



# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-OBJECTIFICATION, SOCIAL COMPARISON, EATING DISORDERS AND SELF-CONCEPT CLARITY

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## INTRODUCTION

Self-objectification is a pervasive phenomenon that subsumes a variety of negative consequences, such as eating disorders, depression, and sexual dysfunction. Despite these negative psychological responses, not much is known about the factors that can affect this relationship. Empirical data shows that the social comparison process has a mediator role in the relationship between self-objectification and eating disorders. Self-concept clarity represents a protective factor against social and cultural influences, which is associated with better psychological adjustment. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the self-concept clarity's effect of moderated mediation in the relationship between self-objectification, social comparison, and eating disorders.

## RESULTS

According to our results, the relationship between self-objectification and eating disorders is not mediated by social comparison, hence our hypothesis of moderated mediation was not confirmed. All the indirect effects were not significantly different from zero. Nevertheless, a positive direct effect between self-objectification and eating disorders was found.

## DISCUSSION

### Limitations:

Using a cross-sectional design, we could not infer causality;  
The instruments used in this research were self-report questionnaires.

### Future research:

Longitudinal studies;  
Take into account other variables that can affect the relationship between self-objectification and eating disorders;  
Use instruments with increased validity;

## CONCLUSION

To summarize, self-objectification represents a risk factor in development of eating disorders among women. However, the relationship between self objectification and eating disorders can be better understood and several methods of psychological intervention can be effectively performed if we consider possible mediating factors, such as the process social comparison or possible moderating factors, such as clarity of self-concept, which can occur in this relationship.

## METHODS

### Sample:

98 females aged 18–32 from a Romanian sample.

### Instruments:

INCOM, Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Scale (Gibbons and Buunk, 1999);  
Self-Concept Clarity Scale (Campbel et. al., 1996);  
The Objectified Body Consciousness Scale OBCS (McKinley & Hyde, 1996);  
Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire EDE-q (Fairburn & Beglin, 2008).

### Design:

Cross-sectional moderated mediation.

