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The prominent role of contingent self-esteem within self-objectification theory

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From a psychological perspective, the present study attempts to explain the causes of compulsive buying through analyzing the relationship between self-esteem, contingent self-esteem, and self-sexualizing behaviors within the self-objectification framework. Participants were 160 female college students aged 18-30 from a large southern university in the United States, who took part in a cross-sectional study using a systematic sampling framework. Research shows the main source of objectification is the internalization of the thin-ideal body which is depicted in mass media. Internalization of the ideal body image results in body surveillance as the initiation of self-objectification process. Accordingly, this research intends to investigate the relationship between body surveillance and self-esteem, as well as contingent self-esteem and compulsive buying. Results show that body shame and contingent self-esteem fully mediated the relationship between body surveillance and self-esteem. Additionally, self-sexualizing behaviors and self-esteem mediated the relationship between contingent self-esteem and compulsive buying. Overall, these results suggest that self-objectification (body surveillance as a consequence of internalization of the thin-ideal body) brings about contingent self-esteem and, in turn, explains changes in self-esteem and self-sexualizing behaviors. In this regard, the mediating role of self-esteem and self-sexualizing behaviors in the relationship between contingent self-esteem and compulsive buying is discussed.

Biography

Meisam Vahedi is a Graduate student from Religious Studies Department of Florida International University. He also has a Master's degree in Sociology from University of Tehran. He has conducted research in the fields of social psychology, feminist theory and family studies during his graduate studies at FIU and UT. He has presented the results of his research in the forms of posters and oral presentations in national and international conferences. The above proposal is based on his recent research on sexual-objectification, self-esteem and compulsive buying. This research applies quantitative method within the objectification framework.

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