

Title: An Exploratory Analysis of the Role of Self-Compassion and the Relationship Between Attachment and Body Appreciation

Program of Study: Psychology

Presentation Type – Choose one of the following: Print Poster

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Abstract: The way in which romantic partners relate to one another (i.e. relational anxiety and relational avoidance) is an important factor in how they see themselves (e.g. self-judgment) and may influence how they view their physical appearance. Anxious attachment is exhibited by an individual who views him or herself as unworthy, while seeing others as worthy. Negative self-compassion measures how likely individuals will critically judge themselves. There are two models that are used to analyze these variables. Other researchers have proposed (Avalos, Tylka, & Wood-Barcalow, 2005; Wasyliw, MacKinnon, & MacLellan, 2012; Gilbert, McEwan, Matos, Ravis, 2011) a romantic partner anxious attachment - self-judgment - body appreciation causal sequence. It is reasonable to argue that conceptually one's self judgment is developed prior to one's romantic partner attachment (Dzwonkowska & Żak-Łykus, 2015) and that any association between variables would be a byproduct of the similarity between parental and romantic partner attachment. The development of negative self-compassion in childhood influenced the decision to test this model with self-judgement as a moderator.

The mediation sequence indicated that self-judgement strengthened the relationship between attachment and body appreciation. Results for Study 1 indicated that self-judgment

mediated the relationship between anxious attachment and body appreciation, suggesting there is a time order sequence. In Study 2, results found no interaction between the variables. By contrasting the two models, this research supports that self-compassion is most useful as a mediator. These results suggest that people who are anxiously attached engage in more self-criticism, which leads to lower self-acceptance. However, it is important to remember that unworthiness or a negative sense of self does not necessarily manifest into poor body image. Therefore, these results cannot provide causal evidence that attachment is a predictor of body appreciation through self-judgment.

References

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Christian Worldview Integration: Worldview inevitably propels all current and future research interests and topics. As humans, there is an innate drive to understand the world in which we are immersed. This desire is a direct result of human identity as God's divine creation; however, the fall of man has diminished God's perfect design and humanity's ultimate purpose: to reflect the Creator's character. The sin of Adam, as outlined in Genesis, marked the emergence of a broken world inhabited by a fallen creation. This pivotal moment has greatly affected the way humans relate to one another, view themselves, and understand God. Modern culture is saturated with the idea of scarcity, a self-centered ideology that often results in broken people in need of healing. As reflections of God's image, humans have been charged with the task of loving God, loving themselves, and loving others. This research aims to prioritize the importance of accepting God's redemption in place of feelings of insufficiency and inadequacy.

Attachment describes how people relate to themselves and others. If an individual's unhealthy views of attachment cause them to reject God's redemption, then the effects of their attachment will inevitably reveal themselves in the way they relate with others. Life's trials often create distorted perceptions in the way an individual views himself or herself. While people remain broken, redemption is a key construct of the Christian faith that offers forgiveness, healing, and acceptance for those who would otherwise be condemned to their tainted views of themselves. Individuals who struggle with self-acceptance in light of their sin, lack the self-compassion that was intended as part of God's design. This study aims to answer questions related to the nature of human behavior in order to gain a deeper understanding of God's creation.