



2017

Body Image and Sex: How Women's Body Image Influences and Impacts Sexual Experiences

Sarah E. Christian

University of Kentucky, sarah.christian@uky.edu

Digital Object Identifier: <https://doi.org/10.13023/ETD.2017.127>

[Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.](#)

Recommended Citation

Christian, Sarah E., "Body Image and Sex: How Women's Body Image Influences and Impacts Sexual Experiences" (2017). *Theses and Dissertations--Family Sciences*. 52.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/hes_etds/52

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Family Sciences at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations--Family Sciences by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I represent that my thesis or dissertation and abstract are my original work. Proper attribution has been given to all outside sources. I understand that I am solely responsible for obtaining any needed copyright permissions. I have obtained needed written permission statement(s) from the owner(s) of each third-party copyrighted matter to be included in my work, allowing electronic distribution (if such use is not permitted by the fair use doctrine) which will be submitted to UKnowledge as Additional File.

I hereby grant to The University of Kentucky and its agents the irrevocable, non-exclusive, and royalty-free license to archive and make accessible my work in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known. I agree that the document mentioned above may be made available immediately for worldwide access unless an embargo applies.

I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of my work. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of my work. I understand that I am free to register the copyright to my work.

REVIEW, APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE

The document mentioned above has been reviewed and accepted by the student's advisor, on behalf of the advisory committee, and by the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), on behalf of the program; we verify that this is the final, approved version of the student's thesis including all changes required by the advisory committee. The undersigned agree to abide by the statements above.

Sarah E. Christian, Student

Dr. Amy Kostelic, Major Professor

Dr. Hyungsoo Kim, Director of Graduate Studies

BODY IMAGE AND SEX: HOW WOMEN'S BODY IMAGE INFLUENCES AND
IMPACTS SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the
College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment
at the University of Kentucky

By

Sarah Elizabeth Christian

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Amy Kostelic

Lexington, Kentucky

2017

Copyright

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

BODY IMAGE AND SEX: HOW WOMEN'S BODY IMAGE INFLUENCES AND IMPACTS SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

Body image, the subjective view about one's own body and how others perceive it, has been shown to have numerous impacts on women in multiple facets of their lives, including sexual experiences. This study seeks to examine the specific impact that body image has on women using sexual relationships for self-validation. Findings suggest that the more likely a woman is to perceive herself as overweight, the higher the chance that she seeks out sex in order to validate her feelings with regards to her body. Parental involvement and comments about the participant's body were also shown with the woman seeking out sex for self-validation. Body image can have numerous impacts on the sexual health of women, as well as on their overall mental health and view of healthy relationships.

KEYWORDS: Body Image, Healthy Relationships, Sex, Validation, Sexual Health

Sarah Elizabeth Christian

April 24, 2017

BODY IMAGE AND SEX: HOW WOMEN'S BODY IMAGE INFLUENCES AND
IMPACTS SEXUAL EXPERIENCES

By

Sarah Elizabeth Christian

Amy Kostelic, Ph.D.

Director of Thesis

Hyungsoo Kim, Ph.D.

Director of Graduate Studies

April 24, 2017

DEDICATION

“A girl’s first true love is her father”

I would like to dedicate my thesis to my dad. The person who has always encouraged me to chase my dreams, and told me I could be whatever and whomever I wanted. My dad has never once discouraged me, and has let me run free. Thanks for giving me all the tools I have ever needed. I can never imagine loving anyone as much as I love you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My wonderful committee, Dr. Amy Kostelic, Dr. Nathan Wood, and Dr. Ron Werner-Wilson, made this thesis possible, and whom I want to thank many times over. You all took a project that meant so much to me, and made it a reality, for which I am extremely grateful. I would also like to thank my wonderful cohort for always inspiring me, you are always challenging me and pushing me to think and dig deeper. Lastly, I want to acknowledge every girl who thinks she isn't smart enough, pretty enough, or good enough, this is for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables.....	vii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	1
Growing Up Ugly? Social Learning Theory and Body Image.....	2
Body Image and Weight.....	4
Body Image and Sexuality.....	5
Women as Objects.....	7
Body Image and Sexual Activity.....	7
Present Study.....	10
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	10
Participants.....	10
Table 1 (Sample Demographics I).....	12
Table 2 (Sample Demographics II).....	13
Materials.....	14
Measures/Design.....	14
Procedure.....	17
Results.....	18
Table 3 (Pearson Correlations between All Variables for Total Sample).....	20
Table 4 (Means and Standard Deviations).....	21
Chapter Four: Discussion and Conclusion.....	22
Discussion.....	22
Bias.....	23
Implications.....	24
Strengths and Limitations.....	25
Future Research.....	26
Concluding Remarks.....	27
Appendices.....	
Appendix A: Facebook Post.....	28
Appendix B: Demographics.....	29
Appendix C: Universalistic Social Comparison (USC).....	32
Appendix D: Family Influence.....	33
Appendix E: Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ).....	34
Appendix F: Body Image Self-Consciousness Scale (BISC).....	35
Appendix G: Self-Worth and Sexual Experiences.....	36

References.....	37
Vita.....	42

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Sample Demographics I.....	12
Table 2 Sample Demographics II	13
Table 3 Pearson Correlations between All Variables for Total Sample	20
Table 4 Means and Standard Deviations	21

Body Image and Sex: How Women's Body Image Influences and Impacts Sexual Experiences

Body image is defined as the subjective picture or mental image of one's body (Jones, 2001). Body image can influence a thin idealization that may ultimately impact eating disturbance, self-worth, self-esteem, and relationships (Cafri, Yamamiya, Brannick, Thompson, 2005). This study examines the specific relationship between the young female adult's (ages 18-25), personal body image and seeking out sexual relationships for self-validation. As supported by past research, factors such as family and friend influence, body mass index, feeling intelligent, and household composition directly affect a woman's view of her body. (Fenton, Brooks, Spencer, & Morgan, 2010). In particular, the literature demonstrates a direct relation between body dissatisfaction and sexuality outcomes in women (Satinsky, Dennis, Reece, Sanders, & Bardzell, 2013). By further examining sexuality outcomes, (i.e sexually risky behaviors, multiple sexual partners, unprotected sex) this study expands the literature regarding body image and the specific impact it has on seeking out sex for self-validation.

Literature Review

Although body image is not gender-specific, body image disturbance is more prevalent in females than males (Bearman, Presnall, Martinez, & Stice, 2006). This is especially true among adolescent and young adult women, ages 18-25 because weight gain, a common factor that contributes to negative body image issues, is a normative developmental experience that is particularly pronounced during puberty (Bearman et al., 2006) and some women will continue to struggle with weight thereafter (Jones, 2001). During this time, young women, who are particularly vulnerable to peer and familial

influences in addition to social comparisons are becoming increasingly body conscious, which can increase the risk for body dissatisfaction (Bearman, et al., 2006). Body dissatisfaction can lead to sexual experimentation/engagement as a way to seek validation.

Growing Up Ugly? Social Learning Theory and Body Image

According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, people are more likely to behave according to what they observe. Because children, starting at young age, are surrounded by various influential models, including parental figures, family members, peers, teachers, and even television and media, they become susceptible to exhibited behaviors. As a result, girls can be made to feel uncomfortable about their body starting at a young age because they may hear an otherwise thin mother say she is "fat" or "unattractive" for example. Adolescence is an intense time for change in anyone's life, and the messages received to the adolescent by their family and peers can have a lasting impact (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003). When it comes to a positive feedback from mom and dad, adolescents have better outcomes for a more positive body image. Parents actually had a bigger role transmitting these sociocultural roles than did peers or the media (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003). The mother-daughter relationship adds complexity in that daughters' body image is positively correlated with what their mother thought of her body; if the daughter had a secure attachment with her mother, she tended to have a more positive body image (Bex, 2015). Daughter's moderate attempts at weight loss have a strong relationship to mothers encouraging their daughters to lose weight (Benedikt, Wertheim, and Love, 1998). The mother-daughter relationship complexity is then further exacerbated by the fact that daughter's extreme weight loss behavior has a

significant association with her mother's reports of her own body dissatisfaction (Benedikt et al., 1998).

In addition, children grow up seeing images of bodies receiving praise on social media that does not look like theirs, and this increases their comparisons with peers and those online (Meier and Gray, 2014). With doubt or expectations of body image already in mind, children are risk of growing up feeling as their body is not up to par with "society's standards" (Meier and Gray, 2014).

Body image can be a major concern for most adolescents, however, in females, as they age they become increasingly dissatisfied with their body, and their negative view of their body continues to worsen (Bearman, et al., 2006). However, whether someone has a positive or negative body image is not something that is just prevalent for adolescents. Women experience this type of self-evaluation through their college years, and many for the rest of their life (Lemer, Blodgett, Benson, 2013).

It has been shown that Facebook activity was associated with an increased level of body disturbance. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) has demonstrated that human beings will adapt to the society and situations around them. When there is a particular body portrayed online that garners a positive response, social learning theory says one will be more inclined to desire that particular body type. Having an elevated appearance exposure can increase this drive for thinness, thin ideal internalization, and self-objectification (Meier & Gray, 2014). It has been shown that adolescent's favorite television characters were identified as thin or average in body size (Te'eni & Eyal, 2015). Even though media may not be the largest predictor of a positive or negative body

image, it does create a strong self-comparison between the adolescents and whom they see on their television (Te'eni & Eyal, 2015).

While television and social media may have harmful effects on body image, the formation of body image can begin even before adolescence. Erik Erikson has developed a life cycle development model that helps to explain the psychological crises that occur from birth to death (Erikson, 1963). Erikson shows that beginning as early as age two, the child begins to develop autonomy and shame. During these years, the child forms a significant bond to their parents, and starts to ask questions about who they are and if what they are doing is normative (Erikson, 1963).

According to Erik Erikson's (1963) lifespan model of development, adolescence is a time in which a teenager should successfully accomplish ego identity versus role confusion. Ego Identity most simply means that individuals are able to experience the sense of who they are, and act on that sense. Role confusion typically occurs in adolescence, because that is the period of time between childhood and adulthood, and not understanding how to navigate the transition. Failure to successfully complete this stage can lead to an extended period of this role confusion, where many may drift around in life, never sure of their purpose or what direction they want to go.

However, this also means that previous stages are successfully achieved (Erikson, 1963). When the adolescent is wrestling with who they are, and forming their self-esteem, the messages they receive about their body can be critical. Many young girls may feel uncomfortable about their body at a young age, with thinness being described as the most valuable physical attribute in women (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

Body Image and Weight

Overall, weight is the most prominent factor when looking at female body dissatisfaction (Jones, 2001). According to western society, “thin is in” despite race, gender, or sexual orientation (Hesse-Biber, 2007a), and this is reinforced not only throughout development, but also daily through health magazines, movie stars, fashion models, television and magazines (Jones, 2001). As a result, women who inhabit a “non-normative” body type (too tall, too short, too thin, or too fat) may have different experiences with body and their sexual health and activities than those who have an average or more universally accepted body size (Satinsky et al., 2013). A “non-normative” body type can be any body type not deemed acceptable by the individual, their family and peers, or society as a whole. Girls who had a lower BMI tended to describe their bodies as about right, whereas those with higher BMI scores were more likely to describe themselves as “too fat” (Fenton et al., 2010).

Lately there has been a big push in school systems to reduce the stigma associated with weight and drive for thinness. In order to promote body positivity, there are many different programs, one being the program, “In Favor of Myself”, which helps to reduce the kind of stigmas attached to BMI and promote a positive self and body image (Te’eni-Harari & Eval, 2015). When taking a closer look at “In Favor of Myself, the literature examines the program and the positive effects it has on young women. In Favor of Myself has shown to have positive outcomes for the adolescents who participate, and helps these adolescents to cope with different challenges that each stage of their life presents (Te’eni-Harari & Eval, 2015).

Body Image and Sexuality

When examining the impact of sexuality on the woman, we must look at when it first begins, and starts to impact decision-making. While Erik Erikson does not specifically look at sexual development, it can best be explained in stage six of development, which is intimacy versus isolation (Erikson, 1963). Erikson discusses the vital importance of intimacy, and the dangerous consequences of isolation, which can lead to severe character problems (1963). This stage can help to explain the need for intimacy, and the desire many feel to be close to another, which may be highlighted in sexual decision-making.

Feminist theory, a philosophy addressed by Rachel Hare-Mustin (1979), recognizes that, “(a) the traditional intrapsychic model of human behavior fails to recognize the importance of the social context as a determiner of behavior, and (b) the sex roles and statuses prescribed by society for females and males disadvantage women” (p.181). Feminism gives everyone the ability to respond to a situation however they deem it appropriate, instead of trying to respond within a rigid gender role. The feminist theory has helped women to be able to become more aware of the rigid and oppressive gender roles to which they have become accustomed, including weight expectations, and the thin ideal (Hesse-Biber, 2007a). Using the feminist lens to examine the effect that body image has on women, one is able to recognize the lack of equality in body standards between men and women (Jones, 2001). Even though women are expected to conceive, they are often pressured to be thin, and despite their build, frame hips needed to bare children (Barnett & Sharp, 2016). When a women’s body starts to develop and weight begins to shift and/or change, some women may feel obligated out of pressure versus health to drastically change their eating habits to fit in to a certain body ideal. When the

ideal cannot be reached, women may use other outlets to feel validated in her body, such as her seeking out sexual experiences (Santisky et al., 2013).

Women as Objects

Women's experiences with their body are also very central to objectification theory (Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997). The objectification theory points to women as being subjected to a constant evaluative gaze, which influences a woman to actually see herself from the lens of an outside observer. Throughout puberty, girls and even others may be able to justify body types based on "baby fat" and hormonal changes (Bearman et al., 2006) but as teenagers develop into young women, they—and society, begins to see what their body really is (Bearman et al., 2006). Objectification is highly correlated to sexuality outcome in women (Santisky, et al., 2013). For example women who have a negative body image are more likely to experience lower levels of sexual desire and arousal (Sanchez and Kiefer, 2007), including decreased pleasure, lack of orgasm and less sexual satisfaction. They also often have less frequent sexual initiation and experience sexual avoidance (Weaver and Byers, 2006). Negative body image is also related to an increase in sexually risky behaviors, such as sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, not using contraception, and intoxication prior to sexual activity (Santisky et al., 2013).

Body Image and Sexual Activity

When it comes to body image and sexual activity and women, there are a multitude of factors that affect if and when a woman decides to engage sexually. When looking through the lens of a woman with a positive body image, they have been shown to be more likely to engage in sexual activity (Anatale & Kelly, 2015). In certain

literature, girls who have a positive body image are more likely to be sexually active, and practice safe sex, whereas girls who are slightly overweight are less likely to engage in sexual activity (Anatale & Kelly, 2015). It has also been found that a more liberal sexual attitude was directly associated with more sexual activity, and these liberal sexual attitudes were also associated with a higher body image (Lemer, et al., 2013). Liberal sexual attitudes can also be associated with a higher level of sexual attitudes, and an increased level of sexual frequency, but not necessarily sexually risky behaviors (Lemer, Blodgett, & Benson, 2013). Girls with a positive body image show an increased condom usage then girls with a negative body image (Gillen, Lefkowitz, & Shearer, 2006). Females with a higher level of body image satisfaction and who were at a less advanced pubertal stage typically had more platonic involvement with males. This shows a significant difference in college aged women, where a positive body image is correlated with higher levels of sexual activity (Lemer, et al., 2013).

When looking through the lens of a woman with a negative body image, those who inhabit a non-ideal body size who heard a critical appearance comment have reported that they felt greater body shame (Overstreet, 2013). Hearing a critical appearance comment from a romantic partner led to greater sexual risk behaviors for people who were smaller in body size but less sexual activity from people who were larger in body size (Overstreet, 2013). Sexual risk behaviors (having a high number of sexual partners, not using protection, not having an STI screening) may be more common in girls who are underweight or perceive themselves to be overweight (Akers, Lynch, Gold, Chia- Chi Chang, & Doswell, 2009). When examining the correlation between weight, race, and sexual behaviors among girls, sexually active girls who perceived

themselves as overweight had 1.6 times the odds of reporting sexual behavior before age 13 and were less likely to report condom use at last sex compared to peers who perceived their weight as normal (Akers et al., 2009). Some research reports that a negative body image leads to decreased amounts of sexual activity (Anatale & Kelly, 2015). However, there is also data demonstrating that a negative body image can lead to increased sexual engagement at a younger age (Compian, Gowen, and Hayward, 2004), lack of safety about protection and number of sexual partners (Anatale & Kelly, 2015).

Culture and sexual orientation also can help to form scripts about body image. While most every culture has different ideals of beauty, this can also lead to a different type of sexual objectification and body shame. Where in some cultures it is looked down upon to be a sexual being as a women, in other cultures it is praised. For years, women's bodies have been seen as a material object that has inscribed social meaning (Satinsky et. al, 2013). Sexual objectification occurs when women's bodies, as well as their body parts are used to separate themselves from their person, and they are reduced to their parts sexual functioning for others (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). When looking at the differences homosexual women face in contrast then heterosexual women, those in a sexual minority are just as likely to internalize the same standards of beauty as heterosexual women and develop those same body image issues (Watson, Grotewiel, Farrel, & Marshik, 2015).

Whether using a feminist theory lens, objectification theory, or social learning theory, it is noted that many different factors affect body image and its intersection with sexual activity. Parental/peer influences, puberty, weight, sexual activity can all be

factors that impact one's body image, and it is important to look at body image from all angles in order to combat the messages being heard.

Present Study

The purpose of the present study is to use a correlation study to examine the relationship between body image and the sexual experiences of young female adults, ages 18 to 25. In this study, sexual experiences are defined as any sort of physical relationship with another human (i.e., kissing, fondling, oral sex, or penetration). Sexual intercourse is defined as penetration. By examining the correlation between body image and sexual experiences, this study looks deeper into the effects that body image can have on the female, and if females engage in sexual activity in order to feel validated with regard to her body.

Based on previous literature and findings, I hypothesize that:

H₁: There will be a positive correlation between women who perceive themselves to be overweight or slightly overweight and seeking out sex for validation about her body.

H₂: There will be a positive correlation between women who were more likely to receive negative parental comments about her body and seeking out sex for validation about her body.

H₃: There will be a positive correlation between women who have high body-image self-consciousness and women who seek out sex for validation about their body.

H₄: There will be a positive correlation between women who have poor body-image avoidance and women who seek out sex for validation about their body.

Method

Participants

Participants who completed the entire study included 263 females between the ages of 18-25. All participants were volunteers and recruited through social media. A recruitment script (Appendix A), which explained the study and participant inclusion criteria, was posted on the researcher's Facebook. The recruitment script and link to the 63-question survey (see Appendix B) were live on Facebook until whichever came first, the cut-off date of January 30 or a minimum of 250 participants. At that time, both were removed from the Internet. The 63-question survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Participants could stop taking the survey at any time. It was anonymous, but participants were given an option to leave their email in order to enter a randomized drawing to win a \$50 gift card to their choice of Chipotle or Starbucks. Table 1 provides insight in to the participants in the study. On average, the typical participant was a white, straight female, who is religious, and in a relationship, but not married. Table 2 gives more in depth information regarding sexual history, as well as weight and perceived weight. Such demographics generally fit the trend of the Southeastern United States.

Table 1
Sample Demographics I (N = 263)

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Female	262	99.62
Questioning or unsure	1	0.38
Race or ethnicity		
Asian	1	0.38
Black or African American	7	2.66
Hispanic or Latino	10	3.80
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	1.14
White	251	94.44
Sexual Orientation		
Straight	242	92.02
Gay	1	0.38
Lesbian	3	1.14
Bisexual	9	3.42
Pansexual	4	1.52
Asexual	2	0.76
Queer	1	0.38
Questioning or Unsure	1	0.38
Religion		
Agnostic	23	9.24
Atheist	14	5.62
Baptist- Southern	8	3.21
Baptist- Unspecified	12	4.82
Catholic	68	27.31
Congregational	2	0.80
Episcopalian-Anglican	2	0.80
Lutheran	8	3.21
Methodist	19	7.63
Mormon/LDS	1	0.40
Non-denominational	54	21.69
Presbyterian	8	3.21
Quaker	1	0.40
Wiccan	2	0.80
None	26	10.44
Refused	1	0.40
Relationship Status		
Single	91	34.60
In a relationship (not married)	146	55.51
Married	26	9.89

Table 2
Sample Demographics II (N = 263)

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Religious Preferences		
Very religious	27	10.31
Somewhat religious	91	34.73
Slightly religious	56	21.37
Not very religious	88	33.59
Sexual Intercourse		
Yes	236	90.08
No	26	9.92
Sexual Partners in the past 9 months		
Never	26	9.89
Not in the past 9 months	17	6.46
1 person	159	60.46
2 people	34	4.56
3 people	12	4.56
4 people	7	2.66
5 people	3	1.14
6 or more people	5	1.90
Current Weight		
100-130	93	35.36
130-150	77	29.28
150-170	43	16.35
170-200	19	7.22
200-220	18	6.84
220-250	9	3.42
250 or greater	4	1.52
Perception of Weight		
Very underweight	1	0.38
Slightly underweight	11	4.18
About the right weight	128	48.67
Slightly overweight	100	38.02
Very overweight	23	8.75

Materials

This study was designed to look at the multiple intersections between body image and sexual experiences, paying close attention to those garnering sexual validation about their body through sexual activity. To best examine body image and sexual experience, multiple established measures were used in the survey, as well as researcher-created measures that helped further explore specific answers to questions about sexual validation.

Since this survey examined body image, questions focused around the factors that contribute to body image according to the literature such as varying backgrounds, socioeconomic status, race, and religion. The participants were not required to have had a sexual experience to participate in the study.

After the survey was completed, the researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to examine the correlations between each measure, and the Cronbach Alpha score of each measure to assess the reliability. By examining each measure, the researcher was able to look at the significant correlations and the implications of each correlation.

Measures/Design

An online survey was constructed that included 63 questions. There were seven different parts included in the survey, including three existing evidence-based questionnaires and three self-made measures. In the survey, there are demographic questions that ask about gender, sexual orientation, age, racial/ ethnic identity, relationships status, religious preference, sexual history, sexual partners, weight, and height. The three existing evidence based questionnaires included the Universalistic

Social Comparison evaluation (USC) (Morrison, Kalin, and Morrison, 2004), the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ) (Rosen, Srebnik, Saltzberg, and Went, 1991), and the Body Image Self Consciousness Scale (BISC) (Wiederman, 2002).

The USC, created by Morrison, Kalin, and Morrison (2004) examines how often women compare their body with those they see in the media, in television, or in movies. This scale includes four questions that can be answered on a 5-point scale ranging from very often to never. The range of possible scores goes from 4-20, with high scores suggesting low social comparison. Morrison, Kalin, and Morrison (2004), found a strong internal consistency ($\alpha=.87$) and the mean for their female sample was a 12.8. The mean for this study was 10.56 with the standard deviation at 3.21, and showed a strong internal consistency ($\alpha=.83$), meaning this questionnaire is appropriate for analysis (Table 4).

The self-reporting BIAQ, developed by Rosen, Srebnik, Saltzberg, and Went (1991), was used to measure the behavioral component of body image disturbances. This is a six scale measure, ranging from never to always, with 19 questions that measure behavioral avoidance of experiences that may increase body image related dissatisfaction or distress. The original study found an average score of 31.5 with a standard deviation of 13.9 and an internal consistency ($\alpha=.89$). The BIAQ asks questions across four behavioral themes, which are clothing, social activities, restraint, and grooming/weighing. Questions were also asked about how often one controls her food intake, wears clothes to cover up her body, and avoids physical intimacy. The mean from the study was a 29.23 and the standard deviation is 9.12 (Table 4). This sample is appropriate for analysis, and scores are consistent with an average population (Rosen et al., 1991).

Lastly, the BISC (Wiederman, 2002) instructs participants to describe their personal self-consciousness over their bodily appearance and their concern about how their body may appear to a partner. This scale includes 15 questions using a 6-item scale that ranged from never to always. The scores ranged from 0-75, with higher scores representing a higher level of body self-consciousness. Wiederman found a strong internal consistency ($\alpha=.93$) and a mean ranging from 20.40 to a 35.41 depending on the heterosexual experience they had participated in. In this sample, the BISC reported a strong internal consistency of ($\alpha=.960$) and had a mean of 36.62 with a standard deviation of 16.61 (Table 4), which shows that this questionnaire is appropriate for analysis.

The survey also included nine researcher-created questions that measured (a) family influence and its impact on weight and body image; (b) perceived weight; and (c) self-worth and sexual validity.

The family influence measure asked questions regarding the family influence, and their influence on the women's weight and body image. The measure included three questions ranging from never to very often. These questions asked about family members encouraging the participant to gain or lose weight, and if they have ever avoided a family member because of their weight. Scores ranged from 3 to 15, with low scores suggesting less negative family comments. The Family Influence measure had an internal consistency of $\alpha=.66$, the mean statistic was a 3.81 with a standard deviation of 1.78 (Table 4).

Perceived weight examined how the participant viewed her own weight, ranging from very underweight to very overweight. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, with low scores

representing the woman perceiving herself as underweight, and a high score represented her perceiving herself as overweight. The perceived weight measure had a mean statistic of 3.50 with the standard deviation at a 0.73 (Table 4). This shows that most women report their body to closer to slightly overweight.

The self-worth and sexual validity measure asks questions ranging from why women engage in sexual activity and if sexual experiences provide a sense of self-validation. When examining the sex for self-validation scale, there was an internal consistency of $\alpha=.72$ and the mean statistic is a 5.71 with a standard deviation of 2.31, which shows that most did not seek out sex for self-validation (Table 4). When doing a preliminary analysis, the researcher decided to use questions 1, 3, and 5 for analysis, because those provided the best internal consistency. These questions ranged from never to very often, and had a range from 5-25, with higher scores representing a higher likelihood of seeking out sex for validation. These questions asked if the participant had ever engaged in sexual activity because they felt poorly about their body, have they sought out a sexual experience for the sole purpose of feeling more positive about their body, and if engaging in sexual experiences provides them with a sense of self-validation. This most simply means that these questions had the highest internal validity, and produced the most significant responses.

Procedure

After the Office of Research Integrity approved the survey, it was promoted through the researcher's social media platform, Facebook. The survey was open from January 9th, 2017 through January 30th, 2017. The inclusion criteria stated that women ages 18-25 were able to complete the survey. After eliminating those who participated in

the study who did not meet the inclusion criteria, the study included a total of 263 participants. This study examined the relationships between the participants need for sexual validation with their scores on the BISC, BIAQ, USC, their perceived weight, and their family influence. Internal consistency for each measure were as follows; Universalistic Social Comparison ($\alpha=.83$), for Family Influence ($\alpha=.66$), for the Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire ($\alpha=.78$), for the Body Image Self-Consciousness Scale ($\alpha=.96$), and for the Self-Worth and Sexual Experiences ($\alpha=.72$).

Results

Prior to running analyses, measures were examined for adequate internal consistency. Pearson correlations were run as a means of analyzing the data with an aim to better understand the associations between body image and sexual experience (Table 3). Correlations are used to test the relationship between two variables, and are appropriate for this study because all of the data was collected at the same time.

Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive correlation between women's perception of being overweight or slightly overweight and seeking out sex for validation about her body. When looking at the correlation between the perceived weight measure and the sexual validation measure (see Table 3), there was a small but significant correlation of .207 ($p<.01$, $n=259$). This hypothesis was supported, which shows for this sample, women who viewed themselves as overweight also sought out sexual relationships in order to feel validated in her body.

Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive correlation between women receiving negative comments about her body and seeking out sex for validation about her body. When looking at the correlations between the family influence measure and the sexual

validation measure (see Table 3), there was a small but significant correlation of .289 ($p < .01$, $n=259$). This hypothesis was supported, which shows for the sample, women who heard negative comments from family members also sought out sexual relationships in order to feel validated in her body.

Hypothesis 3 predicted a positive correlation between women who had a high score on the body image self-consciousness measure with women seeking out sex for validation about her body. When examining the correlations between the body image self-consciousness measure and the sexual validation measure (see Table 3), there is a small but significant correlation of .241 ($p < .01$, $n=258$). This hypothesis was supported, which shows for the sample, women who had high levels of body image self-consciousness also sought out sexual relationships in order to feel validated in her body.

Hypothesis 4 predicted a positive correlation between women who had poor body image avoidance with her seeking out sex for validation about her body. When examining the correlation between the body image avoidance measure and the sexual validation measure (see Table 3), there is a small but significant correlation of .280 ($p < .01$, $n=259$). This hypothesis was supported, which shows for this sample, women who had high levels of body image avoidance, also sought out sexual relationships in order to feel validated in her body.

Table 3
Pearson Correlations between All Variables for Total Sample

	Using Sex for Self Validati on	Social Comparison of Body	Family Influence on Body	Body Image Avoidance	Perceived Weight
Using Sex for Self Validation	–				
Social Comparison of Body	-.214**	–			
Family Influence on Body	.289**	-.199**	–		
Body Image Avoidance	.280**	-.325**	.616**	–	
Perceived Weight	.207**	-.183**	.625**	-.531**	–
Body Image Self Consciousness	.241**	-.416**	.486**	-.664**	.514**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Using Sex for Self Validation	5.71	2.31	259
Social Comparison of Body	10.55	3.21	262
Family Influence on Body	3.81	1.78	262
Body Image Avoidance	29.23	9.12	262
Perceived Weight	3.50	0.73	262
Body Image Self Consciousness	36.62	16.61	260

Discussion

There has been a plethora of literature regarding a positive body image contributing to girls becoming more sexually active, and engaging in and practicing safe sex (Anatale & Kelly, 2015). While there can be a number of reasons that a woman decide to engage in sexual activity, this study focused on the connection between sexual activity and body image.

Specifically, the present study looked at possible connections behind women seeking out sex for validation of her body. This study looked at women ages 18-25, and the correlations between body image and their perceived weight, family influence, self-consciousness, social comparison, and if they seek out sexual relationships for validation.

The literature has shown that parental comments are a factor when it comes to body image, and the messages received from the adolescent by their peers and family can have a lasting impact (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003). Daughter's moderate attempts at weight loss have a strong relationship with their mother encouraging them to lose weight (Benedikt, Wertheim, and Love, 1998). Also, when it comes to positive feedback, parents actually had a bigger role transmitting these sociocultural roles than did peers or the media (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003). Erik Erikson (1963) discusses adolescents forming schemas of who they are, and wrestling with their self esteem, and so they messages they hear can be critical. Results from the present study support the relationship between women who were more likely to receive negative parental comments about her body and seeking out sex for validation about her body. These findings support the literature regarding the key role the parent plays in their child's perceptions about their own body, especially in the mother-daughter dyad.

These messages continue outside of the family as women may feel subject to being constantly evaluated, and objectification is highly correlated to sexuality outcomes in women (Santisky, et al., 2013). There has been data demonstrating that negative body image can lead to increased sexual engagement at a younger age (Compian, et al., 2004), and a lack of safety about protection and number of sexual partners (Anatale & Kelly, 2015). A negative body image is also related to an increase in sexually risky behaviors, such as sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, not using contraception, or intoxication prior to sexual activity (Santisky et al., 2013). Results from the present study support the relationship between self-consciousness, body image avoidance, and the women seeking out sex for validation with her body. These findings add to the literature regarding the role of sex in validating oneself rather than a connection with another person.

Furthermore, there is literature that points to a negative body image leading to engaging in sexual activity at a younger age (Compian, et al., 2004). This study specifically examined the factors that may contribute to women seeking out sex to feel validated about their body. The study demonstrated that there was a connection between women who perceived themselves as overweight, and women who sought out sexual relationships in order to feel validated about her body. Overall, weight is the most prominent factor when looking at female body dissatisfaction (Jones, 2001). Women, who inhabit this “non-normative” body type, may have different experiences with their body and their sexual health than those women who have a more universally accepted body size (Santisky et al., 2013).

Bias

In order to further help eliminate bias, three validated and reliable measures were used. To have a more accurate and non-biased answer about the woman's perceived weight, the question about her actual weight was used at the beginning of the study, and the perceived weight question was in the middle of the questionnaire, in order to help eliminate bias.

Social media is also a bias/limitation of the present study. By using the personal Facebook account of the researcher, the sample was at increased risk of being homogenous due to a significant number of friends, friends of friends and acquaintances of the researcher who knew about and accessed the survey.

Implications

Since messages regarding body image are received beginning in adolescence, knowing the outcomes of a negative body image is crucial. Schools can begin to look into creating body positive programs from a young age, and to promote an inclusive body standard (Te'eni & Eval, 2015). Also, including comprehensive sexual education programs can assist with the adolescent learning about the meaning of a healthy sexual relationship. Women who have more of negative body image are likely to present lower levels of sexual desire and arousal (Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007). This could possibly correlate to women who are seeking out sex for self-validation not having as much sexual pleasure.

Parental comments regarding weight was shown to have a strong relationship with body image. Parents are educated constantly about many factors regarding their child's lives, but it could be important to educate parents to understand the impact that their words can have on their child's body image, and what that may mean for their future.

Whether the comments are negative or neutral, they still can impact the child's perception of their weight and overall body image (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003). This can be especially important for mothers and daughters, because daughter's extreme weight loss behavior has a significant association with her reports of her own body dissatisfaction (Benedikt et al., 1998). By the parent becoming aware of the messages they are sending, it could ultimately impact the success of the parent-child relationship, and the child's future outcomes.

Strengths and Limitations

This study was a correlation study because of the desire to compare multiple measures to each other. A correlational study was the most appropriate measure because the sample was collected all at the same time. A limitation to using a correlation methodology was that correlation cannot prove causation, so even though there were many significant correlations in this study, the study is unable to prove if one measure directly caused another measure to occur. A longitudinal study could also be effective in this realm, due to the impacts that body image can have on adolescence into early adulthood and later life. Unfortunately, due to time and budget constraints, this was not feasible for this particular study.

There were other strengths to this study, one of them being able to anonymously survey women ages 18-25. All of these women have heard a specific message about their body, and the messages they receive about their body may be changing daily.

By being able to take this survey anonymously, women may have felt more compelled to give honest feedback, instead of being interviewed in a one on one setting. Body image, in addition to sex can be a difficult topic to discuss, but being able to talk

about it openly and without fear can help to get the more honest answers regarding these sensitive subjects.

Another limitation in the study was that it was used through the researchers social media platform, and since the researcher is a 23-year old, straight, white female, many of her social media friends are of around the same race and sexual orientation. While they may all have different experiences, this study can be looked through the lens of white, straight women. However, there are many different implications when it comes to those of different races and sexual orientations.

Limitations regarding the measures used may also be taken in to consideration. There were three established measures that were used, but there were also self-created measures. Even though each of these measures was assessed for a positive internal validity, they are not well-established measures.

Future Research

Continuing to look at the intersections of body image and sexual activity is critical. Body image can lead to negative sexual outcomes, which has been shown to a heightening in depression scores (Compian et al., 2004), an increase in sexually risky behaviors (Gilen et al., 2006), and an increase in the number of sexual partners (Anatale & Kelly, 2015). Society continues to hold women to an extremely high standard when it comes to their body, and when women are unable to meet that standard, there are consequences on their mental, physical, emotional, and sexual health. Examining all of the different intersections of what effects that the media, society, and those in close relationship with a female's body image can hopefully push for more body positive programs, and a more inclusive body standard.

Concluding Remarks

The results of this study were clearly supportive of initial expectations that women who had samplings of a negative body image were more likely to have a relationship with seeking out sex for validation about her body. This study aimed to continue the existing literature regarding a negative body image and sexuality outcomes. Ultimately, the data demonstrated strong correlations between seeking out sex for self-validation with parental comments, body image self-consciousness, body image avoidance and a higher perceived weight.

When examining these women who have a higher perceived weight, and may not inhabit the ideal body by the media's standards, it can create numerous impacts on not only her sexuality decisions, but also her idea of relationships moving forward. If these women seek out sex to feel validated in their particular body type, it can give her a skewed idea of a healthy sexual relationship.

Appendix A

Facebook Post

My name is Sarah Christian and I am a master's student in the Department of Family Sciences at the University of Kentucky. I am currently conducting my master's thesis on the impacts of body image on sexual experiences. If you are an 18 to 25 year old female, you are eligible to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you have the option to enter a drawing for a chance of winning a \$50 gift card to either Chipotle or Starbucks.

Please click the link below to complete this 15 minute survey.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please e-mail Sarah Christian at sarah.christian@uky.edu

Sarah Christian
University of Kentucky
Master's in Couple and Family Therapy, 2017

Appendix B

Demographics

1. Which sexual orientation listed below do you most closely identify with?
 - a. Straight or heterosexual
 - b. Gay
 - c. Lesbian
 - d. Bisexual
 - e. Pansexual
 - f. Asexual
 - g. Queer
 - h. Questioning or unsure
 - i. Another sexual orientation (please specify)

2. Please specify the month and year of your birth. (**AGE RANGES**)

3. Which racial or ethnic identity listed below do you identify with? (Select all that apply)
 - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Hispanic or Latino
 - e. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - f. White
 - g. Another racial or ethnic identification (please specify)

4. What is your current relationship status?
 - a. Single
 - b. In a relationship (not married)
 - c. Married
 - d. Separated
 - e. Divorced
 - f. Widowed

5. How would you describe your religious preference?
 - a. Baptist - Unspecified
 - b. Baptist - Northern
 - c. Baptist - Southern
 - d. Congregational
 - e. Episcopalian-Anglican
 - f. Fundamentalist
 - g. Jehovah's Witness
 - h. Lutheran

- i. Methodist
- j. Mormon/LDS
- k. Non-Denominational
- l. Pentecostal
- m. Presbyterian
- n. Quaker
- o. RLDS
- p. Seventh Day Adventist
- q. Unitarian
- r. Wiccan
- s. Atheist
- t. Agnostic
- u. None
- v. Refused

6. Would you say that you are...

- a. Very religious
- b. Somewhat religious
- c. Slightly religious, or
- d. Not very religious

7. Have you ever had sexual intercourse?

- A. Yes
- B. No

8. How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?

- A. I have never had sexual intercourse
- B. _____ years of age

9. During your life, with how many people have you had sexual intercourse?

- A. I have never had sexual intercourse
- B. _____ number of partners

10. During the past 9 months, with how many people did you have sexual intercourse with?

- A. I have never had sexual intercourse
- B. I have had sexual intercourse, but not during the past 9 months
- C. 1 person
- D. 2 people
- E. 3 people
- F. 4 people
- G. 5 people
- H. 6 or more people

11. Which of the following best describes your **oral-genital** sexual play (oral sex)?

- A. Does not apply
- B. Received and given equally
- C. I usually give more than I receive
- D. I usually receive more than I give

12. How often have you had sexual intercourse on a "**one night stand**" over the last 9 months?

- A. Never
- B. Once
- C. Two to Three times
- D. Four or more times

13. How would you describe your sex drive?

- A. Very strong
- B. Somewhat strong
- C. Not very strong
- D. No sex drive

14. What is your current height?

- a. 5ft or less
- b. 5'1- 5'2
- c. 5'2-5'3
- d. 5'3- 5'4
- e. 5'5 – 5'6
- f. 5'7-5'8
- g. 5'9- 5'10
- h. 5'11 or taller

15. What is your current weight?

- a. Less than 100 pounds
- b. 100-130
- c. 130-150
- d. 150-170
- e. 170-200
- f. 200-220
- g. 220-250
- h. 250 or greater

Appendix C

Universalistic Social Comparison (USC)

Answer the following that best describes how often you engage in these behaviors.

- 1-never
- 2-rarely
- 3- sometimes
- 4- often
- 5- very often

1. I want to look like the people I see in movies, television shows, and/or music videos
2. When I judge how attractive I am, I compare myself with actors/actresses/singers that I see on television or in movies
3. When I judge how attractive I am, I compare myself with models in magazines
4. I compare my body to the bodies of people in movies, television shows, and/or music videos

Appendix D

Family Influence

- 1- never
- 2- rarely
- 3- sometimes
- 4- often
- 5- very often

1. Has a family member or friend ever encouraged you to lose weight?
2. Has a family member ever encouraged you to gain weight?
3. Have you ever avoided a family member or friend because of your weight?

Appendix E

Body Image Avoidance Questionnaire (BIAQ)

Answer with the number that best describes how often you engage in these behaviors.

- 5- Always
- 4- Usually
- 3- Often
- 2- Sometimes
- 1- Rarely
- 0- Never

1. I wear baggy clothes
2. I wear clothes I do not like
3. I wear darker color clothing
4. I wear a special set of clothing, e.g. my “fat clothes”
5. I restrict the amount of food I eat
6. I only eat fruits, vegetables, and other low calories foods.
7. I fast for a day or longer
8. I do not go out socially if I will be “checked out”
9. I do not go out socially if the people I am with will discuss weight
10. I do not go out socially if the people I am with are thinner than me
11. I do not go out socially if this involves eating
12. I weight myself
13. I am inactive
14. I look at myself in the mirror
15. I avoid physical intimacy
16. I wear clothes that will divert attention from my weight
17. I avoid going clothes shopping
18. I don't wear “revealing” clothes (e.g. bathing suits, tank tops, or shorts)
19. I get dressed up or made up

Appendix F

Body Image Self-Consciousness Scale (BISC)

Please use the following scale to indicate how often you agree with each statement or how often you think it would be true for you even if you have not engaged in sexual activity. The term partner refers to someone with whom you are romantically or sexually intimate.

- 0- Never
- 1- Rarely
- 2- Sometimes
- 3- Often
- 4- Usually
- 5- Always

1. I would feel very nervous if a partner were to explore my body before or after having sex.
2. The idea of having sex without any covers over my body causes me anxiety.
3. While having sex I am (would be) concerned that my hips and thighs would flatten out and appear larger than they actually are.
4. During sexual activity, I am (would be) concerned about how my body looks to my partner.
5. The worst part about having sex is being nude in front of another person.
6. If a partner were to put a hand on my buttocks I would think, "My partner can feel my fat."
7. During sexual activity it is (would be) difficult not to think about how unattractive my body is.
8. During sex, I (would) prefer to be on the bottom so that my stomach appears flat.
9. I (would) feel very uncomfortable walking around the bedroom, in front of my partner, completely nude.
10. The first time I have sex with a new partner, I (would) worry that my partner will get turned off by seeing me without clothes.
11. If a partner were to put an arm around my waist, I would think, "My partner can tell how fat I am."
12. I (could) only feel comfortable enough to have sex if it were dark so that my partner could not clearly see my body.
13. I (would) prefer having sex with my partner on top so that my partner is less likely to see my body.
14. I (would) have a difficult time taking a shower or bath with a partner.
15. I (would) feel anxious receiving a full-body massage from a partner.

Appendix G

Self-Worth and Sexual Experiences

- 1- never
- 2- rarely
- 3- sometimes
- 4- often
- 5- very often

- 1. Have you ever engaged in sexual activity because you felt poorly about your body?
- 2. Have you ever engaged in sexual activity because you felt positive about your body?
- 3. Have you ever sought out a sexual experience for the sole purpose of feeling more positive about your body?
- 4. Have you ever declined a sexual experience for the sole reason of feeling negative about your body?
- 5. Does engaging in sexual experiences provide a sense of self-validation?

References

- Aletha Yvette Akers, Cheryl P. Lynch, Melanie A. Gold, Judy Chia-Chi Chang, Willa Doswell, Harold C. Wiesenfeld, Wentao Feng, James Bost
Pediatrics Nov 2009, 124 (5) e913-e920; doi: 10.1542/peds.2008-2797
- Anatale, K., & Kelly, S. (2015). Factors influencing adolescent girls' sexual behavior: A secondary analysis of the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 36*, 217–221. doi:10.3109/01612840.2014.963902
- Barnett, M. D., & Sharp, K. J. (2016). Maladaptive perfectionism, body image satisfaction, and disordered eating behaviors among U.S. college women: The mediating role of self-compassion. *Personality & Individual Differences, 99*225-234. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2016.05.004
- Bearman, S., Presnell, K., Martinez, E., & Stice, E. (2006). The skinny on body dissatisfaction: A longitudinal study of adolescent girls and boys. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 35*, 217–229. doi:10.1007/s10964-005-9010-9
- Bex, J. M. (2015). An examination of the relationship between attachment style and body image in adolescent girls: A focus on the mother-daughter relationship. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A, 76*.
- Compian, L., Gowen, L. K., & Hayward, C. (2004). Peripubertal Girls' Romantic and Platonic Involvement With Boys: Associations With Body Image and Depression Symptoms. *Journal Of Research On Adolescence (Wiley-Blackwell), 14*(1), 23-47. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2004.01401002.x

- Dunkley, C. R., Goldsmith, K. M., & Gorzalka, B. B. (2015). The potential role of mindfulness in protecting against sexual insecurities. *Canadian Journal Of Human Sexuality, 24*(2), 92-103. doi:10.3138/cjhs.242-A7
- Fenton, C., Brooks, F., Spencer, N. H., & Morgan, A. (2010). Sustaining a positive body image in adolescence: an assets-based analysis. *Health & Social Care In The Community, 18*(2). doi:10.1111/j.1365-2524.2009.00888.x
- Gendron, T. L., & Lydecker, J. (2016). The thin-youth ideal: Should we talk about aging anxiety in relation to body image?. *The International Journal Of Aging & Human Development, 82*(4), 255-270. doi:10.1177/0091415016641693
- Golan, M., Hagay, N., & Tamir, S. (2013). The Effect of “In Favor of Myself”:
Preventive
Program to Enhance Positive Self and Body Image among Adolescents. *Plos ONE, 8*(11), 1-9.
- Guy, C., Yuko, Y., Michael, B., & J. Kevin, T. (2005). The Influence of Sociocultural
Factors
on Body Image: A Meta-Analysis. *Clinical Psychology: Science & Practice, 12*(4), 421-433
- Hare-Mustin, R. T. (1978). A feminist approach to family therapy. *Family Process, 17*, 181-194.
- Jones, D. C. (2001). Social comparison and body image: Attractiveness comparisons to models and peers among adolescent girls and boys. *Sex Roles, 45*(9-10), 645-664. doi:10.1023/A:1014815725852

- Lemer, J. L., Salafia, E. B., & Benson, K. E. (2013). The relationship between college women's sexual attitudes and sexual activity: The mediating role of body image. *International Journal Of Sexual Health, 25*(2), 104-114.
doi:10.1080/19317611.2012.722593
- Manago, A. M., Ward, L. M., Lemm, K. M., Reed, L., & Seabrook, R. (2015). Facebook involvement, objectified body consciousness, body shame, and sexual assertiveness in college women and men. *Sex Roles, 72*(1-2), 1-14.
doi:10.1007/s11199-014-0441-1
- a photo-sharing site. *Cyberpsychology, 10*(2), 37-56. doi:10.5817/CP2016-2-5
- Markey, C. (2010, December). Invited commentary: Why body image is important to adolescent development. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence, 1387-1391*.
doi:10.1007/s10964-010-9510-0
- McCabe, M. P., & Ricciardelli, L. A. (2003). Socioculture influences on body image and body changes among adolescent boys and girls. *Journal Of Social Psychology, 143*(1), 5-26.
- Meier, E. P., & Gray, J. (2014). Facebook photo activity associated with body image disturbance in adolescent girls. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, And Social Networking, 17*(4), 199-206. doi:10.1089/cyber.2013.0305
- Nanu, C., Tăut, D., & Băban, A. (2013). Appearance esteem and weight esteem in adolescence. Are they different across age and gender?. *Cognition, Brain, Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 17*(3), 189-200.
- Overstreet, N. M. (2013). Examining the effect of body shame on sexual risk outcomes. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A, 74*,

- Petersen, J. L., & Hyde, J. S. (2013). Peer sexual harassment and disordered eating in early adolescence. *Developmental Psychology, 49*(1), 184-195.
doi:10.1037/a0028247
- Price, B. (2009). Body image in adolescents: insights and implications. *Pediatric Nursing, 21*(5), 38-43. doi.org/10.7748/paed2009.06.21.5.38.c7082
- Satinsky, S., Dennis, B., Reece, M., Sanders, S., & Bardzell, S. (2013). My 'Fat Girl Complex': a preliminary investigation of sexual health and body image in women of size. *Culture, Health & Sexuality, 15*(6), 710-725.
doi:10.1080/13691058.2013.783236
- Spencer, B., Barrett, C., Storti, G., & Cole, M. (2013). 'Only girls who want fat legs take the elevator': Body image in single-sex and mixed-sex colleges. *Sex Roles, 69*(7-8), 469-479. doi:10.1007/s11199-012-0189-4
- Swami, V., Tran, U., Stieger, S., & Voracek, M. (2015). Associations Between Women's Body Image and Happiness: Results of the YouBeauty.com Body Image Survey (YBIS). *Journal Of Happiness Studies, 16*(3), 705-718. doi:10.1007/s10902-014-9530-7
- Te'eni-Harari, T., & Eyal, K. (2015). Liking Them Thin: Adolescents' Favorite Television Characters and Body Image. *Journal Of Health Communication, 20*(5), 607-615. doi:10.1080/10810730.2015.1012241
- Watson, L. B., Grotewiel, M., Farrell, M., Marshik, J., & Schneider, M. (2015). Experiences of sexual objectification, minority stress, and disordered eating among sexual minority women. *Psychology Of Women Quarterly, 39*(4), 458-470.
doi:10.1177/0361684315575024

Wallwiener, S., Strohmaier, J., Wallwiener, L., Schönfisch, B., Zipfel, S., Brucker, S. Y., & ... Wallwiener, C. W. (2016). Sexual Function Is Correlated With Body Image and Partnership Quality in Female University Students. *Journal Of Sexual Medicine, 13*(10), 1530-1538. doi:10.1016/j.jsxm.2016.07.020

Webb, H. J., & Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J. (2014). The Role of Friends and Peers in Adolescent Body Dissatisfaction: A Review and Critique of 15 Years of Research. *Journal Of Research On Adolescence (Wiley-Blackwell), 24*(4), 564-590. doi:10.1111/jora.12084

Vita

Sarah Elizabeth Christian

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

B.S., Business Management, 2015
Honors College
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS HELD

Clinic Coordinator, UK Family Center, 2016-2017
Intern Therapist, UK Family Center, 2016-2017
Teaching Assistant, University of Kentucky, 2015-2016
Team Member, Family Sciences MFT Research Team, 2016
Softball Instructional Coach, Greenville, NC, 2011-2015
East Carolina Softball Camp Instructor, 2011-2015
Intern, Real Crisis Center, 2013-2014
Research Intern, CESAR, 2014

SCHOLASTIC AND PROFESSIONAL HONORS

Dean's List, University of Kentucky, 2015-2017
Honors College Graduate, East Carolina University, 2015
Beta Gamma Sigma Honors Society, East Carolina University, 2015