

Where's the Party? How Clothing and Context Influence Perceptions of Women

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ABSTRACT. The sexual objectification of women is a large societal issue and is related to a host of negative mental and physical health implications for women. Past research has suggested that the objectification of women may be influenced by types of clothing worn and the context in which it is worn. However, it is difficult to discern how much objectification is modified by both clothing and contextual features simultaneously. We manipulated the type of clothing worn by models (high skin exposure or low skin exposure) and the type of context the clothing was allegedly worn for (a party or a job interview). Participants ($N = 334$) rated models on traits relating to objectification, professionalism, and capabilities. Analyses showed significant main effects for both context and outfit on most variables but no significant interactions. Results suggest that changing the context in which clothing is meant to be worn can significantly change a number of attributions made of the wearer by observers, specifically in terms of objectification. These findings may help build upon the ever-growing framework for understanding some potential mechanisms behind the objectification of women.

Keywords: objectification, context, revealing, clothing, women



Diversity badge earned for conducting research focusing on aspects of diversity.

The sexual objectification of women has a long, negative history that has been woven into many aspects of society (Beaumont et al., 2021). Sexual objectification is prevalent in patriarchal cultural concepts, which play a strong role in much of Western society (McBride & Kwee, 2021). Objectification has received significant research attention with the #Metoo movement, and there has been an increased effort to understand these issues at a psychological level (Rasmussen & Densley, 2017). Unfortunately, the objectification of women not only hurts the specific woman who is being objectified but other women as well. For example, objectification spillover occurs when the increased objectification of one woman leads to an automatic increase in the objectification of others (Guillén & Kakarika, 2020). There are also significant links between objectification, aggression, and assault (Awasthi, 2017; Harsey, 2021). These co-occurring factors illustrate just how significant

objectification is; examining these issues may help researchers and advocates better understand and diffuse the objectification of women. We tested if different types of clothing as well as different contexts change the amount of objectification taking place.

Objectification

Objectification is defined as “the experience of being treated as a body (or collection of body parts) valued predominantly for its use to (or consumption by) others” (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 174). Female sexual objectification, as the term is most referred to, is when a woman is viewed primarily as an object of male sexual desire (Szymanski et al., 2011). Objectification is positively related to sexualization and perceptions of promiscuity (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2014; Kellie et al., 2019; Ward, 2016).

Recent theorizing on objectification has explored the link between objectification and dehumanization

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(Over, 2021). Dehumanization can be commonly defined as the process of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities. There is evidence that women seen in swimsuits or lingerie are considered, at a neural activation level, as akin to animals (Vaes et al., 2011) and even as everyday objects such as shoes instead of as humans (Bernard et al., 2017). Other studies have found that people assign more humanness to themselves in comparison to others. This would indicate that they believe others have fewer human qualities than themselves, which may make it easier to sexually objectify them (Haslam et al., 2005).

What causes the sexual objectification of women specifically? It has been hypothesized that sexualized female bodies, like objects, are recognized for their use rather than seen as human (Philippe, 2015). Men rated a woman as less competent following exposure to sexualized images of other women, implying that exposure to sexualized stimuli is an important factor (Rudman & Borgida, 1995). Given the role of sexualization, most easily operationalized by showing more skin, and past research that shows sexualized bodies, we hypothesized that provocative clothing would be more likely to lead to objectification (Holland & Haslam, 2016).

In addition to addressing how different forms of clothing result in objectification (e.g., tight versus loose), studies have focused on how skin exposure drives sexual objectification. A number of studies have varied the ratio of skin visible to clothing and found that, as more skin is visible, the sexual objectification of a model increases (Anderson et al., 2018). Consequently, there is even a scale to measure sexualized clothing (Smith et al., 2017). Given this past research, a primary focus of our research was on the role of revealing clothing on objectification.

Clothing

If one looks at clothing as a form of nonverbal communication, it is clear that clothing plays a role in one's identity. Similar to words, the clothes one wears "say" much as well (Awasthi, 2017). Many groups, such as doctors or military personnel, rely on clothing to nonverbally establish authority or profession (Awasthi, 2017). Therefore, garments are part of helping establish one's identity to the outside world and directly and clearly connecting an individual to a larger group. Because clothing can influence the representation of roles and characteristics, clothing should be examined in the context of social perception (Gurung et al., 2018; Livingston & Gurung, 2021).

Women understand their clothing choices matter when it comes to how men perceive them (Edmonds & Cahoon, 2013). This knowledge may limit women from expressing themselves freely in their choice of clothing.

For example, it is known that clothing is a factor in victim-blaming in cases of sexual assault (Brown et al., 2022). In early studies, participants rating pictures of allegedly sexually assaulted women with varying lengths of skirts attributed greater levels of responsibility for the assault to women in shorter skirts (Workman & Freeburg, 1999). Perceiving a woman in revealing clothes may create the perception that the woman is sexually interested in those around them (Johnson et al., 2016). When dressing to attract, women may be misperceived as trying to seduce. This misperception is more likely in men than in women, thereby increasing the chances of victim blaming by men in cases of unwanted sexual advances (Moor, 2010).

Because clothing is a form of self-expression, different types of clothing can lead to the formation of different assumptions, such as ones about sexual morality. After seeing women in outfits varying in promiscuity, participants rated women in more revealing clothes as less moral and having less mental capacity (Kellie et al., 2019). Participants also perceived women in revealing clothes to be more open to casual sex. One may also overestimate a woman's promiscuousness based on clothing (Guéguen, 2011). Guéguen measured the time it took for men to approach two female confederates sitting in a tavern, one wearing suggestive clothing and one wearing more conservative clothing. The time it took for the men to approach the women after initial eye contact was significantly shorter in the suggestive clothing condition, implying clothing influences first impressions. The location of this study (i.e., in a tavern) also suggests the role of context in sexual objectification based on clothing type.

Context

Clothing and its messages cannot be viewed in isolation. Different situations call for different outfits, and some clothing choices fit some situations better than others. A swimsuit worn on the beach may not draw any attention, whereas a three-piece business suit worn at the beach may attract the eye. Expectations for what is appropriate clothing for different situations (i.e., swimsuits at the beach, suits at a formal event) are reinforced by socio-cultural standards that manifest as dress codes. Most schools and workplaces have dress codes for appropriate attire, and when these codes are violated, the perceiver can bear the brunt of prejudice (Gurung et al., 2018). Correspondingly, context is important to consider when one analyzes clothing, and the assumptions people make about what a woman wears.

Contextual priming can affect one's view of clothing, and clothing could be made to send a different message based on different contextual information or

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cues. It is possible that the same outfit may be perceived differently if it is considered to fit the context versus if it does not. In one direct manipulation of this possibility, participants received a message about dating or job interviews presented by a virtual woman dressed either in business attire (i.e., context-appropriate) or a red short sleeveless dress (i.e., context-inappropriate; Nowak et al., 2015). The perceived appropriateness of clothing influenced perceptions of the source: women were perceived as less appropriate if their clothing did not match the context given.

Context may also interact with the objectifying properties of provocative clothing, specifically in terms of professions and substance use. Men and women perceived photographs of women dressed provocatively as less competent at their jobs (Glick et al., 2005). Furthermore, much research has examined the role of alcohol in contexts where women are objectified. If a woman is under the influence of alcohol, she is seen as less sexually responsible and perceived as less responsible in comparison to a woman who is sober (Osborn et al., 2018; Radun et al., 2018). Given alcohol is often served at parties, a woman thought to be going to a party may be also be assumed to be open to drinking and less responsible.

Sexism

In exploring the role of clothing and context, it is important to acknowledge and control for the role played by sexism. Sexism is typically seen as a reflection of hostility toward women (Glick et al., 2005), which is pertinent to this study's focus on negative views of women. Not only is sexism relevant, but Glick et al. also argued that sexism has roots in social and biological conditions such as the patriarchy, which as mentioned before, is a significant tie to objectification. Correspondingly, we measured sexism using the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI; Glick & Fiske, 1996) and included it as a control variable in all analyses.

The Present Study

The present study differentiates itself from past studies; it examined objectification as it relates not only to clothing but also to context. Much of the previous research has placed emphasis on one factor: clothing or context. Other research has examined the interaction of clothing and context, but only in regard to populations of professional settings (e.g., women in the workforce) and without contrasting different contexts. The present research combined two key variables into one design, analyzing them in conjunction with one another. This research also focused explicitly on perceptions of and by a college population. Past work has built a strong foundation on the definition of objectification, the

ways in which clothing and context are important, the operationalization of objectification, as well as tools to measure these variables. This research built on those discoveries and attempted to bring those different foundational pieces together.

Based on past research on objectification, clothing, and context, we had three main hypotheses. First, we predicted a main effect of outfits, where models in outfits showing more skin (high exposure), would be sexually objectified more, and seen as less professional and capable than models in outfits showing less skin (low exposure), regardless of context. Second, we predicted a main effect of context, where the models when thought to be dressed for a party would be viewed better than if they were thought to be dressed for an interview. They would be more positively viewed and objectified less in the party context, while also being seen as less professional and less capable in the interview context. Third, we anticipated an interaction effect, whereby models in the high exposure outfits showing more skin in a context-incongruent condition (the interview) would be objectified the most. We predicted sexism and gender would be significant covariates.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate introductory psychology students volunteered for this study and received class credit. Participants' ($N = 343$) ages ranged from 18–42 ($M = 21.69$, $SD = 5.39$). The sample was mostly women (69.9%), in comparison to men (30.1%) and comprised of European American (63.4%), Asian (12.2%), Hispanic (11.0%), African American (3.7%), Pacific Islander (1.2%), Somalian (1.2%), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (0.6%) individuals. No participant left race/ethnicity blank, but 17 said their race was not listed. We did not have a category for multiracial and unintentionally did not allow participants to select more than one race. One participant reported being transgender, three listed their gender as self-identified, and one said their gender was not listed.

Materials

Independent Variable: Outfit

Three White women volunteered from the university for this study. To keep race consistent, we selected a similar race intentionally. Each woman was a friend of a student research assistant and provided mirror selfies, pictures in front of a full-body mirror using a cell phone in a posed (left arm on hip, left leg popped) position (photos provided in Appendix). Research lab members examined the provided photographs and selected the final set, which best satisfied the experimental manipulation. The entire body was visible. In the high-exposure clothing photo,

each model wore an outfit revealing skin (i.e., cleavage, upper thigh, and midriff showing). In the second low-exposure condition, each model wore a tight-fitting outfit that covered undergarments, intimate body parts, and skin around those parts. The models' hair was pulled back, and their phones covered their faces in the shots to make them less identifiable. All models had similar body shapes and were in the same age range.

Independent Variable: Context

Parties and job interviews are two events that many college students have experience with, if not personally then by proxy. Additionally, these two experiences are very different, representing two sides of the spectrum when it comes to college life. Each context has specific clothing commonly associated with it. For example, one is expected to dress formally for an interview.

We used a two-factor design where each factor had two levels. In addition to manipulating outfit for exposure in the visual stimuli, we focused on two contexts: interview and party. We used these contexts because they each represent a specific atmosphere and are on either end of a wide spectrum of situations experienced by college students. A party was chosen because it is a believable situation that a college-aged woman may attend where she may have the freedom to wear more revealing clothes if she so chooses. The job interview context was chosen to represent a situation directly opposite of a party: a situation in which clothing choices may be restricted to professional, modest choices, and where a reserved tone may be expected.

Dependent Measures: Overview

We selected dependent variables pulled from previous research (Chrouser & Gurung, 2007; Glick et al., 2005; Howlett et al., 2015). Our objectification measures and capabilities measures came from Johnson and Gurung (2011). We used descriptive words separated into three categories: capabilities (determined, independent, intelligent, studious, self-respecting), sexual objectification (attractive, desirable, promiscuous, and uses her body to get what she wants), and professional abilities (confident, competent, organized, powerful, and reliable). Participants rated each term on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*).

Reliability of Dependent Variables

We created composite scores for each variable. Two composites had high reliability, professional, Cronbach's alpha = .87, and capable, Cronbach's alpha = .90. It should be noted that, although professional and capability-oriented adjectives may seem similar, this distinction was intentional. Variables of the professional nature were selected with the intention of capturing workplace-oriented

traits that may relate to one's professional relationships (i.e., coworkers, managers, and interviewers), whereas capability-related adjectives were selected as representations of general personality traits that may relate more to the individual. Reliability for the composite for objectification was low, Cronbach's alpha = .48, and correspondingly, we analyzed the four items individually.

Main Covariate

We used the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI, Glick & Fiske, 1996) to measure and control for levels of sexism. The ASI consists of a 22-statement list that participants rated each term on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 6 (*strongly disagree*). Sample items include, "Women are too easily offended" and "Every man ought to have a woman who he adores." The two subscales of the ASI are Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism. Hostile Sexism is outright prejudice and discrimination toward women. Benevolent Sexism is a combination of attitudes toward women that come off as positive, prosocial, and seeking intimacy, yet are based on stereotypes and restrictive social roles of the female sex. Both benevolent sexism and hostile sexism correlate with stronger tendencies to victim blame (Persson et al., 2018). Cronbach's alpha for each subscale showed acceptable internal reliability, .89 (Hostile Sexism) and .72 (Benevolent Sexism).

Procedure

The Oregon State University institutional review board approved this study (IRB-2020-0558). All participants accessed this study online through SONA, an online software system where they could choose from a variety of studies. For participating in the study, students received research credit, which is a class requirement in general psychology. We randomly assigned participants to one of four conditions, using a between-group, 2 Outfit (high exposure, low exposure) x 2 Context (party, interview) design. We created the survey using Qualtrics survey software. Participants first read a consent form, then viewed and rated three models (with the image visible during rating). We presented all models in a random order for each participant. Before seeing the models, we told participants in two conditions that they would see three pictures of female college students from [redacted university name] getting ready to go to an interview. The women were said to be sending mirror selfies to their friends to get opinions on their outfits. In the other two conditions, "party" was used in place of "interview." Women seen in each context were dressed in high or low-exposure clothing. Participants rated the models on all dependent variables, presented on Likert scales. Finally, participants completed the ASI and answered several demographic questions.

Results

As a manipulation check of exposure, participants rated the models' outfit on the extent to which it was tight-fitting, revealing, and modest. Participants rated each term on a 5-point Likert scale rating from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). A MANCOVA using outfit as a factor was significant, $F(3, 340) = 88.13, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .44$. As expected, clothing in the high exposure condition was rated as being more exposed ($M = 3.64, SD = 0.80$), than the clothing in the low exposure condition ($M = 2.61, SD = 0.80$), $F(3, 340) = 58.29, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .34$. Perhaps not surprising for high exposure clothing styles, this category was also seen as tighter ($M = 4.11, SD = 0.66$), and less modest ($M = 2.61, SD = 0.82$), than clothing in the low exposure condition $M = 3.14, SD = 0.85, F(3, 340) = 53.52, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .32$, and $M = 3.55, SD = 0.67, F(3, 340) = 48.24, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .30$.

To test the primary hypotheses, we conducted three ANCOVAs using Context (party or interview) and Outfit (high or low exposure) as fixed factors; one each for the two composites with acceptable reliability. We used gender and ASI scores (Hostile Sexism, Benevolent Sexism) as covariates for all analyses. We conducted a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) for the objectification variables using the same factors as the ANCOVA.

Given the low numbers of transgender students, analyses did not include participants self-identifying as anything other than men or women. The inclusion of transgender people is important in conducting research, but the low number did not allow us to test this group separately. We list means and standard deviations for all variables by condition in Table 1.

Given the low reliability of the objectification composite, we conducted a MANCOVA with all four individual terms as dependent variables and similar

factors and covariates as the ANCOVAs. We found significant multivariate main effects for Context, $F(4, 329) = 5.15, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$, and Outfit, $F(4, 329) = 3.92, p = .004, \eta_p^2 = .05$, but no significant interaction ($p = .23$). Only two of the four variables showed significant univariate tests. Participants rated the women in the interview condition as more promiscuous ($M = 3.18, SD = 0.85$), $F(1, 343) = 4.13, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = .01$, and more likely to use her body ($M = 2.93, SD = 0.94$), $F(1, 343) = 10.06, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .03$, than women in the party condition (promiscuous $M = 3.00, SD = 0.93$, uses body $M = 2.60, SD = 0.94$). Participants rated the women in the high exposure outfit condition as more promiscuous ($M = 3.24, SD = 0.83$), $F(1, 343) = 12.04, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$, and more likely to use her body ($M = 2.57, SD = 0.91$) $F(1, 343) = 12.31, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$, than participants in low exposure condition (promiscuous $M = 2.93, SD = 0.94$, uses body $M = 2.58, SD = 0.91$). Neither the interaction of context and outfit nor gender were significant. Only hostile sexism was a significant covariate, $F(1, 339) = 9.56, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .03$.

For the professionalism ANCOVA, we found a significant main effect for context $F(1, 339) = 10.63, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$, but not outfit ($p = .10$), and no significant interaction ($p = .51$). Participants rated models in the interview condition as less professional ($M = 3.74, SD = 0.57$) than models in the party condition ($M = 3.90, SD = 0.57$). Only hostile sexism was a significant covariate, $F(1, 339) = 19.48, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$.

For the capabilities ANCOVA, there were main effects for Context, $F(1, 339) = 13.64, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .04$, and Outfit, $F(1, 339) = 6.64, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Hostile Sexism was a significant covariate, $F(1, 339) = 26.76, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$, as well as Benevolent Sexism, $F(1, 339) = 6.12, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .02$. The interaction was not significant. The perceived "capabilities" of the models were affected by both what outfit they wore as well as the setting in which they were allegedly dressing for. Participants rated models in the interview condition as less capable ($M = 3.72, SD = 0.59$), in comparison to models in the party condition ($M = 3.91, SD = 0.60$). Participants rated models in the high-exposure outfits as less capable ($M = 3.73, SD = 0.60$), in comparison to models in the low-exposure clothing condition ($M = 3.90, SD = 0.60$).

Discussion

In this study, we aimed to replicate past research showing the negative effects of wearing revealing clothing and extended past work to test for the effect of context. Both outfit conditions featured tight-fitting clothing suitable for a party but varied in how much skin was exposed. We also examined the interaction of outfit and

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Composite Variables

Context	Interview				Party			
	High		Low		High		Low	
Exposure	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Attractive	4.15	0.68	4.08	0.67	4.13	0.72	4.05	0.72
Desirable	3.93	0.72	3.93	0.68	4.07	0.72	3.92	0.75
Promiscuous	3.27	0.79	3.09	0.91	3.21	0.88	2.76	0.94
Uses Body	3.13	0.85	2.70	0.99	2.73	1.03	2.45	0.81
Professional	3.67	0.57	3.81	0.56	3.87	0.57	3.94	0.58
Capabilities	3.63	0.60	3.82	0.57	3.84	0.57	3.90	0.62

Note. Attractive, desirable, promiscuous, and uses body represent measures of objectification. Professional and capabilities are composite variables.

context and focused on objectification and perceptions of professionalism and capabilities. In strong support of our hypotheses, the context was significant in predicting objectification, professionalism, and capabilities. Women thought to be going to an interview inappropriately dressed were objectified more and seen as being less professional and less capable compared to the same women thought to be going to a party.

We also found a main effect of outfit on objectification and capabilities. Women whose outfits revealed more of their bodies were objectified more and seen as less capable than when the women wore less revealing clothes. As predicted, these results were influenced by sexism where participants higher in hostile sexism rated the women more negatively.

A large body of work has suggested that provocatively dressed women are more sexually objectified (Beaumont et al., 2021; Glick et al., 2005). Many assumptions are made about a woman's personality based on her clothing, leading to objectification and dehumanization (Guéguen, 2011; Vaes et al., 2011). Beyond objectification, a revealing outfit also affected opinions of a model's level of professionalism and capabilities. Professional skills are important qualities that many employers look for, and the unfortunate truth that skin exposure may affect the opinions people have of these qualities is an important factor when analyzing workplace environments and hiring practices.

Context

Our results support past findings on clothing and add a new element to this literature with a valuable new focus on context. Similar to research looking at brain activation during perception (Bernard et al., 2019), results showed that revealing clothing by itself may not be the only driver of objectification and negative impressions of a person, but the assumed context the clothing is worn in, or the mismatch of context and outfit, may contribute to negative perceptions of women (Nowak et al., 2015).

Our addition of context to the study of objectification, professionalism, and capabilities paid rich dividends. Context influenced how the generally provocative clothing was perceived. For objectification, the context of the party led to the models being seen more positively than if they were thought to be going to an interview. The context of a party perhaps activates a schema including more provocative clothing. This has large implications for the role that context may play in the objectification of women. Low sexual morality is often associated with revealing clothing (Kellie et al., 2019), but these results show that, when one thinks a woman is going to a less risqué event (for this study's purposes, an interview), they are objectified more than if they wear the same clothes to a party.

Similar to work on the power of clothing in the workplace (Glick et al., 2005; Howlett et al., 2015), our results show that the context can influence ratings of a woman's professionalism. Participants had more positive perceptions of the models' professionalism and capabilities if they thought she was dressed provocatively for a party, but they had more negative judgments if she was dressing in a similar provocative way for an interview. The disjoint between the provocative clothing and the setting of the interview worked against the models. One interesting finding that heavily supported our focus on dressing incongruently to the situation is that women were rated as being less professional when seen in the interview condition. It is likely that the tight clothing, whether revealing or not and which could be worn to a party, was discordant with the idea that they were going to an interview. Wearing party clothes to a party is one thing, wearing them to an interview is another. The fact that the women did not dress appropriately for the context is perhaps the driving force as both outfits were not professional and this was worse when in the interview condition.

The idea that these events in and of themselves have the power to influence how women are perceived by society is important when looking at why women are so objectified. Switching focus from one's outfit to one's context is a rather underexplored concept, so there is certainly room to explore this idea further. Further research could analyze why these contexts are so important, pinpoint what is happening cognitively, and eventually, refocus the method of reducing objectification through this newfound understanding of the impact of context.

Interaction of Dependent Variables

We did not find support for our third hypothesis. In contrast to expectations, there was no interaction between the two main variables. One possibility for this finding is that both outfits that could be worn to a party might not have been different enough from each other. Although the outfits were different on exposure level as intended, they also varied in how tight and immodest they were. This suggests the high-exposure outfit was clearly different from the low-exposure one, but the low-exposure outfit might have been provocative as well. Perhaps an interaction effect would have been more likely if we contrasted a conservative outfit with a provocative one or compared a business formal outfit with a party outfit.

We hypothesized that women showing more skin in a context-inappropriate condition (interview) would be objectified more in comparison to the party condition. This lack of significance begs further examination but

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could imply that the strength of clothing and context were powerful and acted in different ways and that our use of generally tight clothing in both conditions did not make for a suitable contrast.

Implications and Limitations

In sum, this study showed evidence that clothing and context affect perceptions of the objectification of women as well as perceptions of women's professionalism and capabilities. This study was a strong first step in exploring ways to diffuse objectification but there are some key limitations to acknowledge. One limitation can be found in the visual stimuli presented. Although there is a significant difference in the high skin exposure vs. low skin exposure in the photos presented to participants, the "low skin exposure" condition still showed some amount of skin on the ankles, wrists, midriff, collar bones, etc. This might have caused the ratings of the participants to be more similar than if the "low skin exposure" condition showed no skin at all. Similarly, we note some stimuli include a bed in the background. This inconsistency could have influenced perceptions in a way the study did not account for.

Another important limitation of this study was that the adjectives in the objectification category may not be as direct measures of the concept as needed, and the low reliability of a composite bears this out. The variables used were used in past research, but it is likely that the words mean something different to today's students as compared to those from 15 years ago when some of the original studies were conducted. For example, some younger adults may see being promiscuous as a desirable quality whereas past research considers it a sign of objectification.

This study only used White women between the ages of 18–22 as models, which is not generalizable to the larger population. Future research on this topic should expand the types of models included in the study. The models were somewhat homogenous, and varying racial backgrounds for future studies would be imperative. Additional research should examine age and cultural differences in perceptions of objectification. Both clothing conditions featured social wear. It is possible that comparing casual wear with business or business casual wear would have established a stronger and more consistent main effect of outfit.

Lastly, another key limitation is the difference between exposed and revealing clothing. In this study, all models in revealing outfits were vetted by researchers; however, these models' bodies could have been more exposed. There is a large difference between showing skin versus showing body parts that may be sexual in nature (i.e., cleavage). Further research could replicate

this study with more extreme versions of the outfits presented, with more exposure.

The influence of context in changing perceptions shows promise for the design of interventions to reduce objectification. Whereas much attention has been placed on characteristics of clothing (e.g., if it is revealing or tight), little research has explored the other factors that influence how impressions of certain types of clothing are influenced. This study provided one avenue for exploration. Given the continuing mistreatment faced by women in society and the focus of dress codes on elements of clothing versus contextual factors, it is critical to broaden the focus on factors influencing perceptions of women. Gaining further understanding of the determining factors of the objectification of women may be key in educating people on how to end negative behaviors against women.

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APPENDIX

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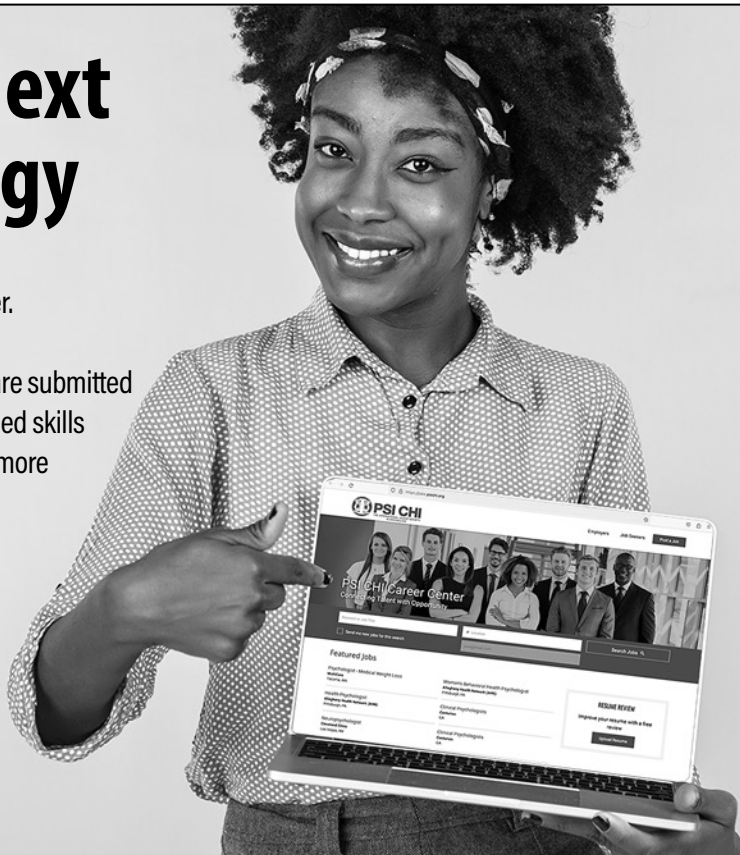


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