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# Masculinity and Body Shame: A Comparative Path Analysis

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# Masculinity and Body Shame: A Comparative Path Analysis

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## Introduction

- Gender similarity hypothesis:
  - differences among men and women are much smaller then may be expected (Zell, Krizan, & Teeter, 2015).
  - research has found small mean differences between men and women in overall body esteem (Silberstein, Striegel-Moore, Timko, & Rodin, 1988).
- However, in certain domains the *processes* through which these scores manifest are likely different among genders.
- Interventions for this issue have typically targeted women, because of the cultural assumption that it disproportionately affects them.
- Therefore, it is important to consider how these issues affect men, as well.
- The current analysis:
  - creation of path models to understand how scores of body shame manifest differently between male and female identified participants using predictors of objectification, experience of sexual victimization, and cognitive factors.
- Through the framework of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, implications and possible explanations of the findings are discussed.

## Method

- Participants:
  - 859 male (N=287) and female (N=572) undergraduates from a large Midwestern university
  - Age ranged from 17 to 38 years
  - Racial diversity: 1.9% African American; 2.6% Asian American/Pacific Islander; 88.8% Caucasian, 2.2% Hispanic/Latino; 3.9% Multiracial; .7% Other
- Procedure:
  - Participants recruited via psychology department subject pool website
  - Redirected to SurveyMonkey where they provided informed consent and initiated the survey
  - Upon survey completion, participants reported demographic information
- Materials
  - Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996)
  - Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (Kozee et al., 2007)
  - Sexual Experiences Survey (Koss & Oros, 1982)
  - Self-Objectification Questionnaire (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998)

## Hypotheses

- Men:
  - A direct path between BMI and body shame
  - Sexual victimization will have direct and indirect paths to body shame
  - Self-objectification will only have indirect paths to body shame

- Women
  - There will be no direct path from BMI to body shame, but BMI predict body control beliefs with a positive linear relationship
  - Self-objectification will have direct and indirect paths to body shame

## Results

### Table 1: Men's Trimmed Model

| Criterion | Significant Predictors | β |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Self-Objectification | BMI | .197** |
| | Sexual Victimization | .142* |
| | Body Evaluation | .138* |
| Body Control | Trait Agency | -.137* |
| Body Surveillance | Self-Objectification | .486*** |
| Body Shame | BMI | .147** |
| | Sexual Victimization | .108* |
| | Trait Agency | -.118* |
| | Body Control | -.140** |
| | Body Surveillance | .444*** |

### Table 2: Women's Trimmed Model

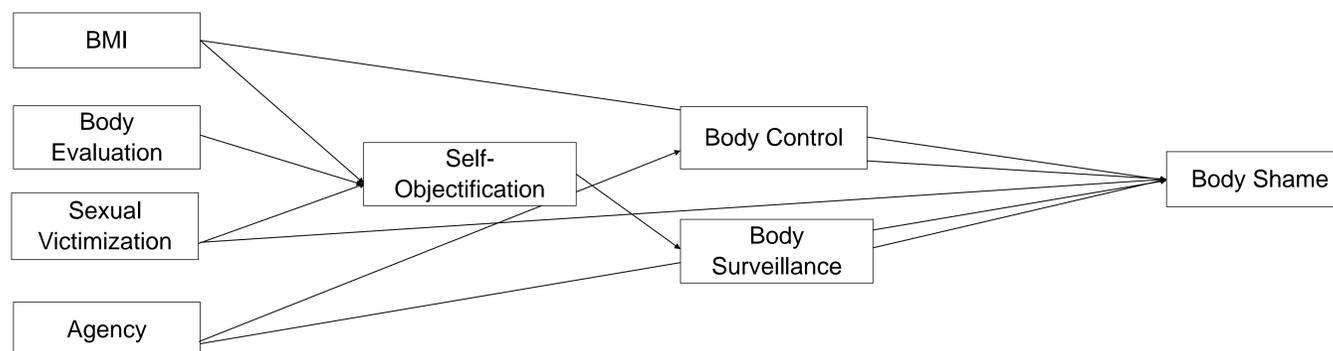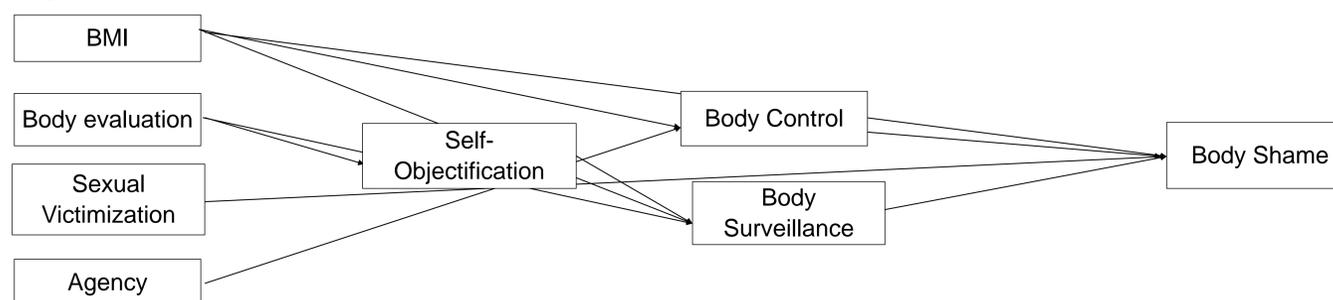| Criterion | Significant Predictors | β |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Self-Objectification | Body Evaluation | .178*** |
| Body Control | BMI | -.079+ |
| | Trait Agency | .086* |
| Body Surveillance | BMI | .124** |
| | Body Evaluation | .142** |
| | Trait Agency | -.104* |
| | Self-Objectification | .405*** |
| Body Shame | BMI | .008 |
| | Sexual Victimization | .138*** |
| | Body Control | -.126** |
| | Body Surveillance | -.483*** |

Figure 1: Men's Trimmed Model



Figure 2: Women's Trimmed Model



## Results Cont.

A series of regression analyses were conducted to determine the direct and indirect relationships among individual difference variables to predict body shame at four levels. Tables 1 and 2 report which variables were significantly predictive at each level for men and women, respectively, while Figures 1 and 2 depict the structures of each trimmed model showing only the significant pathways to highlight the structural differences between the models.

The overall fit of the models for men and women were 51.11% and 44.16%, respectively. At the first level, predicting self-objectification, BMI, sexual victimization, and body evaluation were significant predictors for men, while only body evaluation was significant for women.

Predicting body control beliefs at the second level, only trait agency was significant for men while BMI and trait agency were for women. At the same level, BMI, body evaluation, trait agency, and self-objectification all significantly predicted body surveillance for women, while only self-objectification predicted this for men.

Finally, both men and women had multiple significant direct paths among several variables and the criterion (body shame). For men, these were BMI, sexual victimization, trait agency, body control, and body surveillance while for women they were BMI, sexual victimization, body control and body surveillance.

## Discussion

These results, while descriptive in nature, carry important implications for the field in terms of gendered manifestations of beliefs about the bodies. While base level mean differences on these variables often provide support for the gender similarity hypothesis, it is important to consider differences in the ways these variables behave for male and female identified people. This is demonstrated by the differential structures of two trimmed path models predicting body shame for men and women (Figures 1 and 2), revealing that, while all variables contribute, they do so in different ways for people of different genders.