

# How Do Women “Balance” Objectification?

## The Effects of Body Sentiment and Valence of the Objectification Experience on Source Sentiment

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### Introduction

- Calogero (2011) found objectification can lead to increased body shame, women silencing themselves, and performing worse on cognitive tests
- Women experience approximately 1-2 instances of objectification per week (Kozee et al., 2007)
- Purpose: Find how women respond to different types of objectification experiences (e.g., appearance criticisms vs appearance compliments)
- Through the lens of Heider’s (1958) Balance Theory, the aim was to see the effects of women’s positive or negative body sentiment

#### Body Sentiment

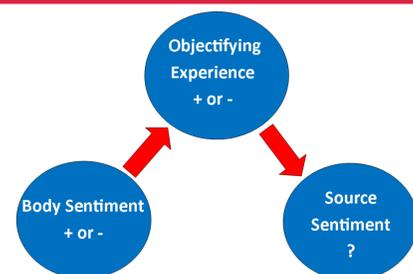


#### Appearance Comment



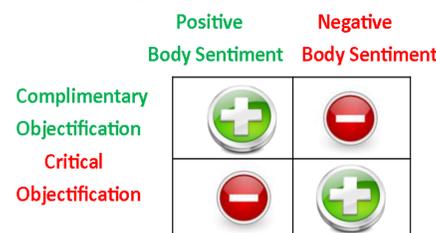
### Research Questions

- Will a woman who has a positive view of her body and receives a positive comment, have a positive attitude toward that person?
- Will a woman who has a negative view of her body and receives a positive comment, have a negative attitude toward that person?
- Will a woman who has a positive view of her body and receives a negative comment from a person, have a negative attitude toward that person?
- Will a woman who has a negative view of her body and receives a negative comment from a person, have a positive attitude toward that person?



### Balance Diagram

### Hypotheses Model



### Methods

- Sample consisted of 121 women
- 82.6% Caucasian (Non-Hispanic), 6.6% Hispanic, 5.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.1% African American, and .8% separate category
- Ages 18 to 74 years of age;  $M=35.13$  years ( $SD=13.24$ )
- Data was collected in seven batches, consisting of 20 HITs on Mechanical Turk
- 2 objectification valence (Complimentary vs. Critical) X 2 body sentiment (Positive vs. Negative) between - participants factorial design

### Body Sentiment Manipulation

#### Picture Presentation (Ideal)

Please compare how you look with the woman pictured below. This woman is more attractive than me in these three ways...



#### Picture Presentation (Non-Ideal)

Please compare how you look with the woman pictured below. This woman is less attractive than me in these three ways...



We had two questions for a manipulation check:  
How positively do you feel about your body right now?  
How attractive do you think you are right now?

### Objectification Valence Manipulation

Please take a moment to imagine a time when you felt that a man was sexually objectifying you and **liked/disliked** what he saw. For example, he was **gazing/glaring** at your body or **complimenting/criticizing** your body in a sexualized way, making **appreciative/unappreciative** sexual comments about your body, or **whistling/heckling** at you in public, etc. Think about what took place and please describe as many details about this experience (e.g., who was there, what was said or done, how you felt and what you thought, what you did, where you were) as you can in the space below. You will have 5 minutes to complete this portion of the study.

We had six questions that looked at how complimentary, critical, objectifying, dehumanizing, considerate, and interested in you (the woman) the man was. It is on a 7-point Likert Scale, ranging from (1) Not at All to (2) Extremely.

- Source sentiment: perceptions, feelings, and behaviors toward the man who objectified them
- Enjoyment of Sexualization: The scale consists of eight questions (6-point Likert Scale), ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (6) Strongly Agree (Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey, 2010)

### Results

- Manipulation checks
- Body sentiment
- Positive body:  $F(1, 119) = 1.20, p = .28$
- How attractive:  $F(1, 119) = 1.92, p = .17$

- Objectification valence
- Critical:  $F(1, 118) = 117.9, p < .000$
- Complimentary:  $F(1, 118) = 36, p < .000$

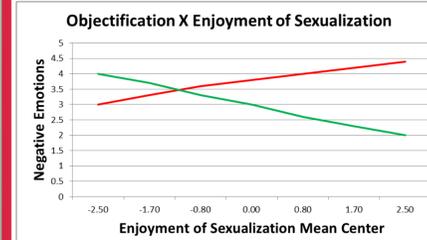
- Positive Behaviors ( $\alpha=.98$ )
- ES:  $p=.006$
- Critical:  $p=.83$
- Complimentary:  $p=.0001$
- OV:  $p=.001$

- Positive Thoughts 1 ( $\alpha=.97$ )
- ES:  $p=.07$
- Critical:  $p=.96$
- Complimentary:  $p=.008$
- OV:  $p<.000$

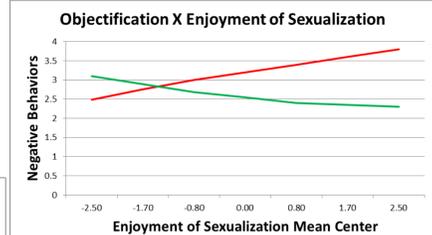
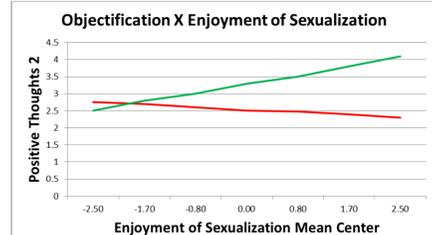
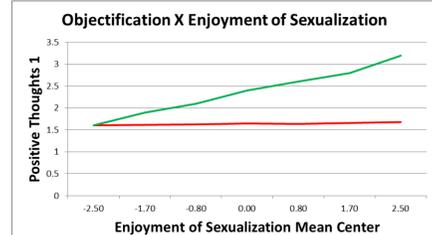
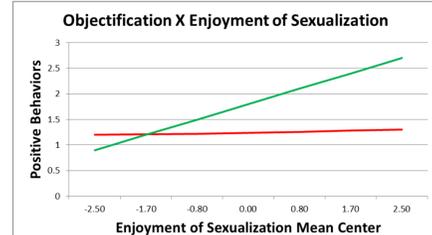
- Positive Thoughts 2 ( $\alpha=.85$ )
- ES:  $p=.006$
- Critical:  $p=.49$
- Complimentary:  $p=.01$
- OV:  $p=.001$

- Negative Behaviors ( $\alpha=.89$ )
- ES:  $p=.47$
- Critical:  $p=.04$
- Complimentary:  $p=.22$
- OV:  $p=.02$

- Negative Emotions ( $\alpha=.84$ )
- ES:  $p=.207$
- Critical:  $p=.03$
- Complimentary:  $p=.001$
- OV:  $p=.001$



- MANOVA: Enjoyment of sexualization (ES) X Objectification valence (OV)
- Interaction between 4/5 DVs ( $p<.05$ )
- Positive thoughts 1 ( $p=.08$ )



#### Legend

Critical —  
Complimentary —

### Discussion

- Valence of objectification, but not body sentiment, significantly predicted source sentiment. Complimentary objectifying experiences predicted more positive source sentiment than critically objectifying experiences, but only when enjoyment of sexualization was high.
- **Limitations:** Mechanical Turk and body sentiment manipulation
- **Future work:** Further investigate objectification from various sources