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A Longitudinal Investigation of the Relationships Between Experiences with Sexual Harassment, Self-Objectification, and Self-Concept Clarity Among Women

Roxanne N. Felig
University of South Florida

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A Longitudinal Investigation of the Relationships Between Experiences with Sexual Harassment, Self-Objectification, and Self-Concept Clarity Among Women

by

Roxanne N. Felig

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Psychology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Co-Major Professor: Jamie L Goldenberg, Ph.D.
Co-Major Professor: Jennifer Bosson, Ph.D.
Diana Rancourt, Ph.D.
Brent Small, Ph.D.
Joseph Vandello, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

This longitudinal research investigates the nuanced relationship between sexual harassment and self-concept development among both men and women over a six-week period, presenting a unified model that integrates theories of self-objectification and self-concept clarity. Across three waves of data collection (N= 370, N=315, N=279, respectively), I find evidence that women experience higher rates of sexual harassment, greater self-objectification, and lower self-concept clarity than men. Across time, I find that experiencing sexual harassment predicts heightened self-objectification, which further predicts a disrupted sense of self among both men and women. Critically, this work investigates the reciprocal nature of self-objectification and self-concept clarity, providing a preliminary explanation as to why women report a less well-defined self-concept than men. This work offers theoretical and applied contributions to the understanding of sexual harassment and underscores the need for interventions aimed at reducing instances of sexual harassment, given its enduring impact on an individual's sense of self.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Girls and women grow up learning that their bodies are not their own. Beginning in adolescence, girls experience biological changes that signal ‘womanhood’ (e.g., breast development and menarche; Kościński et al., 2020; Lee, 1994) while simultaneously being introduced to a society that sexualizes those characteristics (Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2007; Smolak & Murnen, 2011). Unlike boys, girls’ pubertal development is a predictor of their experiences with sexual harassment (Lindberg et al., 2007) and, as such, girls are catapulted into a world where they are subject to sexual attention despite being children. A public forum asked women how old they were the first time they noticed being sexually evaluated — it garnered over 20,000 comments, and an analysis of the responses indicate girls experience this as early as 7 years old, with the average being 12 years old (Singh, 2021). The occurrence of these events in formative years of development (Leaper & Brown, 2008) likely shape how girls perceive themselves, which may have lasting impacts on their self-concept.

Sexually harassing behaviors, such as being whistled at, being sexually evaluated or “checked out”, or being targeted by sexual gestures or comments typically reflect aspects of sexual objectification (e.g., Hill & Fischer, 2008; Wesselmann et al., 2021), in that women are treated as object devoid of personhood to be enjoyed by another person. Supporting this overlap between sexual harassment and objectification, experiencing harassment is related to an increased tendency for girls and women to self-objectify by monitoring their body and self-surveilling (e.g., Davidson et al., 2015; Fairchild & Rudman, 2008). As girls’ encounters with harassment become commonplace — a normative marker of the objectifying milieu in which
they find themselves — so does their tendency to self-surveil (Lindberg et al., 2007). Girls’ higher frequency of experiences with sexual gazing, sexual attention, and sexual harassment as compared to boys (Hill & Kearl, 2011; O’Donohue et al., 1997) offers one explanation for observed gender differences in self-objectification (Daniels et al., 2020; Frederick et al., 2007; Grabe & Jackson, 2009; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010).

To the extent that self-objectification involves women taking a third person perspective to monitor themselves (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) they increasingly lose access to their physiological and emotional states (Daubenmier, 2005; Myers & Crowther, 2008), prioritizing instead sociocultural standards (Kroon Van Diest & Perez, 2013; Myers & Crowther, 2007; Vandenbosch & Eggermont, 2012). Experiences with objectification occur regularly and often, and therefore, a disconnect from the self may become the standard. This continual disconnect from the self may have a lasting impact on an individual’s self-concept, and specifically, create a barrier to a clear and consistent sense of self (i.e., self-concept clarity; Campbell, 1996). Across numerous samples, girls and women report a less clear self-concept than boys and men (Campbell et al., 1996; Crocetti et al., 2016; Geng et al., 2022; Levey et al., 2019; Xiang et al., 2022), but this gender difference has not been investigated, or even acknowledged.

If experiencing routine harassment heightens self-objectification, it may pose lasting consequences for the self-concept, and this may be most relevant for women, as compared to men, who are culturally targeted by an objectifying gaze. While there is some evidence to suggest that women’s tendency to self-objectify is related to their self-concept clarity (Felig, 2020; Teng et al., 2016), little research investigates the nature of this relationship. This longitudinal study seeks to identify experiences with sexual harassment as a precursor to
heightened self-objectification and reduced self-concept clarity among women, as well as to investigate the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity over time.

**Sexual Harassment of Women**

Patriarchy, at its core, is a structural and institutional system of male dominance (Sultana, 2012), which at the interpersonal level makes it acceptable for those with higher status (men) to exert power over those with lower status (women; Mast, 2010). Varying degrees and forms of harassment, from subtle sexual gazing to more extreme forms of sexual violence, are instances where men can dominate and assert power, thus reinforcing the gender hierarchy and keeping women in a place of subordination (Calogero & Tylka, 2014). While men do undoubtedly experience sexual harassment (Davidson et al., 2013; Donovan & Drasgow, 1999) girls’ and women’s experiences with it are systemic and justified by a gender hierarchy whereby men hold higher status and greater power than women (Calogero & Tylka, 2014; Robinson, 2005).

Treatment of women as objects for men’s sexual satisfaction (i.e., the *objectification* of women) is a key component of patriarchy (Bartak, 2015), and therefore an objectifying culture where women are the target of sexual gazing, leering, catcalls, and sexual violence is an expected byproduct. Demonstrating this, threatening men’s perceived dominance over women — by assigning men to work under a purported female boss on a task — led to men’s increased objectification of those female bosses (Bareket & Shnabel, 2020), suggesting that objectification is a tool used by men to reassert dominance over women. Given the gendered nature of these processes, it is perhaps unsurprising the extent to which women experience them. A longitudinal investigation lasting five years found that between adolescence and the end of college, nearly 90% of women experienced at least one form of sexual victimization (White & Humphrey, 1997), positioning this as a near universal experience. Daily diary studies find that women report
experiencing sexual objectification anywhere from once per week (Swim et al., 2001) to once per day (Brinkman & Rickard, 2009), which undoubtedly impacts the way women navigate the world around them and evaluate themselves.

When asked to describe their experiences with sexual harassment in semi-structured interviews, girls between the ages of 8 and 18 reflected a diminished sense of self and self-silencing in response to the harassment they experience (Berman et al., 2007), but this was not reflected in boy’s experiences. Other research finds that women report a loss of self-confidence, self-esteem, and personal control in response to experiencing harassment (Roosmalen & McDaniel, 1999), and a review of sexual harassment identified ‘changing the self’ as a common coping strategy in response to these encounters (O’Donohue et al., 1998). Together, research suggests that experiencing sexual harassment has the potential to profoundly impact women’s sense of self, which may be reflected in both the content and structure of their self-knowledge.

**Sexual Harassment and Self-Objectification**

Girls are introduced in adolescence to a cultural milieu which hypersexualizes them, more so than their male peers (Hatton & Trautner, 2011; Zurbriggen & Roberts, 2013), and which treats the female body as a sexual object to a greater extent than the male body (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). This sexual objectification is reflected in forms of sexual harassment that women often experience, such as body evaluations and unwanted explicit sexual advances (e.g., Kozee et al., 2007), and renders them, the target, a violable, inert object without an inherent sense of self, autonomy or subjectivity (Nussbaum, 1995). In essence, a person is transformed into a thing. An unfortunate consequence of sexual objectification beginning so early in girls’ lives is that it manifests in an internalized way, whereby girls grow up knowing that they can be treated as an object lacking a sense of self at any moment.
This internalization, called self-objectification, is a disruptive process which, among other consequences, impairs concentration, cognitive ability, and internal awareness, as women’s attention is continuously diverted to their appearance (Ainley & Tsakiris, 2013; Quinn et al., 2006; Winn & Cornelius, 2020). Among adolescent girls, self-objectification predicts body shame, which further predicts dieting and depressive symptoms (Tiggemann & Slater, 2015), and among women, high self-objectification is associated with low well-being across domains such as self-esteem, vitality, and engagement in the present moment (Breines et al., 2008). Self-objectification has also been shown to indirectly predict reduced life satisfaction via increased body shame and reduced self-esteem (Mercurio & Landry, 2008). Thus, heightened self-objectification is demonstrated to have several downstream consequences on both mental and physical well-being, but these consequences may be disproportionately experienced by women.

When assigned to an experimental condition intended to heighten state self-objectification (by wearing a revealing swimsuit), women’s, but not men’s, cognitive performance was hindered (Fredrickson et al., 1998), suggesting that women may experience greater cognitive disruption in response to self-objectifying. Further, a systematic review investigating the relationship between self-objectification and depression found consistent evidence of a direct relationship of self-objectification on depression among samples of women, while only one study found a direct effect of self-objectification on depression among men (Jones & Griffiths, 2015).

Given this host of negative consequences and correlates, it is concerning that women and girls report higher levels of self-objectification than boys and men (Frederick et al., 2007; Grabe & Jackson, 2009; Slater & Tiggemann, 2010). Levels of trait self-objectification begin to increase among girls during adolescence (Daniels et al., 2020), and being targeted by sexual
gazing and harassment may partially explain these gender differences. As Holland and colleagues (2017) demonstrated, women encounter objectifying experiences nearly every day, and reported daily experiences of being the target of sexualized gazing is associated with increases in self-objectification. Further, Davidson and colleagues (2013) showed that experiences with stranger harassment predict body surveillance. As such, to the extent that women are the target of varying degrees of sexual harassment, it would follow that they would experience heightened levels of self-objectification, and this should be especially true when compared to men.

As a consequence of women self-surveilling regularly and often, they become disconnected from themselves, as their attention is diverted outward and usurped to take a third person perspective of themselves. This disconnect may impact several domains, such that individuals are disconnected from their emotional states and feelings of self (Myers & Crowther, 2008). Objectification inherently involves a loss of self or personhood (Nussbaum, 1995), and self-objectification has been described as an “individual’s loss of subjectivity, manifested in a sense of being invisible and deprived of autonomy” (Talmon & Ginzburg, 2016, p. 47). Self-objectification is at its peak during adolescence and early adulthood (Daniels et al., 2020), which is a key period for development and organization of the self-concept (Erikson, 1959; Kemph, 1969), as individuals are navigating biological, cognitive, and social changes (Meeus, 2011). If self-objectification disrupts self-subjectivity and perceived sense of autonomy (e.g., Talmon & Ginzburg, 2016), as well as identity exploration (Cary et al., 2021), this critical self-development may be sabotaged. It is therefore possible that girls are disadvantaged in terms of self-concept development due to objectifying experiences which treat them as an object without a sense of
self, and which continually diverts their attention away from themselves (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

**Self-Concept Clarity**

Formation of the self-concept begins early in childhood and adolescence, and continues throughout adulthood (Crocetti et al., 2016; Sebastian et al., 2008), and an essential component of the self-concept is *self-concept clarity* (Campbell et al., 1996). Self-concept clarity reflects the extent to which beliefs and perceptions of the self are clearly defined, consistent, and stable over time (Campbell et al., 1996), regardless of what those self-perceptions might be. That is, self-concept clarity is not evaluative like self-esteem, but rather structural, providing an internal map of who someone is, what they are like, and what they value. However, to the extent that individuals experience self-objectification, which involves reduced self-subjectivity, diminished capacity to assess internal sensations and emotional cues, and a loss of perceived autonomy, they may have difficulty developing a well-defined, stable sense of self.

Individuals low in self-concept clarity, overall, seem to “know” themselves less well than individuals high in self-concept clarity. Self-concept clarity is related to self-other agreement of personality traits, such that high self-concept clarity individuals self-report more consistently with how others rate them, and high self-concept clarity individuals also predict their actual behavior on novel tasks more accurately than low self-concept clarity individuals (Lewandowski & Nardone, 2012). Low self-concept clarity individuals are also more malleable; individuals with a weak sense of self are more likely to adopt personality characteristics of someone they interact with, and are more likely to accept a false, specific personality trait as describing them (Cuperman et al., 2014).
An individual’s ability to “know their self”, or that is, their self-concept clarity, appears to be critical to well-being; individuals high in self-concept clarity typically report higher levels of self-esteem (Campbell, 1990; Nezlek & Plesko, 2001), higher subjective well-being (Ritchie et al., 2011), fewer depressive symptoms (Bigler et al., 2001), less body dissatisfaction (Vartanian & Dey, 2013) and higher relationship satisfaction and commitment (Lewandowski et al., 2010) than individuals low in self-concept clarity. Despite the demonstrated importance of self-concept clarity, across the life span, girls and women report less stability of their self-concepts as compared to boys and men (Campbell et al., 1996; Crocetti et al., 2015; Geng et al., 2022; Levey et al., 2019; Xiang et al, 2022). The source of this gender discrepancy is unclear but may be explained by girls’ high rates of experiencing sexual harassment, and its corresponding effects on self-objectification.

While the relationship between sexual harassment and self-concept clarity has not been directly tested, the two may be associated. Research finds that stressful life events (Hayward et al., 2020; Ritchie et al., 2011) and childhood trauma such as sexual abuse (Evans et al., 2015) are associated with disrupted self-concept clarity. As instances of sexual harassment are stressful and sometimes traumatic, it follows that they may implicate self-concept clarity, but this may occur through a path of self-objectification. It is further theorized that individuals who lack power in interpersonal situations should have difficulty maintaining a clear self-concept, and that their self-beliefs should instead be shaped by those who are exerting power over them (Fiske, 1993; Lodi-Smith & DeMarree, 2017), which corroborates earlier presented findings on malleable self-concepts among low self-concept clarity individuals. Therefore, to the extent that women internalize the objectifying gaze enacted via sexual harassment, it may become reflected in their disrupted self-concept.
The Reciprocal Relationship between Self-Concept Clarity and Self-Objectification

There is ample evidence positioning sexual harassment as a precursor to self-objectification (Davidson et al., 2013; Fairchild & Rudman, 2008; Hill & Fischer, 2008; Holland et al., 2017), which I have suggested may further destabilize the self-concept. However, this mediated pathway whereby sexual harassment indirectly implicates self-concept clarity, has not been tested. Further missing from current research is an investigation of how heightened self-objectification and reduced self-concept clarity interact with each other over time. Self-objectification may facilitate a distancing from the self (Cary et al., 2021), but having an unclear sense of self might motivate someone to seek out external sources to provide identity coherence. In a culture that teaches women to value their appearance above all else, women may depend on sociocultural and appearance ideals for identity guidance, thus upholding self-objectifying practices (Vartanian, 2009; Vartanian et al., 2016). As such, I posit that self-objectification and self-concept clarity feed into — and off of — each other.

Self-objectification and self-concept clarity appear to be more closely linked than the existing literature reflects. Self-concept clarity represents structural self-knowledge (Campbell et al., 1996), and self-objectification represents the contents of self-knowledge (Campbell et al., 2003), but these two components are interrelated (McConnell & Strain, 2007), and as such, disturbance in structural self-knowledge might impact the content of the self-concept, and vice versa. Both traits reflect the extent to which an individual relies on external standards to define the self (Campbell, 1990; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Vartanian, 2009) and, just as individuals high in self-objectification report low interoceptive awareness, so do individuals low in self-concept clarity (Campbell et al., 1996; Krol et al., 2020).

These two traits have many commonalities and may, over time, encourage and exacerbate the effects of each other. One study found that exposing women to luxury advertisements
increased state self-objectification, but only among low self-concept clarity individuals (Teng et al., 2016), positioning self-concept clarity as a protective factor against self-objectification. One other study identified a negative relationship between the two in a sample of men and women, but the direction of the relationship is unclear (Cui & Fang, 2022), and relatively little research has investigated these traits in conjunction with each other.

While experiencing sexual harassment may be responsible for initial heightened self-objectification in women, it may be the first step of a cascading effect, whereby self-concept clarity and self-objectification continue to divert women’s attention away from themselves over time. Self-concept clarity and self-objectification likely follow a similar bi-directional relationship among men, but without an early trigger — like experiencing routine sexual harassment — the compounding effects are likely less impactful over time. Therefore, girls’ and women’s experiences with sexual harassment may predispose them to both higher self-objectification and lower self-concept clarity compared to boys and men throughout their life course.
CHAPTER TWO: PILOT STUDY

To test whether women’s self-concept clarity is disrupted in relation to their self-objectification, an exploratory pilot study was conducted using pre-existing data collected between May of 2019 and March of 2020. This data set did not measure experiences with sexual harassment, but gender served as a stand-in under the assumption that men and women experience different rates of sexual harassment. This pilot study further allowed me to investigate the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity to inform the methodology of my proposed dissertation.

Hypothesis 1: Women will report higher self-objectification than men.

Hypothesis 2: Women will report lower self-concept clarity than men.

Hypothesis 3: Self-objectification and self-concept clarity will be negatively related among both men and women, but the relationship will be stronger among women.

Hypothesis 4: Gender will significantly predict self-concept clarity, such that women will report lower self-concept clarity, and this will be mediated by self-objectification, such that women’s higher self-objectification predicts reduced self-concept clarity.

Hypothesis 5: There is ample theoretical and empirical justification to predict self-objectification as a mechanism through which women’s self-concept clarity is destabilized, but there is also some evidence that the opposite path may exist, whereby self-concept clarity further impacts self-objectification. As such, I hypothesize that gender will significantly predict self-objectification, such that women will report higher self-objectification, and this will be mediated
by self-concept clarity, such that women’s reduced self-concept clarity predicts heightened self-objectification.

Method

Participants

A total of 225 participants were recruited online through the University of South Florida’s undergraduate SONA participant pool system and they received partial course credit for participating. After excluding participants who did not provide any information about their gender identity, the sample included 209 participants ($M_{\text{age}}=21.40, SD=5.06$), where 99 identified as women and 110 identified as men. Of the participants, 44.7% identified as Non-Hispanic White, 22.5% identified as Latinx/Hispanic, 9.7% identified as Black, 8.1% identified as East Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander, 5.7% identified as South Asian/Central Asian/Indian, 4.8% identified as biracial/multiracial, 2.4% identified as Middle Eastern/Arab American, and 2.9% identified as Other. Most participants identified as “exclusively heterosexual” (76.8%) and 2.4% identified as “exclusively gay”, with the remainder of participants identifying in between those two endpoints.

Measures

Not all materials are reported here as these data come from an existing project. Only materials relevant to this project are described.

Self-concept clarity.

Self-concept clarity was measured using the Self-concept Clarity Scale (Campbell et al., 1996) which asks participants to indicate how much they agree with each of 12 items (e.g., “I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality”) on a 5-point Likert
type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 5 = “strongly agree”; α=.91). Higher scores indicate greater self-concept clarity.

**Self-objectification.**

Trait self-objectification was measured using the Self-Objectification Beliefs and Behaviors Scale (SOBBS; Lindner & Tantleff-Dunn, 2017). This 14-item questionnaire assesses the extent to which participants think about how their body looks rather than how it feels and the extent to which they value their physical appearance above other attributes (e.g., “How I look is more important to me than how I think or feel”; “I try to anticipate others’ reactions to my physical appearance”) using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree; α=.91). Higher scores reflect higher self-objectification.

**Demographics.**

Participants completed a standard demographics questionnaire assessing gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited for a study investigating social media trends and the use of social media among students on college campuses. All methods and materials were approved by the University of South Florida Institutional Review Board. Participants were provided with an informed consent form and given the option to participate in this study. After consenting to participate, participants completed the measure of self-objectification followed by the measure of self-concept clarity. Participants then completed a standard demographics questionnaire, were thanked for their time, and compensated with partial course credit.
Results

Descriptive statistics were calculated for self-concept clarity and self-objectification, and bivariate correlations of these variables and gender were computed. The mean level of self-objectification was 2.74 ($SD = 0.80$), and the mean level of self-concept clarity was 3.20 ($SD = 0.91$). Self-objectification and self-concept were significantly negatively correlated, $r = -0.48$, $p < 0.001$, such that individuals with higher levels of self-objectification have a less clear self-concept. Gender (coded dichotomously such that 1 = women and 2 = men) was negatively correlated with self-objectification, $r = -0.19$, $p = .005$, and positively correlated with self-concept clarity, $r = 0.20$, $p = .003$, such that men report less self-objectification and higher self-concept clarity on average than women.

To test for gender differences in self-objectification among men and women, I conducted a one-way ANOVA treating gender as the independent variable and self-objectification as the dependent variable. Consistent with Hypothesis 1, there were significant differences in self-objectification between men and women, $F(1, 207) = 7.91$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .037$, whereby women’s average level of self-objectification ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 0.79$) was significantly higher than men’s ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.78$). To test for gender differences in self-concept clarity among men and women, I conducted a second one-way ANOVA treating gender as the independent variable and self-concept clarity as the dependent variable. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, there were significant differences in self-concept clarity between men and women, $F(1, 207) = 8.76$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .041$, whereby women’s average level of self-concept clarity ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.87$) was significantly lower than men’s ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.91$).

To test Hypothesis 3 — that self-objectification and self-concept clarity are negatively related among both men and women, but the relationship is stronger among women — gender was tested as a moderator on the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity.
using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) Model 1. Consistent with my prediction, self-objectification significantly predicted self-concept clarity, $\beta = -1.01, SE = 0.22, t(205) = -5.51, p < .001, 95\% CI [-1.45, -0.57]$, and this was further qualified by an interaction with gender, $\beta = 0.32, SE = 0.14, t(205) = 2.30, p = .02, 95\% CI [0.05, 0.60]$. Among both men and women, the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity was significant and negative, but the regression slopes significantly differed such that the relationship was stronger among women ($\beta = -0.69, SE = 0.10, t = -6.82, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.89, -0.49]$) than among men ($\beta = -0.37, SE = 0.10, t = -3.79, p = .0002, 95\% CI [-0.56, -0.18]$). These results are shown in Figure 1.

To further investigate the direction of the relationship between gender, self-objectification, and self-concept clarity, I conducted two exploratory mediation analyses using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) Model 4. First, I tested self-objectification as a mediator linking gender and self-concept clarity. Consistent with theorizing, the $a$ path was significant and gender significantly predicted the mediator, self-objectification, $\beta = -0.31, SE = 0.11, t(207) = -2.81, p = .005, 95\% CI [-0.52, -0.09]$, such that women reported higher self-objectification than men. The $b$ path was significant, such that higher self-objectification further predicted reduced self-concept clarity, $\beta = -0.52, SE = 0.07, t(206) = -7.39, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.66, -0.38]$, and the indirect effect was significant, $\beta = 0.16, SE = 0.06, 95\% CI [0.05, 0.28]$, supporting Hypothesis 4. With the mediator included, the $c'$ path showed that gender no longer had a direct effect on the outcome, self-concept clarity, $\beta = 0.21, SE = 0.11, t(206) = 1.84, p = .07, 95\% CI [-0.01, 0.43]$. This suggests that heightened self-objectification among women may explain observed gender differences in self-concept clarity (Figure 2).

While it appears that self-objectification may precede self-concept clarity and be one mechanism through which women’s self-concept is destabilized, it is possible that self-concept
clarity also precedes self-objectification. To test this secondary model, I conducted a mediation analysis treating self-concept clarity as the mediator and self-objectification as the predictor. Gender significantly predicted the mediator, self-concept clarity, $\beta = 0.36$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(207) = 2.96$, $p = .003$, 95% CI [0.12, 0.61], such that women reported lower self-concept clarity than men, but gender no longer had a direct effect on the outcome, self-objectification, $\beta = -0.16$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(206) = -1.60$, $p = .11$, 95% CI [-0.35, 0.04]. Women’s lower self-concept clarity further predicted higher self-objectification, $\beta = -0.40$, $SE = 0.05$, $t(206) = -7.39$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.51, -0.29], and the indirect effect was significant, $\beta = -0.15$, $SE = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.25, -0.05], supporting Hypothesis 5 (Figure 3). This suggests that disrupted self-concept clarity among women may contribute to observed gender differences in self-objectification.

**Discussion**

This pilot study begins to clarify the relationship between gender, self-objectification, and self-concept clarity among young adults. Consistent with previous findings, women report significantly higher levels of self-objectification and lower levels of self-concept clarity than men. Further, while the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity is significant among both men and women, the relationship is stronger among women. This suggests that in an absence of a clear sense of self, women may rely on and incorporate self-objectifying standards more so than men. Most critical to the following longitudinal investigation, gender — conceptualized as a proxy for experiences with sexual harassment — indirectly predicts self-objectification via self-concept clarity, and self-concept clarity via self-objectification. These results offer preliminary evidence that the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity is bi-directional while also suggesting that the relationship differs among men and women. It is possible that women’s destabilized sense of self
and heightened self-objectification may be indirectly impacted by their frequent experiences with sexual harassment, but this variable was not assessed in the current study. What further remains unclear is how self-objectification and self-concept clarity relate to each other over time. The following longitudinal study aims to address these gaps.

**Figure**

*Figure 1. Gender Moderates the Relationship Between Self-Objectification and Self-Concept Clarity*
CHAPTER THREE: LONGITUDINAL STUDY

This three-wave longitudinal design investigates the relationships between experiences with sexual harassment, self-objectification, and self-concept clarity among women and men over a six-week period. This research aims to clarify not only the direct effects of experiencing harassment on these outcomes, but also how self-objectification and self-concept clarity are related over time. Exploration of these constructs in relation to each other is currently lacking in the body of research. This study further investigates these processes in both men and women to identify gender differences in the strength of these relationships and to investigate if men and women are differentially impacted by their experiences with sexual harassment.

Hypotheses 1-3: At each wave women will report more frequent instances of sexual harassment than men (H1), along with higher self-objectification (H2) and lower self-concept clarity (H3).

Hypothesis 4-5: At each wave, self-objectification and self-concept clarity will be negatively correlated (H4), and autocorrelations across waves will be positive (e.g., self-objectification at Wave 1 and Wave 2 (H5)).

Hypothesis 6-7: At each wave, experiences with sexual harassment will positively predict the next wave’s self-objectification (H6) and negatively predict the next wave’s self-concept clarity (H7).

Hypotheses 8: A mediated path, whereby Wave 1 sexual harassment will positively predict Wave 2 self-objectification, which will further negatively predict Wave 3 self-concept clarity, will be significant.
Hypotheses 9: A mediated path, whereby Wave 1 self-objectification will negatively predict Wave 2 self-concept clarity, which will further negatively predict Wave 3 self-objectification, will be significant.

Hypothesis 10: Gender will be a significant covariate of the mediated paths such that the relationship between sexual harassment, self-objectification, and self-concept clarity will be stronger among women than among men.

**Method**

**Participants**

Women and men ages 18-25 were recruited through the Prolific survey platform for a multi-part survey regarding their daily experiences. Based on recommendations by Pan and colleagues (2018) to identify a small to medium effect in a longitudinal design with three observations, 380 participants were needed. Participants were compensated at each wave of data collection and were told they would receive a small monetary bonus upon completion of all three waves. Four hundred participants completed Wave 1 and were all directly invited back for Wave 2. Three hundred and forty-six participants returned for Wave 2 who were all directly invited back for Wave 3, and 302 participants returned for Wave 3. After excluding participants who did not pass attention checks or who did not meet inclusion criteria, the sample size for Wave 1 included 370 participants ($M_{age} = 22.81, SD = 1.80$), which included 184 (49.7%) women. Using these same criteria, the final Wave 2 sample included 315 participants ($M_{age} = 22.80, SD = 2.12$), which included 154 (48.9%) women, and the Wave 3 sample included 279 participants ($M_{age} = 22.85, SD = 1.79$), which included 137 (49.1%) women. Demographic information can be found in Table 1.

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1 Analyses revealed no systematic differences between participants who returned for Waves 2 and 3 with respect to self-objectification, self-concept clarity, or feminist identity. However, participants who failed to return for Waves 2
Measures

Self-concept clarity.

Self-concept clarity was measured using the Self-concept Clarity Scale (Campbell et al., 1996), a self-report measure which assesses the extent to which an individual’s self-conceptions are clearly defined, consistent, and temporally stable. This scale asked participants to indicate how much they agree with each of 12 items (e.g., “I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality”) on a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = “strongly disagree”, 5 = “strongly agree”; Wave 1 \( \alpha = .91 \), Wave 2 \( \alpha = .92 \), Wave 3 \( \alpha = .92 \)). A majority of the items on this scale are reverse coded (e.g., “My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another” and “One day I might have one opinion about myself and on another day I might have a different opinion”). Once reverse scored and averaged, higher scores indicate greater self-concept clarity among individuals. Internal, external, and discriminant validities of this construct has been established, supporting the decision to use this measure of self-concept clarity (Lodi-Smith & DeMarree, 2017).

Self-objectification.

Trait self-objectification was measured using the Self-Objectification Beliefs and Behaviors Scale (SOBBS; Lindner & Tantleff-Dunn, 2017), a recently created measure of self-objectification intended to address limitations of previous measures, such as the rank order nature of the Self-Objectification Questionnaire (Noll & Fredrickson, 1998), which makes calculating internal reliability impossible and handling missing data challenging. This 14-item questionnaire assessed the extent to which participants think about how their body looks rather than how it feels and the extent to which they value their physical appearance above other

and 3 reported significantly more instances of sexual harassment at Wave 1 compared to participants who completed more than one wave of this survey.
attributes (e.g., “How I look is more important to me than how I think or feel”; “I try to anticipate others’ reactions to my physical appearance”) using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree; Wave 1 \( \alpha = .91 \), Wave 2 \( \alpha = .91 \), Wave 3 \( \alpha = .91 \)). Items are averaged and higher scores reflect higher self-objectification. The measure demonstrates convergent and discriminant validity (Lindner & Tantleff-Dunn, 2017), and has been used to assess self-objectification in both men and women, as well as among transgender and non-binary people (Cascalheira et al., 2023; Terán et al., 2021).

**Sexual Harassment.**

Instances of experiencing sexual harassment was measured with the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS; Kozee et al., 2007), which was developed to encompass experiences with the sexually objectifying gaze and unwanted sexual advances. This measure was chosen because it captures subtle, ubiquitous forms of sexual harassment (e.g., “How often have you been whistled at while walking down a street?”), as opposed to other scales of sexual harassment which focus heavily on overt sexual coercion or physical assault (e.g., the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire, the Stranger Harassment index). The ISOS is a 15-item scale which measures instances of body evaluations (e.g., “How often have you overheard inappropriate sexual comments made about your body?”) and unwanted explicit sexual advances (e.g., “How often has someone made a degrading sexual gesture towards you?”) using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Never, 5=Very Often; Wave 1 \( \alpha = .94 \), Wave 2 \( \alpha = .94 \), Wave 3 \( \alpha = .95 \)). Critically, this scale was also chosen because it has been psychometrically evaluated among a sample of college men (Davidson et al., 2013; \( \alpha = .91 \).) In the current study, the item: “How often have you noticed someone staring at your breasts when you are talking to them?” will be changed to “How often have you noticed someone staring at your chest when you are talking to them?”, as Davidson
and colleagues (2013) did in their validation study, in order for the scale to be applicable to both men and women in the present research. For each item, participants were asked to indicate how often they had experienced the situation in the past three weeks, and items were averaged to create a composite score for each participant.

This scale captures perceptions of the frequency that sexual harassment is experienced, but it does not assess the frequency of discrete instances. Therefore, participants were also asked to indicate a numeric value of how frequently they experienced three of the aforementioned situations in the past three weeks. The items asked participant to indicate how often they “felt like or knew that someone was evaluating your physical appearance”, “overheard inappropriate sexual comments made about your body”, and “experienced sexual harassment (on the job, in school, etc.)”, with response categories being “0 times”, “1 time”, “2 times”, “3 times”, “4 times”, “5 times”, and “more than 5 times” (coded as 6). Items were summed to produce one numeric score reflecting number of instances experiencing harassment in the past three weeks, with a possible maximum score of 18.

Inclusion of this secondary numeric measure allowed for nuanced interpretation of these relationships. It is possible that the number of instances of sexual harassment differentially impacts self-objectification and self-concept clarity relative to the perception of how frequently these events occur. Inclusion of this item will also allow for a clearer understanding of how frequently these events are occurring in our sample.

*Exploratory Variables*

The following exploratory measures were only administered during Wave 1, except for the Perpetrator Gender item, which was only administered during Wave 3.
**Feminist Identity.**

Self-identification as a feminist was measured to be tested as an exploratory covariate, as active commitment to feminism has been shown to positively predict perception of sexual harassment (Shi & Zheng, 2020) and frequency of experiencing sexist events (Moradi & Subich, 2002). The Self-Identification as a Feminist scale is a four-item measure of feminist identity (Szymanski, 2004) that was administered at the end of the first wave of data collection, after the primary variables of interest and before the demographics questions. This scale asks participants to rate the extent to which they agree with the following statements: “I consider myself a feminist”, “I identify myself as a feminist to other people”, “Feminist values and principles are important to me”, and “I support the goals of the feminist movement” using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly disagree, 5=Strongly agree; α = .95). Items were averaged, and this variable served as an exploratory covariate in the analyses.

**Early Experiences with Sexual Harassment.**

A single item was used to assess the age participants were the first time they recall ever experiencing unwanted sexual attention. It asked participants to “Please indicate how old you were (in years) the first time you recall experiencing a non-physical form of sexual harassment, such as being "checked out", receiving unwanted sexual commentary, or being cat-called. This does not include instances of physical assault.”, and participants could indicate an age in years or indicate that this had never happened to them. This single item was used as an exploratory predictor of baseline self-objectification and self-concept clarity.

**Pubertal Development.**

A single item asking participants to indicate their age in years when they first began experiencing physical changes associated with puberty was administered and tested as an exploratory predictor of experiences with harassment and self-objectification.
Body Shape.

Two questions were administered to assess body shape to be included as exploratory predictors of experiences with harassment and self-objectification. Participants were asked to select all that apply to describe their body shape ("Athletic", "Slim", "Curvy"), and to describe their chest size ("Smaller than average", "About average", "Larger than average").

Perpetrator Gender.

One item was administered at the end of Wave 3 which asked participants “Over the past six weeks, we have asked you about experiences with harassment. In the instances you’ve experienced, what was the gender of the person initiating the harassment?" (1= Always men, 2= Almost always men, 3= Equally men and women, 4= Almost always women, 5= Always women). This variable will provide a clearer understanding of who is perpetrating sexual harassment against the participants.

Demographics.

A standard demographics questionnaire was administered to collect participants’ age, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

Procedure

Prior to the beginning of data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the University’s Institutional Review Board, and this study was pre-registered on the Open Science Framework. Participants were recruited through the Prolific platform for a survey about daily experiences and personality and were told in advance that they would be invited back for Waves 2 and 3 in three weeks, and six weeks, respectively. Participants were also told that they would receive a small monetary bonus if they completed all three waves, in an attempt to minimize attrition. At each wave, participants viewed an informed consent document overviewing the
purpose and nature of the study. Each of the three surveys took less than 5 minutes, and
participants were compensated in accordance with Prolific payment standards after each wave.

In Wave 1, participants first responded to the measures of self-objectification and self-concept clarity, presented in counter-balanced order. Participants were then presented with the two measures of sexual harassment experiences in the past three weeks. Participants then completed all exploratory measures with the exception of the Perpetrator Gender item. In Waves 2 and 3, participants only completed the measures of self-objectification, self-concept clarity in counter-balanced order, and both measures of experiences with harassment in the past three weeks. At the end of Wave 3, participants responded to the item assessing the gender of the perpetrator of their experienced harassment. Participants’ Prolific IDs were collected at each wave to link data across waves.

**Analysis Plan**

Before conducting primary analyses, an average of each participant’s experiences with sexual harassment was computed for each wave of data collection, as well as a summed score of discreet instances of sexual harassment experienced at each wave. Averaged scores of self-objectification and self-concept clarity were computed for each wave as well. Bivariate correlations of primary variables at all time points, as well as all exploratory variables, were computed. I conducted a series of one-way ANOVAs to test Hypotheses 1-3, treating gender as the independent variable and each primary variable (sexual harassment, self-objectification, and self-concept clarity) at each wave as the dependent variables. Using linear regression, I tested Hypotheses 6 and 7 to investigate the reciprocal relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity across waves. To test the mediated hypotheses (8, 9, and 10), I conducted a series of simple mediation analyses investigating the relationship between Wave 1, Wave 2, and
Wave 3 variables. When data was nested within participant, I repeated the mediation using a multilevel approach to identify both between-level and within-level effects.

Results

Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics for all primary and exploratory variables were computed. Results from the full sample can be found in Table 2, and results disaggregated by gender can be found in Table 3. A series of one-way ANOVAs treating gender as the independent variable and sexual harassment, self-objectification, and self-concept clarity as the dependent variables were conducted. In support of Hypotheses 1-3, women reported more frequent instances of sexual harassment than men (H1), along with higher self-objectification (H2) and lower self-concept clarity (H3) at all three waves. This pattern held for both the averaged and numeric measures of sexual harassment. Means, standards deviations, and results from one-way ANOVAs can be found in Table 4. In support of Hypothesis 4, self-objectification and self-concept clarity were negatively correlated at Wave 1, \( r = -.41, p < .001 \), at Wave 2, \( r = -.49, p < .001 \), and at Wave 3, \( r = -.45, p < .001 \). In support of Hypothesis 5, autocorrelations of all primary variables across waves were positive, which are shown in Table 2.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that at each Wave, experiences with sexual harassment would positively predict the next Wave’s self-objectification. Wave 1 sexual harassment significantly predicted Wave 2 self-objectification, both using the averaged measure of sexual harassment, \( \beta = .34, t(312) = 6.33, p < .001 \), as well as the numeric measure, \( \beta = .35, t(312) = 6.56, p < .001 \), such that more frequent experiences with sexual harassment at Wave 1 predicted higher self-objectification at Wave 2. Further, Wave 2 sexual harassment significantly predicted Wave 3 self-objectification, both using the averaged measure of sexual harassment, \( \beta = .20, t(274) = 3.35, p < .001 \), as well as the numeric measure, \( \beta = .29, t(273) = 5.07, p < .001 \), such that more
frequent experiences with sexual harassment at Wave 2 predicted higher self-objectification at Wave 3.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that at each Wave, experiences with sexual harassment would negatively predict the next Wave’s self-concept clarity. Wave 1 sexual harassment significantly predicted Wave 2 self-concept clarity, both using the averaged measure of sexual harassment, $\beta = -0.21$, $t(312) = -3.70$, $p < .001$, as well as the numeric measure, $\beta = -0.26$, $t(312) = -4.72$, $p < .001$, such that more frequent experiences with sexual harassment at Wave 1 predicted lower self-concept clarity at Wave 2. However, Wave 2 sexual harassment significantly predicted Wave 3 self-concept clarity only when using the numeric measure of sexual harassment, $\beta = -0.18$, $t(273) = -2.98$, $p = .003$, but not the averaged measure, $\beta = -0.11$, $t(274) = -1.83$, $p = .07$.

Hypothesis 8 was tested using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). As hypothesized, the $a$ path, whereby Wave 1 sexual harassment predicts Wave 2 self-objectification, was significant, $\beta = 0.40$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(276) = 6.14$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.27, 0.53]. The $b$ path, whereby Wave 2 self-objectification predicts Wave 3 self-concept clarity, was also significant, $\beta = -0.46$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(276) = -7.13$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.59, -0.33]. The direct effect of Wave 1 sexual harassment on Wave 3 self-concept clarity was not significant, $\beta = -0.03$, $SE = 0.07$, $t(276) = -0.37$, $p = .71$, 95% CI [-0.17, 0.12], but the indirect effect was, $\beta = -0.18$, $SE = 0.03$, 95% CI [-0.27, -0.11], and the overall model, which accounts for 12.1% of the total variance, was significant, $p < .001$. The secondary numeric measure of sexual harassment produces a consistent pattern of results, which can be found in Table 5.

Hypothesis 9 was also tested using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). As hypothesized, the $a$ path, whereby Wave 1 self-objectification predicts Wave 2 self-concept clarity, was significant, $\beta = -0.46$, $SE = 0.06$, $t(276) = -6.14$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.58, -0.34]. The
$b$ path, whereby Wave 2 self-concept clarity further predicts Wave 3 self-objectification, was also significant, $\beta = -0.10, SE = 0.03, t(276) = -3.07, p = .002, 95\% CI [-0.17, -0.04]$. Both the direct effect of Wave 1 self-objectification on Wave 3 self-objectification, $\beta = 0.79, SE = 0.04, t(276) = 21.20, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.72, 0.87]$ as well as the indirect effect, $\beta = 0.05, SE = 0.02, 95\% CI [0.01, 0.09]$, were significant, and the overall model, which accounts for 17.3\% of the total variance, was significant, $p < .001$.

Contrary to Hypothesis 10, gender was not a significant covariate in the mediation model testing the relationship between Wave 1 sexual harassment, Wave 2 self-objectification, and Wave 3 self-concept clarity, nor was it a significant covariate in the mediation model testing the relationship between Wave 1 self-objectification, Wave 2 self-concept clarity, and Wave 3 self-objectification. Inclusion of gender as a covariate did not change the overall pattern of these results, which can be found in Table 6.

**Multilevel Mediation**

Given the repeated measures nature of this design, and that observations across time-points are clustered within participants, I computed the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) for the primary relationships of interest in these analyses. In an intercept-only model with no growth, whereby experiences with harassment predicted self-objectification and was clustered within participants, the ICC was 0.79, whereby 79\% of the total variance in self-objectification is due to participants. Repeating this analysis with self-objectification predicting self-concept clarity, the ICC is 0.88, whereby 88\% of the total variance in self-concept clarity is due to participants. To account for, and investigate, these within-person effects, multilevel mediation was conducted using the MLMED computational macro (Rockwood, 2019). This approach allowed for investigation of both within and between person mediated effects (MacKinnon &
Valente, 2014). Rather than the mediation results presented above, which specifically investigated the relationship between Wave 1 sexual harassment, Wave 2 self-objectification, and Wave 3 self-concept clarity, this approach utilized all three time points of data for the variables of interest and allowed me to investigate how variation in sexual harassment across time-points predicted variance in self-objectification and self-concept clarity. Further, this approach allowed me to parse between-person effects and within-person effects.

First, the mediated path whereby sexual harassment (X) indirectly predicted self-concept clarity (Y) through self-objectification (M) was tested. The clustering variable was participant ID, and the analysis was set to 10,000 Monte Carlo samples with a 95% confidence level. At the between-person level, sexual harassment positively predicted self-objectification, $\beta = 0.44, SE = 0.06, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.33,0.56]$, self-objectification negatively predicted self-concept clarity, $\beta = -0.48, SE = 0.05, p < .001, 95\% CCI [-0.59,-0.38]$, and the indirect effect was significant, $\beta = -0.21, SE = 0.04, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.29,-0.15]$, but the direct effect was not, $\beta = 0.01, SE = 0.07, p = .92, 95\% CI [-0.12, 0.14]$. At the within-person level, sexual harassment positively predicted self-objectification, $\beta = 0.09, SE = 0.04, p = .03, 95\% CI [0.01, 0.17]$, and self-objectification negatively predicted self-concept clarity, $\beta = -0.19, SE = 0.03, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.26,-0.13]$. However, the indirect effect was not significant, $\beta = -0.02, SE = 0.01, p = .05, 95\% CI [-0.04, -0.001]$, nor was the direct effect, $\beta = -0.06, SE = 0.04, p = .11, 95\% CI [-0.13, 0.13]$. Results are presented in Figure 5. This analysis was repeated treating gender as a covariate, and the results remained consistent whereby the indirect effect was significant at the between-person level, $\beta = -0.19, SE = 0.04, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.27, -0.13]$, but not at the within-person level, $\beta = -0.02, SE = 0.01, p = .05, 95\% CI [-0.04, -0.001]$. These results are shown in Figure 4.
Then, this analysis was replicated using the numeric measure of sexual harassment. At the between-person level, sexual harassment positively predicted self-objectification, $\beta = 0.11$, $SE = 0.01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.14], self-objectification negatively predicted self-concept clarity, $\beta = -0.47$, $SE = 0.05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.57, -0.36], and the indirect effect was significant, $\beta = -0.05$, $SE = 0.01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.07, -0.04], but the direct effect was not, $\beta = -0.01$, $SE = 0.07$, $p = .56$, 95% CI [-0.04, -0.02]. At the within-person level, this measure of sexual harassment did not significantly predict self-objectification, $\beta = -0.003$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .79$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.02], but self-objectification negatively predicted self-concept clarity, $\beta = -0.20$, $SE = 0.03$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.27, -0.13]. Neither the within-person indirect effect, $\beta = 0.001$, $SE = 0.002$, $p = .79$, 95% CI [-0.003, 0.01], nor the direct effect, $\beta = -0.01$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .11$, 95% CI [-0.03, 0.003], were significant. This analysis was repeated treating gender as a covariate, and the results remained consistent whereby the indirect effect was significant at the between-person level, $\beta = -0.05$, $SE = 0.01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.07, -0.03] but not at the within-person level, $\beta = 0.001$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .79$, 95% CI [-0.004, -.01].

**Exploratory Analyses**

**Gender Differences.**

While gender was pre-registered and tested as a covariate in the primary analyses, I further investigated it as an exploratory moderator. In the pilot study, gender moderated the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity. However, that pattern did not replicate in this longitudinal study. There was no significant interaction of gender and self-objectification on self-concept clarity in Wave 1, $\beta = -0.09$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(371) = -0.89$, $p = .38$, nor in Wave 2, $\beta = -0.17$, $SE = 0.11$, $t(316) = -1.62$, $p = .38$, nor in Wave 3, $\beta = 0.01$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(281) = 0.08$, $p = .93$. While not hypothesized, I tested gender as an exploratory moderator of
the mediated paths tested in the primary analyses. Gender moderated the relationship between Wave 1 harassment, Wave 2 self-objectification, and Wave 3 self-concept clarity. However, the results are inconsistent with theorizing. Gender and Wave 1 sexual harassment interacted to predict Wave 2 self-objectification, $\beta = -0.31$, $SE = 0.14$, $t(276) = -2.28$, $p = .02$ 95% CI [-0.58, -0.04], whereby the indirect effect was stronger among men, $\beta = -0.26$, $SE = 0.06$, 95% CI [-0.40, -0.15], than among women, $\beta = -0.12$, $SE = 0.04$, CI [-0.20, -0.04].

I further tested gender as an exploratory moderator of the mediated path between Wave 1 self-objectification, Wave 2 self-concept clarity, and Wave 3 self-objectification. Gender and Wave 1 self-objectification interacted to predict Wave 2 self-concept clarity, $\beta = -0.25$, $SE = 0.12$, $t(276) = -2.01$, $p = .045$, 95% CI [-0.48, -0.01], whereby the mediated path was significant among both men, $\beta = 0.03$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.07], and women, $\beta = 0.06$, $SE = 0.02$, CI [0.02, 0.11], but was stronger among women, which is shown in Figure 5. These exploratory findings suggest that men may experience greater disturbances than women in self-objectification in response to sexual harassment, but that women may experience greater disturbances in self-concept clarity in response to heightened self-objectification.

There were also gender differences in several of the included exploratory variables. On average, women reported higher feminist identity ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.08$) than men ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.28$), and this difference was significant, $F(1,369) = 110.53$, $p < .001$. Women also reported being younger than men the first time they recalled experiencing a non-physical form of sexual harassment, with women on average being 10.24 years old ($SD = 2.99$), and men reporting being 13.74 years old ($SD=2.86$). This difference was also significant, $F(1,369) = 132.42$, $p < .001$. Men and women also reported differences in who they had experienced sexual harassment from during the course of this study. Among women, 48.9% reported that this harassment was always
initiated by a man, 15.2% reported that this harassment was *almost always* initiated by a man, and 8.2% indicated that this harassment was equally initiated by men and women. Among men, 7% reported that this harassment was *always* initiated by a man, 11.8% reported that this harassment was *almost always* initiated by a man, 29.4% indicated that this harassment was equally initiated by men and women, 16.6% reported that this harassment was *always* initiated by a woman, and 12.3% reported that this harassment was *almost always* initiated by a woman.

**Inclusion of Exploratory Covariates.**

The multilevel mediation was repeated including feminist identity, early experience with sexual harassment, and perpetrator gender as covariates due to their observed correlations with the primary variables (Table 2). As the body shape item was categorical, it is not presented in Tables 2 or 3. However, 137 participants reported having an ‘Athletic’ body type, 164 reported having a ‘Slim’ body type, and 135 reported having a ‘Curvy’ body type. The exploratory chest size and body shape variables did not consistently relate to primary variables of interest and therefore were not included as exploratory covariates.

The multilevel mediation was repeated with feminist identity, early experience with sexual harassment, and perpetrator gender as covariates. Only feminist identity was a significant covariate at the between-person level, predicting both experiences with sexual harassment, $\beta = 0.08, SE = 0.04, p = .03$, and self-concept clarity, $\beta = -0.12, SE = 0.04, p = .0009$. Consistent with the previous results, the indirect effect was significant at the between-person level, $\beta = -0.20, SE = 0.05, p < .001$, but not at the within-person level, $\beta = -0.02, SE = 0.01, p = .11$.

**Discussion**

Across two studies, this research investigates sexual harassment as a risk factor undermining self-concept development among both men and women and presents an integrated
model of self-objectification and self-concept clarity. Building on research positioning sexual harassment as a pre-cursor to self-objectification, this work further identifies sexual harassment as a possible indirect risk factor hindering both men and women from developing a clear and stable sense of self, while identifying self-objectification as the mechanism. Just as self-objectification has been demonstrated to relate to a disconnect from body sensations and emotional states (Felig et al., 2021, Myers & Crowther, 2008), these findings suggest that taking an outsider’s perspective of the self facilitates a disconnect from the self broadly. Multi-level mediation suggests that over a six-week period, experiencing sexual harassment predicts heightened self-objectification, which further relates to disrupted self-concept clarity, among both men and women. This mediated path was significant at the between-person level, and neared significance at the within-person level. These findings converge to suggest that experiences with sexual harassment have the potential to destabilize an individual’s sense of self due to heightened self-objectification, and that these processes can be reflected in an individual’s sense of self even within a six-week period.

Critically, this work highlights the reciprocal relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity over time. While research has identified a relationship between self-concept clarity and internalization of external standards (Vartanian, 2009; Vartanian et al., 2016), malleability of the bodily self (Krol et al., 2020), body dissatisfaction (Vartanian & Dey, 2013), and other variables theoretically related to self-objectification, little research has specifically investigated the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity (Cui & Fang, 2022; Felig, 2020; Teng et al., 2016). First, this work establishes a consistent, negative relationship between these constructs at three time points. Further, this longitudinal investigation suggests that over a six-week period, heightened self-objectification predicts diminished self-
concept clarity. However, this appears to create a feedback loop, whereby disrupted self-concept clarity further contributes to heightened self-objectification. To the extent that both constructs involve reliance on external sources of information, this reciprocal relationship makes sense. Self-objectification facilitates a disconnect from the self, which may be reflected in diminished self-concept clarity. However, in the absence of a well-defined sense of self, external standards may become more relevant and necessary for identity cohesion. In a culture steeped in objectification, people may be more likely to internalize objectifying standards to define themselves.

The inclusion of men and women in this research allows for nuanced interpretation of how these constructs relate over time. Contrary to my theorizing, men and women’s self-concepts were both impacted by experiencing sexual harassment, whereby heightened self-objectification served as the mechanism. However, exploratory analyses suggested that men experienced greater fluctuations in self-objectification in response to experiencing sexual harassment than women, despite reporting less frequent instances of sexual harassment at all three time points. Perhaps these experiences impact men to a greater extent than women due to their comparative rarity. Women, on the other hand, appeared to experience greater changes in self-concept clarity in response to heightened self-objectification compared to men. This pattern of findings warrants further investigation with careful consideration of how these processes uniquely impact men and women. Despite some evidence for differences in the extent to which men and women are impacted by these experiences, these results clearly present evidence for a reciprocal relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity, whereby these processes feed into—and off of—each other over time.
Taken together, these patterns can be conceptualized as a domino effect, whereby an experience with sexual harassment is the first domino to fall, further heightening self-objectification and disrupting self-concept clarity. However, these results suggest that self-objectification and self-concept clarity may continue to destabilize each other over time, and as experiences with sexual harassment continue to occur, this process continues. Women in this sample reported first experiencing sexual harassment at a younger age than the men and reported experiencing sexual harassment more frequently than men at each time point. Therefore, normative experiences of sexual harassment may disadvantage women from developing a well-defined self-concept over time, offering an explanation as to why women typically report lower self-concept clarity than men.

**Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions**

This research presents many strengths. First, the pilot study and longitudinal analysis converge to establish clear evidence for a relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity, while presenting clear theoretical justification for their relationship. This research merges these two areas of literature and provides a starting point for future research investigating the interplay between these constructs. Additionally, the longitudinal design allows for an investigation of the temporality of these constructs, and the repeated measures allows for both an investigation of the within and between-person effects. This research provides evidence for changes at both the between and within-person levels over a short time, highlighting the impact of sexual harassment on individuals’ senses of self. The inclusion of men and women further allows for a nuanced investigation of how sexual harassment impacts individuals, highlighting the negative consequences experienced by both men and women, and offering one
possible explanation for an observed gender difference in self-concept clarity (e.g., Campbell et al., 1996; Crocetti et al., 2015; Geng et al., 2022; Levey et al., 2019; Xiang et al, 2022).

However, this research is not without limitations. The sample size was limited due to available funding, and there was roughly a 25% attrition rate, despite best efforts to retain participants. Attrition analyses found that participants who did not return for Waves 2 and 3 experienced more frequent instances of sexual harassment at earlier waves compared to participants who returned. Given that participants who experienced greater sexual harassment reported lower self-concept clarity, this may explain why self-concept clarity appears to increase across waves over time. After excluding participants who failed attention checks, this research was slightly underpowered in comparison to the a priori power analysis. Lastly, while the longitudinal design provides more information than cross-sectional studies in terms of how these variables relate over time, causal conclusions cannot be drawn due to the lack of experimental control. Future research should aim to experimentally investigate the impact of sexual harassment on these outcomes, as well as experimentally investigate the relationship between self-objectification and self-concept clarity. Finally, this work highlights the importance of developing interventions aimed at reducing instances of sexual harassment, as these experiences do not just contribute to momentary instances of discomfort, but rather have a lasting impact on the target’s sense of self over time. While reducing instances of sexual harassment is challenging (Bingham & Scherer, 2001; Dobbin & Kalev, 2019), understanding the direction and nature of these relationships can inform future research aimed at minimizing the impacts of experiencing such harassment.
Conclusion

This longitudinal research positions sexual harassment as a risk factor to both heightened self-objectification and reduced self-concept clarity among both men and women. Across three waves of data collection over a six-week period, I find evidence that women experience higher rates of sexual harassment, greater self-objectification, and lower self-concept clarity than men. Across time, I find that experiencing sexual harassment predicts heightened self-objectification, which further predicts a disrupted sense of self, and I find that self-objectification and self-concept clarity are reciprocally related. This work offers theoretical and applied contributions to understanding the harms of sexual harassment, while providing a novel integration of theories related to self-objectification and self-concept clarity.

Tables

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Note. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. SCC refers to self-concept clarity; SO refers to self-objectification; W1, W2, and W3 refer to Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3, respectively. ‘Har’ refers to averaged harassment, and Har 2 refers to the numeric harassment measure.
Table 3. Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables Disaggregated by Gender

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\( \text{n} \) women 184 154 137 184 154 137 184 154 137 184

\( M \) women 2.88 2.91 2.97 3.05 3.02 3.00 1.91 1.73 1.62 3.40

\( SD \) women 0.86 0.87 0.88 0.80 0.79 0.86 0.73 0.70 0.65 3.13
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<td>-.19*</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. SO W1</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.25**</td>
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<td>-.13</td>
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<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. SO W3</td>
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<td>.24***</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.12</td>
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<td>.01</td>
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<td>.54***</td>
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<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.37***</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Harassment W2</td>
<td>.72***</td>
<td>.57***</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.06</td>
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<td>9. Harassment W3</td>
<td>.72***</td>
<td>.63***</td>
<td>-.22*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Harassment 2 W1</td>
<td>.73***</td>
<td>.70***</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.31***</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Harassment 2 W2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.78***</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Harassment 2 W3</td>
<td>.64***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.27***</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Feminist Identity</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
<td>-.05</td>
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<td>14. Age</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>15. Early harassment</td>
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<td>-.22**</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>-.23**</td>
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<td>.09</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.20**</td>
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<td>-.21**</td>
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<td>17. Perp. Gender</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.29***</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Chest Size</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*n women: 153 136 186 186 186 186 134 184
*n men: 3.22 2.81 4.12 22.75 10.22 9.81 1.43 1.97
*SD women: 3.11 2.96 1.07 1.74 3.00 1.72 0.69 0.75

Note. The results for women are shown above the diagonal, and the results for men are shown below. *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. SCC refers to self-concept clarity; SO refers to self-objectification; W1, W2, and W3 refer to Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3, respectively. Har’ refers to averaged harassment, and Har 2 refers to the numeric harassment measure.
Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Gender Differences of Primary Variables Across Three Waves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 1 (N=370)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 2 (N=315)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Wave 3 (N=279)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Objectification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Sample</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.81</td>
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<td>Women</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<td>0.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
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<td>0.79</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Difference</td>
<td>F(1,368) = 17.34, p&lt;.001, η²=0.05</td>
<td>F(1,313) = 7.52, p=.006, η²=0.02</td>
<td>F(1,277) = 6.32, p=.01, η²=0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Concept Clarity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Sample</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Difference</td>
<td>F(1,368) = 5.51, p=.011, η²=0.02</td>
<td>F(1,313) = 4.28, p=.04, η²=0.02</td>
<td>F(1,277) = 4.80, p=.03, η²=0.02</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Sample</td>
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<td>1.58</td>
<td>0.66</td>
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<td>0.70</td>
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<td>0.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>0.64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Difference</td>
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<td>F(1,313) = 17.52, p&lt;.001, η²=0.05</td>
<td>F(1,277) = 7.10, p=.008, η²=0.03</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Sample</td>
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<td>2.66</td>
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<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.11</td>
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<td>F(1,313) = 42.48, p&lt;.001, η²=0.12</td>
<td>F(1,277) = 21.01, p&lt;.001, η²=0.07</td>
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Table 5. Mediation Results Using the Numeric Measure of Sexual Harassment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>n=276</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Path</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: W1 Harassment→ W2 SO</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>[0.07, 0.14]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b: W2 SO→ W3 SCC</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-6.77</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>[-0.56, -0.31]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c': W1 Harassment→ W3 SCC</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-1.41</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>[-0.07, 0.01]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td>c: W1 Harassment→ W2 SO→ W3 SCC</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>[-0.07, -0.03]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R²=.12***

Note. SO refers to self-objectification; SCC refers to self-concept clarity; W1, W2, and W3 refer to Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3, respectively.
Table 6. Mediation Models with Gender as a Covariate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=276</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Path</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a: W1 Harassment → W2 SO</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>[0.25, 0.52]</td>
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<tr>
<td>b: W2 SO → W3 SCC</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-7.06</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>[-0.58, -0.33]</td>
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<tr>
<td>c’: W1 Harassment → W3 SCC</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>[-0.16, 0.15]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Covariate</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender → W2 SO</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>[-0.10, 0.27]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender → W3 SCC</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>[-0.31, 0.09]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: W1 Harassment → W2 SO → W3 SCC</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[-0.26, -0.10]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R^2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a: W1 SO → W2 SCC</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-7.25</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>[-0.56, -0.32]</td>
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<tr>
<td>b: W2 SCC → W3 SO</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-3.09</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>[-0.17, -0.04]</td>
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<tr>
<td>c’: W1 SO → W3 SCC</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>21.06</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>[0.72, 0.87]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Covariate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender → W2 SCC</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>[-0.32, 0.07]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>[-0.14, 0.08]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c: W1 SO → W2 SCC → W3 SO</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[0.01, 0.09]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R^2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>.69***</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* SO refers to self-objectification; SCC refers to self-concept clarity; W1, W2, and W3 refer to Wave 1, Wave 2, and Wave 3, respectively.
Figures

**Figure 2.** Self-Objectification Mediates the Relationship Between Gender and Self-Concept Clarity

**Figure 3.** Self-Concept Clarity Mediates the Relationship Between Gender and Self-Objectification
Figure 4. Multilevel Mediation of Sexual Harassment Indirectly Predicting Self-Concept Clarity Through Self-Objectification

Figure 5. Gender Moderates the Longitudinal Relationship Between Self-Objectification and Self-Concept Clarity
REFERENCES


https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684319871913


https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.20.3.396.22302

https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886301372001


**APPENDIX A: SCALES AND MEASURES**

**Self-Objectification Beliefs and Behaviors Scale**

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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Looking attractive to others is more important to me than being happy with who I am inside.
2. I try to imagine what my body looks like to others (i.e., like I am looking at myself from the outside).
3. How I look is more important to me than how I think or feel.
4. I choose specific clothing or accessories based on how they make my body appear to others.
5. My physical appearance is more important than my personality.
6. When I look in the mirror, I notice areas of my appearance that I think others will view critically.
7. I consider how my body will look to others in the clothing I am wearing.
8. I often think about how my body must look to others.
9. My physical appearance says more about who I am than my intellect.
10. How sexually attractive others find me says something about who I am as a person.
11. My physical appearance is more important than my physical abilities.
12. I try to anticipate others’ reactions to my physical appearance.
13. My body is what gives me value to other people.
14. I have thoughts about how my body looks to others even when I am alone.

**Self-Concept Clarity Scale**

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another. *
2. On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion. *
3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am. *
4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be. *
5. When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I’m not sure what I was really like. *
6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.
7. Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself. *
8. My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently. *
9. If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day. *
10. Even if I wanted to, I don’t think I could tell someone what I’m really like. *
11. In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.
12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don’t really know what I want. *
Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale


(“In the past three weeks, how often have you [1–13]/has someone [14–15] . . .?”)
1. been whistled at while walking down a street?
2. noticed someone staring at your chest when you are talking to them?
3. felt like or known that someone was evaluating your physical appearance?
4. felt that someone was staring at your body?
5. noticed someone leering at your body?
6. heard a rude, sexual remark made about your body?
7. been honked at when you were walking down the street?
8. seen someone stare at one or more of your body parts?
9. overheard inappropriate sexual comments made about your body?
10. noticed that someone was not listening, but instead gazing at your body or a body part?
11. heard someone make sexual comments or innuendos when noticing your body?
12. been touched or fondled against your will?
13. experienced sexual harassment (on the job, in school, etc.)?
14. grabbed or pinched one of your private body areas against your will?
15. made a degrading sexual gesture towards you?

“0 times”, “1 time”, “2 times”, “3 times”, “4 times”, “5 times”, and “more than 5 times”

Please indicate numerically how many times in the past 3 weeks you have personally experienced the following situations:

1. Felt like or knew that someone was evaluating your physical appearance
2. Overheard inappropriate sexual comments made about your body
3. Experienced sexual harassment (on the job, in school, etc.)

Feminist Identity

1. Strongly Disagree 2. 3. 4. 5. Strongly Agree

1. I consider myself a feminist
2. I identify myself as a feminist to other people
3. Feminist values and principles are important to me
4. I support the goals of the feminist movement

Early Experiences with Sexual Harassment

“Please indicate how old you were (in years) the first time you recall being looked at, evaluated, or treated in an unwanted sexual manner”
Age of Pubertal Onset

“At what age did you begin experiencing physical changes associated with puberty?” [numeric dropdown list]

Body Shape

“How would you describe your body shape?”
   Athletic
   Slim
   Curvy

Chest Size

“Would you say your chest size is....”
   Smaller than average
   About average
   Larger than average

Demographics

1. Please select the option that best describes your gender.
   a. Man
   b. Woman
   c. Nonbinary

2. Do you identify as transgender?
   a. Yes
   b. No

3. How do you identify your sexual orientation? Please select one best descriptor. If the categories provided do not fully capture your identify, please feel free to use the "Other" category to specify further.
   a. Exclusively lesbian or gay
   b. Mostly lesbian or gay
   c. Bisexual
   d. Mostly heterosexual
   e. Exclusively heterosexual
   f. Asexual
   g. Other

4. What is your age?

5. How would you describe your race/ethnicity? Please select the one best descriptor or use the “Biracial/Multiracial” option to specify further.
   a. African/ African American/Black
   b. American Indian/Native American
   c. Arab American/Middle Eastern
   d. Asian/Asian American
   e. Hispanic/Latina/o American
   f. Pacific Islander
   g. White/European American/ Caucasian
   h. Biracial/Multiracial (please specify)
   i. Other (please specify)
APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA

EXEMPT DETERMINATION

June 16, 2023
Roxanne Felig

Dear Roxanne Felig:

On 6/16/2023, the IRB reviewed and approved the following protocol:

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<th>Initial Study</th>
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<td>STUDY005910</td>
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<td>Title:</td>
<td>Interpersonal Experiences and Personality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Protocol:</td>
<td>- Interpersonal Experiences and Personality protocol.docx; No Consents</td>
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</table>

The IRB determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review.

In conducting this protocol, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Please note, as per USF policy, once the exempt determination is made, the application is closed in BullsIRB. This does not limit your ability to conduct the research. Any proposed or anticipated change to the study design that was previously declared exempt from IRB oversight must be submitted to the IRB as a new study prior to initiation of the change. However, administrative changes, including changes in research personnel, do not warrant a modification or new application.

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

Institutional Review Boards / Research Integrity & Compliance
University of South Florida / 3702 Spectrum Blvd., Suite 165 / Tampa, FL 33612 / 813-974-5658

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Sincerely,

Laura Alfonso
IRB Research Compliance Administrator