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Hegemonic Masculinity as a Predictor of Body Satisfaction

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Abstract

The relationship between men and body satisfaction is a topic with increased traction within the academic community. However, there is currently no model in place that measures body satisfaction, and without a complete measure, it is difficult for researchers to understand what influences or predicts body satisfaction and how it influences men's lives. This research used quantitative methods to investigate the use of hegemonic masculinity as a predictor for body satisfaction. A survey containing measures for hegemonic masculinity and body satisfaction was sent to self-identifying, college-aged men (N = 63) to measure the conformance to hegemonic masculinity and its relation to body satisfaction. Results indicate that hegemonic masculinity, as it is currently measured, is not a predictor for body satisfaction. These results suggest that either the production of hegemonic masculinity has changed since measures were last produced or that hegemonic masculinity is not the production of masculinity that interacts with body image. The author discusses why an understanding of the predictors for body satisfaction in men is important and suggests what research can be produced in the future to eventually create a model that can accurately measure body satisfaction and influence the establishment of systems that decrease risk taking in men who experience body dissatisfaction.

Keywords: body satisfaction, hegemonic masculinity, body image, risk behaviors

Hegemonic Masculinity as a Predictor of Body Satisfaction

While there has traditionally been less research performed to examine the effects of body image dissatisfaction in men than in women, the attention brought to the topic is growing. Schuster, Negy, and Tantleff-Dunn found in their 2011 research that there is increased objectification of male bodies in the media, similar to the fashion that female bodies have been objectified for decades (p. 76). These objectified forms of the male body can be found across various forms of media that both men and women consume including: paintings, films, sporting events, and advertising (Wienke, 2000, p.

2). Most of these venues produce an image of the male body that other males consider the most masculine: the mesomorphic physique. This body shape includes wide shoulders and narrow hips along with a higher ration of muscle to body fat. Men tend to associate this body shape with stereotypical masculine attributes including power, aggression, success, sexual success, self-confidence, and other similar traits (Wineke, 2000; Biller & Liebman, 1971; Mishkind et al., 1987). However, this body type, which men associate as the most ideal and masculine, is extremely unrealistic and is often only obtainable through excessive exercising (Pope et al, 1999; Spitzer, Henderson & Zivian, 1999).

Literature Review: Hegemonic Masculinity

Men in Western cultures overwhelmingly identify the muscular body type as the most masculine of any male body type and associate it with strength, tenacity, competence, sexual potency, independence, dominance, self-confidence, and aggression. The concept used to connect these traits is hegemonic masculinity. Hegemony is the concept of winning and holding power in a social structure and having the ability to form or destroy other social groups. It emphasizes conformity, and those that do not conform are rejected from the dominant social group. Hegemonic masculinity as a construct includes the characteristics mentioned above and other similar dominant traits. These ideas that make up hegemonic masculinity have been naturalized and internalized over the years, particularly with the aid of media which evolves around characters or activities that center around stereotypical masculinity. This includes sporting events where athletes are seen as being the ultimate idols of masculinity and perceived as upholding traditional hegemonic ideals.

Mishkind et al.'s 1987 study as well as Biller and Libman's 1971 study showed that respondents identified the mesomorphic physique as more attractive and more masculine than non-mesomorphic physiques. Researchers theorize that this muscularity ideal stems from the cultural view that muscularity equates to masculinity (Yang, Gray, & Pope, 2005). Pompper, Soto, and Piel supported this after showing the mesomorph body type and asking men to assign characteristics associated with it. They found that for most males, the muscular body type was equated with the hegemonic masculine characteristics including aggression, stoicism, toughness, risk-taking, and success achievement (2007, p. 526). To further explain this trend, Connell and Messerschmidt used their research to discuss how the decreased spaces in which men can perform traditional standards of hegemonic masculinity has led them to construct masculinity through their bodies performance and appearance (2005). Due to the proposed connection between muscularity and masculinity, the researcher aimed to investigate whether or not conformance to hegemonic masculine ideals influenced body satisfaction.

Literature Review: Male Body Satisfaction

Scholarship on the male body and masculinity reports a growing concern among men about improving their physical appearance, potentially through unhealthy means. Pompper, Soto, and Piel studied male body image across age and ethnicity in their 2007 study. They found that, while most men were "cynical of magazine images of male bodies," very few were satisfied with their own bodies. They concluded that magazine's male body images contribute to feelings of ambivalence in men over time (p. 537). Exposure to idealized images prompt men to prefer a body that is considerably leaner and more muscular than their own (Frederick et al., 2007; Tigermann, Martins, & Kirkbridge, 2007).

The growing body of research on male body dissatisfaction has focused on this topic of media exposure to idealized images. At the end of the 1990s, magazines marketed to males were among the fastest growing consumer magazine market (Pompper, Soto, & Piel, 2007, p. 525). The increased number of men's lifestyle magazines has catered to the burgeoning interest of male readers in health, fitness, leisure, fashion, grooming, relationships, sex, and popular culture (Shaw & Tan, 2014, p. 119). Correlational studies have shown that there is an increasing relationship between viewing media ideals and body dissatisfaction, where media is negatively affecting male body image (Botta, 2003; Morrison, Morrison, & Hopkins, 2003; Moory & Staska, 2001; Farquhar & Wasylkiw, 2007) and that these media ideals influence the self-identification and evaluation of individual males who view them (Shaw & Tan, 2014, p. 120).

Following this increased exposure to idealized media and body objectification, is an increase in body image concerns among men (Grogan & Richards, 2002; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2004; Pope, Phillips, & Olivardia, 2000; Cafri et al., 2005; Ricciardelli, McCabe, & Ridge, 2006). As the number of body image concerns in men increases, so too does the number of ways that men attempt to alter their appearance to fit the media ideal (Schuster, Negy, & Tantleff-Dunn, 2011, p. 76). To change their appearance, men engage in risky health behaviors, including smoking, intense dieting, and the use of performance enhancing substances. Each of these behaviors increases the chance that men will have lower self-esteem and depression as well as other health problems (Farquhar & Wasylkiw, 2007, p. 146). Each of these methods is associated with low self-esteem and depression (Farquhar & Wasylkiw, 2007, p. 146).

The study of body image dissatisfaction in men is no longer about whether or not men experience body dissatisfaction, but what influences this body dissatisfaction and causes detrimental reactions. In this paper, I chose to analyze the relationship between conformance to hegemonic masculine ideals, and whether or not the promotion of the dominant social position of men is accepted or rejected, has influenced the way that men perceive their

bodies and how they measure body satisfaction.

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study were male undergraduate students between the ages of 18 and 33. Participants' gender was limited as the study was specifically investigating the use of body image as a measure for masculinity and masculine identity. The participants were not stratified based on any other demographic characteristics, including race, religious affiliation, or income.

Materials

The Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale (MMIS). The MMIS was used to measure hegemonic masculinity, which is defined by Rae-wen Connell as practices that promote the dominant social position of men (1995, p. 76). The central idea of masculine ideology measured by the MMIS is that "males act in the ways they do, not because of their male role identity or their level of masculine traits, but because of the conception of masculinity they internalize from their culture" (Pleck et al., 1993, p. 14). Therefore, the MMIS measures an individual's adaption and internalization of a culture's norms about how men should act, or hegemonic masculinity. The MMIS consists of 35 questions measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. In this study, 20 of the questions from the MMIS were used, with the other 15 left out due to low correlation in the original study (See Appendix A for questionnaire).

The Somatomorphic Matrix Modification (SMM). The SMM was used to measure body satisfaction, which is defined by Pompper, Soto, and Piel as one's internal representation of his/her outer physical appearance (2007, p. 526). The SMM is a computerized body image test that can assess body image satisfaction and perceptual accuracy with respect to muscularity and body fat (Cafri & Thompson, 2004, p. 23). The SMM consists of 34 figures, each increasing in body fat and/or muscularity (See Appendix B for figure).

Procedure

In all, 1,000 participants were randomly selected from the University of Wisconsin-Stout and coded by gender so that 600 males and 400 females were invited to participate in the study. A proportion of female students were invited to participate to accurately measure the social expectation of male body image and so as not to refuse self-identifying male students from participating as enrollment records stratify students based on genetic sex rather than gender identification. For all participants invited to take part in the study, a Qualtrics survey was emailed to them with a description of the study, and they were provided a consent form within the first page of the online survey. Participants voluntarily agreed to take the survey and were explicitly

informed that they were allowed to quit the study at any time. The survey itself took approximately five minutes to complete and consisted of demographic questions, the Somatomorphic Matrix Modification Scale (SMM), and the Multicultural Masculinity Ideology Scale (MMIS). Self-identified male participants were asked to complete the SSM and MMIS. The survey was open for two weeks to allow participants to complete the questionnaires at a time most convenient to them.

Hypothesis

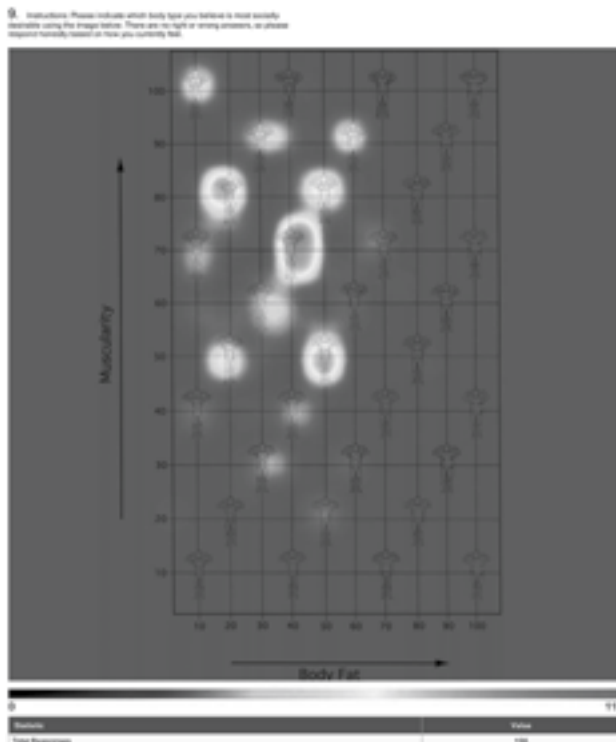
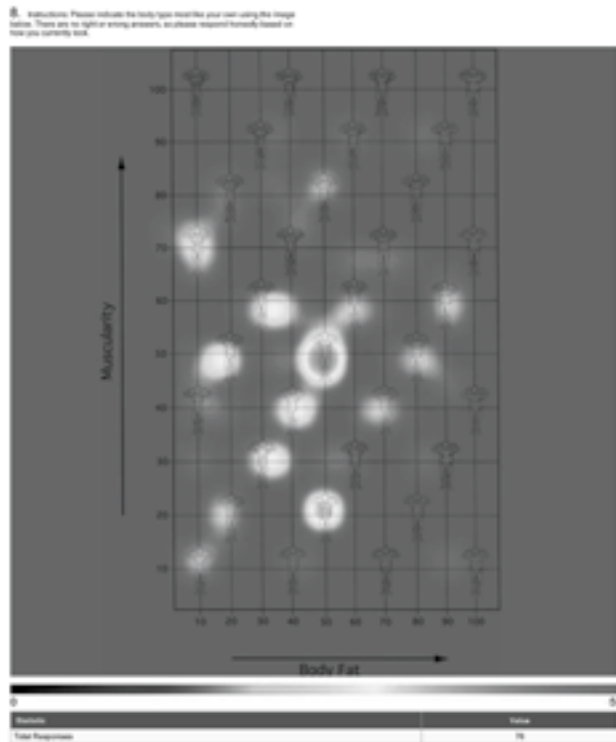
H1: Men with higher levels of conformance to hegemonic masculinity would be more satisfied with their bodies than men with lower levels of conformance to hegemonic masculinity.

H0: Men with higher levels of conformance to hegemonic masculinity would have the same satisfaction with their bodies as men with lower levels of conformance to hegemonic masculinity.

Results

The survey collected 152 responses; 63 had usable data- meaning the respondent had completed the survey fully with no errors and that, as far as the researcher could tell, the participant had answered honestly. The respondents were self-identified male, primarily Caucasian, and the mean age was 21. In all, 32 participants responded that they were satisfied with their body image, while 31 responded that they were not.

The results from the SMM suggest that there is a disjuncture between how men's bodies look in reality and the ideal male body. In the SMM graph measuring realistic body shape, the mean body shape was figure 16 or the figure highlighted in red in Figure 1. Figure 16 represents a person with 50% body fat and 50% muscularity. The rest of Figure 1 shows natural variation around figure 16 that would be expected from the natural human body. Realistically, we would expect there to be a variation in body type and shape as humans are naturally diverse in form. In the SMM graph measuring ideal body shape, the mean body shape was figure 22, a person with 40% body fat and 70% muscularity. Unlike Figure 1, Figure 2 has much less variation, and the majority of results are exclusively in the second quadrant of the measure. This shows that the ideal body shape that was perceived by participants was one with high muscularity and a mesomorphic body shape that is often difficult to obtain.



Data from the MMIS was recoded into SPSS so that Likert scale measures of 1 represented non-conformance to hegemonic masculinity and measures of 5 represented complete conformance to hegemonic masculinity. As seen in Table 1, results showed that the majority of students scored neutrally ($\mu=2.9$), and no student scored with complete non-conformance or complete conformance to hegemonic masculinity (min=1.95, max=3.84).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics- Hegemonic Masculinity

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hegemonic Masculinity	63	1.95	3.85	2.9008	.44308
Valid N (listwise)	63				

The final analysis of the data consisted of a binary logistic regression of all the variables, which looked to see if there was a significant effect on body satisfaction (see Table 2). Body Satisfaction was coded so that 1 was equal to being satisfied with body image while 0 was being unsatisfied with body image. Ideal and realistic body image were both coded so that a higher score was closer to the mesomorph ideal. As stated earlier, hegemonic masculinity was measured on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being non-conformance to hegemonic masculinity and 5 being conformance to hegemonic masculinity. By running a binary logistic regression, the data suggests that age and ethnicity are not predictors of body satisfaction, perception of ideal body type is not a predictor of body satisfaction, hegemonic masculinity is not a predictor of body satisfaction, and realistic body image is a predictor for body satisfaction ($p=.1$). This predictor shows that when a person's realistic body image is closer to the ideal body image, they are approximately 8% more likely to be satisfied with their body image.

Table 2: Binary logistics analysis for effects of age, ethnicity, realistic body shape, ideal body shape, and hegemonic masculinity on body satisfaction

	1	2	3
Realistic Body Shape	0.094	0.123	0.078*
Ideal Body Shape	0.224	0.351	0.475
Hegemonic Masculinity	0.225	0.355	0.364
Age		0.37	0.467
Ethnicity			0.993
R2	0.1	0.111	0.121
df	1	1	1
N	63	63	63

* $p<.10$; ** $p<.05$; *** $p<.01$; **** $p<.001$

Discussion

The research presented above suggests some very interesting patterns regarding masculinity, body image, and body satisfaction. As supported by previous research presented by Pompper, Soto, and Piel, age and ethnicity were not significant for predicting factors for body satisfaction (2007, pgs. 532-4). Also similar is research by Nikkelen, Anschutz, Ha, and Engles who reported finding no differences in body dissatisfaction after exposure to idealized images during their study, suggesting that perception of idealized body image also does not predict body dissatisfaction (2011, p. 317).

The data on hegemonic masculinity provided in the binary logistics analysis suggests that hegemonic masculinity cannot be used as a significant predictor for body satisfaction. This means that the null hypothesis, which states that men with higher levels of conformance to hegemonic masculinity would have the same satisfaction with their bodies as men with lower levels of conformance to hegemonic masculinity, is accepted.

There are two possible explanations for this result. First, hegemonic masculinity may simply not be a predictor of body satisfaction and it would be beneficial to look at other predictors in order to measure body satisfaction. However, it is also possible, that, as Raewen Connell's research suggests, there are various types of masculinity (of which hegemonic masculinity is one) that can be performed by men in various environments or social situations (1995). It may be possible that the men from the population sampled performed a different type of masculinity than hegemonic masculinity. The social environment today also supports this idea. There is an increased awareness of hegemonic masculinity, and various feminist researchers have brought attention to said masculinity's detrimental effects in the subordination of women. Because of this increased awareness, it may be possible that hegemonic masculinity has become less socially acceptable to perform, and therefore men are moving away from the ideal and towards a new type of masculinity.

Realistic body shape was the only predictor within the model presented that was slightly significant. As was interpreted in the results of the binary logistic analysis, men who had a body closer to the mesomorphic ideal were 8% more likely to be satisfied with their body. This suggests that personal conceptualization of one's own body is an important contribution to body satisfaction. An explanation for this significance could be that when men indicate idealized body image, they are focused on what Farquhar and Wasylikiw would call body-as-object, which analyzes the aesthetical appeal of various body parts. When focused on realistic body image, however, men may focus more on body-as-process, which analyzes how a body performs. In this case, if the body performs well as a whole, then men would be more satisfied than focusing on their body as individual pieces (2007, p. 148). It is important to note, however, that whether Farquhar and Wasylikiw's theory

on body satisfaction is correct or not, men analyzing their body as object or process are still focusing on images tied to the mesomorphic ideal.

Limitations and Future Directions

There were a few limitations and biases present in this study. First, the response rate is indicative of a limitation. Of the 1000 surveys originally sent out, only 68 displayed usable data. There is a possibility that this low response rate skewed the data. A second limitation present was the decision to measure hegemonic masculinity specifically. By limiting the data collection to a single measure of masculinity, there is a possibility that valuable information presented in the study is not indicated in the results. Perhaps the largest bias of the study was the decision to analyze the results of male-identified students. There is a possibility that information could have been gathered by female participants concerning their perspective on hegemonic masculinity as well. However, because the focus on the study was body satisfaction in men, the results analyzed came from self-identified male students alone.

This research suggests that realistic body shape is a predictor of body satisfaction. Because of this, it may be beneficial for future research to learn more about realistic body shape. How do men as individuals objectively perceive their bodies, and what influences the ways that they conceptualize a "good" or "bad" body? Finding the answer to these questions may expand on why realistic body shape was the only predictor in this model for body satisfaction in men. In this time period where body positivity and acceptance is an uphill battle, understanding how men perceive their bodies may help identify more predictors that could be added to the model created in this paper.

Research should also be conducted into types of masculinity, particularly how to identify various expressions of masculinity and how to measure these expressions. Connell and Messerschmidt discussed in their research how hegemonic masculinities can change over time and that older ideals of masculinity can be displaced by new ones (2005, p. 833). Their research also supports the idea that various social settings can influence how men express various masculinities and gender relations (2005, p. 836). To continue to create a model to measure body satisfaction and therefore identify ways that programs can support men with body dissatisfaction, there needs to be more research into the ways that hegemonic masculinity has changed over the years. Moreover, research into how various masculinities influence body perception will need to be recognized, measured, and then integrated into the model.

While there is a greater attention on male body satisfaction in 2014 than in 1987, there is still very little knowledge on what causes body dissatisfaction and how body satisfaction can be measured. Future research into different models of masculinity and the effect of idealized images versus

realistic body images could be critical in explaining how body dissatisfaction forms. Knowing how body dissatisfaction is constructed would allow support systems to be created and practiced that would decrease risk-taking behaviors that men use to reach ideal bodies. Having safe and effective methods for producing body satisfaction would decrease the number of injuries caused by body dissatisfaction and could potentially change how the ideas of body image and masculinity are produced in the social world today.

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Appendix A: Multicultural Masculine Ideology Scale

Doss, B., Roy Hopkins, J., 1998

5-point Likert scale:

1. Highly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Highly agree

For Self-Identified Males

1. I am courteous to women my age.
2. I usually do not let others know how I am feeling.
3. When I am mad at someone, I am likely to fight.
4. I hug my closest guy friends.
5. My date's looks are more important than her personality
6. Once I have had sexual intercourse with someone, I usually have sexual intercourse with that person as often as possible.
7. In difficult times, I try to be tough.
8. I do not get very angry at people when they do something mean to me.
9. I show affection towards people I love.
10. I try to block out fear because it only gets in the way.
11. I don't (or didn't) keep my virginity a secret.
12. I don't cry when something bad happens to me or my loved ones.
13. When I want something, I use aggressive ways to get it.
14. I am not competitive with others.
15. I have sexual intercourse only in emotionally committed relationships.
16. I look for danger just for the thrill of it.
17. I am not athletic or good at a sport.
18. I had (or will have) sexual intercourse at my first opportunity.
19. I don't show emotion because it would mean that I was weak.
20. I ask for help when I need it.

Appendix B: Somatomorphic Matrix Modification
Cafri, G. & Kevin Thompson, J., 2004

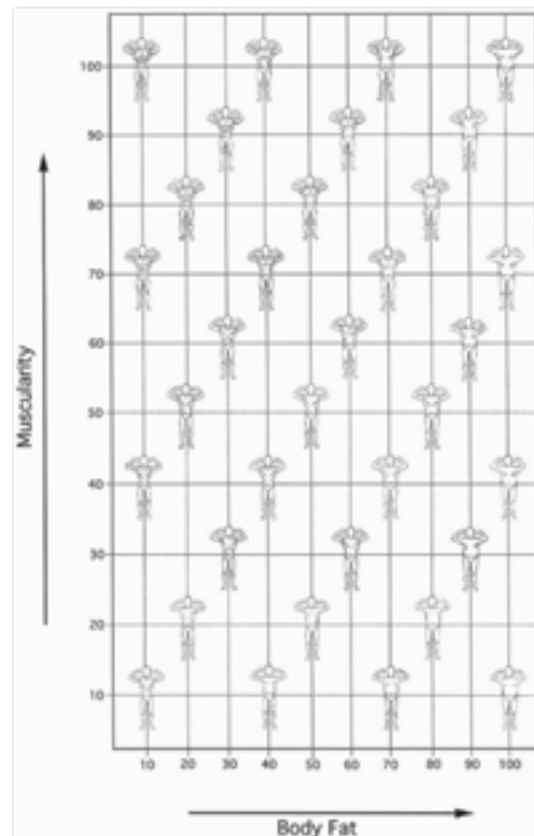


Figure 1. The somatomorphic matrix modification (actual size 1 = 1 inch).

Intention and Consequence in Stem Cell Research

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Abstract

With the increasing use of stem cells in research, discussion surrounding the use of embryos for the derivation of stem cells has often been the cause of heated debates. After defining stem cells and exploring methods to obtain them, support for their use in research is shown through both Kantian and utilitarian ethical theories. Under the Kantian perspective, egg donation for stem cell research is done autonomously, with informed consent, and the embryo is not considered a rational being that we have a duty to protect. Stem cell research represents the imperfect duty of beneficence, to use embryos that would otherwise go unused in order to help others, and the imperfect duty to develop our talents, as stem cell scientists push forward the frontiers of developmental biology and regenerative medicine. The utilitarian perspective generally argues for maximizing happiness and minimizing suffering. Here, the small investment in the use of embryos proves appropriate given the absence of suffering on the part of the embryo and the vast potential gain in happiness and wellbeing that may be attained directly through stem cell research. A limiting factor in this situation is a lack of viable eggs, caused by public policy that prohibits egg donor compensation beyond incurred expenses. The resulting failure to fairly compensate egg donors for this strenuous and time-consuming procedure makes it challenging to find willing donors. We can resolve this issue by altering policy to allow for egg donor compensation equal to that which egg donors receive in fertility clinics.

Keywords: donor compensation, egg, embryo, ethics, Kant, Mill, stem cells.

Introduction

Since the advent of stem cell use in research, discussion surrounding the use of embryos to derive stem cells has sparked heated debates. Proponents of stem cell research speak of them in hopeful terms, describing enthusiastically the benefits and possibilities of developing our knowledge while opponents warn of crossing the line into immoral territory and often depict the use of the embryo as evil, akin to murder.

Part I of this paper is a primer describing embryonic and induced pluripotent stem cells, how they are derived, and provides a comparison of