

Gender Differences in Appearance Concern  
Correlating between self-esteem.

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Research Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor  
Of Arts Degree (Social Science) at Dublin Business School of Arts,

Supervisor: Bernadette Quinn

## **Acknowledgments**

I wish to acknowledge and thank my supervisor Bernadette Quinn who was extremely helpful, helped me every step of the way on this study. Without her guidance, I would have been utterly lost, thanks again Bernie for everything, I could not have asked for a better supervisor and lecturer for my final year, I really appreciate all the help you have given me.

I would also like to thank my loving and supportive family and friends, without your help I do not know what I would have done!

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## **Abstract**

This present research focuses on the effect that self-objectification has towards males and female college students in Dublin, Ireland, and examines whether or not self-esteem correlates with self-objectification. Information was collected by using a quantitative method approach and by using a non-experimental, correlational design. A questionnaire was set out, combined with questions relating to age and the sex and two measures were set out in the style of questionnaires, The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale and The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Participants were gathered outside college hours but on college campuses, so permission was not necessary. Participants included 99 males and 100 female samples, aged from 18-25. The findings of this research showed that there was a significant difference found for male and female college students regarding appearance concern. It also found a positive correlation between female college students regarding body surveillance and self-esteem. In summary, these results suggest that females are just as expected to be body conscious which lowers their self-esteem, and that male college students have become more concerned with their appearance and related to works, focus on their appearance and therefore, have higher self-esteem opposed to females.

## **Introduction**

The term Appearance concern or in other words body image can be defined as; “the picture you form in your mind about the appearance about your body.” (Moe, (1999, p. 1). Understanding one’s body can be more complex than one thinks especially when a mirror is involved. Body image can affect males just as much females and suffer just as many issues regarding their appearance concern. (Choma et al., 2010). This can be how one may think of them when looking into a mirror. Media is one influence that can affect how young males and females regard their body image. Aspects like age, personality, exercise and self-esteem all play a surrounding role towards appearance concern. Relating to age, young adults would be the most popular age that is influenced with their body image. In terms of exercise, males that would be roughly around 5ft 10 would be presumed to be obese if their waist calculation was at 40 inches or over the same for females who were 5ft 5 and who had a waist calculation of 35 inches or more. Moe (1999, p.2-16).

The obsession with appearance concern and magazines first started back from the 1800’s. From the early 1900’s films, especially American films had a huge influence regarding body image globally. There were four types of women created during the early 1900’s; Lois Banner combined these types with certain stages of time. Examples would be one called the steel engraving lady. This type of ‘woman’ was created during pre-civil war times and was described to be quite petite and small and pale. This look was popular but was also popular due to an illness that was spreading at that time; this was called tuberculosis, which affected many women at that time of era. The next type of woman that was created described as being Voluptuous. This type was given to women during post-war times. Lillian Russell was the spokes model for women globally, especially in the United States; she was viewed as having a fuller figure. The next type was called the Gibson girl; this was given to women who were

at the in-between stage of steel engraved woman and a voluptuous woman. The figure would represent more of an active and fit body also exhibiting skin for women. The last and final type of woman was named the flapper. This was named for women who were described as the feminists and for the women who wanted to be independent and who would compare the voluptuous and Gibson girl relating them to women who were just used as homemakers and used for having more children. Moe (1999, p.2-16). discusses appearance concern.

### **Objectification Theory**

Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) can be described as for females the viewing of ones self-resulting from other peoples' opinions'. This kind of viewing or criticism from the public or in other words public opinions can put certain pressure onto one's body or emotional state which if not controlled properly can lead to depression and potential health risks. (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997) described Sexual objectification as only one factor of many that subdue gender. The way the public may look at males' or females' bodies relating to sexual objectification can be viewed as just being an object of desire. Pleasing people can be a major concern relating to appearance concern. The eyes can be the most loving but most dangerous weapons involved with emotional tactics. The eyes can force an objectifying gaze onto the human body. A certain gaze can be divided into three areas; this first act can happen at any social event within society. It has been shown that women tend to receive this objectifying gaze more often than males and with women it has been said that men tend to be more discreet when it comes to sexual objectification opposed to men. It is usually more males than females that like to add a demeaning commentary when gazing. The second area involves the media and its influence regarding sexual objectification. This objectification can be messaged verbally or visually drawn out to people through reality TV, soaps or TV adverts. The third area involves the physicality of the human body being portrayed through pictures or videos that can be used for the pleasure of others. Asian

Americans or Latin ladies seem to provide a trademark with pictures tagged as being 'exotic' or 'different'. (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997).

### **Social Comparison Theory**

Cohen (2006) suggested that most males and females have a practice of continuously associating with others. It can be a forceful or natural habit. Additionally, Cohen suggests, that people when are evaluating others they can give two types of judgment; which can be stated as dejected or active. It is suggested by Cohen's statement, that when a person is to relate himself or herself to someone who they feel is lower than them, they extract higher self-esteem and then start to decrease their anger levels but can go the opposite direction if they meet someone who they feel is on a higher level; this results to reduced self-esteem and anger levels rise. So it can be suggested that; females and males like to identify others who they can compare and contrast themselves with. Cohen (2006).

### **Media influence:**

It is believed that the 'perfect' young female is at a height of 5'7" and at a weight of 100 pounds and has a desired physical image to have long blonde hair with blue eyes. Thompson, and Heinberg (1999) examining the media's influence on body image. This was specifically looking into young adults and young adolescents. For any young male or female who is in this category, leaving their homes in the mornings can be a stressful chore with rituals relating to making sure one looks 'acceptable' in society. Is looking good all about feeling good? 21st century young adults are more conscious than ever about appearance and who can blame them what with the ultimate pressure that is shown with media influence corrupting an image of 'perfection' and this does not just relate to women anymore but has shown to be predicament also relating to young males. The 'perfect' image to most females is having perhaps a sculpted, toned body with a voluptuous, sexual appeal with a big bust and small

waist, the same relates to men as well what with the media giving men a 'perfect' image of a man to have a good body. . Moe (1999, p.2-16). But with these unrealistic, desirable measurements to both sexes comes a price and often relates to self-esteem, which will be looked into with more detail. Self-esteem can act like a processor to body image and can control the body's actions. Thompson, and Heinberg (1999).

### **Mental Health and Eating Disorders:**

In terms of mental health and health issues for Irish men almost three quarters of the population are over the normal weight which can lead to humiliation and a sense of shame. Over half these numbers had already experienced shame and humiliation in a public setting. Doctors treating these males have also blamed weight issues with culture pressures. Doctors also stated that women are better with talking about their problems and their body issues which in turn leads to more of society issues opposed to males who tend to get closed up with their feelings and therefore the issues are not as regularly spoke about. That's why females receive more attention with issues on appearance concern. People often associate eating disorders or mental health issues with body image towards women, but over the last few decades there has been an increase with health issues with men regarding body image. The article goes on to proclaim that 10% of the Irish male population experience bulimia or anorexia. Almost a quarter of men feel that their weight is not adequate and think about their appearance more than twice daily. Hunt (2012).

### **The New Masculinity:**

Masculinity and well-toned body is equal to powerful Swami states; that with this comes confidence for life aspects like career or women. Swami goes onto say that a lot of men feel that a lot of the reasons why relationships struggle or start to diminish is on a count of the lack of male physique and male appearance. Swami (2006, p.49, 50). Although. Looking into

a study that was conducted with the Fredrickson and Roberts theory, it was predicted that the more built up a man was the more problems they had with their eating. It was found from this test that males that were considered bodybuilders had a discontent towards their self-image. Hallsworth, Wade, Tiggermann (2005). Looking into the new profound hobbies of men, the higher the man was to be concerned about their appearance the more they are likely to receive cosmetic surgery. A newspaper article stated that more and more Irish men are receiving treatments like mantox or going under the knife for reduction of the chest area, laser hair removal is another treatment that males are objectifying themselves too. According to surgeons, there has been a high increase of males in the UK receiving treatments like cosmetic surgery with an increase of over 70 per cent of young males attending clinics. O' Shea (2010). Males who feel more youthful and better in shape feel more assured with career goals. Clinics like Bodywhys in Ireland are stating a significant rise with more males being concerned with appearance concern. Vernon, Quinlan (2012).

### **Literature Review**

The following information presents a review of the literature on self-objectification among male and female adults from a thematic point of view. The first theme explored in the present literature was self-objectification and gender, the second theme was self-objectification and age, the third theme explored self-objectification and self-esteem and the last theme explored was self-objectification and eating disorders.

In order to conduct a literature review on self-objectification, a search of the PsycINFO and Academic Search Complete data bases were performed.

The following published articles that were relevant to the model of Objectification Theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and empirically measured causes and consequences of self-objectification were reviewed according to the themes in which they encompassed. The first theme reviewed was self-objectification and gender.

### **Self-Objectification and Gender,**

Choma, Visser, Pozzebon, Bogaert, Busseri and Sadava, (2010) discuss the testing between males and females related to the agreement roles of body shame and nerves relating to body image but also accounting it to self-objectification and self-esteem. Analysis was carried out among the testing of physique embarrassment and appearance concern related to self-objectification. They were tested as mediators for the expected negativity existing between self-objectification and self-esteem. Gender roles were also tested to explore whether or not the mediation ways were in any way being controlled. There were 100 female and 98 men participants in the study used for the research, participants originated from Canada who were male and female undergraduates aged from 19-32. The participants consented willingly but only in return for a sum of \$20. Methods used were asked by four questionnaires related to self-objectification and self-esteem and gender and body shame. The findings were as follows; the relationship between femininity and masculinity was non-fundamental among males and females. Males show numbers just as high as females in terms of body shame and self-objectification through females show higher numbers with self-objectification and lower self-esteem and higher number regarding body shame. It was also found that the more females distinguished themselves as being clichéd 'feminine' the lower the body shame compared to males distinguishing themselves as feminine, it was found that numbers were higher related to body shame. Body shame and body image concern were found to be fully agreed on the relationship between self-objectification and self-esteem. Higher body shame and body image concern each anticipated higher self-objectification along with higher self-

esteem. It was also found that the relationship between high self-objectification and low self-esteem were fully agreed by body shame and body image concern, sustaining the hypothesis. There were also a few limitations; even though self-objectification was studied as an individual distinctiveness it can also help body shame and negative effects. Another limitation was the inability to entry into causation as the study was correlational. Self-objectification and body control was not approached in the same research. Another limitation was that the potential mediating consequences of gender or gender roles have yet to be researched. In conclusion, these aspects like body shame or self-objectification did not differ between sexes (Choma et al., 2010).

Moreover, Oehlof, Musher-Eizenman, Neufled, Hauser 2009 discussed the human physiques worth in terms of self-objectification and states that it can potentially produce negative cognitive effects. This research studied the 'perfect body' for males and females related to self-surveillance. This has previously been researched numerous times on women opposed to men. The method used was quantitative using three questionnaires on self-objectification and ideal body shapes and appearance anxiety questionnaire; this was given to a total of 183 college students, 111 women and 72 men aged between 18-29 years. Findings found that women did not desire a muscular physique compared to males who showed a desire for a muscular frame, this research was kept constant to hypothesis. It was also found that women were more self-embodied than men. There was also a relationship found between gender and self-surveillance on the idealistic body shape. However, it was researched that the relationship between self-objectification and other physique variables may fluctuate between males and females (Oehlof et al., 2009).

In addition, Schwartz, Grammas, Sutherland, Siffert and Bush-King, 2010, discuss the self-objectification towards males and looks into the power of ethnicity and the male typical role. A total of 202 undergraduate male students participated in this research. The age range is

varying from 18 to 65. In return for this participation, students were given extra recognition in their studies. In terms of ethnicity, 37.3% were Asian American, 27.7% were white, 14.5% were Latina and 13.6% were African-American. Methods of receiving data from participants were done by quantitative research by surveys created online by survey-monkey which could be completed by participants at home or in college. Results found that no measures were changed. It was found that males look to their protective masculinity when faced with body image. It was found that males, changeable emotions and relationship determinants are fundamental when it comes to self-surveillance and body concern. Limitations were evident in this research as this study was initially meant for participants 25 years and over, the average was 25 years so it is likely that results would change with different age in participants. The burden on having a 'perfect' or an idealistic physique for males has increased over recent times; therefore a cross-sectional or longitudinal draft could have clarified age as a determinant (Schwartz et al., 1010).

Moreover, Hebl, King and Lin, (2004) discussed the belief that recent self-objectification theory shows that Caucasian women's body image is negatively affected by a stigma and obesity and sociocultural norm of thinness that leads women to self-focus from a critical perspective. This study tested 176 men and 224 women of Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic descent in a situation related to self-objectification, in this case, wearing a one-piece speedo bathing suit or that served as a control condition, e.g. wearing a sweater. The conclusion found that when put in an objectifying situation men and women of every ethnicity experienced negative outcomes, an example lower math performance (Hebl et al., 2004).

A further study by Roberts and Gettman (2004) discusses that American culture has a huge effect on women and how they view themselves and their bodies. This study was designed to test whether a state of self-objectification can be automatically activated by specific objectifying words. It was shown that women showed a high rank when it came to negative emotions but showed a low ranking when it came to the appeal of physical sex when primed with self-objectification opposed to being primed with body competence. Men showed no affect by the primes. The findings of this study showed that mere exposure to objectifying media can play a fundamental role in the initiation of self-objectification (Roberts & Gettman, 2004).

Grieve and Helmick, (2008) discusses the influence of self-objectification on men's drive for muscularity, body satisfaction and self-esteem and symptoms of dysmorphia. 74 men participated with questionnaires that were provided on-line. The self-objectification questionnaire and the drive for muscularity scale and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale and the muscle dysmorphia inventory questionnaire were used. Results found that men who scored high on measures of self-objectification also indicated a greater drive for muscularity and more symptoms of muscle dysmorphia compared to men who scored low on measures' of self-objectification. These findings suggest that self-objectification increases men's risk for experiencing symptoms of muscle dysmorphia.

Mercurio and Landry, 2008 discuss the influence of self-objectification towards women and their self-esteem and satisfaction for life. A quantitative method was conducted and participants were faced with questionnaires. Participants included 227 female undergraduate female college students. Results found that body shame had a relationship with self-esteem.

Breines, Crocker, Garcia (2008) discuss whether or not self-objectification has a high impact towards women's well-being. Participants included 49 female college students. Findings showed that; the majority of women had negative experiences regarding appearance concern.

The first theme in the present review explored the literature that examined gender differences in self-objectification.

### **Self-Objectification and Age.**

The second theme explored the relationship between self-objectification and age.

Hill and Sue (2003) discussed sexual objectifications' link with self-objectification and moderation by sexual orientation and age in white women. In terms of objectification Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) made an assumption that women of all ages are sexually objectified and seen as 'objects'. This can lead to negative side effects for women e.g.: shame, so Hill and Sue's (2003) study was set out to explore the relationship between cultural sexual objectification and self-objectification in women and to also examine the age and sexual orientation towards these results. A total of 502 (307 heterosexual, 33 bi sexual, 155 lesbians and 7 did not report sexual orientation) women participating ranging from ages 18years to 79 years with a mean age of 30.74. 83% were white women. Methods used empirical study and samples. Results found were that cultural sexual objectification were linked to self-objectification in the sample, sexual orientation had no orientation of cultural sexual objectification and experiences were higher for women aged 50-79 opposed to younger women. Results also found that when separated into groups, the correlation between

cultural sexual objectification and objectification for white women aged 18-29 and 30-49 became non-significant (Hill & Sue, 2003).

In addition, Grippo and Hill (2008) discussed feminist attitudes on self-objectification, habitual body monitoring and body dissatisfaction in middle age and older women. Methods used were quantitative and empirical. Participants ranged between ages of 40 to 78 years and there were a total of 138 participants. Tests and measures were the self-objectification questionnaires, multi-dimensional body-self questionnaire and the attitudes towards feminism and the women's scale movement. Findings were that feminist attitudes were not correlated with body dissatisfaction, self-objectification or habitual body monitoring were not found to moderate the relationship between self-objectification and habitual body monitoring and body dissatisfaction (Grippo & Hill, 2008).

Furthermore, Borland and Akram (2007) investigated women on advertising. Most UK advertisers target young, slim females and males. The purpose of Borland and Akram's (2007) study was to find out if the research was relevant to older women who have more income to spend in fashion. The method used in this study was qualitative examining two groups' older and younger women. Interviewing women was a useful approach to get their opinions on specific adverts. The counter drawing rating scale was also used to examine women on their self-image. Findings show that older women were more satisfied with their self-image than younger women. Both groups agreed that models should be larger than they are and the advert "normal-sized" sold better as a product (Borland & Akram, 2007).

A further study by Casey, Augustis-Horvath, and Tylka (2009) discussed women's age relating to disordered eating. Methods used only included women and were sent through electronic mail messages to students. These emails contained a brief description of the study and a request for participation. Surveys were then provided through URL links from these emails. The interpersonal sexual objectification scale was used to determine the extent to which women perceived they were targets of sexual objectification. A 26 item eating Attitudes Test was used to measure ED symptomatology. BMI was also reported on participant's weight and height. Also used was the 8-item Body Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale. Results showed that the older group had a stronger relationship between body shames and disordered eating and a weaker relationship between poor interceptive awareness and disordered eating than did the younger group.

Moreover, Mellor, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, Mc Cabe, Ricciardelli, (2010) investigated age with females and males regarding the topics on appearance concern and self-esteem. Methods used in this study were quantitative and used questionnaires based on appearance concern and confidence and body status and figure satisfaction. Participants included 150 males and 239 females. Findings regarding this study showed; that high stages of self-esteem were related to low heights regarding body disappointment. Results stated that; women were more displeased with their physical appearance opposed to men, although, it resulted that men showed more significance regarding their appearance concerns opposed to women but also resulted to high levels of body disappointment.

The Second theme in the present review explored the literature that examined self-objectification related to age.

### **Psychological consequences of self-objectification**

In order to further understand the psychological experiences of self-objectification, research has also examined the relationship between self-objectification and psychological experiences such as depression.

The third theme investigated was psychological consequences related to self-objectification.

For instance, Grabe and Hyde (2009) discussed the roles of the media and how it may be sexually objectifying to a host of adolescent girls. Age that is affected was mostly surrounded around 13 year old girls. The study predicted that music television would be impacted with self-objectification. The method included 195 female adolescents. Signed parent consent adolescent assent were obtained for this study. Participants then completed questionnaires which were done through computers which lasted an hour. Measures used were; music television use, the access of music consumption for self-surveillance the body consciousness Scale for youth was used. Body Esteem was measured with the body image subscale of the self-image questionnaire and Depressive symptoms and a dieting status were assessed through the Children's Depression Inventory. Anxiety was measured using a short version of the Trait anxiety Scale and a Maths Confidence Scale. Findings found that girls viewed MTV an average of once a week and found that that they have higher levels of self-objectification than did college-aged women. Findings also show that they support a model in which self-objectification mediates a direct relationship between music television and self-esteem, dieting, depressive symptoms', anxiety and confidence in math ability.

In addition, Strelan, Mehaffey, and Tiggemann (2003) investigated the interrelationships between self-objectification, reasons for exercise, body satisfaction, body esteem and self-esteem. An empirical study method was used that provided a questionnaire that accessed each of these constructs. 104 female participants took part ranging from 16-25 who exercised regularly at a fitness centre. Self-objectification was the reason many women did exercise and

findings found that reasons for exercising were found to mediate the relationships between self-objectification and body satisfaction and with body and self-esteem. Objectification theory can be used relatively in the realm of exercise and that among women who exercise motivations for exercise account for the reduced body satisfaction and self-esteem for women high on self-objectification.

Peat and Muelenkamp (2011) discussed the potential mediational roles of introspective awareness and social anxiety using the non-parametric. Bootstrapping procedure for multiple mediation. College aged women, a total of 214 participated in a self-report of measures assessing self-objectification, disordered eating, depression, introspective awareness and social anxiety. The results indicate that both introspective awareness and social anxiety are significant mediators in the relationship between self-objectification and eating disorder symptoms and depression. This conclusion also supports the objectification theory and contributes to a greater understanding of the etiological underpinnings of eating disorders and depression in women.

A further study by Clarke (2006) investigated the relationship between trait and state self-objectification and various eating pathology including restricted eating and it examines the role of general and specific feminist attitudes on body dissatisfaction and trait disordered eating and it also merges two empirical supported models of eating disorders. Using a quasi-experimental research design, a total of 103 women completed different measures of baselines and were assigned to one of two state self-objectified conditions (sweaters vs. swimsuits) when body image and body shame were measured as a post. Following the manipulation participants' caloric intake during a snack break was measured. Results indicated that trait self-objectification was associated with disordered eating symptomatology and analyses found on effect of condition of body shame and this was moderated by trait self-

objectification. Feminist attitudes were also associated with body dissatisfaction but not with disordered eating symptoms.

For instance, Grabe, Hyde and Lindberg (2007) discussed the linkage with body shame rumination and the depression with boys. Research was carried out from a sample of boys and girls aged 11 to 13 years. To be viewed as an object negatively affects girls, not boys, subjective well-being. There was a model tested predicting relationships among self-surveillance, body shame, rumination and depressive symptoms. Models were tested separately for boys and girls. A longitudinal design allowed examination of the casual assumptions of the world. The method tested 299 adolescents in total, 158 females who were included in an on-going, longitudinal Wisconsin study of families and work. Measures were self-surveillance which measured the sub-scale of the objectified body consciousness scale of youth. It measures body shame which was measured by the shame sub-scale. Rumination was also measured and depressive symptoms assessed by the self-report children's depression inventory. There were signed consents from parents and guardians allocated. Results founded were that girls reported higher levels of self-surveillance, body shame and depressive symptoms than their male counterparts. It was also noted that gender difference in surveillance precede the gender differences in rumination and depression which do not appear till aged 13. Developmentally finding show, that gender difference in self-objectification appears before the gender differences in rumination and depression (Grabe et al., 2007).

Morry and Staska (2001) discuss the media influence that can be had on males and females. There were 150 participants involved with this study and it used an empirical study method. Findings showed that Shows those males are just as likely to receive eating disorders from reading fitness magazines as girls would and that males are just as dissatisfied with their image as girls would appear.

The Third theme in the present review explored the literature that examined self-objectification and psychological consequences.

The next theme looked at is self-objectification and exercise or it may be titled as **Psychological consequences of self-objectification and exercises.**

For instance, Prichard and Tiggermann (2005) investigated self-objectification, its theoretical consequences and its relationship to reasons for exercise within a fitness centre environment. A total of 97 female aerobic participants aged from 18-45 completed questionnaires using measures of empirical and quantitative testing. These questionnaires included topics on self-objectification, reasons for exercise, body dissatisfaction and disordered eating. Increased self-objectification (self-surveillance) was related to disordered eating symptomatology, body dissatisfaction and appearance-related reasons for exercise. Aerobics instructors scored significantly lower on self-objectification, body dissatisfaction and disordered eating opposed to the aerobic participants and they exercised more for enjoyment rather than appearance related reasons. For participants, the location of the fitness centre moderated the relationship between the frequency of exercise and self-objectification. Results also showed that higher levels of self-objectification were also related to wearing tighter exercise clothing. The measures that were used for testing was the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale, Body Cathexis Scale, Self-Objectification questionnaire and the Eating Disorder Inventory.

Additionally, Duffy-Paiement (2010) examined the differences in eating disorder symptoms and the diagnoses three groups of athletes (i.e.: aesthetic lean, non-aesthetic lean and non-lean.) it also examines changes in eating disorder symptom's and diagnoses across athletic seasonal status. The methods of this study were empirical and quantitative. 282 females from 14 different American Universities participated. Measures were completed through eating disorder diagnoses. Results found that non-aesthetic lean sport athletes reported fewer

athlete-specific disorder symptoms than the other two groups during athletic season. Non-lean sport athletes reported more athlete-specific eating disorder symptoms at both time points. Because of the expectation that lean individuals are at greatest risk for the development of eating disorders, non-lean sport athletes may not be receiving the attention and treatment needed to improve their eating attitudes and behaviours.

Furthermore, Greenleaf (2005) investigated the fit of the self-objectification model with a sample of physically active women. The methods used were done based on the objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) and college and middle aged women were examined from the ages of 18-64. 394 participants took part in the research. Results found that the younger aged participants reported significantly higher levels of self-objectification, body shame, and appearance anxiety and disordered eating. Self-objectification was also a trace predictor of physical involvement.

Strelan, Hargreaves (2005) discusses the male opinions towards appearance concern related to exercising. The method carried out was a quantitative style approach and it contained four types of questionnaires based on body shame, appearance concern and self-esteem. 153 participants took place between the ages of 18 to 35. Findings showed that men were just as concerned with exercise for appearance as women were. Exercising tends to raise self-esteem.

Hallsworth, Wade and Tiggermann (2005) discuss males and how their muscularity can endure bad eating habits which can in turn, evolve into eating disorders. Three types of muscular samples were used and were grouped and sampled. These samples completed questionnaires on body shame, appearance concern, drive for a muscular physique and bulimia. Findings suggested that bodybuilder men had higher body shame and a disliking for

their physiques. Due to the eating disorders that men experience over this issue, this has a negative impact towards male health.

The theme explored above in the literature above examined self-objectification related to psychological consequences such as disordered eating and regarding exercises.

### **Conclusion of Literature Review**

The aim of the present chapter was to introduce the concept of self-objectification and present a review of the literature on self-objectification among male and female adults from a thematic point of view. The first theme that was explored was the examination of self-objectification differences related to gender. The second theme explored was self-objectification related to age, the third theme explored was self-objectification related to psychological consequences' and the last theme explored was self-objectification related to exercising and psychological consequences such as; disordered eating.

### **Aims and Objectives of study:**

The aim of this study will be to measure the self-esteem and analyse body image concerns among young adults, both males and females. This study also has a lot to do with the sexuality or other words the sexual objectification towards women and men. In the Objectification theory it states that a woman's or men sexual appearance is used as tools and is used for other peoples' amusement or pleasure. It also concludes that women and men that are happy with them and their body image tend to be more successful in life whether it being related to job opportunities or with relationships. Fredrickson, and Heinberg (1999), p. 175-178) discussed the ideas of sexual objectification and body image. This study will be correlational which means it will be gathering information related to body image and self-esteem from males and females and will later be comparing results regarding both sexes.

### **Rationale of study:**

This study is important as it will be looking at the data received from males and females related to self-esteem and appearance concern and will be comparing data to view how both gender feel on the topic of body image.

### **Hypothesis:**

Hypotheses one: Predicting that there will be a significant difference with gender differences with appearance concern.

Hypotheses two: That there will be a significant negative relationship between appearance concern and self-esteem for females but not for males.

### **Methods Section:**

#### **Design:**

The design used for this study was correlational and used a quantitative style approach. It was used to measure quantitative results from both males and females based on their appearance concern with results also regarding their self-esteem. Reasons for choosing a quantitative approach opposed to a qualitative was with quantitative it had a hypothesis that was related for what the study was aiming for; and was looking to test it and use statistics for observation purposes. Predictor variables were gender and self-esteem and the criterion variable was appearance concern.

#### **Participants:**

From gathering the information based on the surveys given out, results were gathered from 99 males and 100 females. Participants were college students aged between 18-25 and were recruited from college grounds or at extra college curricular activities. The average age of

participants from the male and female section was 20 years for males and females. Participants had to answer questions then based on appearance concern and self-esteem. The sample was collected using a snowball method.

### **Materials:**

All participants completed a short booklet of questionnaires containing The Junior Trait Self-Objectification Questionnaire (Quinn & Lewis, 2005) and The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). Participants also completed questions about gender and age.

1. Appearance Concern. The Junior Trait Self-Objectification Questionnaire (Quinn & Lewis, 2005) is concerned with the extent to which individuals place importance on both observable, appearance-based (objectified) terms, and non-observable, competency-based (non-objectified) terms. This 10-item measure contains two subscales, (a) Appearance based items (e.g. importance of weight, attractiveness), and (b) Competence based items (e.g. importance of health, strength), and respondents are asked to rate, by way of importance, these different body parts or qualities.

(a) Appearance. The appearance subscale measures individual's level of concern with their physical appearance, regardless of how satisfied they are with their bodies. This subscale consists of 5 items (e.g. 'How important is weight?'). Responses are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from (1) 'extremely not important', (2) 'not important', (3) 'not sure', (4) 'very important', and (5) 'extremely important'. Scores can range between 5 and 25 with higher scores indicating a higher level of appearance concern, which is interpreted as Self-Objectification.

(b) Competence. The competence subscale measures individual's level of concern with competence-based items, regardless of how competent they feel their body is. This subscale consists of 5 items (e.g. 'How important is strength?'). Responses are scored on a 5-point scale ranging from (1) 'extremely not important', (2) 'not important', (3) 'not sure', (4) 'very important', and (5) 'extremely important'. Scores can range between 5 and 25 with higher scores indicating a higher level of body competence concern.

2. Self-esteem. Self-esteem was assessed by The Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), which measures global feelings of self-worth or self-acceptance. This 10-item scale is scored using a 4-point response format (1= strongly agree; 4 = strongly disagree) to statements such as "I feel that I have a number of good qualities". Scores range from 10-40, with higher scores indicating higher self-esteem.

### **Procedure:**

Participants were given brief information on the nature of the study and were reassured that the survey was confidential and optional as part of the ethical considerations. Then, participants were assured that they had to be between the ages of 18-25 to complete the questionnaires'. It was also necessary to tell participants that their details on the questionnaire would be kept anonymous for ethical considerations of the study. Participants were then thanked, when they had completed the questionnaires and then data could be analysed. Participants were collected from college grounds such as; Dublin Business School, Trinity College, University College of Dublin and Dublin Institute of Technology. Participants were also collected during out of college hours during extracurricular activities like dance society.

Questionnaires took between an average of 5-7mins to complete, some quicker than others. All negative answers were recoded and total scores computed, and the data was analysed using SPSS V18.

## **Results**

### **Descriptives statistics**

Table 1: means and SD for

Gender of participant		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
male	Appearance concern	98	20.00	50.00	37.15	7.83
	Self-esteem	98	20.00	40.00	30.17	4.46
		97				
female	Appearance concern	100	20.00	50.00	32.71	5.42
	Self-esteem	100	14.00	71.00	31.81	6.34
		100				

As can be seen from table one above males scored higher on appearance concern, (mean score was 37.15 and the SD = 7.83) than females, (mean score was 32.71 , SD = 5.42).

As can be seen from the table above with self-esteem females scored higher on self-esteem than males with a mean of 31.81 and a SD= 6.34.

## **Inferential statistics**

### *t-test analysis*

Hypothesis one: Predicting that there will be significant gender differences with appearance concern.

A t-test was carried out and indicated that there was a significant difference between appearance concern between males and females. The male mean score was 37.15 and the standard deviation was 7.83. For females the mean score was 32.71 and the standard deviation was 5.41. The hypothesis was therefore accepted.

### *correlational analysis*

Hypothesis two: Predicting a significant negative relationship between appearance concern and self-esteem for females but not for males.

The correlational analysis indicated a small negative significant relationship between appearance concern and self-esteem for females. R is equal to  $-.219$ ,  $p < .05$ .

Correlational analysis also predicted a small positive significant relationship between the two variables, appearance concern and self-esteem for males.  $R = .278$ ,  $p < .01$ .

In this case, the hypothesis was partially supported.

## **Discussion**

### Self-Objectification and Gender Differences:

Related to this hypothesis, there was a prediction that there would be a significant difference between males and females regarding appearance concern. A T-test was conducted to analyse findings and hypothesis was supported. Findings showed that males scored higher with concerns over their appearance opposed to females who were surprisingly lower. Previous research regarding the self-objectification theory has stated that women are objectified on more of a level than men. (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). which argues that females receive more criticisms on their physical appearance and this can increase tension which can in turn lead to psychological consequences or eating disorders. Although, arguably women expose more of a public issue with physical appearance, the objectification theory can now accommodate for the males. Relating back to previous findings, Morry and Staska, (2001) suggest that males are just as vulnerable towards their appearance concern as females and suggest that males are just as dissatisfied with their physique. A perfect physique to males was researched to have a muscular frame, as stated by (Choma et al., 2010). One reason for this particular desire would be the influence of fitness magazines or the media influences surrounding males as suggested by Morry and Staska (2001). Or another reason for a desire of this physique would be peer influence as muscularity has become increasingly popular over recent times; as stated in previous findings (Schwartz et al., 2010). These present findings suggest that men are in fact more conscious about their appearance than women which; is relevant to previous findings like Morry and Staska (2001). Regarding the spread of a desire for a muscular body, previous findings suggest that exercising for males would increase self-esteem, (Strelan & Hargreaves, 2005). Schwartz, 2010 states that men would believe that exercising for men would increase their masculinity and this is a factor that men look to when faced with appearance concern (Schwartz et al., 2010). Relating back to previous findings, reasons for perhaps the desire for a masculine frame would be that it

attracts career opportunities or female attention; suggested by Swami (2006). As the present findings suggest that males are body conscious, this can have an impact towards male eating disorders and stated that the more muscular one wanted to achieve there was higher body shame related; as suggested by Hallsworth, Wade and Tiggermann (2005). As O'Shea suggested, body shame can lead to such incidents like cosmetic surgery. Grieve and Helmick also stated, that body shame was not the only factor involved that symptoms of muscle dysmorphia occurred with the desire for a muscular build, (Grieve & Helmick, 2008). So perhaps by looking at all the factors involved, as Vernon and Quinlan (2012) suggest, that by males carrying out all these different tasks to form a muscular build males therefore, feel more life assured and confident personally which therefore boosts self-esteem, which is why so many males desired this frame as suggested by Schwartz (2010).

### Self-Objectification and Self-Esteem

The main prediction with this hypothesis in this study was that there will be a significant negative relationship between appearance concern and self-esteem for females but not for males. The results of this study showed that the female sample showed more of a significant, negative relationship with their self-esteem and their appearance concern; this evidently accepted the hypothesis that there may be a negative response from women regarding self-esteem and appearance concern. These findings relate to (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997) who suggest that; objectifying a woman can either raise or lower a woman's self-esteem. These findings also relate to Mercurio and Landry's (2008) previous findings who suggested; that self-objectification showed a strong relationship towards self-esteem and body shame and life satisfaction. These present results from this hypothesis show the female sample to be higher regarding a negative connection between self-esteem and appearance concern; this

also relates to findings such as Breines, Crocker and Garcia (2008) who state that; the majority of women experience negative objectification which in turn leads to low self-esteem. The present findings exposed female college undergraduates with having poor self-esteem when related to their appearance which can support previous findings like Greenleaf (2001) who suggest that; the majority of girls experienced relationships with body shame, disordered eating and appearance and self-esteem this would be mostly college females. Reasons for low self-esteem for women are suggested by (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). that; women are constantly being objectified by males in society. Additionally, Thompson and Heinberg (1999) support present findings by stating that; another reason why males and females constantly objectify other women is due to the high pressure the media experts. Moe (1999) supports this statement stating that; the media has developed a stereotyped, unrealistic sex perfection model for every woman to replicate in society. Music television shows and videos are an example of this type of unrealistic physique; as suggested by Grabe and Hyde (2009) and who go onto state that the majority of these viewers are young girls. So, evidently, it can be stated that developing through the adolescent years are the most important and most targeted for girls; (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Relating back to the present findings, it showed that the young female participants who were involved with this study experienced low self-esteem when regarding their appearance concern, this can relate back to findings like with Borland and Akram (2007) who agree that young females showed to be the most dissatisfied with their bodies opposed to older women, who were out of college. It can be suggested that women who have a higher self-esteem regarding their appearance will experience better opportunities in life regarding dating or marriage, as stated by (Fredrickson and Roberts, (1997). With the present findings supporting the hypothesis, Peat and Muelkamp (2011) suggest that the more anxious a woman is about her body shame the more likely it is for it to develop into psychological consequences'. Relating to previous findings,

Thompson and Heinberg (2009) support this; suggesting that with unrealistic desires that society has developed for women comes a catch relating to self-esteem and this can at times be exploited by commanding the body to act out unrealistic actions.

### **Implications:**

This study was important to carry out as it; conducted tests that supported positive or negative towards the hypothesis that was predicted. It showed that (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997) objectification theory was arguably debated supporting the first hypothesis regarding, a change between sexes relating to appearance concern. Results showed a significant result that in fact, men had more of an issue with their appearance opposed to women. This had supported the hypothesis, but not in the way the study had originally had thought. This is why this particular study was important; showing that times have changed with the belief that women were more anxious about their appearance and felt more objectified opposed to men (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

The study was important for the second hypothesis; as it predicted that women had a lower self-esteem than men; these findings were as predicted. (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) had suggested that this type of prediction can lead to further faults. This research is important as it; can try and work on the issues that affect women and try to reduce the objectification that is pressured towards females.

### **Limitations:**

#### Questionnaire

Because this present study was by requirements of a scholar mark there were expected limitations. Limitations were at going to be a necessary factor when faced with searching for the ideal surveys to provide to students withholding all moral considerations being abided to. Making sure the correct guidelines and procedures in a college atmosphere were fundamental. It was decided that the questionnaire would attain a short layout to attract participants to return the questionnaire without delay.

### Sample size

Although the present study has reached its findings and has accepted the two hypotheses' regarding appearance concern and self-objectification and self-esteem and self-objectification, there were some limitations that were certain and unavoidable. The first, regarding the sample size. As there was a limited time to conduct this study a sample of 99 males and 100 females were used. As the sample was quite limited, this could have effected a moderated correlation; but based on previous findings; not reaching maximum significance. However, with the limited time that was given; the 199 participants was allowed in order to give the right amount of time for the results of the study. For future reference, it would be ideal if the participants could possibly be doubled, in order to perhaps attain maximum, significant findings. In relation, towards this limitation time is highly impacted towards the result of this study, even with time allocation for this study; there remained a limitation for assembling participant information.

### Measures for study

A second limitation that was faced with this study was; the measures that were being tested. The two measures that were used for the present study were; the Junior Trait Self-Objectification questionnaire (Quinn & Lewis, 2005) and this was used for appearance and competence. This was a limitation towards the results; as more questionnaires could have

been used to acquire specific results. Questionnaires on appearance concern like; the Objective Body Consciousness' Subscale (Mc Kinley & Hyde, 1996) or the self-objective questionnaire (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998) could have been added towards the data, but with limited time allocated for this study, the data was just not available to acquire. Finally, regarding this limitation, the more questionnaires added on to the survey may have discouraged participants from taking part so choosing a time, effective survey was crucial. The questionnaire used for the self-esteem measure; was the Rosenberg self-esteem measure (1965).

### Location

Another limitation that this study was faced with; was the location the participants' were tested. Participants were gathered from the Dublin Region College and universities which contained the 18-25 undergraduate students throughout Dublin College and Universities like Dublin Business School, Trinity College, DIT and UCD. If the questionnaire had been given to students outside Dublin; this may have influenced the data results as it would have gathered more participants who mean more opinions which may mean you're looking at a broader and more specific research. For future studies, it would be a beneficial if questionnaires could be allocated towards students of every college, in order for results to become more generalised and broader and for data to become more significant.

### Age

Age became another factor towards the limitation process for this present study. Participants were sampled from between 18 to 25 years. If the questionnaires had been given to a sample of participants aged from 18-50 the results would have ranged from a younger college female/male compared to an older college female/male views. This may have altered the results, allowing a larger sample therefore; allowing more of a significant result. Age would

then have become a confounding variable. For future research, participants if allocated an extension for time should gather a larger sample, this may be more useful to identify, compare and contrast body image data for young and middle aged males 'and females'.

### **Future Research**

Apart from what has been added to what would be beneficial in the limitation section. Other helpful accompaniments to add would be; to research eating disorders, this could widen the data involved with this present study involved and it would be exciting to study in depth how eating conditions have such a high impact towards body displeasure. Also for future investigation, could also detect focusing into behaviour personas for males and for females. This may investigate why students in a certain areas would feel be more confident and at ease when reading fashion magazines or being objectified by media influences. It may add a larger aspect to the data if you could consider whether a person who is more demonstrative would feel more subjective regarding their body image opposed to a person who is more withdrawn.

### **Conclusion:**

This present research is focused on the result towards questionnaires based on appearance concern and self-esteem in conducting a test to predict gender differences with appearance correlating with the factor self-esteem. Regarding self-esteem in this test, it also aimed to recognize whether or not self-esteem was an issue related to appearance carried out through a self-esteem measure. To gather data, crucial and minor factors were availed of; the crucial sources were gathered from questionnaires using participants from third level locations in Dublin. Two questionnaires, the (Quinn and Lewis, 2005) self-objectification and the (Rosenberg, 1965) were used to measure information from participants. This information was

then altered by calculating it for the results section. Minor parts which helped the study's findings were through forms like journals or books.

Results showed that from the first hypothesis; appearance concern was more of an issue for males than it was females. The prediction was that there would have been difference with the sexes so it supported the results. The second hypothesis; wanted to get a negative relationship between self-esteem relating to appearance and predicted that females would have lower self-esteem than males which came out supporting the prediction which correlated into the first hypothesis. An advantage of these questionnaires were they were carried out in a fair manner and with only the two questionnaires, the information was relatively easy and fast to gather. Data was collected from male and females who were still in college and was decided that participants would be from ages 18-25. The data was easy to then result as the computer analysed the material in an effective way.

Although, the questionnaires had many benefits there were a few limitations towards gathering the data through this method. One being, with questionnaires students may feel prevented from giving their true opinion; this is an important suggestion to inform the participants that their information would not be used or given to anyone else. It was a crucial ethical consideration that participants understood that this research was anonymous with their information. Another limitation towards questionnaires would be; that they can only provide so much information which provides limited data, so it was important to choose the right questionnaires for this study.

Regarding the present study, the questionnaires gathered enough data to result and discuss; that males are highly concerned with their looks and that reading fitness magazines are a sole priority when wanting the best build, Morry and Staska, 2001). Results showed that men liked to exercise as exercising as researched, brought the males a higher self-esteem, Strelan,

Hargreaves (2005). Concluding the second hypothesis; (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997) claim can be arguably supported as women are more objectified and therefore; more conscious when it comes to self-image which can lower self-esteem negatively and we can related Cohen (2006) comparison theory into all this; that women effectively compare negatively towards one another opposed to males; which can bring their self-esteem down which supports our first prediction that women would receive a negative relationship with their appearance.

Concluding and relating both hypotheses' together related back to the present study, results exposed that men are more aware of their appearance than ever and in turn do things that make them feel good about themselves; which it can be stated that men who like to work out have higher self-esteem and feel better about themselves which supports present material, but additionally, females that are more concerned about their image turn the opposite and feel more objectified and furthermore, have lower self-esteem.

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**Appendix**

**Body Image among Men and Women**

This study is concerned with body image among men and women. Please answer each section as honestly as you can, do not spend too long thinking about each questions as there are no right or wrong answers. Any information that you give will remain strictly confidential, you are not required to write your name anywhere on this survey. I hope you find this interesting, and I would like to thank you in advance for your time and co-operation.

Please complete the following demographic information.

Gender: Male: \_\_\_\_\_ Female: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please read each question and circle the number that best describes how important this is to your body.

If this is extremely not important, circle	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
If this is not important, circle	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
If your not sure, circle	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
If this is very important, circle	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
If this is extremely important, circle	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

1. How important is physical co-ordination?.....1 2 3 4 5
2. How important is health? .....1 2 3 4 5
3. How important is weight? .....1 2 3 4 5
4. How important is strength? .....1 2 3 4 5
5. How important is it to be attractive to the opposite sex? .....1 2 3 4 5
6. How important is physical attractiveness? .....1 2 3 4 5
7. How important is energy level? .....1 2 3 4 5
8. How important are firm/sculpted muscles? .....1 2 3 4 5

9. How important is physical fitness level? .....1 2 3 4 5

10. How important are measurements (e.g. chest, waist, hips)?....1 2 3 4 5

INSTRUCTIONS: Please read the following statements and indicate how much you agree with them by circling the appropriate number to the right of the statement as follows:

1 = strongly agree

2 = agree

3 = disagree

4 = strongly disagree

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.....1 2 3 4
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.....1 2 3 4
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.....1 2 3 4
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.....1 2 3 4
5. I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.....1 2 3 4
6. I take a positive attitude towards myself.....1 2 3 4
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.....1 2 3 4
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.....1 2 3 4
9. I certainly feel useless at times.....1 2 3 4
10. At times I think I am no good at all.....1 2 3 4

If you are concerned with or affected by any of the raised issues please do not hesitate to contact the following organizations:

Eating Disorder Centre of Ireland	014953577
Bodywhys	1890 200 400(Lo Call)
Samaritans	1850 60 90 90
Reach out	01 7645666
Marino Therapy Centre	01 8333216 (10am-4pm)

I would once again like to thank you for taking part in this study and would remind you that all information given here will remain strictly confidential. If you would like to know more about this study, please do not hesitate in contacting me at the address below.

If you require any further information concerning this research, please contact me Florica Mc Sweeney at [1447091@mydbs.ie](mailto:1447091@mydbs.ie) or my research supervisor, Dr Bernadette Quinn at [bernadette.quinn@dbs.ie](mailto:bernadette.quinn@dbs.ie).