UCCS Psychology Department

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
COLORADO SPRINGS

Diversity Committee E-Blast

April 2022

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This Month's Newsletter At a Glance

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Considerations for Military Service Members and

At UCCS, consider checking out the resources provided at our Student Veteran Center here, and referring student Veterans to the Center for

Veterans in Higher Education

Military service members and Veterans present with unique experiences that should be considered for those working with service members and Veterans in educational settings. In comparison to other college students, military-connected and Veteran students tend to be older, have spouses and children, and have more medical and psychological diagnoses (Cate & Davis, 2016). In addition to these personal factors, Veterans face unique institutional barriers when relying on the GI Bill - different universities have different programs for serving Veteran transition, and Veteran students report varying levels of support from the Department of Veteran Affairs in their educational pursuits (Norman et al., 2015).

Furthermore, other minority groups tend to be overrepresented in military populations, meaning that military- and Veteran students who hold other minority identities may have particularly unique experiences. One study found that student Veterans of color experience cultural alienation and racism in their transition to higher education (Hunt et al., 2022). Thus, instructors, mentors, researchers, and clinicians working with military and Veteran students in higher education should take an intersectional approach to understanding and responding to the unique experiences of Veteran students.

military- and Veteran-related needs, including difficulties transitioning into higher education. This page from the American Psychological Association (APA) also provides more information about how to advocate for military service members and Veterans. The APA also has a wide range of advocacy resources as they relate to health and human rights, education and training, research, practice of psychology, and applied psychology. Check out these resources here.

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Pride Week at UCCS

The Multicultural Office for Student Access, Inclusiveness, and Community (MOSAIC) and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center at UCCS are celebrating LGBTQ+ pride the week of April 18th, 2022, with a number of events. Check out the events below, and consider following MOSIAC on [Instagram](#) to stay up to date on ongoing events.

(B)ice Cream Social (Monday, April 18th): Kick off Pride Week at the Mosaic Lounge with ice cream and other students. RSVP [here](#).

Movie Discussion, "But I'm a Cheerleader" (Tuesday, April 19th): Join the Mosaic and LGBTQ+ Resource Center for a screening of an LGBT cult classic of a young woman discovering her sexuality. RSVP [here](#).

Queer Talk/Introduction to LGBTQ+ Communities (Wednesday, April 20th): Join in on a discussion on LGBTQ+ experiences and social issues in the Mosaic lounge. RSVP [here](#).

Dating Violence in LGBTQ+ Relationships (Thursday, April 21st): Join an open discussion on dating violence within the LGBTQ+ community to learn about resources for yourself and your loved ones. RSVP [here](#).

Pronouns 101 (Friday, April 22nd): Join a short workshop on pronouns. RSVP [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Evolving Language Series: Broadening APIDA
Learn more about language as it refers to Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi-American individuals at this panel hosted by MOSAIC. Click here to learn more and RSVP.

APA Virtual Gathering for Queer and Trans Psychologists/Trainees of Color (Wednesday, April 13th):
Learn more and register here.

Visit the "What I Wore" Display to honor victims of sexual assault (April 25th)
Learn more here.

Attend a showing of "The Bluest Eye," an adaptation of the book from Toni Morrison (April 21st - May 15th)
The ENT Center for the Arts at UCCS is showing a play (directed by Lynne Hastings) of Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye," a story of Black women navigating social and cultural issues in the 1940s. UCCS students can receive free admission. Learn more and get tickets here.

Research Spotlight: "Add to Cart: A Content Analysis on STEM Toys' Representation on Amazon"

UCCS Psychology Department graduate students Katie Oltz, Michelle Shields, and Cynthia Malette recently conducted a content analysis investigating how toys related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are represented on Amazon.com. In their abstract of this project, they wrote:

"*A child's development can be influenced by environmental factors such as the toys they are exposed to. Research work investigating the role of toys in a child's development suggests toys work to aid skill development and provide children with information about their environments, including societal norms. Recently, careers in STEM fields have gained attention, and toys designed to promote STEM learning have increased. As STEM toys increase in availability, it is important to understand how they are presented and how these presentations may impact developmental processes, specifically in terms of societal norms and social standards of gender and race. Currently, little to no work has investigated how themes of gender and race are presented in STEM toys' content. A content analysis of STEM toys on Amazon.com (k*=90) was conducted. Results suggest similar patterns of representation found within other areas of STEM where White children were depicted significantly more than non-White children across content. Additionally, while male and female children were depicted at similar rates, toys depicting males were rated higher in educational value. Together, previous and current findings on gender and race suggest that White male representational biases are not only present in STEM fields but also across various modes of STEM content."

This research demonstrates how widespread social and cultural biases can be, and helps us to learn to raise awareness regarding these issues. We encourage students to continue engaging in research initiatives that incorporate EDI, and to share ideas and best practices! These may include conducting studies within marginalized populations, examining cross-cultural differences, or developing or implementing culturally-specific measurement in methodology. If you are conducting culturally-sensitive research and would like to be featured on our website, please contact kodonne2@uccs.edu.

Learn: APA's 'Hot Topics' Podcast

Check out APA's podcast covering a wide range of issues related to diversity and equity in psychology, including social justice in academic settings. This podcast also provides general advice for graduate students in psychology. Click here to learn more.

Intersectional Feminism and Sexual Objectification

By: McKenzie Lockett

Sexual objectification refers to reducing a person to their body for its sexual appeal or use. According to objectification theory (Frederickson & Roberts, 1997), Western culture overemphasizes the importance of women's physical appearance and sexual appeal and de-emphasizes other aspects of women. Specifically, objectification theory outlines how objectifying social standards are maintained on: 1) social/cultural levels - through media representation that centralizes women's sexual appeal and disregards other aspects of women, 2) interpersonal levels - through others perpetrating sexualizing gazes, making excessive comments on physical appearance, and harassment and 3) intrapersonal processes, through the process of **self-objectification**, in which one takes an observer perspective upon themselves and primarily judges themselves through their physical appearance (Calogero, 2012). In particular, self-objectification is associated with a wide range of negative outcomes, including low self-esteem, depression, and disordered eating (Tiggemann, 2011). Objectification also leads to women being perceived as less competent (Heflick & Goldenberg, 2009) and deserving of less empathy and support after experiencing a hypothetical assault (Gervais & Eagan, 2017).

Initially, objectification research focused primarily on women, with the majority of research subjects being cisgender, heterosexual, White women. However, emerging research has taken an intersectional approach to understanding the multifaceted effects of sexual objectification. For example, feminist writers such as bell hooks have argued that Black women (and men) are often hyper-sexualized in

media and interpersonal interactions as a way to dehumanize and other-ize Black people (hooks, 2014). Consistent with this, research has shown that Black women are objectified at greater levels than White women - in particular, one study showed that Black women are implicitly associated with both animals and objects more than White women (Anderson et al., 2018). Furthermore, the tendency for Black women to be presented as hypersexual in the media has been shown to contribute to negative body image and greater self-objectification among adolescent Black girls (Gordon, 2008). Similarly, other research on has shown that Asian and Asian-American women experience high levels of self-objectification, which in turn translates into psychological symptoms (Cheng & Kim, 2018). Objectification has been associated with broader experiences of racism among women of color as well. For example, Asian women often experience comments about being "exotic" through sexualizing comments from others (Azhar et al., 2021). Among Black women, natural hair has often been deemed "unprofessional" (Lewis et al., 2016), and Black women often experience people commenting on their hair or physically touching their hair without their consent.

Likewise, queer women and men are often exposed to objectification. Media representations of LGBTQ+ individuals often centralizes their sexual behavior (van Esch et al., 2017), which in turn can influence self-concept and body image (Lanzieri & Hildebrandt, 2016). Additionally, queer people report frequently receiving sexualizing comments and questions in everyday life, including professional settings, further contributing to feelings of objectification (Tebbe et al., 2018). Along these lines, asking transgender, gender nonconforming, and genderfluid individuals about their genitalia and medical procedures (Nadal et al., 2012) is inappropriate and often based in objectifying standards that centralize the sexual appeal and experiences of queer people. Furthermore, objectification of transgender and gender nonconforming individuals has been implicated in the heightened levels of sexual violence aimed at trans people, particularly women (Ussher et al., 2020).

In educational, research, and mentoring settings, raising awareness about the insidious and implicit effects of objectification can be helpful. In particular, understanding how sexual objectification reduces empathy and support for minority people may be an important point to raise in class and group discussions. Researchers should consider integrating measures that account for intersectionality when investigating sociocultural topics. For example, Lewis and Neville (2015) recently validated a measure of exposure to gendered, racial microaggressions aimed at capturing the unique experiences of Black women. Furthermore, clinicians working with individuals who have been exposed to objectification and/or experience self-objectification should be aware of the negative mental health outcomes. Several researchers and theorists have developed culturally-sensitive applications of objectification theory to the specific experiences of minority women and people (for example, see Ko & Wei's [2020] 'A culturally modified application of objectification theory to Asian and Asian-American women'). Finally, looking inward to explore how one may hold implicitly objectifying values towards minority individuals is an important step in reducing the harmful effects of an objectifying society.

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