DEVELOPMENT AND PSYCHOMETRIC EVALUATION OF THE INTERPERSONAL SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION SCALE

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This study reports on the development and psychometric evaluation of the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS). Data from 576 college women were collected in three studies. Exploratory factor analysis uncovered two factors: Body Evaluation and Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances; confirmatory factor analysis supported this factor structure. ISOS scores were internally consistent and stable over a 3-week period. Supporting its construct validity, ISOS scores were (a) strongly related to sexist degradation; (b) slightly to moderately related to other sexist events, self-objectification (i.e., body surveillance and internalization of the thin-ideal), and body shame; and (c) unrelated to socially desirable responding. The relationship between ISOS scores and body shame was fully mediated by self-objectification, providing additional evidence for its construct validity. Furthermore, the ISOS garnered incremental validity, as it predicted self-objectification above and beyond the variance accounted for by sexist events.

Scholars (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994; Striegel-Moore & Cachelin, 2001) have noted that women report significantly more symptoms of eating disorders, depression, and sexual dissatisfaction than do men. The sexual objectification of women is one explanation for such gender differences. Elaborating upon this explanation, Fredrickson and Roberts (1997) offered objectification theory to illustrate how contextual and individual variables work together to predict women's psychological distress.

More specifically, objectification theory posits that women routinely encounter experiences of sexual objectification. Sexual objectification is defined as the act of reducing a woman to her body or body parts with the misperception that her body or body parts are capable of representing the woman as a whole (Bartky, 1990). When women are sexually objectified, their worth is considered only to the extent that their bodies give pleasure and benefits to others. It is true that women also can be objectified by their bodies being ridiculed and/or dismissed rather than sexualized (Fine & Asch, 1988). Within objectification theory, the destructive consequences of sexual objectification for women are considered.

Objectification theory suggests that sexual objectification occurs through interpersonal interactions with partners, family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers and through media outlets that depict interpersonal and social interactions (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). One frequent yet subtle way interpersonal sexual objectification is expressed is through the “objectifying gaze,” involving the sexual evaluation of women’s bodies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 175). Due to its pervasiveness in Western culture, evaluating women’s bodies appears normative to men and women; thus, it is often underestimated or overlooked in its contribution to women’s psychological distress. Yet, the cultural acceptance of objectifying gaze is believed to be a central contributor to an extreme form of interpersonal sexual objectification: unwanted explicit sexual advances (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

According to objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997), the influence of sexual objectification on disordered eating, depression, and sexual dissatisfaction is indirect in that it is mediated by several variables. Specifically, encounters with sexual objectification socialize girls and women to engage in self-objectification, which is defined as the act of consistently measuring oneself against an internalized cultural ideal standard (Moradi, Dirks, & Matteson, 2005). Therefore, in Western culture, where a thin body type is considered ideal for women, expressions of self-objectification would simultaneously include (a) the...
adoption of the belief that the thin-ideal cultural standard is the most (and only) desirable body shape and (b) engaging in body surveillance (i.e., habitually monitoring the body and appearance) by comparing the body to this standard (Heinberg, Thompson, & Stormer, 1995; McKinley & Hyde, 1996).

Self-objectification then is proposed to lead to women’s: (a) body shame, as they perceive themselves falling short of the cultural thin-ideal body shape; (b) anxiety about appearance and safety; (c) reduced concentration or flow for non-appearance-related tasks (i.e., challenging mental and physical activities); and (d) decreased awareness of their internal bodily states such as hunger, satiety, and emotions (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 183). These consequences of self-objectification, then, are believed to directly contribute to psychological disorders that unduly affect women such as disordered eating, depression, and sexual dissatisfaction (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Thus, the link between sexual objectification and these psychological disorders is believed to be accounted for by self-objectification and its direct consequences (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Women are exposed to differing levels of interpersonal sexual objectification within their relationships, and these objectifying encounters could wax and wane throughout their lives. Because these encounters influence women’s levels of self-objectification (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998; Noll & Fredrickson, 1998; Tiggemann & Slater, 2001), it is critical that women’s encounters with interpersonal sexual objectification are explored within objectification theory.

Interestingly, despite the fact that interpersonal sexual objectification is an essential variable in objectification theory, most empirical investigations of the model pathways of this theory have not included women’s reported interpersonal sexual objectification experiences as a model variable. It is true that preliminary research has revealed that specific instances of sexual objectification, such as magazine exposure (Morry & Staska, 2001), trying on swimsuits (Fredrickson et al., 1998), sports participation (Parsons & Betz, 2001), ballet participation (Tiggemann & Slater, 2001), and pressure for thinness (Tykka & Hill, 2004) are related to self-objectification. Yet, only Moradi et al. (2005) included a measure of women’s reported general sexual objectification experiences within their test of the objectification theory framework. Sexual objectification needs to be integrated within model frameworks of objectification theory because its incorporation would lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of exposure to interpersonal sexual objectification on women’s psychological distress (Moradi et al., 2005).

A few measures have been developed to assess women’s encounters with sexual objectification and sexist events (i.e., the Schedule of Sexist Events [SSE] by Klonoff & Landrine, 1995; the sexual objectification subscale of the Daily Sexist Events Scale by Swim, Cohen, & Hyers, 1998; the Objectification Experiences Questionnaire by Burnett, 1996; and a composite measure of cultural sexual objectification by Hill, 2003). Although validity evidence has been accrued for these measures in that they predict self-objectification and/or psychological distress, they are limited in several ways. First, many items within these measures contain the term “sexist”; this term could influence women’s reports. Many women experience instances of sexual objectification; however, they do not interpret them as sexist due to not being clear about what constitutes sexism (Stangor, Sechrist, & Swim, 1999). Second, most of these scales do not contain several items assessing both women’s perceptions of others (a) evaluating their bodies and (b) committing explicit sexual advances against their will, both of which are key features of interpersonal sexual objectification. Third, many of these measures combine different instances of sexual objectification within an item (e.g., sexist comments, whistling, and cat calls are included within one item within the Daily Sexist Events Scale), which could confound women’s reported frequency of sexual objectification. For instance, women may report lower frequency if they experienced only one form of objectification listed in the item, even if they experienced many instances of that one form. Fourth, other psychometric evidence (e.g., confirmation of factor structure, item-total correlations, and test-retest reliability of scores) have not been reported for these scales.

Because assessing interpersonal sexual objectification would enhance understanding of women’s psychological distress (Moradi et al., 2005), we developed the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS) to measure this construct. The ISOS was constructed to integrate extant measures of sexual objectification. We sought to pull together and capitalize on the strengths of these extant measures while circumventing many of their limitations. In the following three studies, we report further on its development and psychometric properties.

**STUDY 1**

The purpose of Study 1 was to conduct an initial examination of the ISOS’s factor structure, internal consistency reliability, construct validity, and incremental validity. We sought to determine the ISOS’s convergent validity by investigating its relationship to another measure of a similar construct. Sexist events include many forms of discrimination that serve to minimize women’s importance in society and their internal attributes (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). Because interpersonal sexual objectification minimizes women’s internal attributes by focusing on their physical appearance, interpersonal sexual objectification is a specific type of sexist event (Swim et al., 1998). Scores on the ISOS should be more strongly related to certain sexist events that demonstrate blatant disrespect for women and highlight them as objects (i.e., sexist degradation) than sexist events that emphasize women not being treated as equal to men (within work and school settings and within their relationships). If such findings are evidenced, then support will be accrued.
for the ISOS's convergent and discriminant validity. We chose to use the SSE to measure sexist events due to its widespread use and because it measures a variety of sexist events (Matteson & Moradi, 2005). In addition, because of the direct focus of sexual objectification on women's bodies, ISOS scores should predict unique variance in self-objectification above and beyond the variance accounted for by the sexist events measured by the SSE. This finding would support the ISOS's incremental validity.

Furthermore, objectification theory asserts that interpersonal sexual objectification directly leads to self-objectification because encounters with interpersonal sexual objectification coax girls and women to internalize this objectification and treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). One specific consequence that follows from self-objectification is body shame. Women who self-objectify often compare their bodies to the unrealistic societal ideal body type that is virtually impossible to attain (Wolf, 1991), and this continual comparison is a “recipe” for body shame (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 181). Therefore, we first hypothesized that ISOS scores should be related to self-objectification (i.e., body surveillance and internalization of the thin-ideal) and body shame. Second, we evaluated a model that examines whether interpersonal sexual objectification influences body shame through self-objectification using latent variable structural equation modeling. In this model, we hypothesized that an interpersonal sexual objectification latent variable (estimated by ISOS scores) would predict a self-objectification latent variable (estimated by body surveillance and internalization of the thin-ideal), and that self-objectification would then predict a body shame latent variable (estimated by body shame scores). In accordance with objectification theory, interpersonal sexual objectification was not expected to predict unique variance in body shame. Such findings would accrue additional support for the ISOS's construct validity.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Women at a large Midwestern university were recruited through a description of the experiment on the psychology department's Web page. Participants were instructed that their responses would remain anonymous. They completed the measures (presented below) in a classroom setting used as a research lab; these measures were counterbalanced to control for order effects. Participants received general psychology course credit for their involvement.

Responses from 4 women who did not complete at least 90% of any given measure were not entered into the data set. The final data set included responses from 342 women who ranged in age from 17 to 30 years ($M = 18.45, SD = 1.00$). Women identified as European American ($n = 293, 85.7\%$), African American ($n = 19, 5.6\%$), Asian American ($n = 17, 5.0\%$), Latina ($n = 7, 2.0\%$), multiracial ($n = 3, 0.9\%$), or international ($n = 3, 0.9\%$). Women were first-year students ($n = 259, 74.5\%$), sophomores ($n = 40, 11.7\%$), juniors ($n = 7, 2.0\%$), seniors ($n = 4, 1.2\%$), or postbaccalaureate students ($n = 2, 0.6\%$). Participants described themselves as upper middle class ($n = 160, 46.8\%$), middle class ($n = 150, 43.9\%$), working class ($n = 20, 5.8\%$), or upper class ($n = 8, 2.3\%$). Four women (1.2%) did not report a socioeconomic identification.

Measures

Development of the ISOS. We narrowed our focus to reflect the two forms of interpersonal sexual objectification identified by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997): the sexually objectifying gaze and unwanted sexual advances. In developing the items, we consulted (a) Fredrickson and Roberts's (1997) article, which contained examples of each of these forms of sexual objectification; (b) Swim, Hyers, Cohen, and Ferguson's (2001) article, which used diary reports from college students to generate specific examples of both body evaluation and unwanted sexual advances; and (c) instances of interpersonal sexual objectification noted in Hill's (2003) composite measure. Items were written until the group of items comprehensively and adequately reflected the central characteristics of each of the two forms of interpersonal sexual objectification. More items were written for body evaluation ($n = 15$) than for unwanted explicit sexual advances ($n = 6$) because more examples of ways women's bodies can be evaluated were uncovered from the sources we consulted. We refrained from using the term “sexist” in any item because what is perceived as sexist is likely to vary according to a number of interpersonal and contextual variables, such as women's knowledge about prejudice (Moradi et al., 2005).

A group consisting of a counseling psychologist and two graduate students in counseling psychology (all European American women, two bisexual and one heterosexual) wrote these items. These three individuals have particular interest in sexual objectification and psychometric instrument development. The group met to discuss each item, revising it for clarity and determining whether it contributed uniquely to the measure. This process resulted in the wording of nine items and the deletion of two items that were redundant in content with the remaining items. Following initial item generation, the group sought feedback from a counseling psychologist and a women's studies professor (both European American women, sexual orientation was not queried) to assess content validity. These women were professors at the same university as the authors of the present study and were selected based on their interest and research in sexism and psychometric instrument development. They independently reviewed the ISOS items and then met with two of the present study's authors to communicate their feedback. During this meeting, they suggested performing minor wording changes on three items. They
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stated that they believed that the items accurately reflected the content domain.

The response format for the ISOS is a 5-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, 5 = almost always), and items are averaged. Higher scores indicate higher levels of interpersonal sexual objectification. We wanted to measure sexually objectifying encounters that occur within respondents’ recent history because recent accounts are more accurate predictors of psychological distress than lifetime accounts (Moradi & Subich, 2002). Thus, participants were instructed to respond to each item by reporting experiences within the past year.

This measure was piloted with 35 undergraduate women who indicated that each item was easy to understand. Items were internally consistent (α = .93). However, three items did not correlate at above .30 with their designated subscale and consequently were deleted. The resultant Cronbach’s alpha for this 18-item measure was .93. These 18 items were retained without additional modification.

Sexist events. The SSE contains 20 items that assess perceived frequency of sexist discrimination. Items are rated along a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (the event never happened) to 6 (the event happened almost all the time). Given that we were interested in recent experiences of sexism, only SSE items assessing the frequency of perceived sexist events within the past year (i.e., recent subscale of the SSE) were explored. Factor analyses for the recent SSE have supported three subscales: sexist degradation and its consequences (5 items; e.g., “How many times have people made inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances to you because you are a woman?”), unfair sexist events at work/school (5 items; e.g., “How many times have you been treated unfairly by teachers or professors because you are a woman?”), and unfair treatment in distant and close relationships (7 items; e.g., “How many times have you been treated unfairly by your family because you are a woman?”; Matteson & Moradi, 2005). Subscale items were averaged; higher scores indicate greater perceived sexism. The internal consistency reliability of its scores has been supported among college women (Matteson & Moradi, 2005). For the present study, Cronbach’s alphas were .87 for sexist degradation and its consequences, .77 for unfair sexist events at work/school, and .73 for unfair treatment in distant and close relationships. Supporting its construct validity, recent SSE scores were related positively to reported frequency of daily hassles (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995) and either unrelated or negligibly related to social desirability (Fischer et al., 2000).

Self-objectification. Participants’ level of body surveillance was measured using the 8-item body surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBC; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Items (e.g., “During the day, I think about how I look many times”) are rated along a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). OBC items are averaged to arrive at a total subscale score. McKinley and Hyde (1996) reported that the body surveillance scores were internally consistent, stable over a 2-week period, and demonstrated evidence of construct validity. For the present study, Cronbach’s alpha was .87 for the body surveillance subscale scores.

The internalization subscale of the Sociocultural Attitudes Toward Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-I; Heinberg et al., 1995) also was used to measure self-objectification. Items from the other subscale of the SATAQ (i.e., awareness of sociocultural standards of appearance) were not given to the participants because these items assess a construct different from self-objectification. The internalization subscale of the SATAQ contains 8 items that assess acceptance of society’s emphasis on appearance in general and thinness in particular (e.g., “I believe that clothes look better on thin models”). Items are rated on a scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Items are averaged with higher scores indicating greater internalization. Items of the SATAQ-I were internally consistent in previous samples of college women (e.g., α = .88; Heinberg et al., 1995). Factor analyses have indicated that all 8 items load highly on one factor, supporting its unidimensionality, and strong relations with measures of similar content support the subscale’s convergent validity (Heinberg et al., 1995; Tylka & Subich, 2004). In this study, the Cronbach’s alpha of the SATAQ-I scores was .93.

Body shame. Body shame was measured using the 8-item body shame subscale of the OBC (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Items (e.g., “I feel ashamed of myself when I haven’t made the effort to look my best”) are rated along a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Items are averaged to arrive at an overall subscale score. Body shame subscale scores have been found to be internally consistent, stable over a 2-week period, and related to measures of negative body image (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). For the present study, Cronbach’s alpha was .85 for the body shame subscale scores.

Results and Discussion

Exploratory Factor Analyses

To evaluate the structure of the ISOS, common factor analysis with principal axis factoring was used. This type of analysis was chosen over principal component analysis because it provides a factor solution uncontaminated by error variance and unique variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Direct oblimin rotation was chosen because factors, if found, were expected to be correlated because they would be components of a broader interpersonal sexual objectification construct. The delta weight was specified to be zero; this value permits a moderate correlation between the factors.
The number of factors was determined by parallel analysis (Horn, 1965). This statistical technique has been found to more accurately estimate the number of factors in a data set than other methods such as retaining factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, examining the scree plot of the eigenvalues for breaks or discontinuities, and maximum likelihood procedures (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999). These latter methods tend to overfactor and are both subjective and ambiguous (Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004). Parallel analysis first involves generating multiple (i.e., 50 or more) random data sets that have the same dimensions as the actual data set and factor analyzing each of the random data sets. Then, eigenvalues extracted from the correlation matrix of the actual data are compared to the criterion (i.e., 95th percentile) eigenvalues that have been calculated from the random data. It is recommended that researchers retain only those factors in the actual data set whose eigenvalues are greater than the eigenvalues from the random data (Hayton et al., 2004).

The significance of Bartlett’s test of sphericity, \( \chi^2(153) = 2838.74, p < .001 \), and the size of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO = .92) revealed that the 18 ISOS items had adequate common variance for factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). To determine the number of factors to interpret, we generated 50 random data sets and compared the actual eigenvalues to the criterion (i.e., 95th percentile) of the random eigenvalues. The first two factors of the actual data had eigenvalues greater than the criterion generated from the random data (i.e., 7.51 [actual data] compared to 1.52 [random data] for the first factor, and 1.55 [actual data] compared to 1.40 [random data] for the second factor). The remaining factors derived from the actual data set had values substantially lower than the corresponding criterion generated from the random data.

Thus, two factors were interpreted. The first factor accounted for 41.72% of the total variance, and the second factor accounted for 8.61% of the total variance. The rotated factor matrix was examined to pinpoint items that loaded on these factors. Criteria for factor loadings included item values greater than or equal to .40 on the primary factor and values less than or equal to .30 on other factors. Although a common guideline is to interpret loadings of .32 or higher (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996), the minimum loading cutoff was set at .40 to maximize confidence in the factors derived from the solution.

Three items that had either factor loadings less than .40 or cross-loadings greater than or equal to .30 were eliminated. This procedure resulted in 15 items, with Factor 1 containing 11 items and Factor 2 containing 4 items. All items loaded on their intended factor.

These 15 items were factor analyzed using a principal-axis factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation (delta = 0). We specified this analysis to generate two factors. All items loaded greater than .40 on their respective factor and less than .30 on any other factor (see Table 1). This solution accounted for 56.16% of the data variance. The first factor (eigenvalue = 7.00) accounted for 46.68% of the variance; its factor loadings ranged from .51 to .85. This factor was labeled Body Evaluation. The second factor (eigenvalue = 1.42) accounted for 9.48% of the variance; its factor loadings ranged from .44 to .71. This factor was labeled Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances. These factors were correlated .62 with each other.

The ISOS items are presented in Table 1, along with factor loadings, item-total correlations, and descriptive statistics (i.e., means, standard deviations) for each item. When evaluating the normality of the item distributions, there were only minor deviations from normality for the Body Evaluation items and two Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances Items (i.e., items 20 and 21). More substantial deviations from normality (i.e., positive skewness and kurtosis, \( p < .05 \)) were noted for two Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances items (i.e., items 11 and 12); however, given the large sample size, it was determined (per Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996) that these deviations would not make substantive differences in the analyses.

### Internal Consistency Reliability

We used Cronbach’s alpha to establish the internal consistency reliability of the ISOS scores. Alphas were .92 for the total ISOS, .91 for the body evaluation subscale, and .78 for the unwanted explicit sexual advances subscale. Analyses further indicated that these alphas would not increase with the deletion of any item; thus, each item made an incremental contribution to its scale or subscale. These values support the internal consistency reliability of the ISOS’s scores.

### Validity Evidence

Before conducting the validity analyses, we explored whether age, race-related differences, class rank, and socioeconomic identification were related to the ISOS, SSE, OBC, and SATAQ-I scores. If any of these demographic variables were associated with the study measures, then we planned to partial out the effects of these variables in the analyses. For race-related differences, European American women were coded as 0 and Women of Color were coded as 1. Women of Color were clustered together due to the low number of participants representing certain ethnicities. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) revealed no mean differences between European American women and Women of Color, \( F(8, 294) = 1.64, \text{ns} \), Wilks’s \( \Lambda = .96 \); no mean class rank differences, \( F(32, 1086) = 1.33, \text{ns} \), Wilks’s \( \Lambda = .87 \); and no mean socioeconomic differences, \( F(24, 853) = 1.40, \text{ns} \), Wilks’s \( \Lambda = .89 \), for the study measures. Further, age was unrelated to these measures (range of \( r = -.02 \) to -.10, \( p > .05 \) for all). Therefore, we did not control for any of these variables in the analyses.
Table 1
Item Factor Loadings and Corrected Item-Total Correlations for Each Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Factor Obtained From Analyzing the Data of Study 1

| Factor and Item | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Item/Total: r | M    | SD   |
|-----------------|----------|----------|---------------|------|------|
| Factor 1: Body Evaluation |          |          |               |      |      |
| 1. How often have you been whistled at while walking down a street? | .63 | .00 | .60 | 3.10 | 1.00 |
| 2. How often have you noticed someone staring at your breasts when you are talking to them? | .66 | -.04 | .61 | 2.90 | 1.02 |
| 3. How often have you felt like or known that someone was evaluating your physical appearance? | .63 | -.08 | .55 | 3.82 | .82  |
| 5. How often have you felt that someone was staring at your body? | .79 | -.08 | .69 | 3.49 | .86  |
| 8. How often have you noticed someone leering at your body? | .72 | .06 | .72 | 2.64 | .94  |
| 9. How often have you heard a rude, sexual remark made about your body? | .58 | .16 | .65 | 2.44 | .98  |
| 13. How often have you been honked at when you were walking down the street? | .69 | .01 | .66 | 3.10 | 1.04 |
| 14. How often have you seen someone stare at one or more of your body parts? | .85 | -.07 | .67 | 3.06 | .90  |
| 15. How often have you overheard inappropriate sexual comments made about your body? | .64 | .18 | .72 | 2.37 | 1.00 |
| 18. How often have you noticed that someone was not listening to what you were saying, but instead gazing at your body or a body part? | .51 | .20 | .61 | 2.19 | .83  |
| 19. How often have you heard someone make sexual comments or innuendos when noticing your body? | .71 | .10 | .74 | 2.49 | .96  |
| Factor 2: Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances |          |          |               |      |      |
| 11. How often have you been touched or fondled against your will? | -.04 | .71 | .60 | 1.55 | .74  |
| 12. How often have you experienced sexual harassment (on the job, in school, etc.)? | .03 | .55 | .50 | 1.42 | .75  |
| 20. How often has someone grabbed or pinched one of your private body areas against your will? | -.01 | .78 | .67 | 1.95 | .89  |
| 21. How often has someone made a degrading sexual gesture towards you? | .17 | .62 | .60 | 2.00 | .88  |

Note. N = 342.

Convergent and discriminant validity evidence. Scores on the ISOS were hypothesized to correlate more strongly with the SSE sexist degradation and its consequences subscale than the remaining two SSE subscales (i.e., the unfair sexist events at work/school subscale and the SSE unfair treatment in distant and close relationships subscale). Correlations between these measures are presented in Table 2. We conducted a series of Fisher’s z tests to determine whether the ISOS was more strongly related to sexist degradation and its consequences than the other two SSE subscales. The correlation between ISOS total scores and SSE sexist degradation and its consequences was significantly higher than the correlations between (a) ISOS total scores and SSE unfair sexist events at work/school (z = 2.99, p < .01) and (b) ISOS total scores and SSE unfair treatment in distant and close relationships (z = 2.21, p < .05). Finally, the correlation between ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances and SSE sexist degradation and its consequences was significantly higher than the correlations between (a) ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances and SSE unfair sexist events at work/school (z = 3.13, p < .01) and (b) ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances and SSE unfair treatment in distant and close relationships (z = 2.73, p < .01). Similar results were evidenced for the ISOS subscales. The correlation between ISOS body evaluation and SSE sexist degradation and its consequences was significantly higher than the correlations between (a) ISOS body evaluation and SSE unfair sexist events at work/school (z = 2.99, p < .01) and (b) ISOS body evaluation and SSE unfair treatment in distant and close relationships (z = 2.21, p < .05). Finally, the correlation between ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances and SSE sexist degradation and its consequences was significantly higher than the correlations between (a) ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances and SSE unfair sexist events at work/school (z = 3.13, p < .01) and (b) ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances and SSE unfair treatment in distant and close relationships (z = 2.73, p < .01). These findings, which are consistent with our hypotheses, support the ISOS’s convergent and discriminant validity.
Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas, and Intercorrelations of the Measures from Study 1

| Measure                                               | M    | SD   | α     | Response scale |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------|----------------|
| 1. ISOS total                                         | 2.57 | .62  | .92   | 1–5            |
| 2. ISOS body evaluation                               | 2.87 | .69  | .91   | 1–5            |
| 3. ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances             | 1.73 | .64  | .78   | 1–5            |
| 4. SSE-sexist degradation                              | 2.28 | .88  | .87   | 1–6            |
| 5. SSE-unfair sexist events at work/school             | 1.58 | .65  | .77   | 1–6            |
| 6. SSE-unfair treatment in relationships               | 1.51 | .52  | .73   | 1–6            |
| 7. OBC- body surveillance                              | 4.84 | 1.04 | .87   | 1–7            |
| 8. SATAQ- internalization                             | 3.34 | .94  | .93   | 1–5            |
| 9. OBC- body shame                                    | 3.67 | 1.17 | .85   | 1–7            |

Note. N = 342. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Incremental validity evidence. Next, we determined whether the ISOS predicted body surveillance and internalization of the thin-ideal above and beyond the variance accounted for by the SSE. To test this hypothesis, the SSE subscales were entered at Step 1 of a regression equation, and the ISOS subscales were entered at Step 2 of this equation, in the prediction of each of the two criteria, yielding two hierarchical multiple regression equations. These findings, presented in Table 3, support the incremental validity of the ISOS because it predicted unique variance in body surveillance (5.7%) and internalization of the thin-ideal (7.5%) above and beyond SSE subscale scores. Further, when exploring the standardized beta weights at Step 2, both of the ISOS subscales predicted unique variance in each of the self-objectification criteria, whereas the SSE subscales did not.

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Illustrating the Incremental Variance in the Criteria (Body Surveillance and Internalization of the Thin-Ideal) Accounted for by ISOS Scores

| Step | Predictor                            | Adjusted Incremental | Cumulative R² | Adjusted Incremental | Cumulative R² | Adjusted Incremental | Cumulative R² |
|------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
|      | Criterion: body surveillance, Overall F (5, 336) = 7.77*** |                      |               |                      |               |                      |               |
| 1    | SSE-sexist degradation                | .148                 | .047          | .038                 | .047          | 1.97*                | .97           |
|      | SSE-unfair sexist events              | -.040                |               | -.46                 |               |                      |               |
|      | SSE-unfair treatment in relationships | .120                 |               | 1.34                 |               |                      |               |
| 2    | SSE-sexist degradation                | -.022                |               | -.26                 |               |                      |               |
|      | SSE-unfair sexist events              | -.029                |               | -.35                 |               |                      |               |
|      | SSE-unfair treatment in relationships | .101                 |               | 1.17                 |               |                      |               |
|      | ISOS-body evaluation                 | .134                 |               | 2.04*                |               |                      |               |
|      | ISOS-unwanted explicit sexual advances| .196                 |               | 2.83**               |               |                      |               |
|      | Criterion: internalization of the thin-ideal, Overall F(5, 336) = 9.25*** |                      |               |                      |               |                      |               |
| 1    | SSE-sexist degradation                | .076                 | .051          | .042                 | .051          | 1.00                 | 1.00          |
|      | SSE-unfair sexist events              | .115                 |               | 1.33                 |               |                      |               |
|      | SSE-unfair treatment in relationships | .062                 |               | .70                  |               |                      |               |
| 2    | SSE-sexist degradation                | -.127                |               | -.153                |               |                      |               |
|      | SSE-unfair sexist events              | .127                 |               | 1.53                 |               |                      |               |
|      | SSE-unfair treatment in relationships | .047                 |               | .54                  |               |                      |               |
|      | ISOS-body evaluation                 | .213                 |               | 3.17**               |               |                      |               |
|      | ISOS-unwanted explicit sexual advances| .169                 |               | 2.42*                |               |                      |               |

Note. N = 342. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
**Additional construct validity evidence.** We tested the hypothesis that the ISOS, being a measure of interpersonal sexual objectification, would be moderately related to measures of self-objectification (i.e., body surveillance and internalization of the thin-ideal). Results supported our predictions: The ISOS total scale and subscales were moderately related to these self-objectification measures. These correlations are presented in Table 2.

To test Fredrickson and Robert's (1997) assertion that the relationship between interpersonal sexual objectification and body shame is mediated by self-objectification, we followed Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures. For variables to be tested as mediators, there first must be significant relationships between the predictor (total ISOS scores) and the mediators (OBC-body surveillance and SATAQ-I) and between the mediators and the criterion variable (body shame). As indicated above, these conditions were supported within our data. Second, a variable is a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relationship between the predictor and criterion. To examine this, we used Mplus version 2.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 2001) to conduct a latent variable structural equation model (see Figure 1). The body evaluation and unwanted explicit sexual advances subscales served as indicators of an interpersonal sexual objectification latent variable, the SATAQ-internalization subscale and the OBC body surveillance subscale served as indicators of a self-objectification latent variable, and the OBC body shame subscale was divided into odd-and even-item composite scores to serve as indicators for a body shame latent variable. In the model, all possible direct and indirect paths were estimated. We used maximum likelihood estimation with the variable covariance matrix as input.

Following recommendations of Tabachnick and Fidell (1996), we evaluated the adequacy of the measurement model before simultaneously evaluating the measurement and structural components of the model. The measurement model yielded a comparative fit index (CFI) value of .98, a Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) of .96, a standard root mean square residual (SRMR) value of .07, and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value of .03, suggesting that the model provided an adequate fit to the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All indicators loaded significantly (i.e., *p* < .001) on their respective latent factors, revealing that the hypothesized latent factors are internally consistent and adequately measured by their items. These results support our method of combining the indicators to estimate the latent factors. Next, we analyzed the model including both the measurement and structural components. Results indicated that this model provided an adequate fit to the data (CFI = .98, TLI = .96, SRMR = .03, RMSEA = .07). Indicator loadings and standardized path coefficients for this model are presented in Figure 1. This model accounted for 20% of the variance in self-objectification and 44% of the variance in body shame.

We multiplied indirect standardized path coefficients to compute indirect effects and used Sobel's formula to determine whether indirect effects were significantly different from zero (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). Through self-objectification, interpersonal sexual objectification had a significant indirect link of .31 (z = 5.19, *p* < .001) to body shame. As indicated in Figure 1, interpersonal sexual objectification also had a significant direct link to self-objectification but not to body shame. Thus, our hypothesis that self-objectification would completely mediate the link of interpersonal sexual objectification to body shame was supported. This finding and the significant bivariate relationships found between ISOS scores, self-objectification, and body shame provide additional evidence for the ISOS's construct validity.

**Fig. 1.** Measurement and structural model for self-objectification's mediation of interpersonal sexual objectification on body shame (N = 342). In the measurement model only, correlation coefficients between the latent factors were *r* = .45 between interpersonal sexual objectification and self-objectification, *r* = .66 between self-objectification and body shame, and *r* = .25 between interpersonal sexual objectification and body shame (*p* < .001 for all). *p* < .001.


STUDY 2

When investigating the psychometric evidence for a scale, it is important to explore whether its scores are unrelated to variables that it should not reflect (Walsh & Betz, 2001). One particular variable that should be unrelated to women’s perceptions of interpersonal sexual objectification is social desirability because this is a biased form of responding that involves participants presenting favorable ratings in lieu of more accurate self-descriptions. Because the ISOS is a self-report measure, its validity depends on women’s honest reports. Thus, it is necessary to determine whether ISOS scores are influenced by social desirability. If the ISOS is not related to social desirability, further evidence of its discriminant validity will be accrued. We hypothesized that the ISOS would yield nonsignificant relationships to two forms of socially desirable responding (Paulhus, 1994): self-deceptive enhancement (i.e., in which participants are not consciously deceptive but may refuse to admit, even to themselves, having psychologically threatening thoughts or feelings) and impression management (i.e., presenting consciously favorable self-descriptions).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Women were recruited at a large Midwestern university through a description of the experiment on the psychology department’s Web page. Participants were told that their responses would remain anonymous, and they completed the measures presented in counterbalanced order in a classroom setting used as a research lab. Participants received general psychology course credit for their involvement.

Responses from 2 women who did not answer at least 90% of both measures were not included in the data set. The data set contained responses from 103 women (M age = 19.45 years, SD = 2.52, range 18–37). They identified as European American (n = 74, 71.8%), African American (n = 13, 12.6%), Latina (n = 5, 4.9%), Asian American (n = 4, 3.9%), multiracial (n = 4, 3.9%), or Native American (n = 3, 2.9%). Most participants were freshmen (n = 67, 65.0%), whereas 17.5% (n = 18) were sophomores, 11.7% (n = 12) were juniors, and 2.9% (n = 3) were seniors. One participant (1.0%) was a postbaccalaureate student, and two students (1.9%) did not report their college rank. Women described themselves as middle class (n = 55, 53.5%), upper middle class (n = 32, 30.7%), working class (n = 11, 10.9%), or upper class (n = 5, 5.0%).

Measures

The ISOS, described in Study 1, and the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding Version 6 (BIDR-6; Paulhus, 1994) were used. The BIDR-6 is a 40-item measure of the tendency to give socially desirable responses. It contains two subscales: self-deceptive enhancement (SDE; 20 items; the tendency to give honest but favorable self-descriptions, e.g., “I am a completely rational person”) and impression management (IM; 20 items; the tendency to consciously conceal socially undesirable behaviors, e.g., “I never swear”). Items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true). After appropriate items are reverse scored, one point is added for each 6 or 7 item response, and responses are summed to obtain subscale scores. Higher scores reflect greater SDE and IM. Scores for SDE have yielded mediocre to adequate internal consistency reliability (α = .65 to .75) and are somewhat consistent over a 5-week period (r = .66); scores for IM yield adequate internal consistency reliability (α = .75 to .80) and are consistent over a 5-week period (r = .77); and both SDE and IM have been found to be related to other measures of socially desirable responding (Paulhus, 1994). For the present study, Cronbach’s alphas were .80 for the SDE scores and .81 for the IM scores.

Results and Discussion

Before conducting the analyses, we explored the influence of age, race-related differences, class rank, and socioeconomic identification on ISOS and BIDR-6 scores. Age was unrelated to these measures (range of r = -.06 to -.15, p > .05 for all). Further, a MANOVA analysis revealed no mean differences between European American women and Women of Color, F(4, 74) = 1.25, ns, Wilk’s Λ = .94; no mean class rank differences, F(20, 246) = 1.58, ns, Wilk’s Λ = .67; and no mean socioeconomic differences, F(12, 196) = .62, ns, Wilk’s Λ = .91, for the study measures.

As hypothesized, the ISOS was not significantly related to socially desirable responding, yielding evidence for the ISOS’s discriminant validity. These correlations are presented in Table 4.

STUDY 3

It is important to examine whether a scale that purports to measure a relatively stable construct yields consistent scores over time (Walsh & Betz, 2001). It is likely that most women will have a similar neighborhood, work environment, school environment, and network of significant others over a period of several weeks. As a result, women’s levels of objectification within these environments should stay relatively stable. Furthermore, because the ISOS purports to measure sexually objectifying encounters that occur specifically within the past year, it is expected to demonstrate evidence of stability over short periods of time. Therefore, we hypothesized that the ISOS total and subscale scores would be stable over a 3-week period, which would support the test-retest reliability of its scores.

In addition, we sought to confirm the two-factor structure revealed in Study 1 using the combined data of Study 2 and Study 3. It is recommended that a scale’s factor structure be analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis to
determine the overall fit of the data to the scale model and whether items load on their hypothesized latent factor(s) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). When latent factors are expected to be related and connected to a higher-order factor, confirmatory factor analysis also allows for the estimation of the relationships between the latent factors and the determination of whether the latent factors load on a higher-order factor. Thus, via a second-order confirmatory factor analysis, we hypothesized that the ISOS's items would load on their respective latent factors, the latent factors would be related, the latent factors would load on a higher-order interpersonal sexual objectification factor, and the overall model would provide an acceptable fit to the data.

Method
Women from a large Midwestern university were recruited via oral announcements of the experiment given in their general psychology classes or through a description of the experiment on the psychology department’s Web page. For each administration, women were asked to write a code (consisting of the first two letters of their mother’s maiden name and the last two digits of their phone number) on their questionnaire. This code permitted the experimenters to match participants’ initial and follow-up responses. After we ensured the confidentiality of their responses, they completed the ISOS (described in Study 1) in a classroom setting used as a research lab. They also completed the ISOS 3 weeks later in the same setting. Women received course credit for their participation.

Responses from 14 women who did not complete at least 90% of the ISOS during the first or second administration were not entered into the data set. The final data set included responses from 131 women (M age = 21.58 years, SD = 6.47, range 18–47) enrolled in general and upper-level psychology classes. Women identified as European American (n = 120, 91.6%), African American (n = 6, 4.6%), Asian American (n = 2, 1.5%), Latina (n = 1, 0.8%), or Native American (n = 1, 0.8%). One participant (0.8%) did not report her race. Participants were first-year students (n = 72, 55.0%), sophomores (n = 22, 16.8%), juniors (n = 12, 9.2%), seniors (n = 20, 15.3%), or postbaccalaureate students (n = 5, 3.8%). Women reported their socioeconomic status as middle class (n = 74, 56.5%), upper middle class (n = 49, 37.4%), working class (n = 7, 5.3%), or upper class (n = 1, 0.8%).

Results and Discussion
Consistent with the previous studies, we first explored the influence of age, race-related differences, class rank, and socioeconomic identification on ISOS and BIDR-6 scores. Age was unrelated to these measures (range of r = -.05 to -.16, p > .05 for all). A MANOVA revealed no mean differences between European American women and Women of Color, F(3,109) = 1.64, ns, Wilks’ Λ = .96; no mean differences in class rank, F(12, 288) = 1.03, ns, Wilks’ Λ = .90; and no mean socioeconomic differences, F(18, 308) = 1.03, ns, Wilks’ Λ = .92, for the study measures.

The stability of the ISOS over a 3-week period was supported. These findings, along with descriptive information on the ISOS, are presented in Table 5.

Mplus version 2.12 (Muthén & Muthén, 2001) with maximum likelihood estimation was used to perform the confirmatory factor analysis. The combined sample size of 243 participants from Studies 2 and 3 exceeded the number of cases needed for a participants-to-parameter ratio of 5:1, which is required to accurately estimate a scale’s factor structure (Bentler, 1990). Within our model, 35 parameters were estimated. First, data were examined to ensure that the ISOS items’ distributions were in accordance with the statistical assumptions of confirmatory factor analysis. The four items of the unwanted explicit sexual advances subscale each had a distribution that differed moderately from normal (p < .05). Hence, a square root transformation was performed on these four items.

The 15 IES items served as indicators of their respective first-order latent factor (i.e., Body Evaluation or Unwanted Explicit Sexual Advances). Relations between the two hypothesized latent factors were estimated, and a second-order (i.e., Interpersonal Sexual Objectification) latent factor was estimated from the first-order factors. The fit statistics ranged from fair to good (i.e., CFI = .91, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .06) as determined by criteria for model fit adequacy (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Consistent with our hypotheses, this model

### Table 4

| Measure | M  | SD  | α  | Response scale | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   |
|---------|----|-----|----|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. ISOS total | 2.57 | .64 | .91 | 1–5 | —— |     |     |     |
| 2. ISOS body evaluation | 2.86 | .70 | .91 | 1–5 | .98* | —— |     |     |
| 3. ISOS unwanted explicit sexual advances | 1.78 | .67 | .73 | 1–5 | .78* | .62* | —— |     |
| 4. BIDR-6: SDE | 4.46 | 2.48 | .80 | 0–20 | .05 | .06 | −.01 | —— |
| 5. BIDR-6: IM | 4.89 | 3.00 | .81 | 0–20 | −.15 | −.13 | −.14 | .44 |

Note: N = 103.

*p < .001.
Table 5
Means, Standard Deviations, Alphas, and Retest Coefficients of the ISOS from Study 3

| Measure                                | M      | SD    | α     | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     |
|----------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. T1: ISOS total                      | 2.42   | .71   | .93   | ——    | ——    | ——    | ——    | ——    |
| 2. T2: ISOS total                      | 2.31   | .74   | .95   | .90*  | ——    | ——    | ——    | ——    |
| 3. T1: ISOS body evaluation            | 2.67   | .77   | .92   | .94*  | .83*  | ——    | ——    | ——    |
| 4. T2: ISOS body evaluation            | 2.53   | .79   | .94   | .86*  | .95*  | .89*  | ——    | ——    |
| 5. T1: ISOS unwanted explicit advances | 1.73   | .73   | .82   | .82*  | .78*  | .66*  | .68*  | ——    |
| 6. T2: ISOS unwanted explicit advances | 1.73   | .75   | .86   | .71*  | .84*  | .59*  | .69*  | .80*  |

Note. N = 131. T1 = First Administration of the ISOS, T2 = Second Administration of the ISOS. The response scale range for the ISOS total scale and subscales is 1–5. The test-retest correlation coefficients are in boldface.

*p < .001.

Fig. 2. Factor loadings of the Interpersonal Sexual Objectification Scale (ISOS) garnered via second-order confirmatory factor analysis of the data of Studies 2 and 3 (N = 243). *p < .001.

Table 5

provided an acceptable fit to the data. Figure 2 displays the item and factor loadings from this analysis. All items loaded significantly on their respective first-order latent factors, and each first-order factor loaded significantly on the second-order Interpersonal Sexual Objectification latent factor. Thus, the hypothesized latent factors are internally consistent and exist empirically.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

In three studies, we developed a measure of women’s reported experiences with interpersonal sexual objectification (the ISOS), psychometrically evaluated and cross-validated its factor structure, and determined that it yielded reliable and valid scores with college women. The ISOS avoids many of the limitations of extant measures of interpersonal sexual objectification because its items were constructed to allow women to report encounters of interpersonal sexual objectification without having to label them as such. The items formed two conceptually meaningful factors (i.e., body evaluation and unwanted explicit sexual advances). The ISOS total score and subscales were internally consistent and stable over a 3-week period; they demonstrated evidence of convergent validity via their strong relationships to sexist degradation; they yielded additional construct validity evidence via their relationships to unfair sexist events (within relationships, school, and work), self-objectification, and body shame; and they showed evidence of discriminant validity in that they were more strongly related to sexist degradation than unfair sexist events and unrelated to socially desirable responding.

In addition, the incremental validity of the ISOS was supported because both subscale scores predicted unique variance in body surveillance and internalization of the thin-ideal above that predicted by the three types of sexist events measured by the SSE. Thus, when women report encounters that represent interpersonal sexual objectification, even after considering their beliefs that they are targets of sexist degradation and unfair treatment within their relationships and school/work, they are more likely to monitor their bodies and idealize a thin appearance. The fact that the ISOS accounted for between 5.1% and 7.5% of unique variance in these self-objectification indices is noteworthy considering the strong conceptual overlap between the ISOS and SSE. In fact, SSE scores no longer were associated with self-objectification when ISOS scores were entered into the
analysis. Also, our finding that the effect of interpersonal sexual objectification on body shame is fully explained by self-objectification is consistent with the tenets of objectification theory and therefore provides additional evidence for the ISOS’s construct validity.

Limitations and Additional Future Research

While considering the psychometric evidence accrued for the ISOS, it also is important to note its limitations. First, we did not investigate the criterion-related validity of the ISOS. One avenue for future research, then, would be to explore whether the ISOS accounts for women’s behaviors in the present (concurrent validity) or predicts behaviors in the future (predictive validity). For instance, higher ISOS scores should be related to and predict women’s actual body monitoring behaviors (rather than solely women’s self-reported body surveillance attitudes, as was done in the present study). Disturbances in concentration or flow when completing difficult tasks, depressive behaviors, and disordered eating behaviors.

Second, several variables that may play a significant role in sexual objectification and self-objectification were not measured in the present study. One such variable is body size/shape. Women who have body types that are more consistent with the Western cultural thin-ideal standard have a greater tendency to be viewed as sexual objects; thus, they may be more likely to receive comments about their bodies, witness men gazing at their bodies, and be fondled against their will. Women’s actual body shape and size may further impact their monitoring of their bodies and their level of body shame, given that society encourages women to equate their self-esteem and body esteem with the extent to which they appear similar to the cultural thin-ideal standard. It is important for future research on sexual objectification to include body mass within model frameworks.

Future studies also might examine whether third variables moderate the relationship between interpersonal sexual objectification and self-objectification. Certainly, not all women who report high levels of interpersonal sexual objectification within their environment self-objectify. The sexist events literature might serve as one guide for identifying moderators of this relationship, as previous research has explored the link between sexist events and psychological distress among women. For instance, Moradi and Subich (2002) found that sexist events occurring in the previous year were related more strongly to psychological distress for women who denied sexism and accepted traditional gender roles than for women who did not endorse these attitudes. Sabik and Tylka (2006) also uncovered that sexist encounters were related less strongly to disordered eating for women who endorsed higher synthesis of and commitment to a feminist identity than for women who endorsed lower levels of these attitudes. Moradi and Subich (2004) further found that sexist events were positively related to psychological distress for women with low self-esteem but were not related to psychological distress for women with high self-esteem. Perhaps feminist consciousness and self-esteem protect women who experience high levels of interpersonal sexual objectification from engaging in self-objectification. Other intrapersonal variables, such as negative affect, may place women experiencing high levels of interpersonal sexual objectification at an increased risk for engaging in self-objectification.

Third, the ISOS does not measure asexualized objectification, whereby women are categorized as nonsexual objects rather than persons and then are derided, dismissed, or both (Fine & Asch, 1988). In both sexual and asexual objectification, women are appraised by their external appearance rather than internal qualities; only the feelings and perceptions of the evaluator are considered. Because Western culture encourages women to equate their self-worth with the sexual attention they receive from their appearance, asexualized objectification can be pernicious to women. For instance, asexualized objectification also encourages women to ignore and/or minimize their internal qualities and socializes women to base their worth on their appearance. Measures need to be developed to evaluate this form of objectification and its impact on women.

Fourth, only samples of college women were used to investigate the ISOS’s psychometric properties. Most of these women were young-adult, European American, middle to upper middle class, first-year students. Further, because most women in the United States are older than age 30, our samples are nonrepresentative by age. Therefore, our findings can only be extended to fit the experiences of traditional-aged college women. To make the samples more representative, we could have sampled women faculty, staff, and administrators to broaden the samples’ age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. Future research needs to determine whether the ISOS yields reliable and valid scores with older women, Women of Color, lesbians, and women not in college.

Fifth, the ISOS was developed and evaluated by European American women. Perhaps this demographic influenced (and limited) the type and style of items that were developed and may not represent or capture all forms of interpersonal sexual objectification experienced by all women.

Sixth, only self-report measures were used in the present study. These measures are susceptible to inaccurate responding because they rely on participants’ veridical recollections of events. Women’s reported experiences of interpersonal sexual objectification were investigated rather than their actual levels of interpersonal sexual objectification. Whether reported encounters are similar to actual encounters of interpersonal sexual objectification is important to explore. Individual difference (e.g., affect) and contextual (e.g., the intensity and impact of the event) variables could determine whether women notice their bodies being evaluated in an objectifying manner. Such variables may have had an impact on our findings. Future research, then,
could consider these variables when examining the relationships between interpersonal sexual objectification and self-objectification. Also, the ISOS could be extended to address women’s appraisal of the intensity and impact of each encounter. That is, after women report the frequency of each instance of interpersonal sexual objectification, they could evaluate the intensity and impact of the event on their psychological well-being.

Conclusions

Despite these limitations, the ISOS is a noteworthy instrument that can facilitate both empirical investigations and clinical applications connected to interpersonal sexual objectification. The ISOS would be useful for researchers because exploring women’s levels of interpersonal sexual objectification is necessary for a more comprehensive examination of objectification theory (Moradi et al., 2005). Adequate reliability and validity of measure scores are needed to meet the assumptions of many statistical designs that would be useful for examining objectification theory (e.g., path analysis, latent variable structural equation modeling, longitudinal analyses), and the psychometric evidence garnered for the ISOS scores supports the use of these analyses with this measure. Additionally, the ISOS is easy to administer and score and requires only a few minutes to complete. These appealing features would facilitate its incorporation within research questionnaire packets and implementation within clinical settings. The ISOS also can be used in a variety of clinical settings such as private practice, college counseling centers, and secondary schools. Clinicians can use the ISOS to help them detect whether interpersonal sexual objectification is a source of their female clients’ psychological distress; this detection could signal clinicians to help their clients adopt strategies and advocacy skills to cope with and challenge interpersonal sexual objectification and its negative consequences.

NOTE

1. Body surveillance and internalization of the thin-ideal standard are concomitant manifestations of self-objectification. Women who think of their bodies as objects are more likely to habitually monitor their appearance and are more likely to be receptive to cultural appearance-related messages. Internalizing the thin-ideal standard encourages women to pay attention to their appearance by monitoring their bodies. In turn, this focus on appearance primes them to further look to and subsequently internalize additional cultural standards for how to appear. Thus, we argue that measures of these constructs can be combined to estimate the self-objectification latent variable.

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