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The Effect of Gender Typing and Body Image on Life Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between gender typing, body dissatisfaction, and psychological well-being. It was hypothesized that gender typed individuals would use appearance and body image as defining features of self-worth and therefore would be more vulnerable to feel dissatisfied with their bodies and subsequently experience more psychological distress. Three hundred participants from North America (age 18 to 83) completed online questionnaires that assessed gender typing, body image satisfaction, appearance schematicity, and satisfaction with life. No significant sex differences in body image satisfaction were reported between men and women. Body image satisfaction positively correlated with overall life satisfaction, however contrary to predictions, this correlation was stronger for men. Body image satisfaction was significantly correlated with actual masculinity scores in both men and women, but masculinity did not mediate the association between body image and overall life satisfaction. There was a sex difference in appearance schematicity, indicating that appearance is more important for women, and this sex difference was mediated by femininity. The relative role of gender, as opposed to possessing attributes that have historically been considered masculine and feminine, is discussed.

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The Effect of Gender Typing and Body Image on Life Satisfaction

Gender schemas are cognitive ways of categorizing information according to either feminine or masculine typicality as defined by their culture. For example, an individual who thinks of the adjective 'muscular' may mentally classify this term as masculine according to his/her gender schema and similarly classify the adjective 'skinny' as feminine. Individuals who use gender as a way of classifying information, and who act according to this classification, are said to be gender typed (Bem, 1984). These gender typed individuals may feel pressure to live up to cultural gender expectations.

This study will examine the relationship between body dissatisfaction and psychological well-being, as well as how this relationship is influenced by gender typing. Specifically, this study examines sex differences in general and the role of psychological masculinity and femininity as predictors of body image and of overall life satisfaction. Body dissatisfaction may be a large contributor to poor psychological well-being for both men and women, and different cultural expectations for men and women may influence this dissatisfaction. As will be discussed below, a lot of attention and research has focused on body dissatisfaction in women, but dissatisfaction may also be on the rise for men due to the unrealistic portrayal of men's bodies in the media. Previous research has demonstrated connections between gender and body image, and the aim of the current study is to extend this research by examining different facets of gender typing and internalizations of societal norms for men and women.

Gender Schemas and Gender Typing

In 1984, Sandra Bem described gender typed individuals as those who use their sex to define what personal characteristics, skills, and behaviours are appropriate for them to possess

(Bem, 1984). Bem stated that children learn to categorize by gender at a very young age due to cultural expectations for men and women, but also because of parents, peers, and other people they interact with who emphasize to the child what is appropriate for a man or a woman (Bem, 1984). The child may learn to develop gender-schematic processing, a cognitive way of organizing information into specific gender categories, and then to adhere to those categories. Some children will learn to internalize these gender schemas and start to demonstrate gender appropriate thinking and behaviour, but some are raised in a way that does not emphasize gender as an important category for guiding their behaviour. According to Bem, these early childhood experiences are an important part of how gender differences emerge. Bem's Gender Schema Theory postulates that gender typed individuals, those who are predominantly masculine or feminine, are more likely to wish to behave in a way that is consistent with their gender and are more likely to feel discomfort or distress if they believe their traits and behaviours do not coincide with their gender. Individuals who are androgynous do not process information about the social world according to gender, and therefore they do not experience this internal pressure to conform to gender-based expectations (Bem, 1984).

There have been multiple studies conducted that demonstrate the differences in cognitive processing of gender typed individuals. For example, Mills (1983) found that gender typed individuals responded much faster to gender appropriate attributes that they knew they possessed but took longer to admit they possessed attributes that were not congruent with their gender, suggesting that there was some discomfort with admitting to possess sex-inappropriate traits. Furthermore, Bem (1981) found that participants who were gender typed were more likely to group words according to gender categories above other categories and were more likely to

remember only words typical of their appropriate gender category. Deaux and Major (1977) also found that gender typed participants were more likely to categorize people into gender appropriate categories after watching video clips of people demonstrating different behaviours. This early research is among the first to support Gender Schema Theory and gender-schematic cognitive processes.

Recently a revised approach to measuring gender typing was developed that focuses more on motivation to conform to gender-related attributes based on Higgins`(1987) self-discrepancy theory (Howell-Spooner, 2013; Swift, 2013). Whereas Bem measured gender typing by asking people what attributes people feel they possess (some being stereotypically masculine and some stereotypically feminine), in this new approach participants are also asked about the extent to which they ideally want to possess the attributes and to which they feel that others expect them to possess the attributes. These additions are intended to reflect the extent to which individuals have internalized gender-based expectations into their own motivational system (i.e., as ideals to strive toward) and perceived social pressures to conform. When studying sex differences, using this measure allows for separate investigation of implications of possessing masculine or feminine attributes, as well as the implications of ideally wanting to possess these attributes and of feeling that one ought to possess these attributes, therefore yielding three scores instead of one.

Gender and Body Image

Gender differences in body dissatisfaction have been studied with somewhat mixed findings. Some research emphasizes body dissatisfaction as being potentially greater among women. Clark and Tiggemann (2008) looked at what factors predict body image in young girls

by assessing television and magazine exposure, internalizations of appearance ideals, body image, autonomy, and how often girls spoke to their friends about appearance. The researchers concluded that girls who were dissatisfied with their body image had a higher desire for a thin body and more internalized appearance ideals. The more exposure girls had to media, the lower their self-esteem score. It was also found that girls who defined their self-worth by their appearance were more likely to feel negative about their bodies. Additionally, Ambwani and Strauss (2007) found that women, more than men, greatly emphasized their appearance due to internalizations of how others react to their appearance. Women believed that men were attracted to slender and sexy women, while men believed that women were interested in physical attractiveness and dominance. Moreover, a study by Cash, Jakatdar, and Fleming Williams (2004) examined sex differences in how individuals feel their body image impacts their quality of life and found that women reported more negative impact than did men. The researchers also found that the impact of body image on quality of life increased for women as their body mass score increased. There was no significant relationship between body image quality of life and body mass for men. Furthermore, when researching opinions on specific body parts, Hoyt and Kogan (2002) found that women were more dissatisfied with their abdomen, waist, thighs, and buttocks, while men were more dissatisfied with their upper body.

Some research, however, reveals similarities in men and women with respect to the importance of appearance. For example, Cho and Lee (2013) had participants view different body types while their gaze and eye movements were tracked by a recording device. Participants were then asked to rate the different body types along with their own body. The results of the study demonstrated that men with high body dissatisfaction looked significantly longer at images

of muscular men than images of normal or overweight men. Women with high body dissatisfaction gazed significantly longer at images of thin women. Furthermore, the group of dissatisfied individuals also reported feelings of lower mood and negative emotions. The researchers concluded that there may be an attentional bias for dissatisfied individuals, indicating that these individuals pay more attention to idealized bodies and feel a greater sense of unattractiveness when judging their own bodies. Similarly, Tiggemann (2001) found, by measuring body dissatisfaction in both boys and girls, that slimness and attractiveness influenced how boys and girls perceived their bodies. Emphasis on slimness was determined to be the strongest predictor of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating, demonstrating that internalizations of ideal body images could lead to preoccupations with one's weight and potential development of/into a dangerous eating disorder.

Providing further insight into the relationship between gender-related issues and body image, research has examined whether body image satisfaction is related to gender-schematic processing and gender typing. Gillen and Lefkowitz (2006) examined how body image was related to an individual's gender role by asking men and women about their body satisfaction, relationships, attitudes toward family roles, and what they thought was a typical role of men and women. The researchers found that 72% of women wanted to be thinner and 24% of men wanted to be larger. Women who were highly feminine were more dissatisfied with their bodies than were men who rated high on masculinity. Similarly, Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Rade and Jaberg (2001) measured self-esteem, gender orientation, body satisfaction, and personality traits and concluded that highly feminine individuals showed a greater discrepancy between what they believed their ideal body image was and their actual body image. For men, there was no

significant discrepancy in that regard. Highly gender typed women also reported more body dissatisfaction and lowered self-esteem. Furthermore, Thomas, Ricciardelli, and Williams (2000) looked at gender schematicity in children and found that the strongest predictor of problem eating and dieting was femininity. Boys who scored high on femininity were also more likely to experience problem eating. Although research examining just sex differences in body dissatisfaction has found somewhat mixed results, research on gender typing fairly consistently suggests femininity is an influential factor.

In addition to research examining body dissatisfaction in women and the role of femininity, some research suggests that men may also be at risk of developing body dissatisfaction and lowered self-esteem. Murray and Lewis (2014) conducted a study to determine if the typical male physique, a mesomorphic body shape including a large, muscular upper body and a narrow waist, is linked to a typical male gender role as it implies strength and dominance. A sample of men was asked to report on their body dissatisfaction and gender role expectations, and the results supported a link between age and gender roles. Older men were less likely to experience the pressure to fulfill gender role expectations, but men of all ages who placed importance on their gender were more likely to be dissatisfied with their body. The researchers concluded that adherence to a strict gender role may pressure men to take on the characteristics of this role, including possessing the appropriate body type. These men may feel greater dissatisfaction if they are unable to present a typical masculine appearance. Specifically, idealized media images encouraged dissatisfaction with one's muscularity instead of overall weight.

Similarly, Schwartz, Grammas, Sutherland, Siffert, and Bush-King (2010) studied the relationship between gender roles, body dissatisfaction, and self-objectification in men. Self-objectification, which includes internalizing cultural messages and defining one's worth based on these external messages, can lead to a preoccupation with physical appearance. Men who scored high on self-objectification were more likely to feel pressure to conform to the male physique portrayed in the media and therefore experienced lower self-esteem. Men with a strong self-identity and close relationships with others had a healthier body image. Those men who adhered to the masculine gender role placed an overemphasis on their body image and were more likely to objectify themselves. An autonomous sense of self was determined to be a protective factor against body dissatisfaction and self-objectification. This research suggests that body image issues may also exist for men, and body dissatisfaction in men may be on the rise.

A majority of the body image research examines body dissatisfaction, but more recent research has examined a newer concept called appearance schematicity. Appearance schematicity is defined as the extent that individuals value various aspects of their physical appearance (Cash & Labarge, 1996; Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2002). These appearance schemas are formed early in life and, like gender schemas, influence how one categorizes information about the self and how this information influences one's feelings of self-worth. Cash and Labarge (1996) proposed that appearance schematicity consists of self-evaluative salience and motivational salience. Self-evaluative salience measures the extent to which an individual's self-image is based on physical appearance, and motivational salience measures the extent to which an individual performs behaviours to take care of one's appearance. Ip and Jarry (2007) found that women who scored high on self-evaluative salience were more likely to be dissatisfied

with their bodies, and these women were more likely to experience negative feelings after viewing media portrayals of thin models. Individuals who scored high on the motivational salience aspect of appearance schematicity had higher reports of appearance importance and were more motivated to make sure their appearance matched their ideal body image. Furthermore, Jung and Lennon (2003) examined the relationship between appearance schematicity, body dissatisfaction, and psychological well-being. The researchers found that women who placed a lot of importance on their appearance were more likely to have a lesser body image, lower self-esteem, and a more negative mood. Since their appearance was central to how these women defined their self-image, they were more likely to suffer and feel dissatisfied when their body image did not meet their expectations. For exploratory purposes, the present study will examine appearance schematicity in relation to gender typing and body dissatisfaction to determine how it may influence psychological well-being in women and men as well.

The Present Study

The present study will examine the relationships among gender typing, body dissatisfaction, and psychological well-being. First, the study will examine sex differences in body dissatisfaction, as well as in the importance of appearance for determining one's self worth (appearance schemas). The relative strength of the relationship between body dissatisfaction and psychological well-being will be examined separately for men and women to see if there is a sex difference in the importance of appearance for psychological health. Past research has not been entirely conclusive on this issue, and this study will examine this further.

Furthermore, the study will examine the association between body dissatisfaction and gender roles. It will be determined whether the sex differences described above particularly

reflect women who internalize expectations for their gender (based on the extent to which they "ideally" wish to possess "feminine" attributes). Some research also suggests there may be increasing emphasis on the mesomorphic body type for men, so this study will also provide information as to whether the importance of appearance is highest among men who internalize a masculine gender role (i.e., ideally wish to possess "masculine" attributes).

There are three major sets of hypotheses for this study: 1) Based on the research previously described, women are expected to score higher than men in body image dissatisfaction, 2) body satisfaction is predicted to correlate positively with overall life satisfaction, and this correlation may be strongest for women, 3) women who ideally wish for feminine traits, and possibly men who rate high on wanting to possess masculine traits, will use appearance and body image as defining features of self-worth; hence, they will be more vulnerable to feel dissatisfied with their bodies and subsequently experience more psychological distress. It is therefore predicted that ideal femininity will mediate the relationship between body image and psychological well-being among women, and ideal masculinity will possibly mediate the relationship among men.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited via an online website called Amazon Mechanical Turk (www.mturk.com). An analysis conducted on the assessment of the validity of this website has demonstrated that participants who access and complete questionnaires on MTurk are no more biased than if the study were conducted in person, therefore the responses of participants are fairly representative (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012). Berinsky and colleagues (2012) also

suggest that the sample participants provide a better representation of the broader population than those attained through convenience sampling, and Huff and Tingley (2015) found the samples to be comparable to those attained by a professional polling firm with a few minor exceptions (e.g. a slight over representation of Hispanic women and Asians).

A link posted on MTurk took participants to another website called Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) where they were able to complete each questionnaire for the study. The age of the participants ranged from age 18 - 83 (M = 34.31, SD = 10.62), and the sample consisted of 300 participants: 157 (52.3%) males and 143 (47.7%) females. The recruitment page asked for participants from North America, and in the final sample the majority reported being Caucasian (n = 221). Other ethnicities included were African American (n = 23), Asian (n = 25), Hispanic (n = 13), Arabic (n = 1), Native American (n = 6), Hindu (n = 1), and multi-racial (identified themselves as two or more ethnicities) (n = 10). Participants were also asked to indicate their highest level of education. The demographic information indicated that two participants had less than a high school education, 36 had a high school diploma or equivalent, 105 had some college/university education, 123 had a college/university degree, and 34 had a post graduate degree. After participants had filled out the questionnaires they were provided a debriefing form and were paid $1.50 through the MTurk website.

Materials/Measures

Gender typing. A questionnaire based partly on Bem's Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) was used to measure actual, ideal, and ought masculine and feminine self-concepts. The adaptation of this inventory includes additional terms that may have been overlooked or changed from Bem's previous measure specifically with the aim of examining subcategories of attributes

that may be considered masculine or feminine. In a previous study, a factor analysis was done on this measure and found loadings on six different clusters of traits: nurturance/social orientation, emotional instability, dominance, risk-taking, achievement, and reasoning (Howell-Spooner, 2013), with the first two potentially reflecting feminine attributes, and the latter four being masculine. This factor analysis was replicated in the present study, and the same six trait clusters emerged. These clusters were used to compute the actual masculine and feminine variables.

The inventory includes 3 short questionnaires that instruct individuals to rate their actual, ideal, and ought selves on 32 descriptive traits (see Appendices B to D). The questionnaires use a Likert Scale from *1* to *7,* where *1* indicates *Not at all Descriptive* of the self and *7* indicates *Extremely Descriptive* of the self. A fourth questionnaire in the inventory measures how typically descriptive these same 32 traits are of either males or females (see Appendix E). Participants are instructed to rate descriptive traits on a Likert Scale from 1 to 7, where *1* indicates *Extremely Descriptive of Males* and *7* indicates *Extremely Descriptive of Females.* After performing the factor analysis on the 32 attributes as described above, this measure was used to confirm that the attitude clusters are still seen as masculine (more characteristic of men) or feminine (more characteristic of women). Composite measures of actual, ideal, and ought masculinity and femininity were calculated. Most important for the current study's predictions are ideal masculinity and femininity, which are felt to reflect internalization of gender-relevant standards.

Body image. The Body Image Quality of Life Inventory (BIQLI; Cash & Fleming, 2002) was used to measure participants' body image and its effect on overall feelings about quality of life; this provided the primary measure of body satisfaction/dissatisfaction. This inventory consists of 19 statements, and participants must indicate to what extent their body image has an

effect on these aspects of themselves. The statements include feelings about the self, life, eating, exercise, emotions, family, school/work, sexual relationships, and grooming activities (Cash & Fleming, 2002). The BIQLI uses a 7-point scale ranging from -3 to +3, with -3 indicating a *very negative effect* of body image on the statement in question and +3 indicating a *very positive effect* of body image on the statement in question. Some examples of statements include: "My experience when I meet new people," "My day-to-day emotions," and "My ability to control my weight." Individuals are asked to indicate how their body image affects each part of their daily lives. Scores are calculated by computing the mean of all 19 items, and a higher score indicates a greater effect of body image on domains in one's life. Research indicates the BIQLI is internally consistent for a three-week period and has significant convergent validity with other measures of body image, as well as having good internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .95$. Gender differences have also been reported, with body image affecting women significantly more negatively than men (Cash & Fleming, 2002; Cash, Jakatdar, & Fleming Williams, 2004).

For exploratory purposes, the Appearance Schemas Inventory – Revised (ASI-R; Cash & Labarge, 1996) was included to measure appearance schematicity in individuals. Individuals who score high on appearance schematicity base their self-image on their physical appearance and are more likely to take care of their physical appearance (Cash & Labarge, 1996). The ASI-R presents individuals with 20 statements that measure either the Self-Evaluative Salience or the Motivational Salience of appearance schematicity. Self-Evaluative Salience items measure the extent to which individuals view their physical appearance as part of their self-concept. An example of a Self-Evaluative Salience statement includes: "When I see good-looking people, I wonder about how my own looks measure up." Items that measure Motivational Salience

measure to what extent individuals are motivated to take care of their physical appearance. An example of a Motivational Salience statement includes: "I try to be as physically attractive as I can be." Participants are instructed to rate each statement on a Likert Scale from 1 – *Strongly Disagree* to 5 – *Strongly Agree.* An individual's final score is the mean rating for all 20 statements. The higher the score the more appearance schematic an individual is likely to be. Cronbach's alpha for the ASI-R scale is $\alpha = .90$ for men and $\alpha = .88$ for women, and convergent validity has also been determined indicating correlations with measures of body image and psychological functioning (Cash & Labarge, 1996). Gender differences have also been demonstrated, with women scoring higher on both the self-evaluative and motivational salience components. For this study, the overall appearance schematic score was examined rather than the two separate component scores of the measure.

Psychological well-being. The Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used to measure the psychological effects of gender schematicity, appearance schematicity, and body image on life satisfaction. The measure consists of five global statements that allow participants to rate their lives according to their own internalized set of standards for life satisfaction. Participants rate each statement on a Likert Scale from 1 – *Strongly Disagree* to 7 – *Strongly Agree.* An example of a statement includes: "In most ways my life is close to my ideal." The scale has strong internal validity and moderate temporal validity (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Cronbach's alpha is $\alpha = .87$, and the test-retest coefficient for two months later is $\alpha = .82$ and four years later is $\alpha = .54$. The measure also has excellent convergent validity as it correlates positively with other measures of well-being and correlates negatively with measures of

depression and anxiety (Pavot & Diener, 1993). The final score is calculated by adding up the rating given to each item, and a higher score represents higher life satisfaction.

Procedure

Participants were recruited via an online survey system called MTurk and were provided with a link that took them to another site called Survey Monkey. On Survey Monkey, the seven questionnaires for the study were previously uploaded by the researchers and available for participants to fill out. Only participants who met the requirements for the survey (North American, age 18 and older) were allowed to continue with the study. Participants who agreed to participate were given a consent form describing the study and explaining that all information provided would be kept confidential. Participants were also asked to fill out demographic information, which included providing information about their gender, age, ethnicity, and education (see Appendix A). The seven questionnaires were then presented one after the other in the following order: the measures of actual, ideal, and ought masculinity and femininity, the questionnaire asking how gender-typical the masculinity and femininity items used in the first questionnaire are, the ASI-R, the BIQLI, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale. Participants had to complete each questionnaire before moving onto the next one. The Satisfaction With Life Scale was presented at the end as not to give away to participants that the researchers were interested in a connection between gender schemas, body image, and life satisfaction. The questionnaires were kept anonymous, as no identifying information was collected. When participants completed the questionnaires, they were presented onscreen with a debriefing form that explained the purpose of the study and were paid a $1.50 through MTurk for their participation.

Results

Initial Analyses

Table 1 presents correlations among the main predictor variables. With respect to body image, ideal masculinity and actual masculinity significantly correlated with body image satisfaction, $r(298) = .24$, $p < .001$ and $r(298) = .51$, $p < .001$ respectively, whereas ideal femininity and actual femininity did not. Appearance schematicity also significantly correlated with ideal masculinity ($r(298) = .164$, $p = .004$), ideal femininity ($r(298) = .204$, $p < .001$), and actual femininity ($r(298) = .383$, $p < .001$). There was no significant correlation between body image satisfaction and appearance schematicity ($r(298) = .092$, *ns*.).

Actual masculinity correlated with overall life satisfaction, $r(298) = .28$, $p < .001$, as did ideal femininity, $r(298) = .24$, $p < .001$, suggesting that individuals were more satisfied if they actually possessed masculine traits or were striving to possess more ideal feminine traits. Ideal masculinity and actual femininity did not correlate with overall life satisfaction. Overall, life satisfaction was significantly correlated with body image satisfaction, $r(298) = .54$, $p < .001$, but not with appearance schematicity, $r(298) = -.029$, *ns*. It might also be noted that masculinity and femininity scores were significantly positively correlated, which is generally consistent with Bem's view that these variables should be viewed as distinct dimensions rather than as opposites.

To examine sex differences for the main variables in this study, independent samples t-tests were conducted between men and women to compare differences in ideal masculinity, ideal femininity, body image dissatisfaction, appearance schematicity, and life satisfaction. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations of all variables included in this study, as well as the

Table 1

Overall Correlations Among The Main Predictor Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ideal Masculinity (1)		.485**	.247**	.175**	.239**	.164**	-.001
Actual Masculinity (2)			.176**	.022	.507**	.075	.284**
Ideal Femininity (3)				.557**	.106	.204**	.235**
Actual Femininity (4)					-.094	.383**	-.054
Body Image Satisfaction (5)						.092	.535**
Appearance Schematicity (6)							-.029
Life Satisfaction (7)							

** indicate significance at $p < .001$.

results of the t-tests. It can be seen that there are significant mean differences between men and women among all variables except body image satisfaction and life satisfaction. Tests of equality of variance were also done and revealed no significant differences between men and women in variability for any of the measures.

Testing of Hypotheses

The first hypothesis predicted women to score lower than men in body image satisfaction. As described above, this t-test was not significant. There was, however, a significant sex difference in appearance schematicity, with women scoring higher (See Table 2).

The second hypothesis predicted that body image satisfaction would correlate positively with overall life satisfaction, and that this correlation would be stronger for women. The first part of this hypothesis was supported as body image satisfaction did correlate positively with overall life satisfaction, $r(298) = .54$, $p < .001$. The sex by body satisfaction interaction predicting life satisfaction was calculated using multiple regression, and a marginally significant interaction was found ($t(298) = 1.72$, $p < .09$). Contrary to what was expected, this correlation was greater for men, $r(298) = .61$, $p < .001$, than for women, $r(298) = .46$, $p < .001$, indicating that greater body satisfaction in men had a larger effect on overall life satisfaction than it did in women. The third set of hypotheses predicted that ideal femininity would mediate the relationship between body image satisfaction and psychological well-being among women, and ideal masculinity will possibly mediate the relationship among men. The hypothesis for women was not confirmed, as it can be seen in the correlations in Table 1 that femininity (either actual or ideal) was uncorrelated with body satisfaction overall. The correlation between femininity and body

Table 2

Independent Samples T-tests For Sex Differences

	Mean (SD)			
Variable	Men	Women	*t* value	*p*
Ideal Masculinity	4.96 (.83)	4.74 (.97)	2.18	.029
Ideal Femininity	3.61 (.69)	3.77 (.75)	-1.95	.052
Actual Masculinity	4.32 (.92)	4.12 (.92)	2.06	.041
Actual Femininity	4.03 (.78)	4.43 (.80)	-4.40	.000
Body Image Satisfaction	4.54 (1.11)	4.47 (1.11)	.52	.600
Appearance Schematicity	3.01 (.74)	3.22 (.79)	-2.38	.018
Life Satisfaction	4.09 (1.62)	4.28 (1.58)	-1.01	.314
Gender Satisfaction	5.67 (1.15)	5.84 (1.18)	-1.27	.206

satisfaction in just women was also not significant (r (141) = .06, *ns*. between ideal femininity and body satisfaction and r(141) = -.09, *ns*. between actual femininity and body satisfaction).

To test mediation of actual masculinity between body satisfaction and life satisfaction, a series of regression analyses were conducted, and these were done separately for men and women given the strong correlation between body image and life satisfaction for both. Because of the stronger association between body satisfaction with actual, rather than ideal, masculinity, actual masculinity was used to test the hypotheses. Body image satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of actual masculinity in both men, $\beta = .56$, $p < .001$, and women, $\beta = .45$, $p < .001$, indicating that masculinity could plausibly act as a mediator. Using both masculinity and body image satisfaction as predictor variables of overall life satisfaction, body satisfaction predicted overall life satisfaction significantly both for men, $\beta = .59$, $p < .001$, and women, $\beta = .45$, $p < .001$. Masculinity was not a significant predictor independent of body image in either analysis, indicating that actual masculinity did not act as a mediator between body satisfaction and life satisfaction. Since body image satisfaction was found to significantly predict actual masculinity in both men and women, body satisfaction can be argued to correlate with the type of traits individuals possess overall, with more masculine traits related to greater body image satisfaction; in other words, this does not appear to be related to gender.

Although the major predictions involved body satisfaction, as discussed in the introduction, sex differences in appearance schematicity were also thought to be plausible. The t-test results above found this to be the case, with women scoring higher than men. Additional analyses were then done to examine whether this sex difference would be mediated by femininity. Sex was found to significantly predict actual femininity, $\beta = .25$, $p < .001$, meaning

that femininity could plausibly mediate the sex difference. When actual femininity and sex were included as predictors of appearance schematicity, sex was no longer a significant predictor, $\beta = .05$, *ns.*, but femininity was significant, $\beta = .37$, $p < .001$. Sobel's test of mediation between sex, actual femininity, and appearance schematicity was significant (Sobel's test = 3.75, $p < .001$), indicating that actual femininity completely mediated the sex differences in appearance schematicity. This relationship was not significant for actual masculinity indicating that the gender difference in appearance schematicity is mainly the case in women who are highly feminine.

Discussion

The present study set out to examine the relationships among gender typing, body image, and psychological well-being. Based on previous research findings, the first hypothesis predicted that women would score higher than men on body image dissatisfaction. This hypothesis was not supported, as there was no difference between the body satisfaction scores of men and women. The second hypothesis predicted that body satisfaction would correlate positively with overall life satisfaction, and that this correlation would be stronger for women compared to men. The first part of the hypothesis was supported, as body image satisfaction was positively correlated with overall life satisfaction, but this correlation was unexpectedly stronger for men. The final hypotheses predicted that ideal femininity would mediate the relationship between body image satisfaction and psychological well-being among women, and ideal masculinity would possibly mediate the relationship among men. These hypotheses were not supported. Femininity (either ideal or actual) was uncorrelated with body image satisfaction. Masculinity was significantly

correlated with body image (actual masculinity more strongly than ideal masculinity), but it did not predict life satisfaction independent of body image.

The finding of no sex difference in body satisfaction did not replicate some previous research that did find significant differences between men and women (Ambwani & Strauss, 2007; Clark & Tiggemann, 2008), and one study reported sex differences using this same measure (Cash, Jakatdar, & Fleming Williams, 2004). Perhaps this finding can be explained by the changing culture in which women are learning to be more satisfied with their body image and therefore scoring similar to men. Alternatively, it could be that with the growing stereotypes of the ideal body image for men that men are becoming more dissatisfied with their body image and scoring similar to dissatisfied women. Furthermore, many previous studies have used young girls and boys or undergraduate students as participants (Ambwani & Strauss, 2007; Cash, Jakatdar, & Fleming Williams, 2004, Clark & Tiggemann, 2008; Hoyt and Kogan, 2002), while the current study had a more diverse sample consisting of participants ranging from 18 to 83 years. An exploratory analysis within this sample showed a non-significant negative correlation between age and body satisfaction among women ($r(141) = -.12$, *ns.*), however a significant correlation between age and appearance schematicity ($r(141) = -.34$, $p < .001$); the correlation between age and appearance schematicity was also significant for men ($r(141) = -.21$, $p < .01$). Although it is not clear from these correlations whether age differences between samples alone could explain the different results, it is plausible and also possible that age in combination with other factors (such as socioeconomic status, education level) could influence this relationship.

Although men and women did not differ in body satisfaction, there was a significant difference in appearance schematicity. A mediation analysis was conducted with actual

femininity as the mediator. Actual femininity was found to completely mediate the relationship between sex and appearance schematicity, indicating that sex-typed women in particular were more likely to be concerned with their physical appearance and use their physical appearance as a defining feature of self-worth. This finding supports the research conducted by Cash and Labarge (1996), who found that women were more likely to be appearance schematic compared to men. It is not surprising that women would be more likely to care for their physical appearance due to the importance placed on feminine qualities, such as beauty or elegance, in Western society. The fact that the sex difference is mediated by femininity is consistent with this idea that femininity and an emphasis on appearance are related, and that women who fit societal views of the typical woman also conform to the idea that women are focused on their appearance.

The second set of hypotheses involved the relationship between body image satisfaction and overall life satisfaction in men and women. The correlation was found to be greater in men compared to women, which is not what was predicted. Since the relationship between body image satisfaction and overall life satisfaction is correlational, there are several causal possibilities. The first is that individuals value their body image so much that satisfaction with their body leads to satisfaction with overall life. Given that women score higher in appearance schematicity, this logic should still lead to a stronger correlation between body satisfaction and life satisfaction among women, however. Alternatively, satisfaction with life could lead individuals to be satisfied (or report being satisfied) automatically with their bodies due to their overall happiness. Since there was no difference in the scores of life satisfaction between men and women, this second assumption seems unlikely to explain the stronger link between life

satisfaction and body satisfaction for men. Although the original hypothesis was based on the idea that body dissatisfaction would have a larger impact on women's overall well-being, these results may be understood better by considering men with greater overall life and body satisfaction than by considering women who are satisfied with their lives overall.

To test the third hypothesis, actual masculinity and femininity were examined as possible mediators between body image satisfaction and psychological well-being. Originally, it was hypothesized that ideal masculinity would mediate the relationship for men and ideal femininity would mediate the relationship for women, however, as mentioned earlier, actual masculinity and femininity were found to be stronger predictors of the body image variables. Body image was found to significantly correlate with actual masculinity in both men and women, but not with actual femininity. Regression analyses showed that body satisfaction continued to predict life satisfaction independent of actual masculinity, but masculinity did not significantly predict life satisfaction independent of body satisfaction. It seems that possessing typically masculine traits does not explain the relationship between body satisfaction and life satisfaction as had been predicted for men, nor does femininity mediate the relationship between body satisfaction and life satisfaction for women.

Since there was no difference in the scores of body image satisfaction between men and women, and body satisfaction was significantly related to life satisfaction for men and women, this study does not suggest that sex is relevant to understanding body satisfaction. Possessing more masculine traits in both men and women seems to relate to a greater psychological well-being and satisfaction with body image. This finding supports the masculinity theory proposed by Whitley (1983), which states that one's well-being is related to the extent that one possesses

masculine qualities regardless of one's gender. Whitley argues that masculinity is related to high self-esteem and well-being in both men and women because society values more masculine traits such as independence or assertiveness. Whitley proposes that women who possess these masculine traits are more likely to have increased psychological well-being because they fit into a society that values these traits. The findings of the present study that masculine traits relate to body image satisfaction in both men and women seem to support this masculinity theory or at least suggest that the effect reflects aspects of the attributes that constitute "masculinity" rather than gender.

Actual and ideal femininity both significantly correlated with appearance schematicity, and women scored higher than men on the ASI-R. Actual femininity also completely mediated the relationship between sex and appearance schematicity. These findings seem to suggest that women value their physical appearance more than men, and that this is especially the case in women who are highly feminine. Women who possess actual feminine traits and those who ideally would like more feminine traits place heavy importance on their appearance, perhaps because of cultural expectations regarding women. These feminine women may feel as if an attractive physical appearance is necessary for being feminine, and they may place more time and effort into taking care of their appearance. These results support previous research that has found that women believe their physical appearance is important and spend more time than men taking part in grooming behaviours (Sullivan & Harnish, 1990; Wilcox, 1997). The fact that no significant correlation was found between appearance schematicity and life satisfaction in both men and women seems to indicate that although physical appearance is important for women, it has no influence on overall satisfaction of life in both genders. Yet, since body image satisfaction

does correlate with life satisfaction, appearance schematicity, although an issue related to body image, seems to be a concept independent of body image satisfaction with different psychological effects on the individual.

Although the main hypotheses involved gender and body image, the correlations between the masculinity and femininity measures with life satisfaction are relevant to understanding how gender issues relate to overall well-being. Bem's Gender Schema Theory (Bem, 1984) predicts that gender typed individuals ideally wish to possess traits typical of their gender only and therefore limit the development of their personalities. Whitely (1983) suggests that masculine attributes are more highly valued in North America, and therefore both men and women will be better off if they possess these attributes. Consistent with Whitely, actual masculinity scores predicted higher life satisfaction, and this correlation was significant among both men and women. Although possessing attributes that are considered feminine did not correlate significantly with life satisfaction overall, examined within gender, a marginally significant negative correlation was found within women ($r(141) = -.16$, $p < .06$), suggesting a trend for feminine women to be less satisfied. This may partially be consistent with Bem's theory, suggesting that gender typing may be problematic, but only for women. Surprisingly, wishing to possess feminine attributes (ideal femininity) was positively related to life satisfaction, and this was true for men and women. It is not clear why this would be the case, and this finding does not seem to fit any of the gender theories.

Practical Implications

The results of this study challenge the notion that body dissatisfaction is predominantly a concern in women. Men too are affected by their body image satisfaction, perhaps even more so

than women. This research is beneficial in demonstrating how body dissatisfaction is significantly related to life satisfaction in both men and women, so further precautions should be taken in portraying ideally thin or muscular models in the media. These media portrayals may not only affect women as is often discussed, but also men.

The finding that body image satisfaction is related to actual masculinity traits in both men and women, and that these traits are still classified as stereotypically male, raise issues about the value of masculinity in Western society. Due to the increased body and life satisfaction in those who possess these traits, masculine traits should also be supported in women instead of pressuring women to be typically feminine. Possessing ideally feminine traits may be beneficial for women who are sex-typed, but the possibility of women possessing masculine traits should not be discouraged. There is a negative connotation associated with some feminine traits, such as worried, flighty, or emotional, that may lead to a worse perception of feminine traits compared to masculine traits. The findings of the current study add to the previous research on gender roles in supporting the need for the reduction of pressure to conform to gender stereotypes and the acceptance of individuals possessing traits typical of both genders.

Study Limitations

The first limitation of the present study is that it was correlational. Although many significant correlations were found, it is difficult to make causal assumptions about these relationships. Body image satisfaction and life satisfaction were significantly related but it cannot be said that one led to the other occurring without an experimental study. Likewise, actual masculinity was related to body image satisfaction in both genders, but it cannot be said that

possessing masculine traits leads individuals to be more satisfied with their body image. The same can be said for appearance schematicity and femininity.

Another limitation of the study is that it was conducted online. It is difficult to determine if the sample of participants was representative of the general population. Although there has been research demonstrating the reliability of the MTurk website (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012), the current study would have excluded individuals without access to the Internet and therefore possibly of a lower SES status. Furthermore, participants in the study may have given socially desirable answers or may not have given much thought to their answers, although the significant correlations suggest that this is most likely not the case to a great extent.

Finally, the study was restricted to participants only in North America; therefore the sample is predominantly Western. Although this simple gives an accurate representation of how individuals in the Western culture view gender typing and body image, the results would not be generalizable to other cultures, especially cultures that may have different gender roles and traits or that do not place as much importance on body image ideals.

Future Research

Future research and analyses of the present study should investigate exactly which masculine traits predicted body image satisfaction in both men and women. The factor analysis conducted on the Bem Sex Role Inventory yielded four distinct clusters of masculine traits and two clusters of feminine traits. These clusters should be tested individually within men and women to determine which specifically predict greater body image satisfaction. Additionally, the lack of mediation of masculinity or femininity between body image satisfaction and life satisfaction indicates that some other variables may influence or explain this relationship.

Previous research has found several influences on body satisfaction including mood, exposure to thin models, and attitudes of peers or parents (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Ive, 2006; Haedt-Matt, Zalta, Forbush, & Keel, 2012; Munoz & Ferguson, 2012). Future research should examine other variables that could further clarify the relationship between body satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Future research and analyses should also focus on the discrepancies between the actual, ideal, and ought masculine and feminine traits in relation to body image. The current study examined how the actual and ideal traits predicted body image and life satisfaction but did not assess how body image and life satisfaction differed as a function of discrepancy between the actual and ideal traits. Additional research should assess whether a discrepancy between actual and ideal traits would reflect in how participants view their body image. The fact that actual masculinity and ideal femininity predicted life satisfaction suggests that further analysis of these different measures is needed. Likewise, the ought traits should be examined in relation to body image as the present study did not include this variable in the analyses. Perhaps the ought traits could have an even greater effect on body image satisfaction since in this case individuals would not just want to possess the ideal body but would feel like they ought to possess it, which could lead to even lower feelings of satisfaction.

Lastly, future research should consider the effects of age and education on body image and gender typing. Different age groups may perceive their body image differently as well as have an alternative view of gender traits. Previous research has found that body dissatisfaction and importance placed on gender roles may decrease with age (Murray and Lewis, 2014). A significant correlation was found in this sample between age and appearance schematicity, so the

current study should be analyzed further within different age groups to see if the same masculine traits predict body satisfaction in younger and older adults. Further research including children and teenagers would also be valuable. Education level may also influence body image satisfaction and life satisfaction, as well as gender typing, and this also should be examined further.

Final Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study challenges the assumption that body image satisfaction is influenced by one's gender. Sex differences were not found in relation to body image satisfaction but were found in appearance schematicity. Women scored higher than men in appearance schematicity, and appearance was found to be the most important in highly feminine women, as actual femininity mediated the relationship between sex and appearance schematicity. On the other hand, body image satisfaction was significantly related to masculinity in both men and women. The correlation between masculinity and body image satisfaction seemed to reflect the influence of possessing typically masculine traits, such as assertive, dominant, and driven, rather than simply being male since this correlation was also present among women. Therefore, body image satisfaction seems to be a function of the type of traits individuals possess, with masculine traits predicting more satisfaction, while emphasis on appearance seems to be a function of gender, with feminine women placing the most importance on their appearance. This research adds to the literature about gender typing and body image, but there is a need for further reconsideration of the assumptions about sex differences with regards to body image. In future research, it will be important to separate the effects of specific types of traits individuals possess from those of their gender.

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Appendix A

Participant Demographic Information

Please describe yourself by answering the following questions. Your responses will NOT be used to identify individuals or their responses, but only to describe the characteristics of the sample as a whole.

1. Gender: _____
2. Ethnicity: _____
3. Age: _____
4. Educational level achieved to date (check the highest level attained):
    - Less than High School
    - High School or equivalent diploma
    - Some College/University
    - College/University Degree
    - Post Graduate Degree

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION!

Appendix B

Characteristics That You Possess

Please indicate how descriptive each characteristic is of you using a number from the following scale:

Not at all Descriptive 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely Descriptive 7

Accepting	_____	Flighty	_____
Adventurous	_____	Forceful	_____
Ambitious	_____	Friendly	_____
Analytical	_____	Gentle	_____
Assertive	_____	Logical	_____
Bold	_____	Moody	_____
Caring	_____	Naïve	_____
Co-operative	_____	Nurturing	_____
Competitive	_____	Objective	_____
Concrete-thinking	_____	Perfectionist	_____
Controlling	_____	Polite	_____
Daring	_____	Risk-taker	_____
Dominant	_____	Social	_____
Driven	_____	Suspicious	_____
Emotional	_____	Trusting	_____
Empathetic	_____	Worried	_____

Appendix C

Characteristics That You Would Like to Possess

Please indicate how descriptive each characteristic is of you using a number from the following scale:

Not at all Descriptive 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely Descriptive 7

Accepting	_____	Flighty	_____
Adventurous	_____	Forceful	_____
Ambitious	_____	Friendly	_____
Analytical	_____	Gentle	_____
Assertive	_____	Logical	_____
Bold	_____	Moody	_____
Caring	_____	Naïve	_____
Co-operative	_____	Nurturing	_____
Competitive	_____	Objective	_____
Concrete-thinking	_____	Perfectionist	_____
Controlling	_____	Polite	_____
Daring	_____	Risk-taker	_____
Dominant	_____	Social	_____
Driven	_____	Suspicious	_____
Emotional	_____	Trusting	_____
Empathetic	_____	Worried	_____

Appendix D

Characteristics That Others Expect You To Possess

Please indicate how descriptive each characteristic is of you using a number from the following scale:

Not at all Descriptive 1 2 3 4 5 6 Extremely Descriptive 7

Accepting	_____	Flighty	_____
Adventurous	_____	Forceful	_____
Ambitious	_____	Friendly	_____
Analytical	_____	Gentle	_____
Assertive	_____	Logical	_____
Bold	_____	Moody	_____
Caring	_____	Naïve	_____
Co-operative	_____	Nurturing	_____
Competitive	_____	Objective	_____
Concrete-thinking	_____	Perfectionist	_____
Controlling	_____	Polite	_____
Daring	_____	Risk-taker	_____
Dominant	_____	Social	_____
Driven	_____	Suspicious	_____
Emotional	_____	Trusting	_____
Empathetic	_____	Worried	_____

Appendix E

For each of the following traits please indicate which gender you think they are typical of and to what extent.

Extremely Descriptive of MALES			Equally Descriptive of Males and Females			Extremely Descriptive of FEMALES
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Accepting	_____	Flighty	_____
Adventurous	_____	Forceful	_____
Ambitious	_____	Friendly	_____
Analytical	_____	Gentle	_____
Assertive	_____	Logical	_____
Bold	_____	Moody	_____
Caring	_____	Naïve	_____
Co-operative	_____	Nurturing	_____
Competitive	_____	Objective	_____
Concrete-thinking	_____	Perfectionist	_____
Controlling	_____	Polite	_____
Daring	_____	Risk-taker	_____
Dominant	_____	Social	_____
Driven	_____	Suspicious	_____
Emotional	_____	Trusting	_____
Empathetic	_____	Worried	_____