

The Script of Patriarchy: The Influence of the Objectification Perspective on Moral Criticism of Women

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Abstract. This research investigates the connection among patriarchy, female objectification, and victim-blaming psychology by conducting a systematic review of peer-reviewed literature. With the growing awareness of gender inequality, researchers have highlighted the impact of patriarchal norms on women's experiences and the normalization of their objectification. Studies indicate that women experience sexual objectification at a much higher rate than men, with both personal interactions and media portrayals playing a role in treating women as body parts rather than complete individuals. Extended exposure to these kinds of environments cultivates self-objectification, which is marked by routine appearance surveillance, body shame, anxiety, and reduced social confidence. These psychological mechanisms work in conjunction with just-world beliefs, increasing the likelihood that observers will blame female victims of sexual assault. Research focusing on female college students shows that self-objectification leads to social avoidance due to heightened body shame, but self-compassion can mitigate these effects. The review emphasizes the detrimental effects of objectification and stresses the necessity for educational and societal measures to mitigate gender-based stigma and bolster women's psychological well-being.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Female Objectification, Victim Blaming, Self-objectification, Body Shame.

1. Introduction

With the development of the times and the progress of society, more and more women are deeply aware that they are in a patriarchal society and speak out for the unfair treatment they and other women have suffered. Feminism has also become a widely debated topic due to increasing awareness of gender inequality in contemporary society. More scholars have begun to focus on feminist research, particularly in areas such as gender norms, social stigma, and structural constraints affecting women's living conditions. For example, when women were sexually assaulted, the women who were assaulted tended to be stigmatized by the society, with the title of "no self love, no one wants it" [1]. The relationship between the guilt theory of female victims and female objectification is worth studying. The objectification of women may be caused by the development of patriarchal society in history, and patriarchy will normalize objectification [2]. Research shows that women experience sexual objectification more frequently in public places than men. Women experience sexual objectification comments and behaviors 1.38 times a week on average, while men only 0.35 times [3]. What are the manifestations and effects of female objectification? Can women get rid of objectification and victim guilt? The discussion and Research on these issues are of great significance for the fundamental liberation of women.

This study is based on peer-reviewed literature, using the method of systematic analysis to summarize. The hot issues of feminist psychology: patriarchy, female objectification and the theory of female victims' guilt are put under the test of objective data.

2. Definition and Characteristics of Patriarchy

With the long development of human society, a patriarchal society dominated by men has gradually formed. Such a society is based on men's code of conduct, and gender discrimination is also an inevitable problem. Patriarchal society gives priority to the rights and interests of men, and women's voice is limited in the traditional patriarchal society, but the specific situation varies according to culture and class. Men are regarded by the society as the image of the winner and the

leader, while women are regarded as passive and poor. Women's subordinate status is taken for granted, so women do not know how to resist, and women's plight is not easy to be seen by the society. Although the modern society advocates equal rights for men and women, the gender stereotypes implemented for many years have strengthened the development of patriarchal society. Children's gender concepts are mainly affected by the socialization of families, schools and the media. For example, families will buy robot toys for boys and dolls for girls. These behaviors have a subtle impact on children's gender cognition, making boys think that men are masculine and women are weak. Stereotypes are extremely harmful to young women [4]. These norms reinforce the perception that women primarily require protection, reflecting paternalistic ideology, but not that women are an independent individual, which strengthens the objectification of women. Because in the process of growing up, women will be socially instilled with specific behavior patterns and coping styles, which are shaped by the outside world. It is hoped that women can meet the social discipline and become "normal people" in society [5]. and if a girl fails to meet the social standards, she will be called "female man" or "tomboy" [6].

3. Specific Manifestations of Female Objectification

3.1. Self-objectification and its Psychological Mechanism

Women living in an objectified environment for a long time will make them accustomed to examining themselves from the perspective of observers, such as "do I look good" and "what do others think of me". Instead, they seldom start from their own feelings, such as "how do I feel" and "what can I do". Women regard their body as an "object" that can be evaluated by the outside world. This phenomenon is called "self-objectification" [3]. More and more women begin to publish their photos on social platforms, and are very concerned about the evaluation of others, which may even cause anxiety and become works of art for others to comment on. This represents a subtle form of self-objectification shaped by cumulative social feedback.

3.2. Embodiment of Female Objectification in Social Environment

This objectification is mainly reflected in two levels: (1) interpersonal communication or social occasions (2) media exposure. Carlogero, tantrif Dunn and Thompson pointed out that "interpersonal or social occasions include cajoling, peeping or staring at women's bodies, as well as sexual suggestive remarks and harassment. In interpersonal communication and movies and TV dramas, the external evaluation of women is mostly around her appearance and figure, and rarely mentions her ability; media exposure focuses on women's bodies and parts, and describes women as objects of non equal male gaze [5]. "For example, advertisements watched in daily life deliberately show women's physical attributes, such as breasts, legs, hips, etc., to achieve eye-catching effect. These norms lead women to internalize others' expectations and adjust their self-evaluations accordingly, treat themselves according to the requirements and standards of others, and produce self-objectification [5].

4. Negative Effects of Female Self-objectification

4.1. Physical Effects

The main content of self-objectification is that they pay too much attention to their physical appearance and ignore the internal ability of their body, so self objectified women habitually examine their body and compare their body with the body shape under the traditional social aesthetics. Socially idealized body standards are shaped by cultural and media influences rather than natural diversity, it is difficult to achieve the social ideal body shape through postnatal transformation (such as plastic surgery and fitness). The gap between ideal and reality can cause anxiety through shame and social comparison, and become dull and self-confident about the internal perception of their own body.

These negative psychological results may also become the inducing factors of some more serious diseases, such as sexual dysfunction, depression, anorexia and so on [7].

4.2. Impact on Social Life

Whether sexual objectification or self-objectification, Self-objectification can reduce work engagement by consuming cognitive resources through appearance monitoring, but also may reduce work engagement. These consequences have a more serious impact on women than men. Due to excessive attention or monitoring of body image, self-objectification is usually closely related to increased pressure, anxiety, guilt and shame. Shame, as a self-conscious emotion, often accompanied by self condemnation, plays a key role in the follow-up social activities, This process may increase interpersonal sensitivity and reduce confidence, and then they dare not make friends actively [8].

5. The Objectification Perspective as a Psychological Basis for Victim Blaming

Observers often evaluate victims due to just-world beliefs that attribute harm to personal responsibility, but to find reasons on the victim (for example, asking why the victim was exposed in clothes and why he went to such a place). Studies have shown that there are significant differences between men and women in evaluating events involving female victims. Men believe that rape is a crime motivated by sexual motives, rather than the desire for power and control. Based on this view, people regard crime as the result of inborn sexual desire, and the responsibility for controlling these desires falls entirely on women. Because people believe that the perpetrators cannot control their own behavior, the victims are completely exempted from responsibility [1]. The source of this thought is still the objectification of women. People subconsciously criticize the injured object. The behavior of the leading group is more likely to be rationalized by social norms, and then give women the label of "no self love", examine the victim's every move, and find a reasonable reason for the perpetrator's crime, and women are always in the position of being examined. Such objectification fosters moral disengagement that excuses perpetrators and the whole society. When people believe in the justice of the world, it is easier to think that the victims "deserve" misfortune.

6. Women's Increased Vulnerability to Objectification

Several documents mentioned that compared with men, women are more likely to be objectified, and not only men but also women are objectified. Gervais, Vescio, Forscher, Maass and suitner conducted an experiment. They randomly selected 83 male and female college students from the United States and asked them to watch a picture of a person wearing clothes from head to knee. Then the researchers continued to play two photos, one without modification and the other with slight modification of the sexual organs. The researchers asked the subjects to point out which one they had just seen, and the two photos appeared in the form of whole or part of the body parts. Studies have shown that women are more likely to be identified when their sexual body parts appear alone, while men are more likely to be identified when their sexual organs appear in the whole body. Therefore, it is concluded that regardless of the gender of the subjects, seeing men is more concerned with the whole, while seeing women is local processing. This may lead people to see that a man will be identified as an independent person, while a woman will reduce her body to a sexual body part [3].

7. The Relationship between Female College Students' Group Self-objectification, Physical Shame, Self-Compassion and Social Avoidance

Taking female college students as the research object, she Hong used the methods of questionnaire survey and experiment to explore the influence of self-objectification on social avoidance, and the role of physical shame and self-compassion in it. There is a significant positive correlation between female college students' self-objectification and social avoidance. The higher the degree of self-

objectification of female college students, the stronger the tendency of social avoidance; Physical shame plays a significant intermediary role between female college students' self-objectification and social avoidance, that is, with the increase of female college students' self-objectification, the level of physical shame will also increase, which will promote individual social avoidance; Physical shame has a positive impact on social avoidance, that is, the stronger the sense of physical shame, the higher the degree of social avoidance of female college students; Self-compassion plays a moderating role in the impact of self-objectification on physical shame. When the level of self-compassion is high, the impact of self-objectification on physical shame is lower than that of low self-compassion.

These conclusions come from the questionnaire of 630 female undergraduates and female postgraduates in three major categories (Humanities and Social Sciences, science, engineering, agriculture and medicine, and Art) in three universities. She used the objectified body consciousness scale, social avoidance and distress scale, body image Shame Scale and self-compassion scale. SPSS 26.0 software was used for data analysis, including the test of common method deviation, descriptive statistical analysis and correlation analysis. At the same time, the process v4.0 plug-in is used to test the mediating effect of regulation, and then the experimental results are obtained.

First, on the whole, the researchers sorted out the basic situation of each variable, and processed the experimental data. From the average score, individual social avoidance, physical shame and self-compassion were at the medium level, while individual self-objectification was at the high level.

Differences across majors may reflect distinct educational cultures regarding appearance norms, there are no significant differences in self-objectification and physical shame, but there are significant differences in social avoidance and self-compassion. The post test results showed that the social avoidance degree of female college students majoring in science, engineering, agriculture and medicine was significantly lower than that of female college students majoring in Humanities and Social Sciences and arts, while there was no significant difference in the score of social avoidance scale between female college students majoring in Humanities and Social Sciences and arts. On the scale of self-compassion, female college students majoring in Humanities and Social Sciences and science, engineering, agriculture and medicine were significantly higher than those majoring in art; In the mindfulness dimension, the scores of female college students majoring in art were significantly lower than those of students majoring in Humanities and Social Sciences and science, engineering, agriculture and medicine. From different grades, there were no significant differences in self-objectification, social avoidance and physical shame. There are significant differences in self-compassion between grades. After the post test, the level of self-compassion of graduate students is significantly higher than that of freshmen and juniors; The score of self friendliness of Postgraduates was significantly higher than that of juniors and freshmen; The score of mindfulness dimension of graduate students was significantly higher than that of senior, junior and freshman students. From different BMI data, when BMI is used as the grouping index, there is no significant difference in self-objectification, social avoidance and self-compassion. BMI-related differences may stem from societal weight norms and appearance pressure. The expost test results showed that the scores of physical shame and externalized physical shame dimensions in the overweight group were significantly higher than those in the normal weight group and the low body weight group, and the scores of physical shame and externalized physical shame dimensions in the normal weight group were significantly higher than those in the low body weight group; In the dimension of internalized body shame, the score of overweight group was significantly higher than that of normal weight group and low body weight group, but there was no significant difference between normal weight group and low body weight group. From the perspective of the differences in the places of origin, female college students' self-objectification, physical shame and self-compassion do not show significant differences in the places of origin. However, there is a significant urban-rural difference in the social avoidance degree of female college students. Female college students from rural areas scored significantly higher on the social avoidance scale than those from urban areas. Rural students may face more restrictive social environments that increase avoidance. From the perspective of whether she is an only child or not, there is no significant difference between self objectifying physical shame

and self-compassion on whether she is an only child, indicating that whether she is an only child or not is not a significant factor affecting female college students' self-objectification, physical shame and self-compassion. The social avoidance level of non only women is significantly higher than that of only women. Family structure shaped by the one-child policy may affect social experiences.

Pearson correlation analysis of the four variables in this study showed that self-objectification was significantly positively correlated with social avoidance and physical shame, and negatively correlated with self-compassion. Social avoidance was significantly positively correlated with physical shame, negatively correlated with self-compassion, and negatively correlated with physical shame and self-compassion.

In general, self-objectification can not only have a direct impact on social avoidance, but also have an indirect impact on social avoidance through physical shame; Self-compassion can regulate the effect of self-objectification on physical shame; State self-objectification has a significant positive predictive effect on female college students' physical shame, and state self-compassion plays a regulatory role in the relationship between state self-objectification and physical shame. Under the condition of state self-compassion control, the level of physical shame in the high state self-objectification group was significantly higher than that in the low state self-objectification group; Under the induction of state self-compassion, there was no significant difference in the level of physical shame between the high state self-objectification group and the low state self-objectification group.

In order to reduce the level of self-objectification, the researchers in this paper put forward several suggestions. First, women should reshape their body cognition and recognize themselves from multiple dimensions; Secondly, it is suggested that schools should take various forms to lead the growth of women in many ways, schools can implement gender-awareness workshops and mental-health programs; Thirdly, the society should create a good atmosphere and optimize the environment in multiple directions.

Finally, the researcher believes that the experiment still needs to be improved. Future research can try to investigate a wider range of subjects, and the measurement deviation of the questionnaire survey method is inevitable. Despite these obvious defects, this study also provides insights for reducing physical shame and social avoidance of female college students to improve their mental health [9]. Moreover, one prior study clarifies how higher levels of women's self-objectification lead to greater hostility toward other women's peer selfies, especially those that emphasize physical appearance [10].

8. Conclusion

Through research, this paper finds that patriarchal society is closely related to the objectification of women and the theory of guilt of women victims, so it is difficult for women to get rid of this habitual way of thinking in a short time, which can be explained from the following facts. First, patriarchal society has existed for a long time; Secondly, most women do not realize that this way of thinking is the materialization of themselves. This study scientifically evaluates the harm of the psychological mechanism of women's objectification to women themselves, which helps more women realize this. Finally, the objectification of young women is mainly involved in this study, but in fact, other groups such as elderly women, homosexuals and men will also be affected by objectification, but to different degrees. At the same time, researchers should also consider the self factors of these groups, such as religious beliefs, attitudes towards objectification, national identity, etc. Future research may refine variables through cross-cultural or longitudinal analysis. In the future, the society can strengthen the awareness of popularizing feminism, and should reduce the phenomenon of female objectification through educational publicity and system reform.

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