

Ruminative Brooding Mediate the Association between Self-Objectification and Psychological Distress among Early Adults

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between self-objectification, and psychological distress with rumination as a mediator. The research was designed to get an understanding of the role of rumination on body-objectification and psychological distress in early adults. For this purpose, Objectified Body Conscious Scale (OBCS) was used to measure self-objectification, Ruminative Response Scale (RRS) was used to measure rumination in males and females and Kesler Psychological Distress Scale was used for the purpose of measuring psychological distress in males and females. The research was conducted on the sample size of 249 young adult's male and female and SPSS 23 was used for the analysis. The psychometric properties of each of the scale were assessed. The alpha coefficient for each of the scales were computed. The α -coefficient



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for all variables were more than 0.7 that is good value. Self-objectification was significantly negative with rumination and also significantly negative with psychological distress. While rumination was significantly positive related with psychological distress. Also, there were a significant gender difference in rumination. Mediation analysis revealed that rumination was fully mediated the relationship between self-objectification and rumination.

Key words: Self-Objectification, Rumination, Psychological Distress

Introduction

Self-Objectification

Most western countries still have a prevalent propensity to value women more for their sexual appearance than for their abilities. Women's inner states are impacted by this emphasis on physical appearance because it causes them to self-objectify, or to regard and see themselves as a mere body rather than a complete human being. Women are less likely to speak out against the unfair gender status quo and take part in group actions intended to challenge it, which is an obvious result of this state of self-objectification. The authors of the objectification theory define self-objectification as occurring when people "treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated. Self-objectification is frequently narrowly defined as the adoption of a third-person perspective on the body. This definition states that self-objectification is a required but not sufficient prerequisite for adopting a third-person perspective on the body. The adoption of an evaluative, appearance-based self-construal is necessary for self-objectification in addition to the change in perspectival perspective from first to third person.

Effects

Understanding the effects of self-objectification on women's social and psychological wellbeing is helpful. The sense of body-related distress, which

can manifest as body shame, body dissatisfaction, or appearance anxiety, is one of the main effects of self-objectification. In turn, eating disorders, sexual dysfunction, and depression symptoms have been linked to body image disturbances. Studies link social media use to self-objectification and body-related disorders. Self-objectification is specifically linked to appearance-related photo activity on social media (such as editing and posting selfies) rather than general social media use which in turn deepens internalization of beauty ideals (such as the thinness drive) and visual comparison.

Defining Shame and Shame-Based Processes

Shame is a profound and distressing emotion marked by feelings of inadequacy, undesirability, defectiveness, worthlessness, powerlessness, and exposure. While some scholars have emphasized shame as a self-directed, self-evaluative experience centered on a sense of overall deficiency or inadequacy it often originates in our perception of how we exist in the minds of others. According to Gilbert, shaming experiences are closely linked to stigmatization, which entails facing social criticism, rejection, exclusion, isolation, humiliation, denigration, and subordination by others.

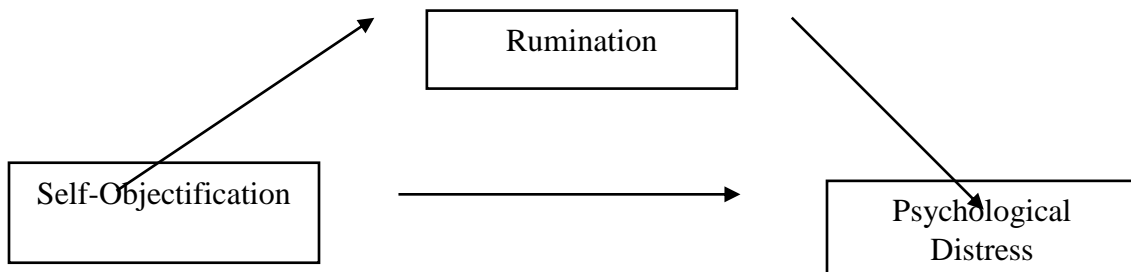
External Shame as described by Gilbert (1997, 1998), pertains to how others perceive us or the way we exist in their thoughts. It is primarily triggered by experiencing shaming behavior from others toward oneself (Gilbert, 1998, 2003). In this form of shame, the primary focus is on the thoughts of others, with a belief that these thoughts are negative, leading to feelings of potential rejection or vulnerability to others' criticism. This aspect of shame is interconnected with awareness and perception of stigma, as outlined by Piel (1999).

Internal Shame as defined by Gilbert (1998, 2003), relates to how an individual perceives themselves in their own mind and in the eyes of others, with the primary focus being on self-judgment and self-perception. This form

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of shame is associated with negative self-evaluative processes, such as self-criticism, self-devaluation, and unfavorable social comparisons, as well as self-directed emotions like self-directed anger, contempt, self-hate, and self-disgust. In this context, the individual experiences themselves as unattractive, inadequate, bad, or flawed, as outlined. This can also be viewed as the internalization of shame (Gilbert, 2003), which can be likened to the concepts of internalized stigma or self-stigma.

Proposed Model



Literature Review

The research was conducted by Hlaim Emil Jarar in 2017 on the relationship between self-objectification and life satisfaction and the role of rumination. 126 young Dutch women completed the online survey. In this research it was expected that the relation between self-objectification and life satisfaction would be moderated by rumination response style. In 2014, Reid doing research to examine the study focuses on Shame, Rumination, and Self-Compassion in men who underwent assessment for Hypersexual Disorder study have connected maladaptive shame to increased hypersexual behavior and rumination tendencies. However, limited research has investigated factors that might lessen the adverse effects of shame and rumination on hypersexuality. Using data from male patients (N=172) assessed for hypersexual disorder, a path analysis explored the links between shame, rumination, self-

compassion, and hypersexual behavior. The study revealed that self-compassion played a role in partially mitigating the connection between shame and rumination and their impact on hypersexual behavior. This underscores the significant negative influence of shame on rumination in the context of hyper sexuality. Abbasi conducted research in 2015. The current study had two goals: first, it sought to understand the connections between university students' self-compassion, body image, and psychological health; and second, it sought to understand the significance of various demographic factors, including gender and parental education, in relation to the study's variables. 123 male and 177 female students from universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad made up the sample. To assess self-compassion, body image, and psychological health, we employed the Self-Compassion Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire-Appearance Scale. The study's findings demonstrated a substantial beneficial relationship between self-compassion and psychological well-being as well as good body image. Similar to this, a positive relationship existed between body image and psychological health. Significant relationships existed between self-compassion and body image as predictors of these students' psychological wellbeing. In 2007, Grabe conducted research on the connections between body objectification, shame, and rumination in adolescent depression. The current study set out to look at self-objectification's psychological effects in two innovative methods. In this study, the sample research has shown that among female undergraduate students as well as teenagers, self-objectification and body shame are directly related. This study's major objective was to increase our knowledge of self-objectification's developmental impacts and processes. It is a long-term investigation. There were 299 teenagers in the study, of whom 158 were girls. The teenagers were 11-24 years old on average. According to the results, teenage girls than boys reported higher

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degrees of self-objectification, body shame, rumination, and sadness. The discovery is consistent with the self-objectification model. The total model confirmed the hypothesis that rumination and body shame would contribute to the relationship between self-objectification and depression in females. Due to self-objectification, there were certain limitations in the current study, such as the failure to capture boys' psychological experiences in comparison to girls.

In previous literature they investigated how experiencing online racism can lead to psychological distress and loneliness among adults. Through a path analysis, we found that online racism is directly linked to higher levels of psychological distress, loneliness, and alcohol use severity. Rumination and vigilance related to online racism play a significant role in explaining the indirect relationship between online racism and psychological distress as well as loneliness. Rumination is the key factor in the indirect link between online racism and alcohol use severity. This suggests that online racism places an unjust burden on racial minority individuals, leading them to ruminate and anticipate facing racial discrimination in their offline lives, ultimately resulting in psychological distress.

Methodology

Study Design

A cross sectional analysis was used in the research. The cross-sectional study design in a survey research design in which the researcher at one time take one or more sections from one population for collecting survey from them and compare them with each other to find the difference between their characteristics.

Objectives

The current study has following objective is:

1. To investigate the relationship between self-objectification, rumination and psychological distress among early adults.
2. To evaluate the predictive relationship between self-objectification and psychological distress among early adults.
3. To examine the mediating role of rumination between self-objectification and psychological distress among early adults.
4. To study the mean difference of self-objectification and rumination among males and females.

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a statement showing expected relation between two variables.

H1. Self-objectification will negatively relate to rumination.

H2. Psychological distress will positively relate to self-objectification.

H3. Rumination will be negatively related to psychological distress.

H4. Self-objectification will have impact on psychological distress among early adults.

H5. Rumination will be mediate the relationship of self-objectification and psychological distress among early adults.

H6. Self-objectification and rumination will be a mean difference among male and female.

Sample

Purposive random sampling was utilized. The study's sample consisted of both male and female participants drawn from the early adult's population, specifically university students. The sample comprised 249 individuals, with 90 being male and 159 females. The age range of the research participants spanned from 18 to 30 years old and was subdivided into three categories. There were 37 participants in the 18-20 age range, 195 in the 21-25 age range, and 17 in the 26-30 age range.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria specified that participants should be adults between the ages of 18 and 35 to ensure the study's relevance to a mature population. In addition, individuals who provided informed consent were eligible for participation, particularly those students who willingly chose to take part after being informed about the research's sensitive topic, which is self-objectification.

Exclusion Criteria

Participants under the age of 18 were excluded to maintain a consistent focus on adults. Individuals who were unwilling to provide informed consent or had difficulty understanding the research's purpose were excluded to ensure ethical research practices. Participants who did not exhibit self-objectification experiences, as indicated by assessment measures, were excluded to maintain the study's focus on individuals influenced by self-objectification.

Research Instruments

Three scales were used to collect data from the target sample. Objectified Body Consciousness Scale, Ruminative response scale, Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10).

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

It was the 24-item, which was developed by McKinley & Hyde in 1996. This scale consists of three eight-item subscales that measure body surveillance (e.g., "I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good"), body shame (e.g., "I feel ashamed of myself when I haven't made the effort to look my best"), and appearance control beliefs (e.g., "I think a person can look pretty much how they want to if they are willing to work at it"). On a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7, participants indicated how much they agreed with each item. Items with the correct codes were reversed. Body Shame Subscale, of Objectified Body Consciousness

Scale is developed by McKinley and Hyde (1996), is composed of 8 items totally, with 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The body shame scale is a reliable having alpha coefficient .87. Two items are negative 5 and 7.

Ruminative Response Scale

The 22 items on the RRS test for brooding and introspective pondering, two components of rumination. On a four-point scale, items are graded as follows: 1-Almost Never, 2-Sometimes, 3-Often, and 4-Almost Always. Scores are provided for the scales of brooding, reflecting, and depression on the questionnaire.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)

A straightforward tool for measuring psychological discomfort is the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10). The K10 scale consists of 10 questions, each with a five-level response scale, describing different emotional states. The test can be used as a quick screening tool to determine the severity of discomfort. Patients can be given the form to fill out on their own, or the practitioner can read the questions to them. Each response is graded on a scale of one ("none of the time") to five ("all of the time"). The ten items' scores are then added up to produce a final score that can range between 10 and 50. High scores imply high levels of psychological anguish, whereas low scores suggest low levels.

Procedure

In this research the researcher used cross sectional study design for the purpose of data collection. Researcher used three scales/questionnaire Ruminative response scale, objectification body conscious scale and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) for the research or the researcher use the survey method to collect the data form the sample. the sample consisted of 249 participants with the age range of 18-35 years males and females. Sample

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was taken from university students. Informed consent was given to the participants which detailed the rationale, objectives, and the purpose of the study in order to obtain the informed permission from the participants. Before doing this, it will be ensured to all the participants that there will be physical or psychological harm. It will ensure to them that we have permission from the author for the scales we are using.

Results

To achieve the objectives of the study, the results section consisted of a number of statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of sample and the measurements used in the study. Using alpha reliabilities, the instrument's internal consistencies were estimated. The relationship between the research variables were examined using correlations. Regression analysis was used to investigate the study variable's prediction. All the mentioned statistics were computed using SPSS 23 edition, it was also determined whether there was an interaction effect of (mediation) of rumination between the relationship of self-objectification and rumination.

Data Cleaning and Dealing with Missing Values

A data set of 250 cases was screened out to identify multivariate and univariate outliers and to confirm the data set's accuracy. First, when entry level instances were evaluated, it was discovered that 1% of the cells had incorrect data because of typing mistakes. After that, hard copies of the forms were evaluated to correct the data. After ensuring the accuracy of the data, box plots were analyzed with the objective of identifying univariate outliers. After checking the outliers that no outliers were found. Finally, the data set included all 250 young people who had undergone through screening and were ready for the final analysis.

Demographic Variables

The frequency and percentage of demographic variables including age, gender.

Social status, education and socioeconomic status of sample were calculated. The demographic characteristics of sample are mentioned in the table below.

Table I

Frequencies and Percentage of Sample of the study (N=250)

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
Age		
18-20	37	14.9
21-25	195	78.3
26-30	17	6.8
Gender		
Male	90	36.1
Female	159	63.9
Social Status		
Unmarried	239	96.0
Married	9	3.6
Divorced	1	4
Education		
Under graduate	187	75.1
Post graduate	61	24.5
Other	1	4
Residential Areas		
Rural	89	35.7
Urban	159	63.9

Note. *f*=Frequency, %=Percentage

Table I indicates the sample characteristics of sample. Frequencies and percentage of age, gender, social status, education, residential areas, and socioeconomic status and were calculated. 14.9% participants were with the age range of 18-20,78.3% were from 21-25 age range and 6.8%were with

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26-30 age range 36.1% were male respondents and 63.9% were female respondents take part in this research. Among the participants, 3.6% were married, 96.0% were unmarried and .4% were divorced. In terms of education status, 75.1% were under graduates, 24.5% participants were postgraduates and .4% were from other educational level. In residential status, 35.7% participants were from rural area and 63.9% participants were from urban area.

Psychometric Properties of Scales Used for Study Variable

Internal Consistency of the study measures was computed by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for reliability. The psychometric properties of study variables are presented in the tables below.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and sample reliability for the main study variables (N=250)

Scales	<i>K</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	<i>Range</i>
1.OBCS	9	30.8	9.85	.725	8-48
2.RRS	10	22.04	7.07	.807	11-35
3.PSYD	10	31.86	8.88	.842	10-49

Note. K= no. of items, M= mean, SD= standard deviation, α = reliability coefficient.

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviations, and reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha for the research instruments and the corresponding subscales used in the current study. The above-mentioned table shows that all of the subscales' reliability fall within normal ranges. The Cronbach α for objectified body conscious scale are ($\alpha = .725$). The Cronbach α rumination response style scale is ($\alpha = .807$). However, the Cronbach α for psychological distress scale are ($\alpha = .842$).

Relationship between the Study Variables

In the current study, zero order bivariate correlations were computed to identify the patterns of relationships between the studied variables. The patterns of relationship between the study variables are shown in Table 3. All the variables have both significant, non-significant, positive and negative correlations.

Table 3

Variables	1	2	3
1.OBCS	-	-.281**	.150*
2.RRS	-	-	-.568**
3.PSYD	-	-	-

Note. OBCS= self-objectification. RRS= rumination. PSYD= psychological distress. **p<.01,*p<.05.

The relationship between self-objectification, rumination and psychological distress is showed in the table 3. The relationship between self-objectification and rumination is negative and significant ($r=-.281$, $p<.01$) and significantly positively related to psychological distress ($r=.150$, $p<.05$). rumination is significantly negatively related to psychological distress ($r=-.568$, $p<.01$).

Role of Rumination as Mediator

Table 4

Rumination as a mediator between self-objectification and psychological distress (N=249)

Mediator	Psychological distress			
	Effect	R ²	F	
Rumination	Total B	.1354	.0225	5.6876
	Direct B	-.0097	.3227	58.5969
	Indirect B	.1450		

95%CL [.0784, .2161]

Note. *p<.05, **p<.01

Table indicates the mediating role of rumination between self-objectification and psychological distress. Results reveals that self-objectification significantly negatively predicted rumination [$\beta=-.28$, *p<.05]. Rumination significantly negatively predicted psychological distress [$\beta=-.5710$, *p<.05]. indirect results revealed that self-objectification significantly affecting psychological distress with the mediating role of rumination [$\beta=.1450, 95\%CL = [.0784, .2161]$]

Predictive Relationship between Study Variables

The current research has identified possible variables that may predict self-objectification and psychological distress in males and females. Linear regression is used in the present study to examine the predictive significance of those variables. These regression estimates (F-test, R² & Beta values) were used to analyze the relationship between one dependent variable and one independent variable.

Table 5

Linear regression predicting psychological distress from self-objectification (N=250)

Variables	Estimate	SE	95% CL		P
			LL	UL	
Constant	27.686	1.838	24.065	31.307	
OBCS	.135	0.57	.024	.247	.018

Table 5 indicates that self-objectification is positively significant to psychological distress ($\beta=.150$, p<.05). Finding indicates that 2.3% of

change in psychological distress is accounted for by self-objectification ($R^2 = .023$).

Role of Demographics Factors

Numerous analyses were conducted to illustrate the significance of demographics factors for rumination in young adults. The importance of the demographic factors is illustrated in the table below.

Table 6

Mean, Standard deviations and t-values of males and females on study variables(N=249)

	Male		Female		t(df)	p	Cohens'd
	M	SD	M	SD			
R	19.5778	6.15890	23.43	7.199	-4.272(247)	.000	6.87

*Note. M=mean, SD=standard deviation, R=Rumination *p<0.05, **p<0.01*

Table indicates that there is a significant gender difference in rumination $t(247) = -4.272, p < 0.05$. Females ($M=23.43, SD=7.199$) has high level of rumination then males ($M=19.5778, SD=13.93$)

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between self-objectification, and psychological distress with rumination as a mediator. The research was designed to get an understanding of the role of rumination on body-objectification and psychological distress among early adults. For this purpose, objectified body conscious scale was used to measure self-objectification, ruminative response scale was used to measure rumination in males and females and Kesler psychological distress scale was used for the purpose of measuring psychological distress in males and females. The

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research was conducted on the sample size of 249 young adults' male and female and SPSS 23 was used for the analysis. The psychometric properties of each of the scale were assessed. The alpha coefficient for each of the scales were computed. The reliability of the self-objectification ($\alpha = .725$), rumination ($\alpha = .807$) and psychological distress ($\alpha = .842$) respectively. The α -coefficient for all variables were more than .7 that was good value. Because all coefficient value is within acceptable bounds, we can conclude that the results of the relevant scales are reliable. The frequency and percentage for age, gender, social status, education, residential area, socio economic status was calculated. Findings illustrate that 14.9% participants were with the age range of 18-20, 78.3% were from 21-25 age range and 6.8% were with 26-30 age range 36.1% were male respondents and 63.9% were female respondents take part in this research. Among the participants, 3.6% were married, 96.0% were unmarried and .4% were divorced. In terms of education status, 75.1% were under graduates, 24.5% participants were postgraduates and .4% were from other educational level. In residential status, 35.7% participants were from rural area and 63.9% participants were from urban area. The study variables means, and standard deviations were calculated. Findings indicate that our data is normally distributed because the value of skewness was within an acceptable range. The objective of the study was to examine how self-objectification affects rumination. The current study investigates the relationship between self-objectification and rumination among male and female. The authors of the objectification theory define self-objectification as occurring when people "treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated" (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Self-objectification is frequently narrowly defined as the adoption of a third-person perspective on the body. This definition states that self-objectification is a required but not sufficient prerequisite for adopting a third-person perspective on the body. The

adoption of an evaluative, appearance-based self-construal is necessary for self-objectification in addition to the change in perspectival perspective from first to third person. The recent study found that self-objectification negatively affects the life satisfaction of young women. However, the degree of this impact varies based on individual coping strategies. Specifically, women who tend to ruminate on negative thoughts experience a stronger negative relationship between self-objectification and life satisfaction. To enhance women's life satisfaction, the study suggests implementing mindfulness interventions to reduce rumination and educating individuals about coping strategies' effects, potentially leading to increased well-being in future generations of women (Jarrar, 2017). Findings of the present study reveals that self-objectification had significant relation with rumination. Rumination is defined as a repetitive, primarily self-directed thought pattern that is a result of another psychopathological issue and is linked to stress symptoms. The study focuses on Shame, Rumination, and Self-Compassion in men who underwent assessment for Hypersexual Disorder. study have connected maladaptive shame to increased hypersexual behavior and rumination tendencies. However, limited research has investigated factors that might lessen the adverse effects of shame and rumination on hyper sexuality. Using data from male patients (N=172) assessed for hypersexual disorder, a path analysis explored the links between shame, rumination, self-compassion, and hypersexual behavior. The study revealed that self-compassion played a role in partially mitigating the connection between shame and rumination and their impact on hypersexual behavior. This underscores the significant negative influence of shame on rumination in the context of hyper sexuality. It was hypothesized that self-objectification had significantly negatively relationship with rumination. Findings of the present study reveal that self-objectification has negative relation with rumination. These findings also

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consistent with previous literature and there was a correlation between self-objectification and rumination, which was negative and statistically significant.

Another objective of the study was to identify the relationship between self-objectification and psychological distress among youth. A study investigated the impact of selfie-related activities on the mental health of young Ghanaian adults. It found that selfitis plays a mediating role in the links between problematic social media use, excessive smartphone use, negative body image, and psychological distress. These results indicate that selfitis can act as a pathway through which excessive engagement in problematic digital behaviors and body image concerns may contribute to psychological distress. This suggests that a focus on positive self-image and healthy self-presentation in digital contexts could potentially reduce psychological distress. Findings of the present study shows that there was significantly positive relation between self-objectification and psychological distress. It was also hypothesized that self-objectification had significant positive relation with psychological distress.

Implications

- To enhance understanding of how self-objectification affects emotional distress, there is a need to introduce various seminars, programs, and awareness campaigns that focus on psychological well-being and reducing rumination.
- This will aid future researchers in gaining deeper insights into the relationship between rumination, self-objectification, and psychological distress.
- The study also offers guidance for researchers to address the limitations of their current research and obtain practical and beneficial results.

- Developing educational initiatives and interventions that target self-objectification and its impact on mental health can have a broader societal impact by fostering emotional well-being and decreasing psychological distress.

Limitations/ Suggestions

- It is imperative to investigate objectification of objects other than oneself.
- For the study of body shaming in both males and females, the sample should be distributed based on gender, while examining the mediating role of rumination and other psychological factors.
- It is recommended to gather samples from lower-level schools and colleges.
- The number of female university students exceeded that of male university students.
- It is essential to explore demographic factors like socioeconomic status.
- Participants often exhibit a lack of seriousness and may conceal their true views or interests.
- Future research should consider utilizing qualitative research and a mixed-method approach to delve into the nature of body-related shame and guilt within Asian culture.
- Future research should strive for equal representation of both genders.

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