

Considering Valence: Improving the Twenty Statements Test (TST) as a Measure of State Self-Objectification and Physical Competence

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INTRODUCTION

- Research has demonstrated that objectification, the tendency to adopt an externalized view of oneself or another, is a ubiquitous process that disproportionately affects women (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).
- The Twenty Statements Test (TST, Fredrickson, et al, 1998) is a widely-used measure for assessing the effects of objectifying experiences on state self-objectification (Calogero, 2012) and perceptions of physical competence (Daniels, 2009), whereby participants complete 20 "I am..." statements which are then coded according to whether these statements reflect body shape/size, other aspects of physical appearance, or physical competence.
- Only two studies using the TST have coded the valence (negative, neutral, and positive) of responses and shown its importance (Aubrey, 2009; Linder & Daniels, 2018).
- However, coder-rated valence is time-consuming and may present more challenges than categorical ratings of responses.
- Therefore, the goal of the current study was to explore the utility of participant ratings of the valence of TST statements.

METHOD

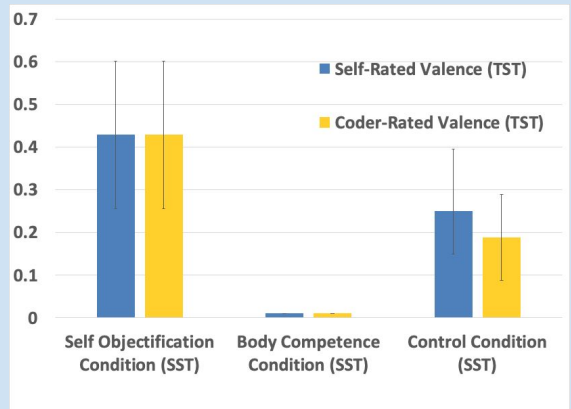
- We examined data from three separate experiments that utilized a shortened 10-statement version of the TST (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954). Participants completed 10 "I am..." statements.
- In each study, both female participants (N= 372, all study participants were between the ages of 18-25) and trained coders rated the valence (negative, neutral, and positive) of TST statements that were categorized as either self-objectifying (including body shape/size and other physical appearance statements) or physical competence descriptors.
- Data from the largest online experiment were used to understand whether self- and coder-rated valence objectifying statements varied as a function of priming conditions.
- In this experiment, participants completed an online survey in which they were primed with one of three versions of the Scrambled Sentence Task (SST): objectifying words, body competence words, or neutral words among four filler words. They were tasked with creating grammatically correct four-word sentences.
- Although participants were also randomly assigned to view either images of women, nature, or to experience a delay control group - a page loading gif for 3 minutes (Dunn et al., 2018; Gervais et al., 2013) following completion of the SST, for the purposes of the current study TST data from the delay control group were examined.
- Coders were blind to both condition and study hypotheses.

We recommend including self ratings of valence when using the Twenty Statements Test to assess state self-objectification.

Why?

1. Self and coder valence ratings were moderately consistent and demonstrated similar patterns of results (see figure below).

Self- and Coder-Rated Negative Self-Objectifying Statements are Similarly Affected by Experimental Manipulation Intended to Prime Self-Objectification Versus Body-Competence



2. Decreases the coding burden of an already-cumbersome measure.

3. Reduces measurement error resulting from subjective judgments made by others with varying generational, gender, and/or cultural norms.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive statistics by condition of scrambled sentence task for women who viewed control images for self-rated and coder-rated valence

TST Variables	SST Objectifying words		SST Body competence words		SST Control words		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Objectifying statements							
Positive (Self)	1	.68	.93	.59	.75	.86	
Positive (Coder)	.79	.58	1	.66	.75	.58	
Neutral (Self)	.29	.61	.40	.63	.38	.62	
Neutral (coder)	.50	.76	.33	.49	.63	.96	
Competence statements							
Positive (Self)	1.0	-	1.25	.96	.71	.49	
Positive (Coder)	1.0	-	1.0	1.2	.86	.90	
Neutral (Self)	.0	-	0.0	0	.43	.53	
Neutral (coder)	.0	-	0.0	-	.00	.00	
Negative (Self)	.0	-	.25	.5	.14	.38	
Negative (coder)	.0	-	.5	.58	.57	.53	

Concordance between self and coder valence ratings

Coder Rating	Self Rating			Coder Rating	Self Rating		
	Negative	Neutral	Positive		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Negative	30	5	0	Negative	21	7	3
Neutral	10	60	26	Neutral	1	2	1
Positive	4	12	118	Positive	1	26	124

Self-objectifying Statements ($\kappa = .64$)
 ● example response = "I am blonde"

Physical Competence Statements ($\kappa = .50$)
 ● example response = "I am a softball player"

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The field would benefit from a published coding manual that standardizes the TST and includes self-rated valence.
- Given the mediating role that self-objectification seems to play in accounting for negative effects of objectifying experiences (e.g., body shame, depressed mood), incorporating valence into existing and alternative measures of state self-objectification is critical.
- Finally, in the context of media-based exposure to empowering (Bue & Harrison, 2019) and performance-based (Linder & Daniels, 2018) images and advertisements, including valence ratings of TST statements may broaden our understanding of the positive and negative effects of exposure to diverse images and ideals.