated that participants in the workshop group size of N = 14 ($M = 8.64$, $SD = 2.098$) scored significantly lower than participants in the workshop group size of N = 18 ($M = 10.44$, $SD = 1.688$). None of the other workshop groups differed significantly from one another on scores of knowledge of sexual objectification. As this did not seem to indicate an obvious pattern (e.g., smaller workshop groups showing lower scores on knowledge versus larger workshop groups), the researcher referred to the original data set. Visual inspection of the data suggested this was likely due to an outlier in the data. This participant's data was removed and a one-way ANOVA was conducted; results of the ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences between group means ($F(3, 44) = 2.457$, $p = .075$; $\eta^2 = .143$). These findings suggest that group size did not have a statistically significant impact on participant's knowledge of sexual objectification. Therefore, the data from individuals who participated in workshops were collapsed into one group (i.e., the treatment group) for all future analyses.

Knowledge of Sexual Objectification

To provide a baseline for knowledge, descriptive statistics were calculated for the control group regarding knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization. A total score was calculated using all 10 items from the sexual objectification questionnaire. Five of the items were forced-choice with two possible answers and were either coded as "0" for incorrect or "1" for correct. The other five items were open-ended and were coded based on pre-specified correct answers determined by the researcher (based on Objectification Theory; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Four of the open-ended items were either coded as "0" for incorrect, "1" for partial credit, or "2" for full credit. One open-ended item was coded as either "0" for incorrect or "1" for

correct. Essentially, one point was given for each correct answer, but some questions had multiple parts and therefore a possible of two points maximum. This coding system resulted in a possible total score ranging from zero to 15 points. Results indicate that actual scores ranged from 3 to 13 points, with a mean of 8.45 ($SD = 1.99$).

It was hypothesized that women in the treatment group would score significantly higher on a measure of knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization than women in the control group. A one-way ANOVA significance test was conducted to examine the potential difference between the treatment and control groups with regard to women's knowledge of sexual objectification. The one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($F(1, 155) = 12$, $p = .001$; $\eta^2 = .072$) for knowledge of sexual objectification. This analysis suggests that 7.2% of the variance in knowledge is accounted for by the treatment. Descriptive statistics demonstrate that the treatment group ($M = 9.61$, $SD = 1.84$) scored significantly higher than the control group ($M = 8.45$, $SD = 1.99$) on this measure. These findings are consistent with the first hypothesis that the treatment group would score significantly higher on a measure of knowledge of sexual objectification compared to women in the control group.

Attitudes Related to Sexual Objectification

Some research (i.e., Choate & Curry, 2009) has found that media literacy interventions may unintentionally heighten participant's self-objectification. It was hypothesized that level of objectified body consciousness would not significantly differ between the control and treatment group in this study, since participation in the workshop included discussion of harmful messages and consequences related to objectifying images as opposed to exposure to objectifying images alone. A one-way ANOVA significance test was conducted to examine the potential effect of

condition (i.e., control group versus treatment group) on women's objectified body consciousness, as measured by the OBCS. The ANOVA failed to reveal a reliable effect of condition on objectified body consciousness ($F(1,152) = 1.55$, $p = .215$; $\eta^2 = .01$). The mean score for the treatment group ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .60$) was slightly lower than that of the control group ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .53$), which was not found to be statistically significant. Results of Lavene's test was also not significant ($p = .582$), suggesting that variances between groups are equal and this assumption is upheld. These findings are consistent with the second hypothesis that objectified body consciousness scores would not significantly differ between the treatment and control group.

It was hypothesized that women in the treatment group would endorse significantly lower levels of enjoyment of sexualization than women in the control group. A one-way ANOVA significance test was conducted to examine the potential effect of condition conditions (i.e., control group versus treatment group) on women's enjoyment of sexualization, as measured by the ESS. Scores of treatment group ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .70$) were slightly higher than scores of the control group ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .81$); however, the ANOVA revealed that there was not a statistically significant difference between the treatment and control group with regard to enjoyment of sexualization ($F(1,153) = 212$, $p = .646$; $\eta^2 = .001$). Results of Lavene's test were also not significant ($p = .365$), suggesting that variances between groups are equal and this assumption is upheld. These findings do not support the third hypothesis that women in the treatment group would endorse lower levels of enjoyment of sexualization than women in the control group.

An exploratory one-way ANOVA significance test was conducted to determine whether a significant difference existed between the treatment and control group regarding feminist

identity. The ANOVA failed to reveal a reliable effect of condition (i.e., treatment vs. control group) on feminist identity ($F(1,157) = .079$, p = .779; $\eta^2 = .000$). Lavene's test was found to be significant ($p = .033$), suggesting that variances between groups were not equal. Visual inspection of the data suggested this was likely due to an outlier in the data. This participant's data was removed and a one-way ANOVA was conducted; results of the ANOVA revealed no statistically significant differences between group means ($F(1, 156) = .931$, $p = .336$; $\eta^2 = .006$). Lavene's test was not found to be significant ($p = .171$) for this analysis, suggesting that variances between groups were equal and this assumption was upheld.

It was hypothesized that feminist identity, measured using the SRFIS, would buffer (i.e., moderate) the relationship between knowledge of sexual objectification (knowledge) and reported enjoyment of sexualization. One way to test moderation is to create an interaction variable based on the product of two independent variables (Howell, 2009). First, a variable was created to represent the interaction between knowledge and feminism. Then, bivariate correlations were calculated for the entire sample (i.e., control and treatment groups) between these four variables (i.e., knowledge, feminism, the interaction between knowledge and feminism, and enjoyment of sexualization). Enjoyment of sexualization was not significantly correlated with either knowledge ($r = -.001$), feminist identity ($r = -.122$), or the interaction between these two variables ($r = -.079$). The interaction variable knowledge and feminist identity was correlated with both knowledge ($r = .756$) and feminist identity ($r = .672$) at the p = .01 level; these correlations were statistically significant, which is not surprising.

Using the enter method, a multiple linear regression was conducted with the total sample to predict enjoyment of sexualization based on knowledge of sexual objectification, feminist identity (i.e., SRFIS) and the interaction between these two variables. The results were not

significant, (F(3, 147), = .522, p = .455). These findings do not support the fourth hypothesis that feminist identity would moderate the relationship between knowledge of objectification and enjoyment of sexualization.

Secondary Analysis

Workshop Evaluation

Scores for the five fixed-response evaluation questions were calculated and averaged. Responses ranged from 1 (disagree slightly) to 5 (agree strongly) on these items. The maximum possible total score for the evaluation was 25. Actual total scores ranged from 10 to 25, with the mean score being 24.42 (SD = 3.38), meaning participants rated the workshop highly overall. See Tables 1 and 2 for means and standard deviations for each item and frequencies and percentages of responses by item.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Workshop Evaluation Items 1-5

Item	M	(SD)
1. The workshop was well organized.	4.48	(.54)
2. The concepts presented in the workshop were presented so that I understood how they may relate to my own life.	4.44	(.73)
3. I gained valuable information and will be able to apply it to my academic and/or personal life.	4.21	(.89)
4. I would recommend this workshop to a friend.	4.17	(.92)
5. I would attend similar workshops in the future.	4.12	(1.04)

Note. N = 52. Mean scores are based on the following scoring system: 0 = Disagree Strongly, 1 = Disagree, 2 = Disagree Slightly, 3 = Agree Slightly, 4 = Agree, 5 = Agree Strongly.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses for Workshop Evaluation, by Item

Item	SD-0 F (%)	D-1 F (%)	SD-2 F (%)	SA-3 F (%)	A-4 F (%)	SA-5 F (%)
1. The workshop was well organized.	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	1(1.9)	25(48.1)	26(50)
2. The concepts presented in the workshop were presented so that I understood how they may relate to my own life.	0(0)	0(0)	1(1.9)	4(7.7)	18(34.6)	29(55.8)
3. I gained valuable information and will be able to apply it to my academic and/or personal life.	0(0)	1(1.9)	2(3.8)	4(7.7)	23(44.2)	22(42.3)
4. I would recommend this workshop to a friend.	0(0)	0(0)	3(5.8)	9(17.3)	16(30.8)	24(46.2)
5. I would attend similar workshops in the future.	0(0)	2(3.8)	2(3.8)	7(13.5)	18(34.6)	23(44.2)

Note. N = 52. SD-0 = Strongly Disagree, D-1 = Disagree, SD-2 = Slightly Disagree, SA-3 = Slightly Agree, S-4 = Agree, SA-5 = Strongly Agree.

An exploratory one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the potential differences between the four workshop groups of differing sizes (i.e., N=18, N=15, N=12, and N=7) with regard to total evaluation score. The one-way between-subjects ANOVA ($F(3, 48) = .046$, p = .987) with four levels revealed that there were no statistically significant differences among the four groups with regard to women's overall rating of the workshop. For these data, Lavene's test was not found to be significant (p = .809), meaning homogeneity of variances can be assumed. These findings suggest that group size did not have a significant impact on participant's perception of the workshop quality.

Given that no significant differences were found between groups, responses from the remaining two open-ended evaluation questions were analyzed as a whole rather than by individual workshop. Responses to Item 6, "The most valuable aspect of the workshop" were categorized into the following six themes developed and coded by the researcher: relatability of information, group discussion, learning information (did not specify what), learning about sexual objectification, and learning about empowerment. Responses that did not fit into one of those categories (e.g., "I liked the way media was incorporated") were included in an "other" category. See Table 3 for frequencies and percentages of responses for this item. Responses to Item 7, "My suggestion(s) for future workshops on this topic" were grouped into the following seven themes: more discussion, add specific information, incorporate the male perspective, more media/activities, other format changes, no suggestions, and again an "other" category. See Table 4 for frequencies and percentages of responses for this item. Note that responses that seemed to fit more than one theme for either question were only coded into one category.

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages for Workshop Evaluation Item 6, "The most valuable aspect of the workshop"

Theme	F	%
Discussion	17	32.69
Learning about sexual objectification	12	23.08
Learning (did not specify what)	8	15.38
Learning about empowerment	6	11.54
Relatability of information	5	9.62
Other	4	7.69

Note. N = 52.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages for Workshop Evaluation Item 7, "My suggestion(s) for future workshops on this topic"

Theme	F	%
No suggestions	17	32.69
Format changes	9	17.31
Adding information	7	13.46
Media/activities	7	13.46
Male perspective	5	9.62
Other	4	7.69
More discussion	3	5.77

Note. N = 52.

Workshop Excerpts

Though a thorough qualitative analysis was beyond the scope of this study, in line with the feminist goal of giving voice to otherwise unheard groups, this study sought to include some of the voices of women who participated in the study. It is this researcher's belief that including women in the conversation about sexual objectification, sexualization, and empowerment is one way to empower women. Therefore, excerpts of women's ideas and experiences as well as observations from the workshop groups are reported below. Note that ellipses indicate pauses from speaking and the use of brackets indicates words that were implied but not directly spoken.

The workshop began with an introduction and discussion of background information such as the Sexual Double Standard. When asked about their knowledge of the Sexual Double Standard, some (but not all) of the women stated they were aware of a *"double standard"* regarding women's sexuality and behavior. One woman stated, *"Men don't get judged… can do almost anything. Women get judged for just a fraction."* One woman added, *"Also, men can take their shirt off if it's hot out, but* [women can't]*."* Another example of the sexual double standard discussed among at least two of the groups was school dress code. One woman shared that in her high school, women weren't allowed to wear Victoria's Secret Pink (clothing line) and another rule was, *"No* [exposed] *shoulders, no yoga pants."* She added, *"Guys can wear what they want."* Most women in this group nodded and seemed to agree. One woman noted that a male student was sent home from her school for wearing yoga pants. In another group of women, a woman shared her opinion that school dress codes *"make double standards"* and said that at her school women were *"not allowed to show shoulders… but guys were."* When asked about their perception of such dress codes, one woman identified the implied message as, "*Guys can't control themselves.*"

Also during the introduction, the researcher asked about derogatory terms used for women and various women in one group replied: *"slut," "sloot," "smut," "whore," "ho," "skank,"* and "*thot*." Women from other groups mentioned many of the same terms: *"thot," "whore," "slut,"* and *"smut*." One woman asked for clarification of the term "thot" and another woman explained that it stands for *"that ho over there."* The researcher asked if there were male equivalents to such terms and a woman replied, *"Man whore."* She noted that for women these were *"insults"* whereas the term man whore might be seen as a *"compliment"* for men.

During the first exercise where women were asked to read over items from the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS; Kozee et al., 2007) and share reactions, some women talked about their experiences of hearing *"rude remarks"* while walking in public. One woman shared her belief that this is something *"only women have to face."* Another group of women were silent after this exercise; when asked about their reaction, a woman shared "[Sexual objectification is] *kind of a normal thing, 'cause it happens so often. But it shouldn't be… [it's] not okay."* In another group, one woman's reaction was to say that *"Most boys* [are] *not like that, but some give them a terrible name."* Another participant shared her personal experience with sexual objectification; she said, *"As a woman with double D,* [I hear] *a lot of comments – 'Put them away!' – where do you want me to put them!?"* Women nodded, seeming to relate. One woman shared her experience of sexual objectification in sports. She began, *"I play volleyball and wear spandex"* and went on to say that she heard from friends, *"Guys come to watch that* [girls in spandex]*, but that's not why you wear them!"*

Before providing a definition for sexual objectification, the researcher asked women in the workshop groups if they were familiar with the term. One woman in one workshop group replied, *"To look at as a possession, not a person"* and shared that an example might be *"a*

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trophy wife.” In other workshops, women were not sure how to define sexual objectification, but after learning the definition they guessed at potential consequences for women, such as *“[To] feel like less of a person.”* Other women correctly posited a link between experiencing sexual objectification and issues with *“self-esteem,” “depression,”* and *“eating disorders.”* To depict sexual objectification, the researcher displayed an image of Pamela Anderson dressed in a bikini with areas of her body marked off in sections (like an animal being cut up for meat) for a PETA advertisement. One woman expressed that women in advertisements like these, *“Don’t need to be naked.”* Similarly, a woman in another workshop group said there was *“no need to be in a bikini.”* When asked what, if anything, they found objectifying about the image, one woman stated, *“Comparing* [her] *to an animal.”* Women in other workshops also made this connection. One woman wondered, *“Why does she need to be thin?”* One group began a conversation about the way women objectify one another when one woman stated, *“I feel like girls do this to girls more than men do.”* Other women joined in the conversation, agreeing that women often engage in social comparison and/or negatively evaluate other women’s appearance or clothing.

The researcher introduced the topic of sexualization with a definition and an image of a young girl wearing makeup and high heels, lying in a seductive position on her stomach for a Vogue Paris advertisement. In general, women appeared upset by this advertisement (e.g., furrowed eyebrows). One woman commented that it was *“disgusting.”* Another woman stated that the girl in the ad should instead be playing *“like a child.”* A couple of the groups of women identified child pageants as another example of inappropriately imposing sexuality on girls. One woman in one of the groups shared a different example of sexualizing girls; she shared that she learned about a “*5 year old girl sent home from school for wearing a sun dress,”* which she did not find inappropriate.

Next women engaged in an exercise meant to further illustrate sexual objectification and sexualization of women and elicit conversation on these topics. Women used their mobile devices to search the general feed on their Instagram accounts for images they found objectifying and/or sexualizing. After 60 seconds, women reported the number of objectifying images they found, which ranged from 1-30. Reactions to this exercise were mixed. Some women were surprised by the number of objectifying images they counted. For instance, 25 seconds into the activity, one woman blurted out, *"I lost count!"* Another woman said, *"I didn't realize how many* [sexualizing images there are] *when you count… * [I] *scroll through usually."* Some women did not count as many objectifying images and groups discussed possible reasons for such differences, including different opinions about what constitutes sexual objectification. One woman explained, *"Some people post* [images] *themselves, it's not objectifying… but others may objectify* [these women] *when they look at the photos."* Another woman agreed it was not objectifying since *"Most of the time women* [are] *putting themselves in that position."* One woman stated that many of the images of women in bikinis that she found were on "*athletic accounts,"* which she did not find objectifying since they were for personal fitness goals.

In the next exercise, the researcher provided lyrics to a popular Katy Perry song, *Last Friday Night* and asked women to discuss what was objectifying and/or empowering about the song. One woman argued that the first lyric "[there's a] *stranger in my bed"* was her *"push back against the* [sexual] *double standard,"* and therefore was empowering. Another woman agreed and pointed out a lyric that states *"I don't care."* Similarly, a woman in another group said, "*she was a geeky girl, now* [she] *had fun,"* and *"seems to have 'no regret,'"* which she viewed as a sign she's sexually empowered. Other women disagreed that the song was empowering. Several women woman pointed out the lyric, *"This a hickey or a bruise?"* to illustrate their opinion.

Another woman discussed the *"nonchalant"* tone of the lyrics, which she did not find empowering. The researcher asked women if they could think of other popular songs that were objectifying. One woman named the song *Blurred Lines* and explained that the artist talks about women like possessions, *"like his car or house or boat."* Several women nodded, seeming to be familiar with the song and/or this idea. Another woman named a song, *Girl in a Country Song,* which she said conveys the message that country music *"respected women back in the day,* [but now] *music* [has] *no filter."*

Finally, the researcher asked the women to consider the differences and/or similarities between sexy and sexual empowerment. One woman defined sexual empowerment as *"embracing* [your] *body the way it is… doing it for yourself."* Similarly, another woman said, *"if you feel sexy,* [that's] *good enough."* A woman in another group echoed this sentiment when she stated, *"not depending on society's definition…* [you should] *build* [a] *perspective of yourself."* One woman shared her belief that it's about *"your actions…* [I'm] *not going to dress slutty."* Another woman expressed frustration regarding being sexy versus being sexually empowered; she stated, *"I feel like it's damned if you do, damned if you don't."* Another woman summed up her opinion: *"Each person has a different definition of sexy"* and *"it can lead to sexual empowerment."* In the same group, one woman added, *"Society exaggerates both of these ideas."* One woman contended, *"Society pins up women who are super skinny and perfect, but nobody is perfect."* One woman shared her personal experience: *"[I] always had a person growing up to tell me 'you're okay, you're you' – everyone should have that."*

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to design and implement an intervention aimed at changing college women's knowledge and attitudes related to sexual objectification. This study compared a control group of college women against a treatment group on measures of knowledge (i.e., related to sexual objectification and sexualization) and attitudes (i.e., feminist identity, objectified body consciousness, and enjoyment of sexualization). One other intervention (i.e., Moloney & Pelehach, 2013) focused on educating men and women about sexual objectification, but the researchers did not utilize a comparison group nor did they investigate specific outcome variables. This is also the first known study of this kind to investigate attitude change. One other study examined the impact of a media literacy video about sexualization on attitudes toward advertisements and brands and intent to purchase certain brands in the future (Reichert et al., 2007), but the study did not include a comparison group and did not investigate attitudes related to the potential negative consequences of sexual objectification. Additionally, the current study involved presentation of an intervention to multiple treatment groups and examined potential differences between groups of differing sizes on knowledge and perceived quality of the workshop, unlike Moloney & Pelehach (2013).

The results demonstrated that the intervention was successful at increasing knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization, but it was not effective at changing women's attitudes (i.e., enjoyment of sexualization) over time. Furthermore, results of the evaluation showed that women rated the workshop highly. This suggests that a workshop with elements of media literacy, based heavily on Objectification Theory and findings of the APA Task Force Report on the Sexualization of girls, is useful for educating women about sexual objectification. And, such

workshops will likely be well-received by college women. However, results suggest that this type of intervention may not be useful for changing women's attitudes toward sexualization.

Knowledge of Sexual Objectification

One research question from the current study was, "What knowledge do women have about sexual objectification?" Descriptive statistics on knowledge questions calculated for the control group participants provided baseline data to answer this question. Overall, women who did not receive the intervention scored an average of about 56% on the measure of knowledge. Inspection of individual forced response items aids interpretation. In particular, the results showed that almost all women were able to recognize a sexually objectifying or sexualizing image of a woman. This suggests that women were well aware of the sexual objectification of women in media and advertising, which is not a surprising finding since it is likely pertinent to their everyday lives. However, since women were only given two images to choose from for each of the identification items, it's also possible that they were able to select the image that appeared *sexual* without having specific knowledge of sexual objectification. Between one half and three fourths of the women correctly labeled sexually objectifying media images as harmful. It seems even though the vast majority of women were able to recognize sexually objectifying images of women, not as many women were aware that such images can be harmful. This could be evidence that the ubiquitous nature of sexual objectification of women leads to a blasé attitude toward actual instances of sexual objectification, even among a sample of women. This is highlighted by one woman's remark during a workshop: "[Sexual objectification is] *kind of a normal thing, 'cause it happens so often. But it shouldn't be… [it's] not okay.*

Women in the control group performed well on open-ended questions about knowledge of sexual objectification. Around one third of women were able to list one point made by

Objectification Theory and another one third of women were able to list two points made by Objectification Theory. This suggests that the majority of women are familiar with some concepts outlined by Objectification Theory. Whether or not they are actually familiar with the theory itself is unknown. Over half of women were able to list two negative consequences of sexual objectification for women and about a third of women could list a negative consequence for society in general. Again, this seems to suggest that women had knowledge about the existence sexual objectification but were less aware of related harmful consequences. This is consistent with research that suggests information about sexual objectification and its negative consequences is not widely disseminated (Moloney & Pelehach, 2013), though instances of sexual objectification are quite common. Finally, around two thirds to three fourths of women were able to discuss messages underlying sexually objectifying media advertisements; one tenth or less of women specifically mentioned sexual objectification or sexualization with regard to such images. It may be that women recognized generally that sexuality is used to sell products (i.e., "sex sells"), but were less aware of the way women's bodies in particular are objectified and dehumanized through such advertisements.

Though the researcher attempted to recruit an equal number of participants for each workshop presentation, the actual number of women in each workshop presentation differed. This is because some women did not attend the study as scheduled and some studies simply did not fill to the same capacity as others. Given that the workshop was meant to facilitate learning both through didactic information and discussion, the researcher posited that group size could impact discussion and in turn influence outcome variables such as knowledge learned. For this reason, the researcher examined potential differences in knowledge between workshop groups of different sizes by comparing group means on outcome measures. No significant differences were

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found between groups, which implied that group size did not have a significant impact on participant's knowledge of sexual objectification. It's also possible that the groups were similar due to other factors such as group dynamics. These findings suggest that workshops as small as seven women can be just as effective at teaching information about sexual objectification as workshops as large as 18 women. Anecdotally, it seems that interpersonal dynamics between women may have more of an impact on outcomes than group size. In one workshop of 15 participants, one particularly outgoing woman spoke her opinion frequently, leaving little room for others to answer questions. This is highlighted by one woman's suggestions for future workshops: *"Maybe have an ice breaker to get to know the group before we start. I felt like I couldn't talk because one member was overbearing and over talking every other member."* On the other hand, in another group of ten women, every woman spoke during the workshop, women allowed space for others to share their ideas, and they worked out differences of opinion. As a therapist, this phenomena is often observed in group therapy where it is understood that one problematic group member can impact the entire group dynamic (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Nevertheless, knowledge did not vary significantly across the groups of differing sizes and as a result, the data was collapsed into one group (i.e., the treatment group).

It was predicted that women in the treatment group would score significantly higher on a measure of knowledge of sexual objectification and sexualization than women in the control group. This hypothesis was supported. The mean score of women in the treatment group was significantly higher than the mean score of women in the control group. This suggests that the intervention was effective at increasing women's knowledge about sexual objectification. However, the actual difference in mean scores was a little over one point between the treatment and control groups. This could relate to the fact that women already had a fair amount of

knowledge about sexual objectification prior to the intervention, as evidenced by scores in the control group. Since this measure was developed and used for the first time in this study, it's difficult to make interpretations about the meaningfulness of this difference in scores. It's unclear what (if any) impact a one-point increase in knowledge might have on attitudes and behaviors.

Attitudes Related to Sexual Objectification

It was predicted that level of objectified body consciousness would not significantly differ between the control and treatment groups. This hypothesis was supported. Mean scores for level of objectified body consciousness did not significantly differ between the two groups. This conflicts with findings of a previous study (Choate & Curry, 2009) in which exposure to a media literacy video focused on the thin ideal unintentionally heightened participant's self-objectification. However, this is not a surprising finding given the fact that the current study focused on the impact of sexual objectification on women's sexuality in general rather than body image. Additionally, the current study was a live intervention that involved exercises and discussion meant to encourage active learning and critical thinking. Perhaps these components of media literacy aided women in processing the information and developing a deeper understanding of sexual objectification, at the same time protecting against potential negative effects of viewing objectifying images. The lack of significant differences between the control and treatment group also lends support to the idea that self-objectification is responsive to some outside impacts but not fully responsive. Although some (Moradi & Huang, 2008) caution against using the terminology trait self-objectification (arguing that "trait" insinuates that self-objectification is inherent), results of this study suggest that self-objectification may be long-

lasting like a trait, since a one-hour workshop was not enough to change this self-reported behavior.

It was predicted that women in the treatment group would endorse significantly lower levels of enjoyment of sexualization than women in the control group. This hypothesis was not supported. In fact, the average score on the measure of enjoyment of sexualization was slightly higher for the treatment group than the control group, though this difference was not found to be statistically significant. The average score of women in both groups was just above the midpoint of the scale, meaning that women in both the control and treatment groups endorsed enjoyment of sexualization to some degree. The average scores of women in this study were comparable to the average scores of the sample of women on whom the ESS was standardized (Liss et al., 2010). This suggests that an intervention aimed at increasing knowledge of sexual objectification may not be effective at changing attitudes toward sexualization. Perhaps enjoyment of sexualization, like self-objectification, is less fluid than a state. This finding could also relate to the small (but significant) difference in mean scores between the two groups on the measure of knowledge. Perhaps a larger increase in scores (i.e., more knowledge) would have led to attitude change. Also of note, the ESS is a new scale that has not been used extensively in research. Studies conducted by the developers of the scale (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010 and Erchull & Liss, 2013b) have had mixed findings, suggesting that some aspects of enjoyment of sexualization may be empowering and relate to feminist attitudes while others may not. Therefore, it's possible that the ESS is not a reliable measure for distinguishing conflicting attitudes related to sexualization.

It was also predicted that feminist identity would buffer the relationship between knowledge of sexual objectification and reported enjoyment of sexualization. In fact, neither of

these variables, nor the interaction between the two variables, predicted enjoyment of sexualization. Therefore, this hypothesis was not supported. It makes sense that feminism did not moderate the relationship between knowledge and sexualization in this study, since knowledge and enjoyment of sexualization were not correlated with one another. That is, women with varying degrees of knowledge of sexual objectification endorsed enjoying sexualization. This will be discussed further in the next section.

Empowerment vs. Sexualization Debate

There is an unresolved disagreement within the feminist community about sexual empowerment for young women. Some argue that perceived sexual empowerment through sexualization is a result of internalizing cultural stereotypes that focus on women as sexual objects of male desire (e.g., Lamb, 2010a), while others argue that enjoying sexualization itself is a choice and therefore can be a path to empowerment (e.g., Peterson, 2010). It was this researcher's view that enjoying sexualization is not actually empowering for women because it serves to perpetuate a limited view of women's sexuality (i.e., hyper-sexuality), while at the same time restricting women's sexual agency by focusing on traditional gender roles and stereotypes that regard women as objects. Thus, the researcher speculated that knowledge of sexual objectification in society could enable women to resist sexualized images in the media and the underlying messages (e.g., women's worth is limited to their appearance) and move women to reject enjoyment of sexualization in favor of actual empowerment. However, knowledge of sexual objectification and enjoyment of sexualization were not found to be significantly correlated.

The lack of significant relationship could mean various things with regard to the debate on empowerment versus sexualization. Perhaps knowledge of sexual objectification is not

enough to overcome attitudes toward sexualization, since such ideas are culturally engrained and reinforced through interactions. It's also possible that these two variables were not related because enjoyment of sexualization is actually empowering for some women. Two studies found limited support for this idea (Erchull & Liss, 2013a and Erchull & Liss, 2013b). Clearly, more research in this area is needed.

College women were asked to respond to the debate regarding sexualization versus sexual empowerment. In an exercise that instructed women to count the number of sexually objectifying images of women observed on a popular social media app, some young women in the workshops argued that sexy selfies or even selfies demonstrating fitness achievements are not harmful so long as they are intended for oneself. It is possible that an individual's intent could buffer potential consequences, and certainly there are differences between women. However, if selfies were truly for "oneself," there would be no need to post such images on social media in the first place. Women may receive a confidence boost as a result of sharing and receiving "likes" on a sexy selfie, but this kind of boost in confidence or self-esteem is narrowly defined (i.e., focused on appearance), time-limited (e.g., sensitive to the effects of aging), and may be short-lived as a result (Liss et al., 2010).

It's also possible that women who post sexy selfies more routinely engage in self-objectification. Since research has demonstrated that women who report higher levels of self-objectification (Moradi & Huang, 2008) and enjoyment of sexualization (Liss et al., 2010) are more likely to engage in disordered eating, posting sexy selfies may contribute to (or be symptomatic of) issues with self-image, at least for some women. Furthermore, seeking a confidence boost from sexy selfies also perpetuates the notion that women's worth is tied to their appearance and sex appeal. Therefore, individual women posting sexy selfies may be harmful to

society as a whole due to reinforcing sexist ideals. For these reasons, it seems unlikely that posting sexy selfies is a pathway to empowerment.

When asked about their views on sexual empowerment, women's opinions were mixed. Several young women highlighted the idea that empowerment for a woman should be about that woman (e.g., *"…doing it for yourself," "your actions…,"* and *"building perspective of yourself"*). Each of these excerpts from women's dialogue seems to connect to the idea of agency, which is a concept that has been theorized, researched, and touted by feminists to connect with healthy female adolescent sexuality (e.g., Fine, 1988, Tolman, 2002, and Lamb, 2010a). On the other hand, some woman spoke about feeling sexy for themselves or for a partner and expressed the belief that feeling sexy can lead to sexual empowerment. These ideas appear to reflect Peterson's (2010) contention that sexualization may be a path to empowerment for some women.

What do these conflicting opinions mean? McKinley & Hyde (1996) state that objectified body consciousness leads a women to have a contradictory relationship to her body. The same may be true for a woman's relationship to her sexuality. On one hand, enjoying sexualization or self-sexualization (e.g., dressing in revealing clothing, pole dancing at bars, or posting "sexy selfies" on social media) may appear to be positive, empowering experiences for women. Such behaviors may boost confidence or self-image. But, each of these behaviors can also have negative consequences for how a woman feels about her sexuality and herself. For instance, a woman may experience her self-image as restricted to appearance or sexual appeal and she may also envision sexuality through a restricted range of behaviors (e.g., performative, male-focused, or passive recipient). Research suggests self-sexualization may even negatively impact women's relationships due to negative evaluations from others (e.g., Daniels & Zurbriggen, 2014). Of

course, judging a woman for her sexual attitudes or behavior is unfair and representative of the

sexual double standard, but regardless, women ultimately pay the price through negative social

interactions, which is exemplified by the social phenomena of "slut bashing." Perhaps pitting

these concepts (i.e., empowerment versus sexualization) against one another will only go so far.

If enjoyment of sexualization and sexual empowerment are multidimensional concepts, there

may not be a single answer as to whether or not sexualization is empowering for women.

In the workshops, one woman aptly pointed out that society's ideas of both sexy and

sexual empowerment for women are exaggerated. This is supported by the literature on the

hyper-sexualization of women in the media (e.g., Hatton & Trautner, 2011) and feminists who

argue that the media has hijacked the idea of sexual empowerment to sell products (e.g., Gill,

2012). This observation also suggests that the media does not provide a good model for healthy

female sexuality. This is problematic based on the amount of time young adults spend

consuming media. In this study alone, the third most likely source of information where women

received information about sex was TV; over half of the women reported that they learned about

sex from TV. Although parents and school sex education were tied for the second most likely

source of information (which is an encouraging finding), peers/friends were the most likely

source of information. One has to wonder where those peers/friends got their information.

Another encouraging finding was a statement made by one woman during one of the workshops

with reference to the ideals conveyed by the media; she shared, "*[I] always had a person

growing up to tell me 'you're okay, you're you' – everyone should have that."* This researcher

agrees that everyone would benefit from e a positive, affirming influence in their life, but not

everyone has that privilege. Therefore, it seems that more dialogue and interventions such as the

current study are needed to help women sort through the conflicting messages received from the media and society regarding women's sexuality.

Secondary Analysis: Workshop Evaluation and Excerpts

As was previously mentioned, the size of the workshop groups varied. The researcher postulated that, since the format of the workshop was discussion-based, group size could impact outcome variables. However, results indicated that mean evaluation scores between groups of different sizes were not significantly different. These findings suggest that workshop size (at least between seven and 18 participants) does not impact the perceived quality of the workshop.

Results of the workshop evaluation indicate that the average score was very close to the maximum possible score, which means that the majority of women rated the workshop very highly. This is a positive finding indeed, since the workshop was designed for the benefit of college women. An overwhelming majority of women reported that they would recommend this workshop to a friend and that they would attend similar workshops in the future. The majority of women also felt that information presented in the workshop was valuable. Consistent with Moloney & Pelehach's (2014) findings, it appears that there is an interest among college students in this kind of educational program. Responses to open-ended questions on the evaluation corroborate this notion. Half of the women identified information they learned (whether general or specific to sexual objectification or empowerment) as the most valuable aspect of the workshop. Another one third of women identified discussion as the most valuable component of the workshop. This suggests that conveying the information in an interactive format may be most beneficial. One woman specifically credited *"The safe atmosphere where women felt comfortable to talk and express ideas."* It is unknown what exactly she felt was safe about the environment, but time was taken at the beginning of each workshop to acknowledge potential

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individual differences and encourage respect for opposing views. It's also possible that the relatively small group size and presence of only women contributed to a "safe" environment. The researcher notes that she often relied on techniques learned during her training as a clinical psychologist to facilitate discussion. In particular, techniques such as asking questions (e.g., "Why do you think that is?") and using nondirective statements (e.g., "I wonder why that is.") seemed to encourage critical thinking without causing women to become defensive about their experiences. Additionally, the researcher learned to shift the focus to society's role in creating and perpetuating sexist ideas so that women did not become upset with the researcher and automatically reject new or foreign concepts. These methods should be taken into consideration for future educational programs of this kind.

Reviewing women's suggestions for future workshops is also informative. About one third of women suggested additions or changes to the format of the workshop, including activities or media. For example, on woman stated *"A video might be nice of a commercial seen today."* Several women's suggestions for format changes pertained to increasing interactions between women in the group. For instance, two women recommended an ice breaker at the beginning of the workshop and one woman suggested, *"More interacting with student to student. Maybe a group circle."* The researcher observed that images and social media activities appeared to garner the greatest reaction and discussion among women. It is highly recommended that future interventions or educational programs include such components. Of note, the discussion elicited by such images and activities limits the amount of topics that are able to be covered. In retrospect, this researcher would have covered less topics in favor of delving deeper into discussion. It would help to expand this workshop into a series of workshops for this reason.

After reviewing all of the suggestions for future workshops, it was interesting to find that in a workshop about women's sexuality, several women wanted to hear the male perspective. One woman stated, *"Discuss more about men's ideas of womens sexuality"* and another woman said, *"bring in a males point of view."* Other women asked for more discussion about the fact that men can also be sexually objectified. Does this provide evidence that women are constructing their sexuality around men? Perhaps it reflects the patriarchal society in which women in the United States live. Or perhaps women are just uncomfortable with the fact that women are more routinely objectified in society and seek to justify or downplay this fact by pointing out the sexual objectification of men.

Strengths and Limitations of the Current Study and Future Directions

There were several strengths of the current study. Unlike previous interventions aimed at educating women about sexual objectification (Reichert et al., 2007 and Moloney & Pelehach, 2013), this study included a control group to compare to the individuals who received the intervention (i.e., the treatment group). This allowed the researcher to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the intervention in achieving the stated objectives. Additionally, this study utilized new and standardized measures to examine differences between the control and treatment groups on specific outcome variables (i.e., knowledge of sexual objectification, SRFIS, OBCS, and ESS), unlike previous research (Moloney & Pelehach, 2013). Results provided support for some of the hypotheses. It would be useful to replicate this study to further investigate conclusions about enjoyment of sexualization in particular.

Another strength of the current study was the time and effort put into the development of the workshop itself. The intervention was grounded in theory (i.e., feminist theory and Objectification Theory) and incorporated components of media literacy interventions that have

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been demonstrated by research to be effective. The intervention included several exercises to facilitate media literacy, including an exercise utilizing social media, since it is known that adolescents consume a large amount of media each day (Rideout et al., 2010). The intervention designed in this study could be easily implemented by a number of individuals (e.g., teachers, professors, counselors) in various settings. This researcher argues that delivering this workshop for girls in junior high or even elementary school would be beneficial, due to the increasing sexualization of young girls in society. Since self-objectification appears to be more stable than a temporary state, earlier conversations about sexualization would allow girls to practice resisting harmful messages, which could protect against negative consequences later in life.

The included outline and PowerPoint slides make this intervention easy to learn and deliver. There are little or no costs associated with implementing this intervention since the media and images used in the workshop were found on the internet and are therefore widely available. Additionally, the length of the workshop makes it possible to present it during a typical college course or as a workshop outside the classroom. Given the generality of the information, it could even be presented to non-academic audiences. In that case, one might consider including less detail on empirical research studies related to sexual objectification and sexualization and instead add more opportunities for self-reflection and discussion.

A limitation of the current study was the timing of the post-workshop evaluation for certain measures. The researcher decided to have participants complete the computerized survey immediately after their participation. However, due to the large amount of missing responses, a portion of the survey was resent to participants 8 weeks later. This means that for the workshop evaluation and knowledge of sexual objectification measures, participant responses were recorded immediately after the workshop, whereas for attitude measures participant responses

were recorded after an 8 week delay. This limits the ability to determine the long-term effectiveness of this program with regard to increasing knowledge. This is because of the priming that occurs when ideas are first introduced to a person. Research suggests that on evaluative measures such as those used in this workshop, primed concepts can be easily accessed for up to 24 hours (Byrne, 2009). Therefore, it's possible that the effectiveness of the workshop at increasing knowledge could have faded over a short period of time. However, this researcher argues that the relevance to and familiarity of these concepts for the women in the workshops may facilitate long-term storage of the information. Nevertheless, future research should include evaluations at multiple times to enhance measurement of workshop effectiveness.

A common criticism of research on sexual objectification is the focus on White, heterosexual, upper middle class women (Syzmanski, Moffit, & Carr, 2010). Similar to previous studies on sexual objectification, this sample was comprised of majority White (86.2%), heterosexual (89.9%) women. Compared to the general population at the university, this sample appeared to be slightly less diverse. This could limit generalizability of the findings. Additionally, although this workshop invited all self-identified women and encouraged awareness and respect for individual differences, the workshop did not prompt for a specific a discussion of the ways in which sexual objectification is experienced differently among women with different sociocultural identities. And, in fact, sexual objectification does intersect with women's other sociocultural identities (Szymanski et al., 2010), which could account for some of the differences in perspectives shared by women in the workshop. Therefore, an explicit conversation about such differences would be beneficial. Future studies or workshop presentations should consider adding information and facilitating discussions about unique media portrayals and experiences of subgroups of women.

Workshops like this could become a part of curriculum, which previous research suggests would be valuable (Moloney & Pelehach, 2013). The benefit of this would be disseminating the information to a wide audience of college students, not just those who express interest in the topic. One consideration for facilitating such discussions in a classroom setting is the fact that some women may not feel comfortable sharing experiences and attitudes in a mixed-gender group. The design of this study intentionally included only women since previous focus groups encouraging discussion of social factors related to women's sexuality (e.g., the sexual double standard) revealed that women were more likely to share experiences in same-sex groups of peers as opposed to mixed-sex groups (Pearlson & McHugh, 2010).Thus, it may also be helpful to offer such workshops for women as a part of an outreach program through an entity on campus such as the counseling center. Although all women would be welcome and would likely benefit from the workshop, counselors at the center could recommend the workshop to clients for whom the topic seems particularly relevant. Given the individual differences in level of self-objectification women engage in, this might be an effective method for identifying and intervening with women who report higher levels of self-objectification. As some women who participated in this study indicated, having an ice-breaking exercise and/or a series of workshops that go deeper into the topics discussed might allow women to get to know each other better and feel more comfortable opening up.

Carrying out and analyzing separate interventions aimed at men and women was beyond the scope of this study. However, this workshop could be modified and presented to an audience of men. As mentioned in the Consequences of Sexual Objectification section, men are also impacted by the increasing sexualization of women in our society and it may be equally imperative to intervene with them. In fact, research suggests such interventions may be necessary

to actually disrupt the effects of sexual objectification at the societal level, particularly given men's ability to change the status quo based on their relative power (compared to women) in Western society (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005).

Conclusion

The current study designed, implemented, and evaluated a workshop for college women about sexual objectification. The study compared a control group of college women against a treatment group on measures of knowledge (i.e., related to sexual objectification and sexualization) and attitudes (i.e., feminist identity, objectified body consciousness, and enjoyment of sexualization). Two of the hypotheses in this study were supported and two were not. In support of the first hypothesis, women in the treatment group scored significantly higher on a measure of knowledge of sexual objectification than women in the control group. In support of the second hypothesis, women's reported level of objectified body consciousness did not significantly differ between the two groups. However, contrary to the third hypothesis, women's enjoyment of sexualization did not differ significantly between the two groups. Finally, contrary to the fourth hypothesis, feminist identity did not buffer the relationship between knowledge and sexualization, as no such relationship was found to exist.

It is encouraging that an intervention designed to educate college women about sexual objectification was able to achieve this goal without heightening women's self-objectification. However, it appears this intervention was not successful at decreasing women's reported enjoyment of sexualization. Furthermore, there was no relationship between knowledge and sexualization, meaning feminist identity could not explain this relationship. More research is needed to understand the lack of relationship between knowledge of and attitudes related to sexual objectification. An overarching goal of the current study was to empower women and

affect social change by raising women's awareness of sexual objectification and its consequences. It is believed that by empowering women to reject the status quo (i.e., become critical of sexualized media), they will share this information with friends and family members who will then share the information with significant people in their lives, enacting a chain of social change. Though this goal is immeasurable, the fact that women who engaged in the intervention demonstrated greater knowledge than those who did not is promising. After all, "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family." – Kofi Annan

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Appendix A

Workshop Outline

"Embrace Your Sexuality"

The following is an outline/script of the workshop as it was presented:

Informed Consent (*~3 minutes*)

❖ Participants will be given handouts on informed consent and facilitator will explain that participation in the study is voluntary and all information collected will be kept anonymous and confidential; facilitator will collect completed consent forms prior to beginning.

❖ After participants complete the consent form, the facilitator will highlight the importance of participants maintaining confidentiality of other participants. Facilitator will invite the group to make a short list of "rules" to guide discussion in the workshop:

"This workshop is intended to be an enjoyable learning experience. We will be discussing topics related to women's sexuality, which we all may have different experiences with or opinions about, so it's important to first discuss how to make this a safe environment. Safety means ensuring that members feel safe or comfortable sharing their perspectives during small and large group discussions. What are some things that would aid your comfort or feelings of safety in this group today?"

❖ Rules that will be suggested by the facilitator, if not already mentioned are: being respectful of different perspectives, being nonjudgmental, and agreeing to maintain individuals' privacy outside the workshop.

Introduction (*<1 minute*)

❖ Facilitator will introduce the workshop with the following explanation:

"What we learn about sexuality is based on messages we receive. Like many other phenomena, sexuality is a socially constructed concept. So, what we know about being sexual as women is based on social interactions we've had from the time of birth. This includes messages from parents, peers, sex education, and the media. Many of these messages about sexuality relate to gender. For instance, research has demonstrated that there is a double-standard that exists such that women are held to a different standard than men regarding sexual behavior (e.g., women are derogated for engaging in sex with multiple partners, whereas such behavior is often expected or overlooked for men). Another socially constructed difference between men and women's sexuality is how they are portrayed within sexual interactions. Women are typically portrayed as sexual "objects" rather than "subjects." This can impact how we view ourselves, our relationships, and the choices we make about sex. Two concepts related to this idea are objectification and sexualization, both of which are documented to have a negative impact on individuals and society. We are going to explore your experience with these concepts today."

Learning Objectives (*<1 minute*)

❖ Facilitator will highlight workshop learning objectives by stating, "This workshop is designed to help you recognize and explain the impact of social factors on women's sexuality. Specifically, this workshop will help you…

- *Summarize* objectification theory

- *Recognize* examples of sexual objectification and sexualization

- *List* negative consequences of sexual objectification and sexualization

- *Critique* current models of 'sexiness' and 'sexual empowerment'"

Topic 1: Introduction to Sexual Objectification *(~15 minutes)*

❖ EXERCISE: Facilitator will introduce the topic of sexual objectification with a series of questions about experiences women may have had and invite reactions. Note: items taken from a standardized measure, the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS), developed by Kozee and colleagues (2007).

How often have you been whistled at while walking down a street?

How often have you noticed someone staring at your breasts when you are talking to them?

How often have you felt like or known that someone was evaluating your physical appearance?

How often have you felt that someone was staring at your body?

How often have you noticed someone leering at your body?

How often have you hear a rude, sexual remark made about your body?

How often have you been honked at when you were walking down the street?

How often have you seen someone stare at one or more of your body parts?

How often have you overheard inappropriate sexual comments made about your body?

How often have you noticed that someone was not listening to what you were saying, but instead gazing at your body or a body part?

How often have you heard someone make sexual comments or innuendos when noticing your body?

How often have you been touched or fondled against your will?

How often have you experienced sexual harassment (on the job, in school, etc.)?

How often has someone grabbed or pinched one of your private body areas against your will?

How often has someone made a degrading sexual gesture towards you?

❖ DIDACTIC: Next, facilitator will explicitly introduce Objectification Theory and provide a definition of sexual objectification from the literature on this topic. The following ideas will be conveyed:

- When a woman is sexually objectified she is reduced to an object, that is, a body, or a collection of body parts to be used and/or consumed by the viewer.

- The inherent message in sexual objectification is that a woman's worth is limited to her appearance.

Topic 2: Sexualization and Consequences *(~15 minutes)*

❖ DIDACTIC: Next, facilitator will explicitly introduce the concept of sexualization by providing a definition from the literature on this topic. The following ideas will be conveyed:

- Sexualization is said to occur if a girl or woman is valued primarily for sexual appeal or behavior; if she is held to a narrow standard of beauty; if her physical beauty is equated with sexiness; if she is viewed as an object for sexual use; or if society inappropriately imposes sexuality on her.

  o Sexual objectification is one way that women are sexualized, but sexualization is broader.

- The inherent message in sexualization is that a woman's worth is limited to her sexuality.

❖ EXERCISE: Participants will be placed into breakout groups of 4-5 individuals. They will be asked to use one of their cell phones to access a popular social media site (i.e., Instagram) and peruse their news feed for examples of objectifying and/or sexualizing photos of women. Each group will designate a member to keep a running tally of instances of sexual objectification as well as the total number of photos perused. Participants may also observe the use of hashtags and how this demonstrates/contributes to sexual objectification or

sexualization of women. After about 5 minutes, groups will be asked to share their findings with the larger group in a discussion.

❖ DIDACTIC: Facilitator will ask participants what they know or guess about the negative consequences of sexual objectification and sexualization, and, filling in any gaps in knowledge, the facilitator will summarize the negative consequences based on existing literature:

  o Self-objectification (internalize beliefs about ideal body standards and adopt checking behaviors to compare body against ideal standards)

  o Self-sexualization (internalize messages about women's worth relating to sexuality)

  o Shame, anxiety, reduced concentration, decreased awareness of internal bodily states

  o Psychological distress including eating disorders, depression, sexual dysfunction

❖ DIDACTIC: If participants do not bring it up themselves, facilitator will highlight double bind created by the existence of the sexual double standard (i.e., women's sexual behavior judged by different standard than men's) and sexualization of women in our society. That is, women are denigrated for being *sexual* but taught to be *sexy*, creating a "lose-lose" situation.

Topic 3: Sexy, Sexual, and Sexual Empowerment *(~20)*

❖ DIDACTIC: Facilitator will provide working definitions of sexy, sexual, and empower, which will be projected on a screen for participants to refer back to:

• "Sexy is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as: sexually appealing, attractive, desirable, suggestive, or stimulating."

• "Sexual is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as: of, relating to, or involving sex."

- "Empower is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as: a verb, to give power to (someone). Thus, we can think of sexual empowerment (noun) as: possessing the power to be sexual."

❖ DISCUSSION: Participants will be asked to return to breakout groups and briefly discuss the difference(s) between sexy and sexual empowerment, prior to engaging in an exercise. Groups will be asked to share their ideas with the large group.

❖ EXERCISE/DISCUSSION: Each breakout group will receive written copy of lyrics (see below) to a pop song from 2010, *Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)* by Katy Perry. Participants will discuss in breakout groups: 1) their general reaction to the song, 2) what, if anything do they find sexually empowering, 3) what, if anything, do they find objectifying or sexualizing, 4) what feelings are evoked after reading the lyrics?, and 5) how would they feel if the person in the song was their sister/friend/themselves? Groups will be asked to share their thoughts with the larger group.

VERSE 1:

There's a stranger in my bed,

There's a pounding my head

Glitter all over the room

Pink flamingos in the pool

I smell like a minibar

DJ's passed out in the yard

Barbie's on the barbecue

This a hickey or a bruise?

BRIDGE:

Pictures of last night

Ended up online

I'm screwed

Oh well

It's a blacked out blur

But I'm pretty sure it ruled, damn

CHORUS:

Last Friday night

Yeah we danced on tabletops

And we took too many shots

Think we kissed but I forgot

Last Friday night

Yeah we maxed our credit cards

And got kicked out of the bar

So we hit the boulevard

Last Friday night

We went streaking in the park

Skinny dipping in the dark

Then had a menage a trois

Last Friday night

Yeah I think we broke the law

Always say we're gonna stop-op

Whoa-oh-oah

This Friday night

Do it all again

This Friday night

Do it all again

VERSE 2:

Trying to connect the dots

Don't know what to tell my boss

Think the city towed my car

Chandelier is on the floor

Ripped my favorite party dress

Warrants out for my arrest

Think I need a ginger ale

That was such an epic fail

(BRIDGE)

(CHORUS)

T.G.I.F. x 6

(CHORUS)

❖ DIDACTIC/VIDEO: Participants will view a clip of a video that questions the ideals
   conveyed in pop music, which is sometimes thought of as empowering to women. About 5
   minutes of a YouTube video entitled, "Party Girl Pop: Empowerment or Sexism?" by a
   Melissa A. Fabello of Miss Representation blog, will be shown. Facilitator will ask

participants to share any new reactions to the pop song, after watching the video. Video can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0pORzAe1Pg&feature=youtu.be

Conclusion *(~10 minutes)*

❖ EXERCISE: Facilitator will show a series of slides including images from advertisements, entertainment (e.g., movies, TV), and social media and ask participants to consider whether or not the images are sexually empowering for women. Facilitator will attempt to problematize "traditional" views of sexiness and contemporary sexual empowerment. Facilitator will ask women to critique the images by considering the following questions:

- "Who has the power here?"

- "Whose idea of sexy is this?"

- "How does this impact other women (i.e., at a societal level)?"

- "Who produced this image, and why do they want me to consume it?"

❖ Facilitator will present participants with a take-home question: "How can you embrace your own sexuality and feel sexually empowered despite the existence of sexual objectification and sexualization?"

❖ Facilitator will show a slide with ideas for positive alternatives:

- Become critical when viewing and consuming entertainment and media

- Challenge sexist ideals and practices when you see them happening

- Become an activist by starting or joining a campaign that challenges these ideas

Evaluation *(~15 minutes)*

Participants will be given about fifteen minutes to complete an anonymous post-workshop evaluation online.

Debriefing *(<1 minute)*

Upon completion of the evaluation, participants will be given a debriefing handout, including

final remarks and related, suggested readings.

Demographic Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS:

Some of these questions are sensitive in nature, but it is important that you answer honestly.

Please answer all of the items to the best of your ability. Your feedback will help to guide further

research.

1. Please choose the sexual orientation that most closely represents you.

    Heterosexual   Lesbian   Gay   Bisexual   Self-identify:_____

2. Are you currently (or have you ever been) sexually active?   Yes/No

3. Please choose the race/ethnicity that most closely represents you.

    Caucasian/White   African American/Black   Asian American/Asian

    Hispanic/Latina/o   American Indian/Alaskan Native   Pacific Islander

    Biracial/Multiracial   Self-identify:_____

4. What year of school are you enrolled in currently?

    Freshman   Sophomore   Junior   Senior   Graduate Student

5. How old are you? _____

6. I would consider myself a feminist:

    Agree   Somewhat Agree   Maybe   Somewhat Disagree   Disagree

7. Where did you get information about sex? (Mark all that apply.)

    Mom   Dad   Peers/Friends   Porn   School Sex Ed

    Internet, specify where _____   TV/Movies/Other entertainment

    Other, specify where _____

8. Where did you receive formal sex education (sex ed)? (Mark all that apply

Elementary school   Middle school   High school   I did not receive sex ed

Appendix C

Sexual Objectification and Sexualization Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS:

Some of these questions are sensitive in nature, but it is important that you answer honestly. Please answer all of the items to the best of your ability. Your feedback will help to guide further research and programming on this topic for college women.

1. List two points made by objectification theory: _____   _____

2. Media depictions of women with parts of their bodies exposed are harmless.
                              True   False

3. List two negative consequences of objectification and/or sexualization for women:
   _____   _____

4. List a negative consequence of objectification and/or sexualization for society:
   _____

5. Choose the image that is objectifying:
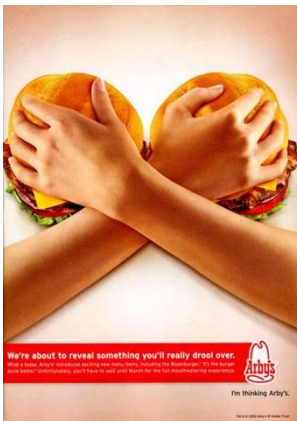
6. Choose the image that is sexualizing:

Critically examine the following two images and for each one, indicate:
 a) what underlying messages are conveyed?
 b) is the image harmful in your opinion?

7.
   a) what underlying messages are conveyed?
   b) is the image harmful in your opinion?

8.
   a) what underlying messages are conveyed?
   b) is the image harmful in your opinion?

Appendix D

Self-Reported Feminist Identity Scale (SRFIS)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please answer each item as completely and accurately as you can by marking the number that

most accurately indicates your opinion:

> 0 Disagree Strongly
>
> 1 Disagree
>
> 2 Disagree Slightly
>
> 3 Agree Slightly
>
> 4 Agree
>
> 5 Agree Strongly

1. Women who are supportive and active in working for women's rights should be admired.

2. Gender roles are oppressive to many women.

3. For some issues, rallies and marches for women's rights are the best way to be active in
    spreading the word about gender equality.

4. Women and men should have equal rights and opportunities.

5. It is important to support female artists by buying their art, projects, writings, and other
    artistic endeavors.

6. Women should speak out against sexually derogatory remarks made by others in public.

7. The emphasis our society places on women's appearance and weight dehumanizes women.

8. Women should be valued for their abilities rather than for their appearance.

9. Men treat women as objects more often than they treat them as equal human beings.

10. Harassment and rape reflect and maintain gender inequality in society.

Appendix E

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please mark the number that corresponds to how much you agree with each of the following statements.

Circle NA only if the statement does not apply to you. Do not circle NA if you don't agree with the statement. For example, if the statement says "When I'm happy, I feel like singing" and you don't feel like singing when you're happy, then you would circle one of the disagree choices. You would only circle NA if you were <u>never</u> happy.

      0 Disagree Strongly

      1 Disagree

      2 Disagree Slightly

      3 Agree Slightly

      4 Agree

      5 Agree Strongly

      NA – Not Applicable

1. I rarely think about how I look.

2. When I can't control my weight, I feel like something might be wrong with me.

3. I think it is more important that my clothes are comfortable than whether they look good on me.

4. I think a person is pretty much stuck with the looks they are born with.

5. I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best.

6. A large part of being in shape is having that kind of body in the first place.

7. I think more about how my body feels than how my body looks.

8. I feel like I must be a bad person when I don't look as good as I could.

9. I rarely compare how I look with how other people look.

10. I think a person can look pretty much how they want to if they are willing to work at it.

11. I would be ashamed for people to know what I really weigh.

12. I really don't think I have much control over how my body looks.

13. Even when I can't control my weight, I think I'm an okay person.

14. During the day, I think about how I look many times.

15. I never worry that something is wrong with me when I am not exercising as much as I should.

16. I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good.

17. When I'm not exercising enough, I question whether I am a good enough person.

18. I rarely worry about how I look to other people.

19. I think a person's weight is mostly determined by the genes they were born with.

20. I am more concerned with what my body can do than how it looks.

21. It doesn't matter how hard I try to change my weight, it's probably always going to be about the same.

22. When I'm not the size I think I should be, I feel ashamed.

23. I can weigh what I'm supposed to when I try hard enough.

24. The shape you are in depends mostly on your genes.

Body Surveillance Subscale: 1, 3, 7, 9, 14, 16, 18, 20

Body Shame Subscale: 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 22

Control Beliefs Subscale: 4, 6, 10, 12, 19, 21, 23, 24

Appendix F

Enjoyment of Sexualization Scale (ESS)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please answer each item as completely and accurately as you can by marking the number that

most accurately indicates your opinion:

0 Disagree Strongly

1 Disagree

2 Disagree Slightly

3 Agree Slightly

4 Agree

5 Agree Strongly

1. It is important to me that men are attracted to me.

2. I feel proud when men compliment the way I look.

3. I want men to look at me.

4. I love to feel sexy.

5. I like showing off my body.

6. I feel complimented when men whistle at me.

7. When I wear revealing clothing, I feel sexy and in control.

8. I feel empowered when I look beautiful.

Appendix G

Post Workshop Evaluation

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please answer each item by marking the number that most accurately indicates your opinion:

       0 Disagree Strongly

       1 Disagree

       2 Disagree Slightly

       3 Agree Slightly

       4 Agree

       5 Agree Strongly

1. The workshop was well organized.

2. The concepts presented in the workshop were presented so that I understood how they may relate to my own life.

3. I gained valuable information and will be able to apply it to my academic and/or personal life.

4. I would recommend this workshop to a friend.

5. I would attend similar workshops in the future.

6. The most valuable aspect of the workshop was: _____

7. Suggestions for future workshops on this topic: _____

Appendix H

Informed Consent (Treatment Group)

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. You are eligible to participate because you are a student in a General Psychology course at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). This research has been approved by IUP's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (724-357-7730).

The purpose of this study is to help us learn more about college women's thoughts and opinions about sexuality. Participation will require approximately **90 minutes** of your time and you will receive **1.5 credits**. In addition to viewing presentation of material, you will be asked to engage in various interactive activities and participate in facilitated discussions related to topics of women's sexuality. You will *not* be required to share personal information during discussions, though you are free to do so. At the end of the workshop you will be asked to complete an anonymous evaluation of the workshop. We are interested in the impact of the workshop. This will help us to improve future workshops for college women. You may find the experience enjoyable or interesting, and it may help to increase your awareness of your own beliefs about sexuality. There are no known risks associated with this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without it adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. Choosing not to participate will also have no effects on the evaluation of your performance in General Psychology; however, it would still be your responsibility to complete the course's research requirement. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and the data will be kept securely. Your participation will have no bearing on your academic standing or services you receive from the University. The information obtained in the study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but *your identity will be kept confidential.*

Once you complete the study, you will be given an information sheet that will provide additional resources to learn more about women's sexuality and contact information if you have questions or wish to receive results of the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below. If you have any questions, please contact the following individuals:

Student Researcher:
Ms. Samantha R. Sciarrillo, M.A.
Clinical Psychology Doctoral Student, Psychology Department
Uhler Hall, 1020 Oakland Ave., Indiana, PA 15705

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Maureen C. McHugh, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Psychology Department
Uhler Hall, 1020 Oakland Ave., Indiana, PA 15705

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone 724/357-7730).

_____   _____
Participant Name   Date

_____
Participant Signature

Appendix I

Informed Consent (Control Group)

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. You are eligible to participate because you are a student in a General Psychology course at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). This research has been approved by IUP's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (724/357-7730).

The purpose of this study is to help us learn more about college women's thoughts and opinions about sexuality. Participation will require approximately **30 minutes** of your time and you will receive **0.5 credits**. You will complete brief, on-line questionnaires related to the topic above. You may find the experience enjoyable or interesting, and it may help to increase your awareness of your own beliefs about sexuality. There are no known risks associated with this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without it adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or IUP. Choosing not to participate will also have no effects on the evaluation of your performance in General Psychology; however, it would still be your responsibility to complete the course's research requirement. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and the data will be kept securely. Your responses to the questionnaires will be confidential. The information you provide us will be considered only in combination with that of other participants. Your participation will have no bearing on your academic standing or services you receive from the University. The information obtained in the study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be kept confidential.

Once you complete the study, you will be given an information sheet that will provide additional resources to learn more about women's sexuality, as well as contact information if you have any questions or wish to receive results of the study.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please select "Yes" below. If you have any questions, please contact the following individuals:

Student Researcher:
Ms. Samantha R. Sciarrillo, M.A.
Clinical Psychology Doctoral Student, Psychology Department
Uhler Hall, 1020 Oakland Ave., Indiana, PA 15705

Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Maureen C. McHugh, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Psychology Department
Uhler Hall, 1020 Oakland Ave., Indiana, PA 15705

This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone 724/357-7730).

I have read the information above, understand that participation in this study is voluntary and agree to be a part of this research (Select "Yes" if you agree to participate and select "No" if you choose not to participate in this study).

Yes   No

Appendix J

Debriefing Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine college women's thoughts and opinions about sexuality and raise awareness of specific social factors that impact women's sexuality. All participants completed brief questionnaires related to this topic. Prior to completing the questionnaires, some women participated in a workshop, including interactive activities and discussions about sexuality.

Because college women in the United States are bombarded with numerous (often negative), conflicting messages about sexuality, this study aimed to create a workshop to explore some of those messages and the impact of such messages. Specific topics included the sexual double standard (i.e., judging the behavior of men and women by different standards), objectification (i.e., equating a person's worth to her appearance), and sexualization (i.e., equating a person's worth to her sexual appeal). These social phenomena have negative effects on men, women, and society more broadly. For instance, sexualization has been linked to impaired cognitive performance, eating disorders, low self-esteem, depressed mood, and diminished sexual health in girls and women. In 2007, the American Psychological Association documented the serious, negative effects of sexualization and recommended further research and interventions aimed at raising awareness of this phenomena.

Thus, the current study aimed to create a workshop intended to generate conversation among college women about the impact of these social phenomena on women's sexuality. It is the hope of the researchers that this workshop will provoke women to seek further information on this topic and share their knowledge and personal experiences with other women and men. This could have a positive impact for individuals and society as a whole.

If you are interested in further reading on these topics, we would suggest the following resources: *Dilemmas of Desire: Teenage girls talk about sexuality* by Deborah Tolman; *Yes Means Yes!: Visions of female sexual power and a world without rape* by Jaclyn Friedman & Jessica Valenti; *The Purity Myth: How American's obsession with virginity is hurting young women* by Jessica Valenti; *Objectification theory* by Fredrickson & Roberts (in Psychology of Women Quarterly, 1997).

This research project is sponsored by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Department of Psychology. If you have any questions or would like further information about this study, including the results when the study has been completed, please contact the following individuals or call the psychology department at 357-2426.

Student Researcher: Faculty Advisor:
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Appendix K

SRFIS Score Frequencies, by Total Sample

Total Sample

Mean = 37.58
Std. Dev. = 8.571
N = 52
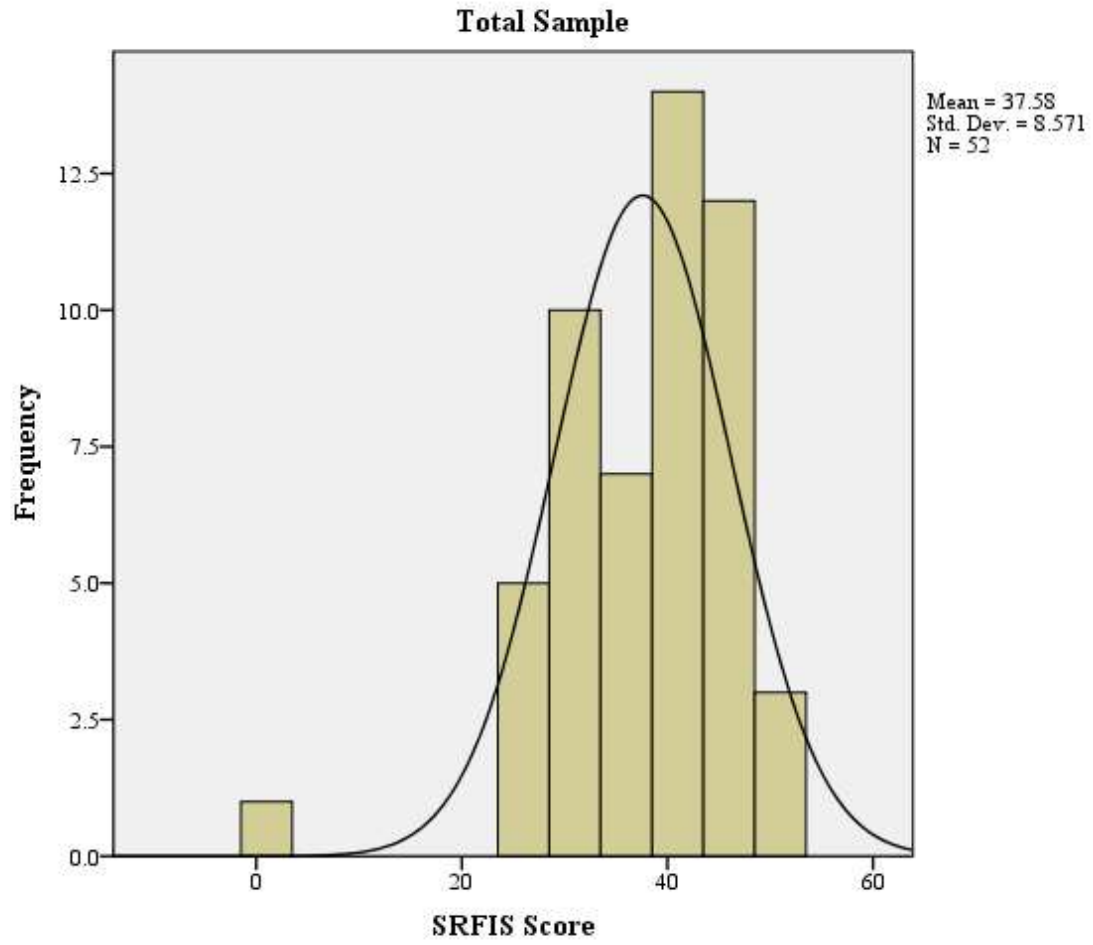
Appendix L

OBCS Score Frequencies, by Total Sample

Total Sample

Mean = 3.65
Std. Dev. = .602
N = 47

Frequency

OBCS Score
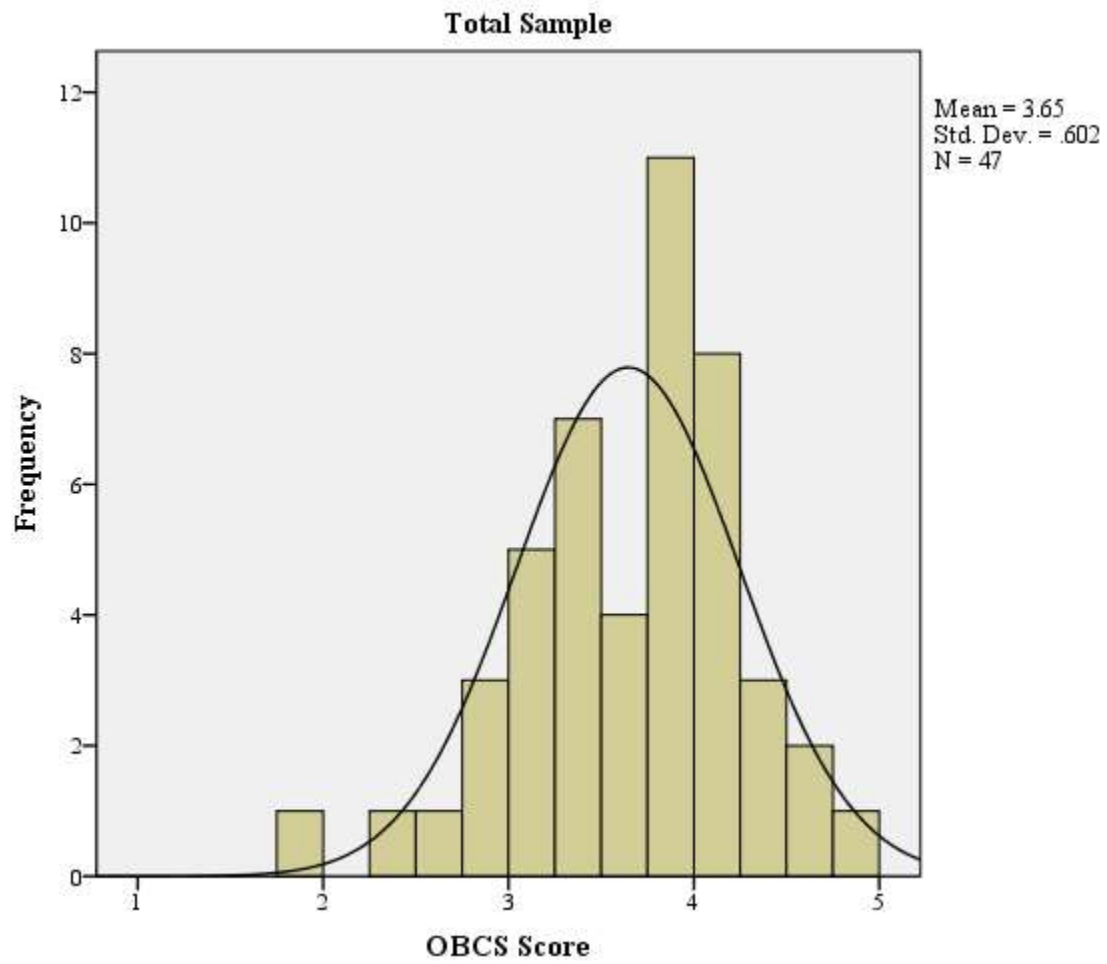
Appendix M

ESS Score Frequencies, by Total Sample

Total Sample

Mean = 4.10
Std. Dev. = .704
N = 48