

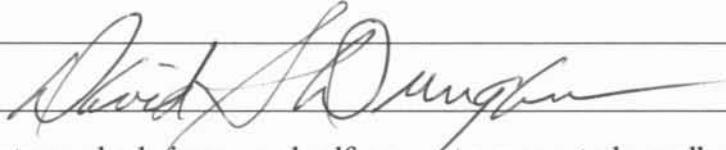
AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

_____ Autumn Lyn Schowalter _____ for the _____ Master of Science _____

in _____ Psychology _____ presented on _____ May 12, 1998 _____

Title: The Relationship Between Body Image and Self-Concept: An Age and Gender _____

Analysis _____

Abstract approved: _____  _____

The relationship between body image and self-concept appears to be well grounded. However, this research has primarily used young adults as participants. Is it accurate to declare a global relationship between these two constructs when research has predominantly been done with a limited age group? The primary purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship between body image and self-concept existed for a sample of middle aged as well as young adult individuals. Gender differences concerning body image and self-concept were also studied. Eighty-eight participants were divided into four groups depending on their age and gender: young adult men, young adult women, middle aged men, and middle aged women. Each group had approximately equal numbers. Each participant was administered the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale and the Body Cathexis Scale which measures body image. A Pearson product moment correlation was utilized to determine the relationship between these two measures. A t-test was utilized to determine which groups significantly differed from one another. The results showed that, in general, there were no significant differences between young and middle aged participants on measures of body image and self-concept. However, after analyzing subgroups, young men showed a significant, positive relationship between body image and self-concept. When contrasting these young men with the middle aged men, who did not show a relationship, these results suggest age differences exist for men but not for women. Finally, the results showed gender differences on measures of body image, with women being slightly less satisfied. The implication of these results is that age and gender affect

how one experiences the relationship between body image and self-concept. In addition, previous research which utilized young men may not be applicable to middle aged men.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BODY IMAGE AND SELF-CONCEPT:

AN AGE AND GENDER ANALYSIS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Division of Psychology and Special Education

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Autumn Lyn Schowalter


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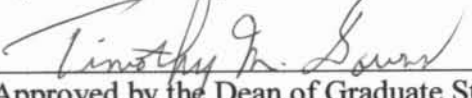
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I would like to thank Dr. [Name], who chaired my thesis committee, for allowing me to be a flexible, and giving me an excellent thesis project. I would also like to thank the other two committee members, Dr. [Name] and Dr. [Name]. I have appreciated Dr. [Name]'s statistical knowledge and his ability to help me correct mistakes and learning experiences that he provided. I would also like to thank Dr. [Name] and Dr. [Name].

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Approved by the Chair of the Division of
Psychology and Special Education


Approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1900s American society has progressively emphasized physical appearance. The media have played an integral role in reinforcing society's obsession with physical appearance. Television celebrities, magazines, and models have all contributed to society's defining an ideal body. The ideal body portrayed by the media includes a thin, well proportioned body and flawless facial features. In addition, society and the media also convey the message that an ideal body is attainable if the individual is willing to work for it. The appearance of one's body has become such a significant part of individuals' lives that researchers question the impact of one's body image on self-concept.

There is no universal definition for body image. Instead, body image is often defined with an emphasis on either perception or affect. For example, perceptual definitions of body image are concerned with "the accuracy of perceptions regarding one's size" (Thompson, 1996, p. 28). Affective definitions are concerned with "satisfaction with one's body size or specific body parts" (Thompson, 1996, p. 29). Body image can also be defined more broadly emphasizing other body aspects. For example, Roid and Fitts (1988) define body image as "one's view of his or her body, state of health, physical appearance, skills, and sexuality" (p. 3).

Similarly, self-concept has a number of definitions. One such definition is "individuals' mental images of themselves" (Reeve, 1997, p. 240). Other definitions include "the collection of beliefs we hold about who we are" (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 1994, p. 137) and "the various attributes people see themselves possessing" (Steinberg & Belsky, 1991, p. 585). In addition, when an emphasis is placed on descriptive and evaluative judgment, self-concept is equated with self-esteem, which refers to how one feels about him or herself (Roid & Fitts, 1988). The present study defined body image using Thompson's (1996) affective definition of "satisfaction with one's body size or specific body parts"

(Thompson, 1996, p. 28). In addition, self-concept was defined as persons' thoughts and feelings of their self-definition.

As a result of the research done on self-concept and body image, the theory that there is a relationship between these two constructs appears superficially to be well grounded. However, the representativeness of the samples used to produce the relationship between self-concept and body image is questionable. The majority of research done on the relationship between body image and self-concept has been with young adults. Is it accurate to declare a relationship between body image and self-concept across the entire life span when the age sample has been limited? This study is unique because it measured the relationship between self-concept and body image with young adults as well as middle aged adults.

Determining whether self-concept and body image are related is an important issue among all ages. Individuals' self-concepts are an integral part of their identity. The self-concept influences and pronounces individuals' identities by organizing the continuous information they receive from their environments. For example, individuals with a negative body image interpret environmental stimuli, such as media messages that "thin is beautiful" as meaning "I am not thin, therefore I am not beautiful." The issue becomes whether this interpretation negatively affects individuals to the degree to which the individual says "I am not beautiful, therefore I am worthless."

In addition to the importance of understanding what factors negatively affect individuals self-concepts, another significant aspect of this study was utilizing middle aged adults as a sample. The relationship between self-concept and body image among middle aged adults has not been sufficiently studied. Research documenting a relationship between self-concept and body image among young adults cannot be generalized to the middle aged populations. This generalization can not occur because self-concept is not static, rather, it changes over time. For example, elements of the self-concept which

change over time include the number of self-schema's, the content of the self-schema's, the evaluations individuals give to each of their self-schemas, and the degree of dominance and activity of one self-schema over another (Stein, 1996).

Another significant reason for conducting the present study was to provide information which will be beneficial to mental health practitioners. Knowing there is a relationship between body image and self-concept may help practitioners who are working with individuals who have a seemingly isolated case of either a low self-concept or a body image disturbance. Knowing there is a relationship between body image and self-concept will give practitioners a general knowledge base for formulating hypotheses about their clients. For example, practitioners would be able to think to themselves "If my client has a low self-concept, I hypothesize she has a negative body image." Conversely, practitioners would be able to think to themselves "Since my client has a negative body image, I hypothesize he has a low self-concept."

Further, studying the relationship between body image and self-concept for middle aged individuals is important in a practical sense. Middle aged individuals, especially women, are involved in numerous activities which have to do with attempting to enhance physical appearance, such as dieting, exercising, and using cosmetics. It is important for these middle aged individuals to know if their body image affects their self-concept. This knowledge would perhaps help these individuals better understand and accept themselves.

The present study had four hypotheses. The first hypothesis was there would be a significantly positive correlation between measures of body image and self-concept for young and middle aged adults. Secondly, young adults would have a significantly higher degree of relation between measures of body image and self-concept than middle aged adults. Thirdly, there would be a significant and positive correlation between measures of body image and self-concept for both men and women. Finally, men and women would not significantly differ on independent measures of body image or self-concept. That is,

there would be no gender differences on measures of self-concept, and no gender differences on measures of body image.

Literature Review

The following literature review discusses how body image and self-concept are related to young adults, middle aged adults, and gender. In addition, this review includes a discussion concerning the development and current use of the instruments which will be used in this study.

Young Adults

The young adult population in American society has been a central focus in studying the relationship between body image and self-concept (Lerner, Orlos, & Knapp, 1976; McCaulay, Mintz, & Glenn, 1988; Rosen & Ross, 1968). For example, in a study completed by Stowers and Durm (1996), the relationship between body image and self-concept was assessed with a group of college men and women who had mean ages of 22.7 years and 22.6 years, respectively. The results of this study indicated both men and women had a significant positive relationship ($r = .70$, $r = .75$, respectively) between body image and self-concept. In addition, the women were significantly less satisfied with their body image than were the men. Finally, the men and women did not differ in their self-concept scores.

Strauman and Glenberg (1994) also conducted a study which focused on the relationship between body image and self-concept among young adults. In this study, a group of college women, who had an average age of 20, were studied to determine which self-beliefs predicted a tendency to overestimate body size. The results of this study indicated that those participants who had high body shape concern overestimated their body size more than the low body shape concerned participants. That is, the participants who were more worried about their appearance thought they looked larger than they actually were. In addition, an actual-ideal self-concept discrepancy was the best predictor

of who overestimates body size. That is, of the women who overestimated their body size, there was a discrepancy between what the women believed were their actual attributes and the attributes they would ideally like to possess.

Lerner, Karabenick, and Stuart (1973) also assessed the relationship between body image and self-concept utilizing a young adult sample. The participants included 308 college students, including both men and women. The mean ages for the men and women were 23.3 and 21.9 years, respectively. The measurements taken in this study focused on body characteristics and self-concept. The results of this study indicated the top three body characteristics which men judged to be most important were their general appearance, face, and, tied for third, weight distribution and facial complexion. The women judged their general appearance, face, and weight distribution as the top three important body characteristics. Each of these body characteristics rated as most important to the men and woman were also positively correlated with self-concept. The results also indicated a significant and positive correlation between the mean body characteristics satisfaction and self-concept for both men and women. In addition, 17 different body characteristics of the men were correlated with self-concept. For the women, 19 different body characteristics were correlated with self-concept. Examples of body characteristics are nose, shape of legs, height, and waist. Finally, the results indicated that self-concept was not related to physique type. That is, self-concept was not related to whether individuals had a chubby, thin, or an average body type.

Middle Aged Adults

Beyond the young adult population, there is limited research concerning the relationship between body image and self-concept. The research which has been documented for age groups older than young adults concerning this relationship is contradictory. For example, Rackley, Warren, and Bird (1988) measured what determinants influence a middle aged woman's body image. This study included women

ranging in age from 35 to 55 years old. The results indicated that self-concept, the importance a woman attaches to physical appearance, and the amount of control a woman perceives herself as having over the events in her life influence a woman's body image. In contrast, Janelli (1993) found that body image and self-concept for men and women with an average age of 72 and 76, respectively, are not significantly correlated. These two studies, each utilizing different age groups older than young adults, suggest the relationship between body image and self-concept may change across time.

With more of the population approaching middle age (Bassis, Gelles, & Levine, 1991), there has been more research concerning body image dissatisfaction than with the relationship between body image and self-concept. Within this research, the notion that the importance of one's body image decreases with age is not consistently supported. Altabe and Thompson (1992) found that body image dissatisfaction increases with age. They investigated whether increasing age was related to increasing incongruity between individuals' ideal body and current body. This study also investigated whether there was an increasing discrepancy between the way individuals think they look and the way they feel they look. In this study, men and women undergraduates ranging in age from 17 to 40 years consisted of the participants. The results indicated that as individuals become older, there was an increasing discrepancy between what individuals think they currently look like and the body they would ideally like to possess. More specifically, the results indicated that the 40 year old men and women were most likely to have the largest discrepancy between what they think they look like and their ideal body. In addition, the results revealed that the 40 year old women were most likely to have the smallest discrepancy between how they feel they look and how they think they look. That is, how a woman thinks she looks and how she feels she looks become more congruent with age.

Rozin and Fallon (1988) also found that middle aged adults actual size and the size they would ideally like to be differ. In this study, body image satisfaction was assessed for

middle aged women and men with a mean age of 46 and 50 years, respectively, and was compared with college women and men with a mean age of 18 and 19 years, respectively. The results indicated the middle aged women were less satisfied than were the college women with their body image. The results also indicated that, unlike the college men, the middle aged women, college women, and the middle aged men had a significant degree of incongruity between ideal and current body size, thought of themselves as overweight, frequently felt guilty about eating, restrained themselves at meals, and frequently were on diets.

There is also research which has shown that age is not related to one's perception of their bodies, but it is related to how individuals' feel about their bodies. For example, Gray (1977) studied participants ranging in age from 18 to 60 years. In this study two elements of body image, perception of normalcy of weight and body affect, were studied. The results indicated age was not related to perception of normalcy of weight. However, age was related to whether the participants had negative feelings toward their bodies. The young adults rather than middle aged adults had negative feelings toward their body. Thomas and Freeman (1990) also found that body image dissatisfaction does not increase with age. They studied women ranging in age from 17 to 55 years who completed the Body Esteem Scale. They found there were no significant differences among these women concerning the degree of dissatisfaction with their bodies.

In addition to body image, self-concept has also been documented to change over time. In a study conducted by Hooker and Kaus (1994), health-related possible selves were evaluated for both young and middle aged adults. The term possible self refers to "individuals' ideas of what they would like to become, what they might become, and what they are afraid of becoming" (Reeve, 1997, p. 244). The results indicated that health-related possible selves were more salient for middle aged individuals than for young adults. In addition, the results also indicated that the young and middle aged adults feared

a health-related possible self rather than a hoped for possible self. For example, a feared health-related possible self would be fear of developing heart disease, whereas hoped-for possible self would be hope of developing a strong heart.

Further support of self-concepts changing over time was demonstrated by Labouvie-Vief, Chiodo, Goguen, Diehl, and Orwoll (1995). This study assessed the differences in the way individuals ranging in age from 11 to 85 years thought of themselves. The results indicated that young adults thought of themselves as more conforming to societal norms and peer and family influences. In contrast, middle aged adults thought of themselves as less conforming, more individualistic, and more likely to reflect on their lives and make changes based on self-contradictions.

Gender

Among the young adult population, many studies indicate that for both men and women, a relationship exists between body image and self-concept (Abell and Richards, 1996; Learner, Karabenick, & Stuart; Stowers & Durm, 1996). However, research indicates that the nature of body image dissatisfaction is different for men and women. Mens' dissatisfaction with their bodies is related to their perceiving they are not big enough (Drewnowski, Kurth, & Krahn, 1994). In contrast, womens' dissatisfaction with their bodies is related to their perceiving they are too big. This finding is consistent with Gray (1977) who found that women had a tendency to overestimate their actual body size whereas men had a tendency to underestimate their actual body size. This gender difference is also consistent with Silberstein, Striegel-Moore, Timko, and Rodin (1988), who found 43% of the men in their sample desired to be heavier, whereas 75% of the women desired to be thinner.

In general, there is contradictory evidence concerning which gender experiences more body dissatisfaction. Some evidence indicates that women experience more body image dissatisfaction than men. For example, Mintz and Betz (1986) found women were less

satisfied with their bodies than were men. In addition, the results indicated that women's perceptions of their weight were usually heavier than their actual weight. In contrast, there is also research which indicates that men have more body dissatisfaction than women. Abell & Richards (1996) assessed the relationship between body image and self-esteem utilizing 41 men and 43 women undergraduates as participants. The results indicated the men experienced a greater degree of body image disturbance than the women. Other research indicates there is no difference in the degree of body dissatisfaction between men and women (Mable, Balance, & Galgan, 1986; Silberstein et al., 1988).

Research concerning gender differences among the middle aged population is inconclusive due to the limited amount of research completed with this population. Within the research on middle aged adults, there is evidence that gender differences do exist. For example, Rozin and Fallon (1988) found gender differences among middle aged men and women who had a mean age of 50 and 46 years, respectively. The results indicated women experience a greater discrepancy than men between what they feel they look like and the ideal body they would like to possess. In contrast, Gray (1977) studied middle aged participants. She found that gender was not related to how individuals perceive the normalcy of their weight or whether they were negatively affected by their body image. Interestingly, McAuley, Bane, Rudolph, & Lox (1995) studied the effects of social physique anxiety "experienced when one perceives others to be negatively evaluating one's physique" (p. 229). They utilized a middle aged population ranging from 45 to 64 years. This study found that women had significantly more social physique anxiety than men.

Rationale and Research Hypotheses

The relationship between body image and self-concept is well documented among young adults. However, research concerning this relationship with older individuals is scarce. In addition, the research concerning older individuals consists of contradictory

evidence of whether there is a relationship between body image and self-concept. The research which has been done on middle aged adults has focused on the issues of body image and self-concept independently. Within this research there is contradictory evidence of whether body image dissatisfaction increases with age. However, the research concerning self-concept for middle aged individuals is consistent in suggesting that self-concept changes over time. In addition to the uncertainty of whether there is a relationship between body image and self-concept among middle aged individuals, there is also an uncertainty of which gender among both the young and middle aged adults experience more body image dissatisfaction.

There were four hypotheses of this study. The first hypothesis (H_1) was there would be a significant and positive correlation between measures of body image and self-concept for both young and middle aged adults. The second hypothesis (H_2) suggests young adults would have a significant and stronger degree of relation between measures of body image and self-concept than would middle aged adults. That is, young adults would have a higher correlation between measures of body image and self-concept than middle aged adults. The third hypothesis (H_3) was there would be a significant and positive correlation between measures of body image and self-concept for both women and men. The fourth and final hypothesis (H_4) was men and women would not significantly differ on independent measures of body image and self-concept. That is, there would be no gender differences on measures of body image and no gender differences on measures of self-concept.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Young and middle aged adults were the participants used in this study. Both of these populations were defined by the age of the participants. Those participants who were aged 18 through 39 were included in the young adult population. Participants who were aged 40 through 60 were considered middle aged. There were a total of four groups in this study: young adult men, middle aged men, young adult women, and middle aged women. There were a minimum of 20 participants per group. The participants who were used in this study came from the Presbyterian, First United Methodist, First Mennonite, and Catholic churches of Halstead, Kansas. Participants from churches were chosen because it was desired for all participants to be obtained from one source. The location of Halstead, Kansas was chosen because it is the most accessible and practical location for the researcher.

Participants who were physically disabled, or who were currently suffering from an eating disorder, depression, or any other psychiatric disorder were excluded. These participants were identified through the use of a demographic sheet, which asked them to check "yes" or "no" to a list of disabilities. Participants having these particular demographic features were not included because it was believed that any one of these disabilities would affect body image or self-concept. The remaining data were placed in a concealed folder in a private domain.

Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study were the Body-Cathexis Scale (BCS) and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition (TSCS:2). The BCS measures the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with body parts and processes. The BCS appears to be reliable and stable. Test-retest reliability has been shown to range from .87 (Tucker, 1981)

to .89 (Balogun, 1986). In addition, the BCS has demonstrated it has validity. The BCS has a significant correlation of .64 with the Physical Self subscale of the TSCS (Balogun, 1986). The BCS is also a multidimensional measure of body image. The dimensions include health and physical fitness; face, weight, and overall appearance; physique and muscular strength; and weight and lower body (Tucker, 1981; Tucker, 1985).

The BCS is comprised of a list of 40 body parts (e.g., arms, legs, waist) and processes (e.g., muscular strength, physical stamina, flexibility). The participants were asked to rank their degree of satisfaction with each body part and body process using a Likert-type five-point scale. Within this Likert scale, one indicates the most dissatisfaction with a body part; two indicates not liking body, but can put up with it; three indicates no particular feelings one way or the other; four indicates satisfaction; and five indicates thinking of self as fortunate. The score for each participant was obtained by summing ratings from all 40 items and then dividing by 40. The final score for the scale ranged from 1 through 5, with 1 indicating dissatisfaction with body, 3 indicating feelings of neutrality toward the body, and 5 indicating satisfaction with body.

The TSCS:2 was also used in this study. This instrument provided a measure of self-concept. The TSCS:2 is also a reliable, valid, and a multidimensional instrument. Internal consistency and test-retest reliability for the TSCS:2 ranges from .73 to .95, and .82, respectively. In addition, the TSCS:2 is also found to be valid as it correlates .71 with the widely respected Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Fitts & Warren, 1996). Finally, the TSCS:2 consists of both internal and external dimensions. The internal dimensions, which are also considered the three supplementary scales, include Identity, Self-Satisfaction, and Behavior. The external dimensions, which are the six self-concept scales, include Physical, Moral-Ethical, Personal, Family, Social, and Academic/Work.

The TSCS:2 is comprised of 82 items which measure self concept. Within the TSCS:2, the participant was asked to rank on a Likert-type five-point scale whether the statement

of each item is completely false, mostly false, partly false and partly true, mostly true, or completely true. The TSCS:2 comes in two forms, the Adult Form and the Child Form. Because all participants were 18 years and older, each participant was administered the Adult Form. Due to the measure of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of body parts and processes which was derived from the BCS, the score from the Physical Self subscale of the TSCS:2 was not calculated in with the total score, which subsequently lowered the T-scores of the participants' total self-concept score. The total score reflects the individuals' thoughts and feelings about him or herself. The score was considered to be in the normal range if it is between a T-score of 40 through 60. T-scores above this range represent very positive self-concepts, whereas T-scores below this range reflect very low self-concepts.

In addition, there are four validity measures on the TSCS:2: Self-Criticism, which measures defensiveness, Inconsistent Responding, which measures the individuals' discrepancies in their responses, Faking Good, and Response Distribution, which measures the definiteness of the individuals' responses. If participants' TSCS:2 was invalid, then their data were excluded from this study. Invalid scores were determined by two factors. One factor was if any validity scale score was 11T or more points above or below the normal range for that particular validity scale, then the participants' profiles were automatically considered invalid. Secondly, the participants' profiles were considered invalid if any of their validity scale scores were between 1T and 10T points above or below the normal range, and, by visually checking the items there was an obvious noncompliance to their response patterns.

Procedure

To obtain the young and middle aged sample, the minister and church leaders of four churches in Halstead, the First Mennonite, United Methodist, Presbyterian, and the Catholic church were called. During these phone calls the researcher first identified herself

as a graduate student in clinical psychology who is attending Emporia State University. Then, it was explained what this study is about, the purpose of this study, and the procedures necessary to complete it. Finally, the ministers and church leaders were asked if this study could include their members as participants. After obtaining permission, a time and place was scheduled to meet with the members of their churches.

After the young and middle age adult samples were obtained, the next step was to meet with each group at the scheduled time and place. For each group of participants, desensitization techniques were practiced which included an introduction of the researcher, an explanation of what this study concerns, and an invitation for questions. Secondly, four forms were administered to each individual. The first form administered was a consent form. The individuals' signatures on this form were an indication that they were willing participants. Individuals who did not sign this form did not receive the next two forms, were reassured that their decision to not participate is appropriate, and were excused from the room. The next 3 forms administered were a demographic form (Appendix B) which asked only relevant demographic information, the BCS (Appendix C) and the TSCS:2. Before the researcher administered the demographic form and the two instruments, the participants were asked not to write their name on them. In addition, they were asked to keep their demographic information, BCS, and TSCS:2 together when they were finished. The informed consent and remaining data were picked up separately to maintain confidentiality.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

A total of 108 participants were tested, all of whom were members of the Presbyterian, First United Methodist, First Mennonite, and Catholic church in Halstead, Kansas. Included among these 108 participants were 51 women and 57 men. Eleven of these 108 individuals had disqualifying demographics. These 11 individuals consisted of four participants having a physical disability, three with an eating disorder, three with clinical depression, and one with other psychological problems. In addition, nine participants' Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS:2) data were not analyzed due to having invalid scores. After the invalid data were discarded, 88 participants remained. These 88 participants consisted of 42 women and 46 men with a mean age of 38.7 years ($SD = 11.4$). The minimum age was 18 years while the maximum age was 59 years. These 88 participants were divided into four groups based on age and gender. The four groups included the following participants: 23 men ages 40-60 years; 23 men ages 18-39 years; 21 women ages 40-60 years; and 21 women ages 18-39 years.

The first hypothesis stated there would be a significant and positive correlation between measures of body image and self-concept for both young and middle aged adults. A Pearson product moment correlation between scores on the Body Cathexis Scale (BCS) and the total raw score of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS:2) indicated that neither young nor middle aged adults had a significant, positive relationship (see Table 1). A further investigation was done by splitting the data into subgroups of men, women, young men, middle aged men, young women, and middle aged women. The young adult men were the only subgroup who had a significant and positive relationship between body image and self-concept ($r = .57, p < .05$). These results suggest that, in general, young men's thoughts and feelings about themselves are related to how they feel about their

bodies. Conversely, this also suggests that, in general, how young men feel about their bodies is related to how they feel about themselves.

The second hypothesis stated that young adults would significantly differ from middle aged adults by having a higher degree of relationship between measures of body image and self-concept. A Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the degree of relation between body image and self-concept for each age group. The results showed the correlation was low and not significant for young adults ($r = .21$) as well as middle aged adults ($r = .22$). A t -test was utilized to evaluate whether there was a significant difference between the two age groups. With alpha set at .05, a planned comparison of the means for young and middle aged adults on the TSCS:2, 230.86 and 236.80, respectively, found no significant difference, $t(83) = -1.12$, $p = .27$. In addition, with alpha set at .05, a planned comparison of the means for young and middle aged adults on the BCS, 3.53 and 3.60, respectively, found no significant difference, $t(82) = -0.55$, $p = .59$. These results suggest that age does not relate to how individuals feel about their bodies or how they think and feel about themselves.

Concerning the third hypothesis, a Pearson product moment correlation was utilized to determine whether both men and women have a significant and positive correlation between measures of body image and self-concept. As shown in Table 1, the correlation was not significant for men ($r = .27$) or for women ($r = .22$) with the alpha level set for .05. These results suggest that both genders are similar in that neither men's nor women's thoughts and feelings about themselves were related to how they felt about their bodies. Similarly, the results also suggest neither genders' feelings about their bodies relate to how they think and feel about themselves.

To test the fourth hypothesis, a t -test was utilized to determine whether men and women significantly differ on independent measures of body image or self-concept. With alpha set at .05, a comparison of the means for men and women on the TSCS:2, 232.54

and 235.24, respectively, found no significant difference, $t(82) = -0.50, p = .62$. In contrast, with a .05 alpha level, a comparison of the means for men and women on the BCS, 3.72 and 3.40, respectively, found a significant difference, $t(82) = 2.83, p < .01$. These results suggest three things: gender is not a factor for how a person thinks and feels about him or herself; gender is a factor for how a person feels about his or her body; men report slightly more satisfaction with their bodies than do women.

Finally, two statistical analyses were performed to determine whether a curvilinear relationship was present between age and the BCS or TSCS:2. First, as shown in Table 2, when comparing the correlations of young and middle aged groups, the two age groups have opposite signs which is a potential indicator of a curvilinear relationship. The young adults' correlation between age and BCS and age and TSCS:2 was $-.20$ and $-.11$, respectively. Conversely, the middle aged adults' correlation between age and BCS and age and TSCS:2 was $.16$ and $.15$, respectively. However, the magnitude of these four correlations were low and nonsignificant.

Second, a regression equation showed that for Age and BCS and Age and TSCS:2 the magnitude of the multiple correlations (R) were low and not significant at the .05 alpha level ($R = .22, R = .20$, respectively) ($F = 2.07, p = .13; F = 1.83, p = .17$, respectively). Therefore, the presence of a curvilinear relationship was not confirmed. These results suggest that in this study, age is not a meaningful factor in the relationship between body image and self-concept, either in a linear or curvilinear fashion.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Age, Self-Concept and Body Image and Correlations
Between Body Image and Self-Concept

	N	Age		Self-Concept		Body Image		r
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Men	46	38.5	12.4	232.5	23.5	3.7	0.5	.27
Women	42	38.9	10.3	235.2	26.5	3.4	0.6	.22
Young	44	28.9	6.5	230.9	22.5	3.5	0.6	.21
Middle Age	44	48.5	4.9	236.8	27.0	3.6	0.5	.22
Young Men	23	27.7	6.9	229.7	20.9	3.8	0.6	.57*
Middle Age Men	23	49.3	4.6	235.3	25.9	3.7	0.4	.00
Young Women	21	30.2	5.8	232.1	24.5	3.3	0.6	-.04
Middle Age Women	21	47.6	5.1	238.4	28.6	3.5	0.5	.41

* $p < .05$.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between self-concept and body image focusing on age and gender differences. The primary goal of this study was to determine the relationship between body image and self-concept for young and middle aged adults. Research concerning this relationship is well documented for young adults. However, there is a scarcity of research with middle aged individuals. A second goal of this study was to investigate gender differences for the relationship between body image and self-concept and for body image and self-concept as independent measures. Previous research has demonstrated there are minimal to no gender differences concerning the relationship between self-concept and body image for young adults. For middle aged adults, however, it was not known whether men and women in this age group experience similar relationships between body image and self-concept. In addition, there was contradictory evidence within both age groups concerning which gender experiences more body image dissatisfaction.

The first and second hypotheses of this study focused on how age affects the relationship between body image and self-concept. The first hypothesis, which stated there would be a significant and positive correlation between body image and self-concept for both young and middle aged adults, was not supported. However, by further splitting the data into subgroups of men, women, young men, young women, middle aged men, and middle aged women, young adult men did have a significant and positive relationship between body image and self-concept. The young men having a significant, positive relationship suggests that how they think and feel about themselves is related to how they feel about their bodies. For example, if a young man feels bad about the way he looks, then this will relate to how he thinks and feels about himself as a person, perhaps to

the point where he says "I am not handsome, therefore I am worthless." Conversely, these results could also mean that how young men feel about their bodies is related to how they think and feel about themselves in general. Consistent with the previous example, a young man may say "I am worthless, therefore I am not handsome."

The second hypothesis, which stated that young and middle aged adults would significantly differ in the degree of relation between measures of body image and self-concept, was supported. Initially, with the total group of young adults and the total group of middle aged groups not significantly differing, it appeared that age was not a factor in how individuals experience themselves and their bodies. However, the finding of young men being the only subgroup to have a significant, positive relationship suggests that age is a factor, but for only men. For example, when the young men were pooled together with the middle aged men, this study found that these men combined did not show a significant, positive relationship between body image and self-concept. However, because the young men alone were found to have a significant, positive relationship, while the subgroup of middle aged men alone did not show such a relationship, this may indicate that there are age differences for men concerning the relationship between body image and self-concept. In contrast, there was no age differences for young and middle aged women. For example, there was no significant, positive relationship between body image and self-concept for either young and middle aged women combined as one group, or for their respective subgroups of young women and middle aged women.

Based on the results of the first and second hypotheses, there are several implications for research. First, the young men in this study having a significant relationship between body image and self-concept is consistent with previous research (Lerner et al., 1973; Stowers & Durm, 1996). However, the results of this study suggest that the numerous studies which have been completed with young adult men concerning body image and self-concept may not be applicable to middle aged men. This apparent age difference

between young and middle aged men supports previous research which suggested there are age differences for self-concept (Hooker & Kraus, 1994; Labouvie-Vief et al., 1995).

Second, these results for women suggest there are minimal to no differences between young and middle aged women concerning the relationship between body image and self-concept. Therefore, the research which has already been completed using young adult women (Lerner et al., 1976; McCaulay et al., 1998; Rosen & Ross, 1968), and the subsequent theories which have been generated from this research on young women, may be applicable to middle aged women.

Finally, the young adult women not having a significant relationship between the measures of body image and self-concept is inconsistent with the literature (Lerner et al., 1973; Stowers & Durm, 1996; Strauman & Glenberg, 1994). Generally with this issue of body image and self-concept in the literature, there appears to be more emphasis on young women than on young men. The results of this study imply that young men need to be given at least equal attention as young women on the issue of body image and/ or self-concept, if not more.

The third and fourth hypotheses of this study focused on gender. Concerning the third hypothesis, both men and women did not have a significant, positive relationship between measures of body image and self-concept. That is, neither the young and middle aged men combined nor the young and middle aged women combined appear to have a relationship between how they think and feel about themselves and how they feel about their bodies. For example, if men or women don't feel good about themselves, this does not predict how they will actually feel about their bodies. Conversely, these results could also mean that how men and women feel about their bodies does not relate to how they think and feel about themselves. For example, if men and women are dissatisfied with their bodies, this does not predict how they feel about themselves in general.

When further dividing gender into age groups, that is, shifting the focus to young adult men and women and middle aged men and women, this study's results have suggested there are gender differences for young adults, but not for middle aged adults. Concerning the young adult population and gender, this study's finding of young men, but not women, having a significant and positive relationship between body image and self-concept is contradictory to previous research which focused on gender and the relationship between body image and self-concept for young adults (Abell & Richards, 1996; Lerner et al., 1973; Stowers & Durm, 1996). Previous research indicated that both genders experience a positive and significant relationship between these two constructs.

In contrast, this study found that both middle aged men and women did not have a significant relationship between body image and self-concept. When focusing on previous research in which the samples used were over the age of 40 years, this study's finding of the middle aged men and women not having a significant relationship for these two constructs supports Janelli's (1993) research. He found that men and women, with an average age of 72 and 76, respectively, had no significant relationship between body image and self-concept. In contrast, this study's findings refute Racklidy, Warren, and Bird's (1988) research with this age group. They found that for women ages 35 through 55, determinants of body image included self-esteem, mastery of life events, and importance placed on body image. The implication of these results for both young and middle aged adults suggest that future research needs to continue to study how age and gender, together, effect the relationship between body image and self-concept in order to establish some consistency of findings.

Knowing how gender plays a role in the relationship between body image and self-concept is important. For example, consider a young adult who comes to counseling with the presenting complaint of having negative thoughts and feelings about him or

herself. According to this study, if this young adult is a male, it could be predicted that he would also feel dissatisfied with his body. In contrast, this study suggests that if this client was a young adult female, then it should not be predicted that she is dissatisfied with her body.

The fourth hypothesis was concerned with body image and self-concept as independent measures, rather than focusing on their relationship. This hypothesis stated that there would be no significant gender differences on measures of body image nor on measures of self-concept. This study found that men and women did not significantly differ on measures of self-concept. However, there was a significant gender difference on measures of body image, with women having slightly more dissatisfaction. It should be noted that even though these women were found to be slightly more dissatisfied with their bodies than men, their actual body image score was 3.4, which means they have neutral feelings about their body. This is an important finding as there is contradictory evidence in the literature, for both young and middle aged adults, as to which gender experiences more body image dissatisfaction, or whether there is any gender difference at all. Further, this is an interesting finding in light of young men, not women, having a significant correlation between body image and self-concept. That is, this study showed that women are slightly more dissatisfied with their bodies, yet they did not show a significant relationship between body image and self-concept. This may suggest that there are enough important components to womens' self-concept so that the one component of body image is not enough to affect how they think and feel about themselves. For example, a women may be very dissatisfied with her body. However, if for example she is satisfied with her family, her morals, her social life, and her work, then she generally thinks and feels good about herself despite her negative body image.

It is recommended that gender differences on measures of body image be further studied because in this study there were not outstanding differences between men and

women on this measure. In addition, the women's dissatisfaction with their body image was not pronounced.

The meaning which can be derived from this study is that body image and self-concept vary depending on the individual's age and gender. This study suggests that age differences, in particular, have been neglected by previous researchers. According to this study, the numerous research which has been completed with young adult men can not be generalized to middle aged men. This poses a problem because there is a deficiency of research done with middle aged men concerning the relationship between body image and self-concept. In a clinical setting then, therapists may be ill informed about middle aged men and how they experience body image and self-concept. If a middle aged man, or anyone for that matter, is seeking therapy, it is likely that his self-concept is affected to some degree. For treatment purposes, it is important to know what relates to his self-concept in order to provide him the best services possible.

In addition to identifying that middle aged men have been neglected in research and consequently in clinical settings, this study also found minimal differences between men and women in the young adult population concerning the relationship between body image and self-concept. This is an important finding as it supports other current research which is leaning in the direction of establishing that there are, in fact, minimal differences for gender in this age group. It is important for therapists to be cognizant of this so they know they can treat men and women in this age group similarly for this issue of body image and self-concept. It is also important for therapists to be aware of this research because there is a natural propensity to think women suffer more, with especially body image, than men.

A final meaning which can be derived from this study stems from the findings that women were more dissatisfied with their bodies than men, but did not show a significant, positive relationship between body image and self-concept. This finding is important as it suggests that women draw upon various aspects of their life, not just one component,

when they evaluate how they think and feel about themselves. It is important for therapists to be aware of this. For example, consider a woman who comes to therapy with the presenting complaint of having low self-esteem. Because many therapists are trained to think of client's issues in a linear fashion, there is perhaps a natural propensity for therapists to wonder what is *the one thing causing* this woman to have low self-esteem. However, the findings of this study suggest that a therapist should hypothesize that this particular client is unhappy with many aspects of her life, not just one.

The suggested answers to these hypotheses need to be considered in light of the sample utilized in this study. The generalization of this study's sample is questionable. The sample was obtained from Halstead, Kansas which is a small, rural community. With this isolated area, it is questionable whether samples obtained in Halstead generalize to other geographic regions. Secondly, most of the samples were active members of a church. It is not clear to what degree, if at all, religion affects how individuals feel about their bodies and themselves.

For further study, it is first recommended that a general knowledge base, for both young and middle aged adults, be established by continuing to determine whether these age groups experience a relationship between body image and self-concept. This first recommendation was made based on the fact that there is a scarcity of research on the middle aged population concerning body image and self-concept. In addition, even though there is numerous studies suggesting that both men and women have a relationship between body image and self-concept for the young adult population, this study did not support this previous research. Second, it is recommended that the relationship between body image and self-concept be established for gender groups, such as young adult men and women, and middle aged men and women. After general knowledge has been established, it is finally recommended that specific questions which concern age and gender differences be studied. Pertaining to this study, for example, the questions raised

are why do young men, but not middle aged men, have a relationship between body image and self-concept? Why do young adult men, but not young adult women have a significant, positive relationship between body image and self-concept? Why do women tend to have slightly more dissatisfaction with their bodies than men?

The relationship between body image and self-concept appears to be complex. The complexity lies in the fact that body image and self-concept, both independently and in relation to one another, vary depending on age and gender. Perhaps future research can answer the question of what constitutes these age and gender differences.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

The Department of Psychology (Special Education) supports the practice of informed consent for human participants participating in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be considered an adult if you agree to participate. Your written consent is required for any future, and that if you ever withdraw from the study, you will not be referred to, reported or any other form of disclosure.

In your study you will first be asked to fill out a short demographic questionnaire consisting of five questions. Then you will be asked to complete the Inventory of Interpersonal Items, which consists of 100 items. Complete the **Appendix A** will take approximately 10 minutes. The second questionnaire consists of **Informed Consent** will take approximately 5 minutes.

The questionnaire you will be asked to complete is a self-report questionnaire that is useful for the researcher to understand the relationship between self-concept and self-esteem. In addition, it will be used to understand the relationship between self-concept and self-esteem.

I have read the above information and I understand the purpose of the study. I have read the above information and I understand the purpose of the study. I have read the above information and I understand the purpose of the study. I have read the above information and I understand the purpose of the study.

Participant and/or parent/guardian signature: _____

Researcher signature: _____

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

The Department of Psychology/Special Education supports the practice of protection for human participants participating in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdraw from the study, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach.

In this study you will first be asked to fill out a short demographic form which consists of five questions. Then, you will be asked to fill out two questionnaires. One questionnaire consists of 100 items. Completing this questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes. The second questionnaire consists of 40 items. Completing this questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes.

The questionnaires you are being asked to fill out will provide data which will be beneficial for the researcher in studying the relationship between body image and self-concept. In addition, the data from the questionnaires will also help the researcher better understand the two concepts of body image and self-concept as separate entities.

“I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures and possible risks involved. I understand the potential risks involved and I assume them voluntarily. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without being subjected to reproach.”

Participant and/or authorized representative

Date

APPENDIX B
DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Ethnic background: _____

**Appendix B
Demographic Form**

Please indicate yes or no to the following questions.

Do you have a physical disability?

Do you have an eating disorder?

Are you clinically depressed?

Do you have any other psychiatric conditions?

If yes, indicate what.

APPENDIX B
DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Height: _____

Weight: _____

Ethnic Background: _____

Please indicate yes or no to the following questions:

Do you have a physical disability? Yes No

Do you have an eating disorder? Yes No

Are you clinically depressed? Yes No

Do you have any other psychological problems? Yes No

If yes, indicate what:

APPENDIX C

BODY-CATHEXIS SCALE

On the following pages are 60 items (number of things characteristic of yourself as related to you. You are asked to indicate which things you are satisfied with as they are, which things you wish to change and would like to change if it were possible, and which things you have no feeling either way or the other.

For each item below, indicate the number which best represents your feelings regarding the following scale:

- 1 - I have strong feelings and wish change could somehow be made.
- 2 - I don't like it, but I can't do anything about it.
- 3 - I have no particular feelings either way or the other.
- 4 - I am satisfied.
- 5 - I consider myself satisfied.

Appendix C

Body-Cathexis Scale

1. Hair

2. Face

3. Teeth

4. Physical strength

5. Physical appearance

APPENDIX C

BODY-CATHEXIS SCALE

On the following pages are listed a number of things characteristic of yourself or related to you. You are asked to indicate which things you are satisfied with exactly as they are, which things you worry about and would like to change if it were possible, and which things you have no feelings about one way or the other.

Consider each item below and encircle the number which best represents your feelings according to the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5 1. Have strong feelings and wish change could somehow be made.

1 2 3 4 5 2. Don't like, but can put up with.

1 2 3 4 5 3. Have no particular feelings one way or the other.

1 2 3 4 5 4. Am satisfied.

1 2 3 4 5 5. Consider myself fortunate.

1 2 3 4 5 hair

1 2 3 4 5 facial complexion

1 2 3 4 5 appetite

1 2 3 4 5 hands

1 2 3 4 5 hair distribution

1 2 3 4 5 nose

1 2 3 4 5 physical stamina

1 2 3 4 5 elimination

1 2 3 4 5 muscular strength

1 2 3 4 5 waist

1 2 3 4 5 flexibility

1 2 3 4 5 weight

1 - Have strong feelings and wish change could somehow be made.

2 - Don't like, but can put up with.

3 - Have no particular feelings one way or the other.

4 - Am satisfied.

5 - Consider myself fortunate.

1 2 3 4 5 energy level

1 2 3 4 5 back

1 2 3 4 5 ears

1 2 3 4 5 age

1 2 3 4 5 chin

1 2 3 4 5 body build

1 2 3 4 5 profile

1 2 3 4 5 height

1 2 3 4 5 keenness/senses

1 2 3 4 5 pain tolerance

1 2 3 4 5 shoulder width

1 2 3 4 5 arms

1 2 3 4 5 chest

1 2 3 4 5 eyes

1 2 3 4 5 coordination

1 2 3 4 5 hips

1 2 3 4 5 resistance/illness

1 2 3 4 5 legs

1 2 3 4 5 teeth

1 2 3 4 5 overall appearance

1 2 3 4 5 muscle tone

1 2 3 4 5 sleep

1 2 3 4 5 voice

1 2 3 4 5 health

1 2 3 4 5 physical skills

1 2 3 4 5 knees

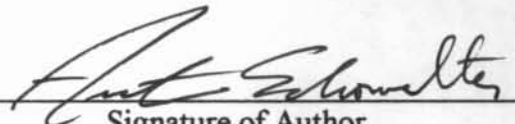
1 2 3 4 5 flexibility

1 2 3 4 5 face

1 2 3 4 5 weight

1 2 3 4 5 sex organs

I, Autumn Lyn Schowalter, hereby submit this thesis/report to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available to use in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, or other reproduction of this document is allowed for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author.




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Title of Thesis/Research Project



Signature of Graduate Office Staff

July 28, 1998.

Date Received

Accepted