

AN ANALYSIS OF BODY ESTEEM, TRUST, AND JEALOUSY PATHWAYS TO
RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN WOMEN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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DECEMBER 2011

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
DENTON, TEXAS

November 15, 2011

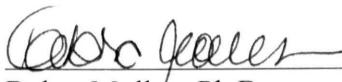
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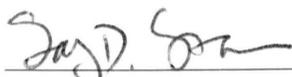


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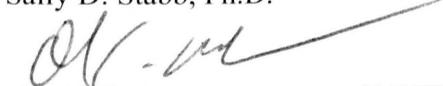
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ABSTRACT

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AN ANALYSIS OF BODY ESTEEM, TRUST, AND JEALOUSY PATHWAYS TO RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN WOMEN

DECEMBER 2011

Previous studies have found that overweight heterosexual women experience less relationship satisfaction than average weight women. Overweight women may have lowered body esteem, feel less trusting towards others, and experience more jealousy in their relationships. Although studies have linked body esteem, trust, and jealousy to relationship satisfaction, few have examined the relationship among all variables. This study investigated various pathways linking body esteem to relationship satisfaction through trust and jealousy. A total of 237 heterosexual women (ages 18 to 43) participated. Path and mediation analyses were used to determine significant direct pathways between body esteem, relationship satisfaction, trust, and jealousy based on the woman's identified ethnicity (Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, or Asian American). The only significant indirect pathway was body esteem to relationship satisfaction through jealousy for Caucasians. The results indicated that women vary based on their ethnicity when examining links between body esteem, trust, jealousy, and relationship satisfaction.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most individuals are involved in some type of romantic relationship because humans are social and need the companionship of another human. Romantic relationships are an important part of women's lives; therefore, a satisfactory romantic connection may be important in relationship sustainability. A variety of factors affect relationship satisfaction; there is no single predictor of a couple's quality of relationship (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2008). Although many researchers have conducted studies to determine correlations between possible predictors and relationship quality, fewer studies have been conducted to determine the correlation and interaction among several predictors and women's relationships. Body image, trust, and jealousy are a few of the constructs that researchers have previously linked individually to the quality of a couple's relationship.

As social beings, people seem to spend a great deal of time working at, thinking, and talking about their relationships (Eshbaugh, 2010). With so many different aspects of relationships, it may be helpful to narrow the scope to women involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship to identify the importance of close relationships for women.

Psychologists have increased the amount of studies examining women within the last 40 years (Denmark, Felipe Russo, Hanson Frieze, & Sechzer, 1988); therefore, there is ample room for intellectual inquiry and discussion. Thus, looking at the intricacies

affecting heterosexual women's romantic relationships could help broaden current literature and advance the therapeutic processes.

Relationship Satisfaction

Western culture emphasizes the importance of relationships; the media often depicts people in relationships and families may pressure their members to seek romantic relationships. As early as elementary school, girls learn that it is important to conform to society's ideals for fear of being socially rejected by their peers (Nesdale et al., 2010). This need for acceptance is driven by the desire to have long-lasting, positive relationships; these relationships act as a safeguard against loneliness and social isolation (Mellor, Stokes, Firth, Hayashi, & Cummins, 2008). Positive, fulfilling relationships that reduce loneliness are evaluated by women based on their view of the intimacy, quantity, and type of relationships in their lives (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006; Qualter, Wagner, Quinton, & Brown, 2009). Throughout life, individuals seek relationships with friends, family, and primarily romantic partners to decrease loneliness (Eshbaugh, 2010). Therefore, there is a high importance placed on maintaining healthy relationships.

It can be assumed that a healthy relationship is determined by each woman in the relationship via her interpretation of the quality of that relationship. One component of such relationship quality is relationship satisfaction (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2010). Relationship satisfaction stems from women's sense of their relationship based on various interpersonal factors including self-disclosure, commitment, empathy, positive

conflict resolution, sexual satisfaction, and passionate and compassionate love (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2008).

Murray and Holmes (2000) argued that women with lower self-esteem are more likely to find faults in partners or the relationship because of acquired relationship insecurities based on their perception of their own worthiness of love. This suggests that women with low self-esteem will go into relationships already looking for a fault or reason for the partner to leave them and in turn will develop low relationship satisfaction.

Body Image

Festinger (1954) suggested that people compare themselves to other people they believe fit a standard of superiority. Women often evaluate themselves after they have evaluated another woman on the same dimensions, creating a social comparison (Dunning, 2000; Dunning & Hayes, 1996). It is conceivable for women's body image to be affected if they are comparing their bodies to other women's bodies. For example, if a woman is comparing herself to someone whom she considers superior, then she is more likely to have a lower body satisfaction than if she compared herself to someone considered physically inferior. Not only do women compare themselves to others around them, they compare themselves to women portrayed in the media (Strahan, Wilson, Cressman, & Boute, 2006).

Body image is defined as a woman's belief and sense of self-worth based on her rating of her own appearance (Cash, Theriault, & Milkweicz Annis, 2004). Often, women's evaluations of their bodies are influenced by a culture's definition of beauty.

Women who have body types similar to the societal ideal are satisfied with their own body image (Monteath & McCabe, 1997). However, these ideals are becoming farther and farther from women's actual bodies (Spitzer, Henderson, & Zivian, 1999). The increasing gap in society's ideal image and actual body size could lead to poor body image in women.

Body image ideals are conveyed through peers, family, and media. Media is considered one of the most influential factors on ideal body image (Dittmar, 2009). Ideal body image varies between cultures and through time within that culture. In Western society, the body image ideal has become increasingly thinner over the past 50 years, as evidenced by findings that the majority of *Playboy* centerfolds and Miss America Pageant contestants now weigh less than 85% of a normal body weight for their height (Seifert, 2005; Weisman, Gray, Mosimann, & Ahrens, 1992). This low body weight fits the criteria for anorexia nervosa in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR)*; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Media images are viewed by both men and women in society; however, women are uniquely affected by media images geared toward the male viewer. Women socially compare themselves to these media images because they are meant to attract men, causing their body image to be related to the affirmation of not only their own view but also the view of men (Sypeck et al., 2006).

This body image ideal is not only presented to adults through the media but to children as well. As early as five years old, a girl is able to distinguish between different body types and identify the more desired body image (Dittmar, Halliwell, & Ive, 2006;

Gilbert, 1998; Schur, Sanders, & Steiner, 2000). The ability to distinguish and show desirability for society's ideal body image at a young age reflects an early socialization by society on the importance of body image and how to evaluate and compare bodies.

Interpersonal experiences also help shape women's body image (Cash et al., 2004). From an early age, girls are looking at their peers and family to provide an example of how to think and behave; however, peer acceptance of their body image becomes integral during adolescence (Jones & Crawford, 2006). Felson (1985) noted girls' emphasis on their perception of friends' views as compared to the actual appraisal given by their friends. It is conceivable that, because of this importance of peer evaluation in childhood and adolescence, women will continue to look towards important figures in their lives for acceptance in adulthood.

Romantic relationships are considered important for most individuals and women often link the importance of their own physical attractiveness to a romantic relationship (Feingold, 1990). Therefore, it is understandable that when women are in relationships, they will highly regard their partners' opinions and perceptions. Relying on a partner's opinion and acceptance could possibly result in a negative view of one's body if women are not given consistent body acceptance. Women with poor body image may rely on their partners' approval of their appearance, thus affecting relationship satisfaction (Cash et al., 2004). Researchers have found a link between self-esteem and body image as well as relationships (Ambwani & Strauss, 2007). It is understandable in this sense that women develop a body image that affects relationship satisfaction.

Trust

Butler (1986) suggested that to have a healthy relationship, there needs to be interpersonal trust. Trust occurs when a woman has confidence that another individual can be relied on despite her worries and fears (Campbell, Boldry, Simpson, & Rubin, 2010; Rempel, Ross, & Holmes, 2001). Trust is developed through three distinct categories: predictability, dependability, and faith (Zak, Gold, Ryckman, & Lenney, 1998). Individuals are considered predictable when they have a consistent behavior. A dependable partner exhibits honest, loyal, and compassionate qualities. Finally, faith in a partner shows that one believes the relationship will last and the partner values the relationship. Therefore, women's trust is based on their perception of their partners' behaviors and intrinsic qualities. Zak et al. (1998) suggested that if women or their partners exhibit trusting behaviors, then women are more likely to trust their partner. Less trusting women examine their partners' trusting behaviors through cues of perceived positive and negative behaviors towards the relationship, therefore contributing to an unstable relationship due to the constant examination of the partner (Campbell et al., 2010).

Jealousy

Similar to trust in a relationship, jealousy can potentially affect a relationship because one partner is constantly examining the other partner and the intentions of that partner. In the context of romantic relationships, jealousy is the reaction to a perceived threat to the relationship by another individual and can be influential in relationships

(Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1985). This perceived threat may be the result of women's insecurities, such as body image. Although jealousy could be justified due to an actual threat, it is conceivable that it may also be women's insecurities influencing the perception of their partner. Either way, jealousy could potentially affect a woman's relationship satisfaction (Sheets, Fredendall, & Claypool, 1997).

Although various labels are used for different types of jealousy, researchers have identified two types of jealousy. Accordingly, this study will use the terms reactive and suspicious jealousy (Bringle, 1991) when referring to the types of jealousy. The first type is reactive jealousy, occurring when women feel threatened due to factual evidence of events outside the relationship. The second type, suspicious jealousy, occurs when women feel jealous but have no evidence to prove there has been any transgressions. There are three aspects of the two types of jealousy that in turn affect a relationship: cognitions, emotions, and behaviors (Andersen, Eloy, Guerrero, & Spitzberg, 1995; Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). Cognitive aspects of jealousy occur when women become aware of the threat to the relationship; an awareness of a perceived threat leads to obsessive thoughts about the threat. Women then experience negative emotions related to the potential loss of the relationship. Finally, women react with different detective behaviors to determine if the worries and suspicions are accurate (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989).

The types of jealousy also differ in how they relate to interpersonal experiences; reactive jealousy relates to relational trust and suspicious jealousy relates to women's insecurities and self-esteem (Rydell & Bringle, 2007). Therefore, women's insecurities

when entering a relationship could potentially affect their jealousy and trust within that relationship. The constant assessment of a partner's faithfulness is similar to how women rely on others' acceptance to determine their body worth in a relationship. If women lack trust or are jealous in a relationship, then their satisfaction in the relationship could be affected negatively. Therefore, trust and jealousy can be seen as important factors in relationship satisfaction.

It appears that women's body image could have a relationship with different aspects of a romantic relationship. Given the importance of romantic relationships, the study suggested a model to examine the relationship among body esteem, trust, and jealousy with the quality of heterosexual women's relationships. The model tested a direct pathway for a woman's body esteem to affect her romantic relationship satisfaction. It also examined two indirect pathways for a woman's body image to affect her relationship satisfaction through her experiences of trust and jealousy in the relationship. Only heterosexual women were used in this study due to the small number of participants who indicated they were in non-heterosexual relationships.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Extensive research has been conducted in the area of relationships for women; however, few studies have expanded beyond the study of young, White, middle- to upper-middle class heterosexual women. Therefore, this review of previous findings is based on young, White and middle to upper-middle class women as opposed to women in general. It was found by Feingold (1990) that the link between body image and relationships is more common in women than men; therefore, women will be the main focus of this study. As determined by Mellor, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, McCabe, and Ricciardelli (2010), the age of women does not affect their body dissatisfaction. The review of this literature will discuss each construct of the model individually and then the interaction of the different constructs.

Relationship Satisfaction

Although there are a variety of ways to look at the quality of a relationship, researchers seem to all agree that it involves multiple components. Relationship satisfaction refers to women's contentment and happiness within their romantic relationship (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2008). It is each partner's perception of the partnership that is critical to their relationship satisfaction (Flora & Segrin, 2000). The way that women understand the world and people around them may be easily influenced

by how positively or negatively they think about themselves. Regardless of the accuracy of these beliefs, they appear true to each woman, which may affect her viewpoints of people and environments.

Development and Importance of Relationship Satisfaction

Relationships create an environment which safeguards against loneliness, increase happiness, and assist in enhancing women's sense of worth in their lives. Of the different types of interpersonal connections, a romantic relationship may often be considered one of the most important relationships in an adult's life. There are varying beliefs about how romantic relationships develop and women's relationship satisfaction is affected (Flora & Segrin, 2000). However, it is agreed that speed and depth of cognitions, emotions, and behaviors within a relationship are crucial for relationship satisfaction (Flora & Segrin, 2000). Intimate couples' relationships that progress at a deeper level and faster pace often have a greater relationship satisfaction than those in relationships that progress more slowly and are less intimate (Flora & Segrin, 2000). Likewise, women who feel that they are deeply connected with their partners are often more satisfied with their relationship.

Loneliness is often viewed as a result of lacking close relationships; however, it can also occur when women experience a lack of support, hope, fulfillment, pleasure, and intimacy within a close relationship (Flora & Segrin, 2000). Often in dissatisfying relationships, an individual becomes lonely and may experience clinically significant distress (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006). The results of loneliness can include depression,

self-depreciation, negative thinking, and poor social skills (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006). Women who have poor relationship satisfaction may feel lonely which could further exacerbate dissatisfaction with the relationship. It could then be determined that greater consequences may result from an unsatisfying relationship than no relationship at all.

Eshbaugh (2010) studied loneliness in regards to the importance of college students' romantic relationships. College students, particularly women, reported higher rates of loneliness when not involved in a romantic relationship. Women who had high family support but low romantic relationship support in college experienced a higher level of loneliness than other women in college (Eshbaugh, 2010). The finding that unpartnered women experience a greater level of loneliness than women without family support indicates a unique significance of romantic relationships as opposed to other types of relationships for women. Findings also showed loneliness experienced by women college students negatively correlated with the support of a relationship partner but was not affected by family support (Eshbaugh, 2010). This discovery suggests that romantic relationships are considered an important factor for women and can significantly affect their overall life satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction can be affected by various factors, such as women's self-talk and willingness to discuss thoughts and opinions with their partner (Besser, Flett, & Davis, 2003). Unwillingness to discuss various topics with partners could potentially lead to greater loneliness and, ultimately, dissatisfaction in a relationship. Women who are self-critical are often found to experience higher levels of loneliness (Besser et al., 2003).

Self-criticism is correlated with feeling inferior, guilty, having lowered self-worth, and a desire for perfection (Besser et al., 2003). Furthermore, women who self-criticize are often found to self-silence. Besser et al. suggested self-silencing occurs when women conceal emotions, often anger, to maintain or improve a relationship. Self-criticizing women may be more aware of the difference between the feedback of others and the thoughts of themselves (Besser et al., 2003). Therefore, women who are self-critical are often sensitive to feedback from themselves as well as others, leading to lowered communication, self-silencing, loneliness, and often relationship dissatisfaction. The loneliness that these women experience may have a significant impact on their life satisfaction. Although loneliness can occur within or outside of a relationship, the satisfaction within a relationship may influence its impact and existence as would the rate of progress and depth of the relationship, self-criticism, and self-silencing behaviors.

Relationship Satisfaction and Self-Esteem

Women's perceptions are important aspects of relationships; women examine satisfaction with the romantic relationship, their partners, and the self often leading to self-criticism. If women are self-critical and view themselves negatively, they may have low self-esteem, thereby suggesting that self-esteem plays an integral role in the satisfaction women have in their partnership. Self-esteem is women's perception of their own self-worth (Murray & Holmes, 2000). Murray and Holmes identified a positive correlation between women's self-esteem and the way they perceived their partners' view them. Low self-esteem in women leads to less positive, less certain, and more conflicted

beliefs about themselves and their partners' views of them (Murray & Holmes, 2000). Compared to women with high self-esteem, women with low self-esteem tended to have a greater gap between how they perceived their partners' view of them and the reported perceptions of the partners (Murray & Holmes, 2000). This could significantly affect how romantic partners interact and the satisfaction within the relationship. Murray and Holmes noted that women with low self-esteem are not only in less satisfying relationships, but in less stable relationships. Stability in a relationship refers to consistent or inconsistent satisfaction over time. Murray and Holmes suggested that women's perceptions of their partners' opinion of them may influence the connection between self-esteem and relationship satisfaction. Women with lower self-esteem often believe their partners view them in a negative light, resulting in a lower satisfaction with their relationship.

Likewise, Sciangula and Morry (2009) reported that women with low self-esteem tend to emotionally distance themselves by thinking about their partners in a negative fashion in effort to avoid rejection. It was found that women with lower self-esteem were inclined to experience greater relationship dissatisfaction. Furthermore, these women often underestimated their partners' perceptions of them and their relationship. The findings suggested that women with high self-esteem were happier in their relationship as well as had more positive feelings overall, were involved in longer lasting relationships, and had less suspicions within and worries about the relationship (Sciangula & Morry, 2009). Women with lower self-esteem viewed experiences within the relationship more

negatively than those with higher self-esteem (Sciangula & Morry, 2009). In essence, Sciangula and Morry's discoveries proposed that women with higher self-esteem may experience more satisfaction with their relationship than those with a lower self-esteem due to seeing their partner and experiences more positively.

Research has linked women's self-esteem to dieting behaviors which interacts with their relationship satisfaction (Boyes, Fletcher, & Latner, 2000). Often dieting behaviors were related to a partner's satisfaction, mood, and self-esteem. Boyes et al. reported greater dissatisfaction, lower self-esteem, and an increase in dieting behaviors in women when partners exhibited greater depressive symptoms and less satisfaction with the relationship. Low levels of self-esteem and dieting may be due to pressure to have society's set ideal body in order to satisfy a romantic partner and maintain a relationship. A desire for increased attractiveness to maintain a relationship may affect women's dieting behaviors, self-esteem, and overall satisfaction within the relationship.

Body Image

The influence of society on women's self-esteem, dieting, and subsequently relationship satisfaction shows the importance of women's perception of their appearance in our society. Monteath and McCabe (1997) defined body image as the perceptions and attitudes about one's body that results in satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's appearance. Body esteem is a component of body image involving the difference between the actual and ideal self (Smolak & Levine, 2001). Western culture has been characterized as emphasizing a thin ideal and thus encouraging high rates of body

dissatisfaction (Monteath & McCabe, 1997). It is estimated that between 6 and 11 million United States citizens have a diagnosable eating disorder (National Organization for Women Foundation, 2007). Approximately 95% of those people with eating disorders are women (National Organization for Women Foundation, 2007). Since women often base their self-worth on appearance and life achievements, it is understandable that women with poor body images might also develop low self-esteem.

Development of Body Image

Body image ideals in Western culture are thinner than the average weight for a woman and appear to get thinner with time (Levine & Killbourne, 2008). This cultural ideal is often thinner than the personal ideals set by average women; relatedly, women are highly influenced by images portrayed in the media (Monteath & McCabe, 1997). When a woman's body differs greatly from society's ideal body image, body dissatisfaction may arise, which correlates with depression, low self-esteem, and eating disorders (Monteath & McCabe, 1997). Women were found to expect others to rate their bodies more negatively than they rated others' bodies (Monteath & McCabe, 1997). This belief could potentially cause women to question the thoughts of others around them which may lead to increased dissatisfaction with their own bodies.

Just as the ideals of society influence women, children become highly susceptible to the sway of societal messages as well. Children's constant observing, mimicking, and learning about the world around them possibly creates an unbridled acceptance of pervasive messages. Children as young as preschool age are able to identify the

importance of weight in the United States culture. When looking at children's actual and perceived weight of themselves affecting their anti-fat attitudes, Holub (2008) discovered that children desired to have a thin body and often developed an anti-fat prejudice, particularly if they perceived themselves as thinner than average. These prejudiced attitudes, which are often shown through actions or words, include disliking of individuals who are overweight, fear of obesity, blaming overweight individuals for a perceived lack of control, and attributing negative attributes to those overweight (O'Brien et al., 2007). Anti-fat prejudices could cause a great deal of stress and negatively affect body image due to a desire to fit in and avoid ridicule. Also, not fitting the ideal image and dealing with prejudice of body image may potentially increase depression and body dissatisfaction for women. Nesdale et al. (2010) noted the importance of conforming due to repercussions from peers and society.

This negative attitude towards weight continues throughout childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. Women who are overweight are often perceived as less capable, less intelligent, and less sexually appealing than those who are average or below average weight (O'Brien, Hunter, Halberstadt, & Anderson, 2007). O'Brien et al. (2007) noted that overweight women are given less educational and financial opportunities than men or women who are perceived as average or less than average weight. Anti-fat prejudices are apparent throughout society and may only fuel the societal norm for an ideal body type and cause greater body dissatisfaction for women.

Body Image and Social Comparison Theory

Social comparison theory, originally developed by Festinger (1954), proposes that people will compare themselves to others whom they consider superior or inferior in some aspect based on social standards. Comparisons may be between women and either a peer or media image, for example. Although men and women make these comparisons, it is more common for women to make appearance-based comparisons to others who are considered superior (Strahan et al., 2006). With an emphasis placed on the importance of maintaining the societal ideal body type or risking negative social judgment, women often compare themselves to other women to evaluate their own bodies. This internal comparison with other individuals often comes with a price. Myers and Crowther (2009) found that women frequently experience greater levels of body dissatisfaction when comparing their bodies to other women. Dissatisfaction with their bodies is caused by negative perceptions about their own appearance based on the judgement of and comparison with others (Myers & Crowther, 2009). Judgment and comparison with other women are often based on cultural norms which dictate that the body should be unnaturally thin; consequently, body dissatisfaction occurs after women compare their bodies to this unattainable standard. Although dissatisfaction as a result of social comparison is common among men, it is more prevalent in women. Strahan et al. (2006) suggested that women who compared themselves to others whom they considered socially superior experienced a greater level of body dissatisfaction than men.

Women may be influenced by media images; however, it is the comparison of these images to themselves that seem to have the greatest effect on their body-esteem. Sheldon (2010) examined the relationship between women's body-esteem and the amount of comparisons with media images. Findings show that women with lower body-esteem often compared themselves to media images and felt pressure from friends and family to obtain an ideal body (Sheldon, 2010). Furthermore, Sheldon noted the connection between perfectionism and comparison with other individuals for women. Women who desire perfection in themselves may be more likely to compare themselves to others and have a lower body-esteem as a result.

Based on social comparison research, women are highly susceptible to the influence of society's body ideal. The tendency for many women to compare their bodies to others' could be due to the desire for acceptance and the pressure to maintain a certain body ideal. These findings show that beliefs are spread rapidly in a culture and are important in the understanding the influence of media, peers, and family in women's evaluation of their bodies as well as the bodies of others.

Trust

Many may consider trust in one's partner as paramount to a relationship; however, trust may be interpreted in various ways. Trust, as defined by Rusbult, Wieselquist, Foster, and Witcher (1999), is a way for partners to evaluate each other's commitment to the relationship. Rusbult et al. also argued that trust is defined as a personality characteristic and an interpersonal characteristic that varies among relationships.

Therefore, women have relatively stable personalities that affect the level of trust in others, though relationship dynamics and experiences with a particular partner play a role as well. There is also a possibility of environmental factors affecting women's level of trust, such as previous relationship experiences. It seems that trust is not constant and may vary based on the personality, previous experiences, and the current relationship of each woman.

Zak et al. (1998) suggested that trust grows as an exchange between individuals. According to this view, as women develop trust, their partners reciprocate with an increase in trust; however, when a partner breaks the cycle of trust, it may increase instability within the relationship. It is this variability of trust within a relationship that may cause more dissatisfaction with relationships. When trust is broken, women feel unable to depend on a partner and that the partner may be unable to meet their needs and goals (Campbell et al., 2010). Women's perception of their partners' predictability and dependability within a romantic relationship will affect how they trust their partners.

Rempel, Ross, and Holmes (2001) investigated the importance of trust in relationships when women interpret events and conflicts within the relationship. Women who had high trust in their partners were more likely to look at their partners' behavior in a positive light than women with less trust in their partners (Rempel et al., 2001). Women who had high trust in their partnerships associated positive attributes with their significant other. Women with lower trust in their partners tended to assume that their partners' behaviors were not for the benefit of the relationship and as a result saw their

actions negatively (Rempel et al., 2001). However, these women continued to make positive attributions to avoid more conflict within the relationship. High-trusting women saw and talked about their partners positively, while low-trusting women saw their partners negatively and only discussed positive attributes of them when they were present (Rempel et al., 2001).

Jealousy

Similar to trust in a relationship, jealousy relies on the belief that a partner is committed to the relationship. Jealousy develops when women sense a threat, either actual or perceived. A perceived threat to one's relationship from another individual can often be a result of insecurity with oneself, fear of losing a loved one, or low self-esteem (Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1985). Pfeiffer and Wong (1989) described two types of jealousy, pathological and normal; however, other studies use the terms suspicious and reactive to refer to the same jealousies (Bringle, 1991). Pathological, or suspicious jealousy, occurs when women have an imagined threat to the relationship, paranoid suspicions about a threat, emotional distress, and behavioral obsessions questioning the validity of the threat. Normal, or reactive, jealousy involves an actual threat, negative emotions, and some behaviors exhibited to ensure the continuation of the valued romantic relationship.

Suspicious and reactive jealousy were also examined by Rydell and Bringle (2007). Women experiencing reactive jealousy as a result of a reaction to an actual threat showed greater dependency on their partner throughout the relationship (Rydell &

Bringle, 2007). When women experience suspicious jealousy, they often have insecurities about themselves and lowered self-esteem. Women with lower self-image may perceive a threat to the relationship more often than those who have a better self-image. In addition, these women may have a greater dependence on the perceived acceptance of their partner which may lead to increased worry about threats to the relationship and suspicious feelings about others. Thus, lowered self-esteem is associated with increased jealousy.

There are three aspects within each of the two types of jealousy: emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. Although jealousy is mainly an emotional construct, it also involves cognitions and behaviors (Pfeiffer & Wong, 1989). Cognitive aspects of jealousy, as defined by Pfeiffer and Wong (1989), consist of the worries and suspicions concerning an actual or imagined threat to the relationship. Behavioral aspects of jealousy occur when women use any actions to protect the relationship or detect a threat to the relationship. Anderson et al. (1995) examined correlations between different types of jealousy and relational satisfaction. Cognitive jealousy was found to have the greatest negative correlation with relationship satisfaction. Therefore, women who ruminate and obsessively worry about partners' infidelity are more likely to experience dissatisfaction in the relationship than those who exhibit behavioral jealousy. Those who express greater jealousy in a relationship also exhibit both positive and negative communication techniques (Anderson et al., 1995). Negative communication, as identified by Anderson et al. (1995), includes verbal and physical aggression, purposefully distancing from partners, accusations, and threats. Positive communication includes expressing thoughts

and feelings without placing blame, less defensiveness, not changing the subject, low criticism, humor, validation, and negotiation (Anderson et al., 1995). While the positive techniques could be helpful for a relationship, the negative communication techniques could lead to greater stress on the relationship causing lower relationship satisfaction.

Interaction Between Variables

Relationship Satisfaction and Body Image

Individuals' body image develops early in life, prior to any development of a romantic relationship. Preschoolers are able to evaluate their own and other's bodies and identify the positive and negative attributes related to the ideal body image (Holub, 2008). It is conceivable that women's body image will affect their romantic relationships and satisfaction within those relationships. For heterosexual individuals, men rate the ideal woman to date as slightly below average weight which contrasts with women, who rate the ideal man to date as slightly above average weight (Stake & Lauer, 1987). Women who do not perceive themselves as attaining the thin ideal may thus question their ability to obtain and maintain a romantic relationship.

Even after entering a romantic relationship, women who have a poor body image may fear that their partners are constantly negatively evaluating their bodies. Sciangula and Morry (2009) noted that women's self-esteem affects their perception of how partners perceive them. Those who had lower self-esteem believed their partner viewed them less positively than the partner's actual perception. This in turn negatively affected women's relationship satisfaction and experiences within their relationships. Although

women's perceptions of how their partners view them are affected by self-esteem, their body image is also influenced by the partners' approval. McKinley (1999) found a correlation between body image and the woman's perception of her partner's approval. If women believed their partners approved of their appearance, they in turn had a more positive body image. Findings also showed that women with partners who disapproved of their appearance were more likely to have lower body-esteem compared to those with no partner or those with partners who approved of their appearance (McKinley, 1999). For that reason, women's body image and self-esteem are linked to how they perceive what a partner thinks of them and how the partner actually thinks of them.

Sheets and Ajmere (2005) found that about one-third of men and women in relationships tell their partners to change their weight. The majority of these individuals told their partner to change closer to the societal ideal for a woman or man. Men were most commonly told to gain weight and women were most commonly told to lose weight to satisfy their partners. Sheets and Ajmere also found that women told to lose weight and men told to gain weight by their partner reported greater relationship dissatisfaction. When women are told to change their weight, they may experience lower body image and self-esteem, leading to greater dissatisfaction with the relationship.

In a study by Cash et al. (2004) men and women who were found to have a negative body image also had concerns about approval and acceptance of other individuals, particularly their romantic partners. Women exhibiting a fear of intimacy in their romantic relationship showed greater body dissatisfaction and emphasis on

appearance. Cash et al. assumed that women with poor body image developed anxiety in their romantic relationships due to dissatisfaction with their bodies, over-investment in appearance, and situational poor body esteem.

Women who exhibit anxiety in their relationships and who place greater emphasis on their bodies may seek appearance feedback from their partners. Evans and Stuck (2007) suggested that women with poor body images solicit negative appearance comments from their partners. This finding is based on the Self-Verification theory, in which women seek to validate their views of themselves through others' positive and negative feedback (Swann, 1987). It is reasonable to expect that if women with poor body image receive confirming feedback about their bodies, they would develop more body dissatisfaction. Evans and Stuck (2007) noted the importance of these solicitations and feedback on relationship satisfaction. In their study, women who sought negative feedback had a poorer body image and exhibited greater relationship dissatisfaction than women who did not seek negative feedback from a partner. Thus, poor body image may impact the ability to begin and maintain satisfying romantic relationships.

Some types of communication, such as negative feedback in self-verification, could potentially cause hurt for women who are receiving the feedback even though they may have requested the information. Theiss, Knobloch, Checton, and Magsamen-Conrad (2009) suggested that women become more uncertain about their relationships' future and perceive that their partners interfere with goals when the intensity and intentionality of hurtful messages increase, causing greater damage to the relationship. It was also noted

that women with greater certainty and less interference of goals from their partners were more likely to confront their partners and discuss the effects of the hurtful messages (Theiss et al., 2009). With these findings in mind, it would be understandable that women who are receiving negative appearance feedback may be less certain in the relationship and possibly not discuss the hurtful feedback. Ultimately, less certainty and decreased communication may lead to relationship dissatisfaction.

Trust and Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship evaluation is at the core of trust for romantic relationships (Campbell et al., 2010). Women often evaluate their relationship to gauge a partner's love, commitment, and benevolence. It is when the trust level is low that women increase the level of evaluation, often resulting in negative relationship perceptions and satisfaction (Campbell et al., 2010). Campbell et al. (2010) determined that women felt more stable in their relationship when their partner reported high relationship quality. It was also found that trusting women responded more positively to conflict and negative interaction with their partner than less trusting women. Those who are less trusting responded with more destructive behaviors, negative emotions, and felt a greater sense of distress than more trusting women (Campbell et al., 2010). The response of distrusting behaviors could be detrimental to the relationship and cause even greater distrust and relationship satisfaction. Zak et al. (1998) noted that women perceive levels of trust by the presence of their own trusting behaviors as well as their partners' trusting behaviors. Consequently,

if individuals do not trust themselves or see distrusting behaviors from a partner, then their level of trust and relationship satisfaction should decrease.

Trust and Body Image

Although research has not connected women's body image directly with trust in a relationship, the two constructs may be related. As body image and trust have been found to be related to relationship satisfaction, it is important to consider that each of these constructs may have direct and indirect pathways to relationship satisfaction. As women develop their self-perceptions in childhood, body image may affect their ability to develop and maintain trust in a romantic relationship. If women have poor body image based on social comparison, then they may not trust their partners to be committed, reliable, and reciprocative.

Jealousy and Relationship Satisfaction

Sheets et al. (1997) evaluated the correlation between jealousy and women's expectations for the relationship. Those with high jealousy had low expectations for the stability in their relationship and those with low jealousy exhibited high expectations for the stability of the relationship (Sheets et al., 1997). Sheets et al. determined that partners' jealousy predicted both women's expected and actual relationship stability. Women with high jealousy expect low stability within their relationship. Low stability is more likely to occur in the relationship when one of the partners has high jealousy; therefore, a jealous and unstable relationship cycle occurs. The perception of the other partner's jealousy also causes greater instability in the relationship (Sheets et al., 1997).

These findings show that women's jealousy as well as the perception of their partners' jealousy have a significant effect on the stability in the relationship. This instability can ultimately cause a lower relationship satisfaction for each partner.

Jealousy and Body Image

Since appearance is important in society and partner selection, women may feel jealous when the relationship is threatened by an individual considered physically superior. Physically attractive women are considered to have a smaller waist-to-hip ratio (WHR), 0.7, and could be considered a threat to women with a larger ratio (Massar & Buunk, 2009). Massar and Buunk examined women's reactions to jealousy-provoking scenarios after viewing pictures of other women with varying WHRs. The smaller WHR pictures provoked greater jealous emotions for women than the larger waist-to-hip ratio. Women in relationships may exhibit jealous emotions and cognitions when they perceive a threat with a WHR close to 0.7. Women in this study reported not being aware of the women's appearance in the picture prior to the scenario; thus jealousy may be a subconscious reaction to feeling threatened due to physical appearances.

If women feel jealous due to the belief that other women are physically superior based on society's ideal body, then they may have poor body image. Women with a positive body image may exhibit more confidence in their partners' approval of their appearance and commitment to the relationship. The perception that a partner approves of their appearance and is committed to the relationship may encourage trust within the relationship and subsequently decrease the fear or suspicion of a possible threat to the

relationship. Therefore, those with a positive body image would be more likely to experience increased trust of their partners, lower jealousy, and higher relationship satisfaction than women with a negative body image.

Jealousy and Trust

Carson and Cupach (2000) examined the cognitive and behavioral sides of jealousy and the subsequent effect on relationship satisfaction. Ruminative thoughts, or intruding and obsessive thoughts, were found to positively correlate with jealousy in romantic relationships (Carson & Cupach, 2000). Women with preoccupied thoughts of relationship loss were also found to experience untrusting behaviors, possessive qualities, and irrational perceptions of the relationship (Carson & Cupach, 2000). Therefore, women with low trust towards a partner may ruminate on the potential of the partner ending the relationship to partner with another individual. The rumination may create more possibilities for jealousy and a low relationship satisfaction due to the constant fear and irrational perceptions of the partner. Jealousy and irrational perceptions possibly beget more jealous ruminations, thus causing a vicious cycle for the individual. Ergo, trust influences an individual's jealousy within a relationship which in turn influences an individual's relationship satisfaction.

Body Image, Trust, Jealousy, and Relationship Satisfaction

Although researchers have found connections between various combinations of two or three of the variables of body image, trust, jealousy, and relationship satisfaction, these four variables have yet to be studied together. Ambwani and Strauss (2007) reported

a relationship between body image and romantic relationships for women. These findings suggest that body image has a significant effect on various aspects of women's relationship and possibly their jealousy and trust of a partner.

Purpose of the Study

Previous research has found relationships between body esteem, trust, and jealousy individually with relationship satisfaction; however, there has been little research on the relationship between all of these constructs and women's relationship satisfaction. This study sought to develop a model (see Figure 1) of direct and indirect pathways predicting women's relationship satisfaction. The following hypotheses were proposed based on previous research:

H1: Body esteem has a direct and positive association with one's relationship satisfaction.

H2: Body esteem has a direct and positive association with trust.

H3: Body esteem has a direct and negative association with jealousy.

H4: Trust has a direct and negative association with jealousy.

H5: Trust has a direct and positive association with relationship satisfaction.

H6: Jealousy has a direct and negative association with relationship satisfaction.

H7: Body esteem has an indirect association with jealousy via trust.

H8: Body esteem has an indirect association with relationship satisfaction via jealousy.

H9: Trust has an indirect association with relationship satisfaction via jealousy.

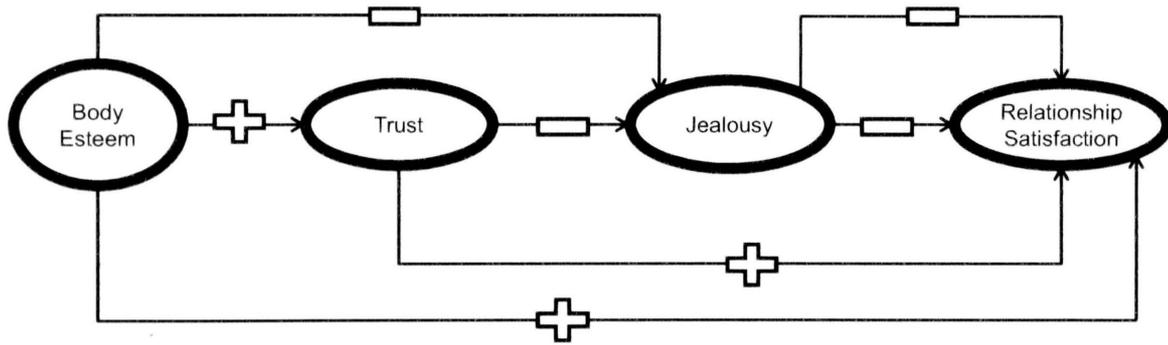


Figure 1. Predicted pathways for body esteem to relationship satisfaction.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Participants

For this study, a total of 440 participants recruited from a university primarily for women in a Southwestern state completed the study for course credit. A total of 198 participants were removed who did not meet the criteria for the study; Of the participants removed from analysis, 28 identified themselves as males and two as transgendered. Participants who were removed due to sexual orientation included 16 who identified themselves as bisexual, one as gay, and nine as lesbian. In addition, five participants were removed due to technical errors affecting the completion of the surveys. In total, there were 237 women participants with ages ranging from 18 to 43 years old (average 21.23 years old). The main interest of this study was relationships, so participating individuals were currently in a committed romantic relationship. "Current committed relationship" is defined in this study as an interpersonal relationship in which the partners are exclusive and in a long-term relationship. These relationships include: cohabiting, engaged, married, or a long-term relationship. In this study the consideration of a relationship to be long-term is defined by each participant. No person was excluded from this study based on race or ethnicity. Sexual orientation was not used to exclude participants from

participating in this study; however, heterosexual women were of interest and the only ones included in the analyses due to a small sample of bisexual and lesbian women.

Instrumentation

In addition to the required informed consent (see Appendix A), the instruments included a demographics questionnaire (see Appendix B), the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988) (see Appendix C), the Weight Concern subscale of the Body Esteem Scale (BES; Franzoi & Shields, 1984) (see Appendix D), the Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980) (see Appendix E), and the Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981) (see Appendix F).

Demographics

This measure consisted of several questions about participants developed by the researcher. These questions asked for information regarding the participants' age, gender, height, weight, ethnicity, relationship status, sexual orientation, and length of current relationship. All questions were in the form of short answer or Likert scale format.

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

The RAS, an assessment for relationship satisfaction, is a 7-item measure on a 5-point Likert type scale developed by Hendrick (1988). The range of scores is between 1 and 5. For this scale, scores below 3.0 are indicative of extreme levels of dissatisfaction with the relationship, scores between 3.0 and 4.0 indicate a moderate level of dissatisfaction, and scores above 4.0 are indicative of extreme satisfaction with the relationship. The RAS measures general satisfaction, how well a partner meets one's

needs, how well the relationship compares to others, and one's regrets about the relationship. Examples of items include: "How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into the relationship?" and "How well does your partner meet your needs?" This assessment is suitable for use with individuals in various stages of a relationship such as dating, cohabiting, engaged, and married. Vaughn and Matyastik Baier (1999) found the RAS to be valid and reliable ($\alpha = 0.91$) for adults in relationships.

Body Esteem Scale (BES)

The BES is a 35-item scale derived by Franzoi and Shields (1984) to assess self-esteem and body image for men and women. Three separate dimensions of the scale were created based on evaluation of important components for men and women's body esteem. In this study, the primary concern was women's body-esteem; therefore, the weight concern subscale was used to assess the participants' perceptions of body parts and functions. The questions for this scale ask women to identify their feelings towards their body and body functions, such as "appetite" and "body build." There are a total of 10 items on a five-point Likert type scale. The scores range from 10 to 50. Women with scores between 10 and 30 have extremely poor body esteem, those with a score between 30 and 40 have moderate body esteem, and those with scores above 40 have high body esteem. The subscale of the BES is reliable ($\alpha = 0.87$) and valid for an adult population.

Dyadic Trust Scale

The Dyadic Trust Scale, developed by Larzelere and Huston (1980), assesses the trust of a partner. This scale is an 8-item measure to assess the perception of a partner's

honesty and compassion towards the relationship (Couch & Jones, 1997). The scores for this scale range from 1, very untrusting of a partner, to 7, highly trusting of a partner. The questions are formatted on a 7-point Likert type scale with questions such as “there are times when my partner cannot be trusted” and “my partner treats me fairly and justly.” This scale is reliable ($\alpha = 0.93$) and construct validity has been found related to love, self-disclosure, and relationship status (Couch & Jones, 1997; Larzelere & Huston, 1980).

Interpersonal Jealousy Scale

The Interpersonal Jealousy Scale, developed by Mathes and Severa (1981), utilizes 28 items on a 9-point Likert type scale to assess jealousy within a relationship. The scores can range from 28, low jealousy, to 252, high jealousy. The scale was edited to allow greater variation in relationships; for example, “the opposite sex of my partner” was changed to “the interested sex of my partner.” Also to protect the participants’ confidentiality, “partner” replaced a blank for the participant to put her/his partner’s initials or name. Therefore, questions are phrased as “if my partner admired someone of her/his interested sex I would feel irritated” and “when I notice that my partner and a person of his/her interested sex have something in common, I am envious.” The scale was developed to measure negative emotions a partner develops as a result of jealousy. When an individual feels jealous in a relationship, she or he fears losing his or her partner to another individual. The scale has been found to be valid and reliable ($\alpha = 0.92$) (Couch & Jones, 1997). Couch and Jones (1997) also noted discriminant validity in this scale

between jealousy and liking, showing that this scale shows jealousy and not how much an individual likes another person.

Procedure

Using convenience sampling, the researcher posted a survey on PsychData as well as a recruiting announcement on Blackboard for the Introduction to Psychology and Developmental Psychology classes. The announcement consisted of the purpose of the study, requirements to participate in the study, how to become a participant in the study, and contact information for the researcher. Participants completed the surveys online at PsychData at a time and place of their choosing. The participants first read the consent form (Appendix A) and by choosing to continue the study, they acknowledged their awareness of benefits and risks related to the study. Each participant then completed the assessments in the same order after completing demographics questions. The first assessment was the relationship scale, RAS (Hendrick, 1988). The second assessment consisted of body esteem questions, the Weight Concern subscale of the BES (Franzoi & Shields, 1984). The third assessment examined the individual's trust in one's partner, the DTS (Larzelere & Huston, 1984). Finally, the participant completed the IJS (Mathes & Severa, 1981) to assess jealousy within the relationship. Once they completed all assessments, the participants were directed to another survey where they entered their name, course, and section number and email address if they wanted to receive the results or receive credit for class. This portion of the survey was not tied to their survey responses due to confidentiality purposes. They were then directed to a survey conclusion

in which the email address of the principal researcher was given in case any questions arose as well as referral sources for any discomfort or distress that may have resulted from completion of the study.

Statistical Analyses

Descriptive analyses were conducted. The frequency and percentages for categorical demographics and standard deviation and means for continuous variables were calculated. Categorical descriptives included relationship status, sexual orientation, gender, and race/ethnicity. Continuous descriptives included age, Body Mass Index (BMI), and relationship length in days. For each psychological scale and subscale used, overall scores, means, and standard deviations were calculated and reported. As the current study utilized a path analysis to evaluate the hypotheses, relationships between potential covariates and the independent and dependent variables were assessed. The relationships between categorical variables were examined using cross-tabulations with Pearson's Chi-square analyses. However, Pearson Product Moment correlations were used for the continuous variables. Analyses of variance procedures were conducted to examine potential relationships between the categorical demographics and the psychological measures. The covariates that were significantly related to independent or dependent variables were controlled for in the linear regressions or path analysis. Additionally, mediation or the indirect pathways of the path analysis were assessed by conducting several regression analyses and Sobel tests for significant effects.

As path analyses allow multiple linear regressions to be conducted simultaneously, a path analysis was conducted on the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

To test the first hypothesis that body esteem is directly and positively associated with one's relationship satisfaction, a linear regression was completed.

Hypothesis 2

To test the second hypothesis that body esteem is directly and positively associated with trust, a linear regression was completed.

Hypothesis 3

To test the third hypothesis that body esteem is directly and negatively associated with jealousy, a linear regression was completed.

Hypothesis 4

To test the fourth hypothesis that trust is directly and negatively associated with jealousy, a linear regression was completed.

Hypothesis 5

To test the fifth hypothesis that trust is directly and positively associated with relationship satisfaction, a linear regression was completed.

Hypothesis 6

To test the sixth hypothesis that jealousy is directly and negatively associated with relationship satisfaction, a linear regression was completed.

Hypothesis 7

To test the seventh hypothesis that body esteem is indirectly associated with jealousy via trust, a series of linear regressions and Sobel tests were completed to test mediation.

Hypothesis 8

To test the eighth hypothesis that body esteem is indirectly associated with relationship satisfaction via jealousy, a series of linear regressions and Sobel tests were completed to test mediation.

Hypothesis 9

To test the ninth hypothesis that trust is indirectly associated with relationship satisfaction via jealousy, a series of linear regressions and Sobel tests were completed to test mediation.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

A total of 237 participants were included in the current study. The current study examined the relationships between body esteem, trust, jealousy, and relationship satisfaction. Information regarding BMI, ethnicity, length of relationship, and relationship status was also collected in order to test the relationships with the primary variables of interest. Furthermore, path analyses were conducted to examine these relationships.

Descriptive Analyses

As shown in Table 1, participant's body mass index (BMI) scores ranged from 13.39 to 40.00, with an average BMI of 24.54 ($SD = 5.23$, $Mdn = 23.04$), and the length of their current relationship in days ranged from 2 days to 8030 days, with an average relationship in days of 847.13 ($SD = 1011.00$, $Mdn = 576.50$).

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviation for Continuous Demographics

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | SD | Min | Max |
|----------------------------|----------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Age | 237 | 21.23 | 4.85 | 18.00 | 43.0 |
| Body Mass Index (BMI) | 236 | 24.54 | 5.23 | 13.39 | 40.0 |
| Relationship Length (Days) | 238 | 847.13 | 1011.00 | 2.00 | 8030.0 |

Note. Frequencies not summing to 238 reflect missing data.

Due to a non-normal distribution, participants were categorized into two age groups: 18 to 19 years and 20+ years. As shown in Table 2, the majority of participants were either 18 or 19 years old (53.2%). Additionally, a majority of participants reported that they were in a committed relationship (76.5%) whereas the remaining participants reported living together (7.6%), engaged (7.1%), or married (8.8%). Again due to a non-normal distribution, length of relationship was categorized into three groups: less than one year, 1 to 2.5 years, and more than 2.5 years. Participants were fairly equally distributed across the three groups, as shown in Table 2. Finally, most participants were Caucasian (41.2%), followed by African American (28.5%), Hispanic (21.5%), and Asian (8.8%).

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages for Categorical Demographic Variables

| | Frequency | % |
|------------------------|-----------|------|
| Age | | |
| 18-19 Years | 126 | 53.2 |
| 20+ Years | 111 | 46.8 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | |
| White/Caucasian | 94 | 41.2 |
| Black/African American | 65 | 28.5 |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 49 | 21.5 |
| Asian/Asian American | 20 | 8.8 |
| Relationship Status | | |
| Committed Relationship | 182 | 76.5 |
| Living Together | 18 | 7.6 |
| Engaged | 17 | 7.1 |
| Married | 21 | 8.8 |

(continued)

Table 2 cont'd

| Relationship Length | | | |
|---------------------|--|----|------|
| Less than one year | | 80 | 33.6 |
| 1 to 2.5 years | | 79 | 33.2 |
| More than 2.5 years | | 79 | 33.2 |

Note. Frequencies not summing to 238 reflect missing data.

The means and standard deviations for participants' relationship assessment scale (RAS), body esteem scale (BES), dyadic trust scale (DTS), and interpersonal jealous scale (IJS) scores are shown in Table 3. Participants' total RAS scores ranged from 1.90 to 5.00, with an average total score of 4.19 ($SD = .68$). The total BES scores ranged from 10 to 50, with an average BES score of 32.71 ($SD = 10.24$) and their total DTS scores ranged from 1 to 7, with an average DTS score of 5.43 ($SD = 1.29$). Finally, their total IJS score ranged from 41 to 219, with an average IJS score of 122.42 ($SD = 27.90$).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviation for Variables

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> | Min | Max |
|-----------|----------|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| RAS Total | 238 | 4.19 | 0.68 | 1.90 | 5.00 |
| BES Total | 238 | 32.71 | 10.24 | 10.00 | 50.00 |
| DTS Total | 238 | 5.43 | 1.29 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| IJS Total | 238 | 122.42 | 27.90 | 41.00 | 219.00 |

Note. RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988); BES= Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984); DTS= Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980); IJS= Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981).

Preliminary Analyses

A series of Cross-tabulations with Chi square analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between the categorical demographic variables. As shown in Table 4, length of relationship was significantly related to age, $\chi^2(2) = 20.92$, Cramer's $V = .297$, $p < .001$. A greater proportion of participants who were 18 or 19 years of age were in a relationship less than one year (46.0%) than those who were 20 years of age and older (19.8%). A greater proportion of participants who were older than 19 years of age were in a relationship for more than 2.5 years (45.0%) compared to those who were either 18 or 19 years of age (23.0%). Furthermore, relationship status was significantly related to age, $\chi^2(3) = 28.93$, Cramer's $V = .349$, $p < .001$. A greater proportion of participants who were

either 18 or 19 years old were in a committed relationship (88.9%) than those who were 20 years of age and older (62.2%). Additionally, a greater proportion of participants who were 20 years old or older were engaged (9.9%) than those who were 18 to 19 years old (4.8%). Finally, a greater proportion of participants who were 20 years old and older were married (18.0%) than participants who were 18 or 19 years of age (0.8%). Age did not have a significant relationship with ethnicity, $\chi^2(3) = 6.33$, Cramer's $V = .167$, $p = .097$.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages for Categorical Variables by Age

| | 18-19 Years | | 20+ Years | | χ^2 | p |
|------------------------|-------------|------|-----------|------|----------|-------|
| | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | | |
| Relationship Status | | | | | 28.93 | <.001 |
| Committed Relationship | 112 | 88.9 | 69 | 62.2 | | |
| Living Together | 7 | 5.6 | 11 | 9.9 | | |
| Engaged | 6 | 4.8 | 11 | 9.9 | | |
| Married | 1 | 0.8 | 20 | 18.0 | | |
| Relationship Length | | | | | 20.92 | <.001 |
| Less than one year | 58 | 46.0 | 22 | 19.8 | | |
| 1 to 2.5 years | 39 | 31.0 | 39 | 35.1 | | |
| More than 2.5 years | 29 | 23.0 | 50 | 45.0 | | |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | 6.33 | 0.097 |
| White/Caucasian | 41 | 34.7 | 53 | 48.6 | | |
| Black/African American | 38 | 32.2 | 27 | 24.8 | | |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 25 | 21.2 | 23 | 21.1 | | |
| Asian/Asian American | 14 | 11.9 | 6 | 5.5 | | |

A series of Cross-tabulations with Chi square analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between ethnicity and relationship length. The number of participants

who were in a relationship type other than committed relationship (engaged, married, living together) was too low to compare to relationship length. As shown in Table 5, length of relationship did not have a significant relationship with ethnicity, $\chi^2(6) = 7.28$, Cramer's $V = .126, p = .296$.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages Race/Ethnicity by Relationship Length

| Race/Ethnicity | Less than 1 | | 1 to 2.5 | | More than 2.5 | | χ^2 | p |
|------------------------|-------------|------|----------|------|---------------|------|----------|-------|
| | Year | | Years | | Years | | | |
| | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | <i>n</i> | % | | |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | | 7.28 | 0.296 |
| White/Caucasian | 26 | 33.8 | 33 | 44.0 | 35 | 46.1 | | |
| Black/African American | 25 | 32.5 | 23 | 30.7 | 17 | 22.4 | | |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 16 | 20.8 | 13 | 17.3 | 20 | 26.3 | | |
| Asian/Asian American | 10 | 13.0 | 6 | 8.0 | 4 | 5.3 | | |

Analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted to examine the effect of age, length of relationship, ethnicity, and relationship status on BMI scores. As shown in Table 6, ethnicity had a significant effect on BMI scores, $F(3, 222) = 2.81, p = .040$, partial $\eta^2 = .037$. Participants who were Caucasian had marginally lower BMI scores ($M = 23.47, SD = 5.01$) than those who were Hispanic ($M = 25.65, SD = 5.78$). Age, length of relationship, and relationship status did not have a significant effect on BMI scores.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Age, Relationship Length, Race/Ethnicity, and Relationship Status by BMI

| | <i>N</i> | Mean BMI | <i>SD</i> | Min | Max | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> |
|------------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------|-------|-------|----------|----------|
| Age | | | | | | 1.64 | 0.202 |
| 18-19 years | 125 | 24.13 | 4.83 | 13.39 | 40.00 | | |
| 20+ years | 110 | 25.00 | 5.67 | 17.68 | 40.00 | | |
| Relationship Length | | | | | | 2.20 | 0.113 |
| Less than 1 year | 79 | 23.93 | 4.99 | 13.39 | 40.00 | | |
| 1 to 2.5 years | 78 | 24.16 | 4.61 | 17.68 | 40.00 | | |
| More than 2.5 years | 79 | 25.53 | 5.93 | 17.47 | 40.00 | | |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | 2.81 | 0.04* |
| White/Caucasian | 93 | 23.47 ^a | 5.01 | 17.23 | 40.00 | | |
| Black/African American | 64 | 25.33 | 5.29 | 17.68 | 40.00 | | |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 49 | 25.65 ^a | 5.78 | 13.39 | 40.00 | | |
| Asian/Asian American | 20 | 23.59 | 3.47 | 18.97 | 32.03 | | |
| Relationship Status | | | | | | 1.81 | 0.146 |
| Committed Relationship | 180 | 24.17 | 4.95 | 13.39 | 40.00 | | |
| Living Together | 18 | 25.87 | 5.98 | 18.41 | 40.00 | | |
| Engaged | 17 | 24.49 | 4.27 | 18.30 | 33.98 | | |
| Married | 21 | 26.62 | 7.07 | 19.00 | 40.00 | | |

Note. * $p < .05$. Superscript a represents a significant mean difference on post hoc analyses.

Separate ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effect of age on participants' total RAS scores, total BES scores, total DTS scores, and total IJS scores. As shown in Table 7, age did not have a significant effect on these scores. ANOVAs were also conducted to examine the effect of length of relationship on participants' total RAS

scores, total BES scores, total DTS scores, and IJS scores. As shown in Table 8, length of relationship had a significant effect on DTS scores, $F(2, 235) = 3.42, p = .034$, partial $\eta^2 = .028$. Participants who were in a relationship less than one year had significantly higher DTS scores ($M = 5.73, SD = 1.19$) than participants who were in a relationship between 1 and 2.5 years ($M = 5.22, SD = 1.32$). Length of relationship did not have a significant effect on BES, RAS, and IJS scores.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for RAS, BES, DTS, and IJS by Age

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | η^2 |
|-------------|----------|--------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| RAS Total | | | | 0.018 | 0.892 | <0.001 |
| 18-19 years | 126 | 4.18 | 0.66 | | | |
| 20+ years | 111 | 4.19 | 0.69 | | | |
| BES Total | | | | 3.612 | 0.059 | 0.015 |
| 18-19 years | 126 | 33.87 | 9.74 | | | |
| 20+ years | 111 | 31.34 | 10.70 | | | |
| DTS Total | | | | 0.115 | 0.735 | <0.001 |
| 18-19 years | 126 | 5.40 | 1.28 | | | |
| 20+ years | 111 | 5.46 | 1.32 | | | |
| IJS Total | | | | 1.158 | 0.283 | 0.005 |
| 18-19 years | 126 | 120.63 | 28.77 | | | |
| 20+ years | 111 | 124.54 | 26.97 | | | |

Note. RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale.(Hendrick, 1988); BES= Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984); DTS= Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980); IJS= Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981).

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for RAS, BES, DTS, and IJS by Relationship Length

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | η^2 |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| RAS Total | | | | 0.587 | 0.557 | 0.005 |
| Less than 1 year | 80 | 4.56 | 0.66 | | | |
| 1 to 2.5 years | 79 | 4.15 | 0.73 | | | |
| More than 2.5 years | 79 | 4.15 | 0.63 | | | |
| BES Total | | | | 2.779 | 0.064 | 0.023 |
| Less than 1 year | 80 | 34.13 | 9.74 | | | |
| 1 to 2.5 years | 79 | 33.46 | 10.45 | | | |
| More than 2.5 years | 79 | 30.54 | 10.30 | | | |
| DTS Total | | | | 3.421 | 0.034* | 0.028 |
| Less than 1 year | 80 | 5.73 ^{ac} | 1.19 | | | |
| 1 to 2.5 years | 79 | 5.23 ^{ab} | 1.32 | | | |
| More than 2.5 years | 79 | 5.35 ^{bc} | 1.32 | | | |
| IJS Total | | | | 1.515 | 0.222 | 0.013 |
| Less than 1 year | 80 | 126.49 | 27.76 | | | |
| 1 to 2.5 years | 79 | 121.86 | 27.39 | | | |
| More than 2.5 years | 79 | 118.86 | 28.36 | | | |

Note. * $p < .05$. Superscripts a, b, and c represent significant mean differences on post hoc analyses ($p < .05$). RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988); BES= Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984); DTS= Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980); IJS= Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981).

Other ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effect of relationship status on participants' total RAS scores, total BES scores, total DTS scores, and total IJS scores. As shown in Table 9, relationship status had a significant effect on DTS scores, $F(3, 234) =$

2.97, $p = .033$, partial $\eta^2 = .028$. Participants who were engaged had marginally lower DTS scores ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 1.31$) than those who were in a committed relationship ($M = 6.09$, $SD = .79$). Relationship status did not, however, have a significant effect on BES, RAS, and IJS scores.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for RAS, BES, DTS, and IJS by Relationship Status

| | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | η^2 |
|------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| RAS Total | | | | 1.676 | 0.173 | 0.021 |
| Committed Relationship | 182 | 4.14 | 0.69 | | | |
| Living Together | 18 | 4.31 | 0.60 | | | |
| Engaged | 17 | 4.46 | 0.40 | | | |
| Married | 21 | 4.30 | 0.76 | | | |
| BES Total | | | | 1.662 | 0.176 | 0.021 |
| Committed Relationship | 182 | 33.42 | 10.14 | | | |
| Living Together | 18 | 28.50 | 8.58 | | | |
| Engaged | 17 | 30.24 | 10.27 | | | |
| Married | 21 | 32.24 | 11.79 | | | |
| DTS Total | | | | 2.965 | 0.033* | 0.037 |
| Committed Relationship | 182 | 5.31 ^a | 1.31 | | | |
| Living Together | 18 | 5.91 | 1.08 | | | |
| Engaged | 17 | 6.09 ^a | 0.79 | | | |
| Married | 21 | 5.56 | 1.43 | | | |

(continued)

Table 9 cont'd

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| IJS Total | | | | 0.743 | 0.527 | 0.009 |
| Committed Relationship | 182 | 122.26 | 27.92 | | | |
| Living Together | 18 | 130.06 | 20.53 | | | |
| Engaged | 17 | 116.06 | 28.78 | | | |
| Married | 21 | 122.38 | 32.62 | | | |

Note. * $p < .05$. Superscript a represents a marginally significant difference on post hoc analyses. RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988); BES= Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984); DTS= Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980); IJS= Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981).

Finally, separate ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effect of ethnicity on participants' RAS, BES, DTS and IJS scores. As shown in Table 10, ethnicity had a significant effect on participants' RAS scores, $F(3, 224) = 7.09, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .087$. Participants who were Caucasian had significantly greater RAS scores ($M = 4.40, SD = .58$) than African American women ($M = 4.02, SD = .67$) and Hispanic women ($M = 3.94, SD = .75$). Ethnicity also had a significant effect on participants' BES scores, $F(3, 224) = 5.83, p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .072$. Participants who were African American had significantly greater BES scores ($M = 36.49, SD = 9.60$) than those who were Caucasian ($M = 32.23, SD = 10.76$), those who were Asian American ($M = 28.35, SD = 6.85$), and those who were Hispanic ($M = 29.88, SD = 9.69$).

Additionally, ethnicity had a significant effect on participants' DTS scores, $F(3, 224) = 4.68, p = .003$, partial $\eta^2 = .059$. Participants who were Hispanic had significantly

lower DTS scores ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.40$) than those who were Caucasian ($M = 5.74$, $SD = 1.20$). Finally, ethnicity had a significant effect on participants' IJS scores, $F(3, 224) = 5.77$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .072$. Participants who were Hispanic had significantly lower IJS scores ($M = 110.27$, $SD = 28.41$) than those who were Caucasian ($M = 128.52$, $SD = 29.31$) or African American ($M = 127.12$, $SD = 24.22$).

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for RAS, BES, DTS, and IJS by Race/Ethnicity

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | <i>SD</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | η^2 |
|------------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| RAS Total | | | | 7.090 | <0.001** | 0.087 |
| White/Caucasian | 94 | 4.40 ^{ab} | 0.58 | | | |
| Black/African American | 65 | 4.02 ^a | 0.67 | | | |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 49 | 3.94 ^b | 0.75 | | | |
| Asian/Asian American | 20 | 4.23 | 0.64 | | | |
| BES Total | | | | 5.825 | 0.001** | 0.072 |
| White/Caucasian | 94 | 32.23 ^a | 10.76 | | | |
| Black/African American | 65 | 36.49 ^{acd} | 9.60 | | | |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 49 | 29.88 ^c | 9.69 | | | |
| Asian/Asian American | 20 | 28.35 ^d | 6.85 | | | |
| DTS Total | | | | 4.677 | 0.003** | 0.059 |
| White/Caucasian | 94 | 5.54 ^b | 1.20 | | | |
| Black/African American | 65 | 5.74 | 1.22 | | | |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 49 | 5.23 ^b | 1.40 | | | |
| Asian/Asian American | 20 | 4.97 | 1.34 | | | |

(continued)

Table 10 cont'd

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|----|----------------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| IJS Total | | | | 5.766 | 0.001** | 0.072 |
| White/Caucasian | 94 | 128.52 ^b | 29.31 | | | |
| Black/African American | 65 | 127.12 ^c | 24.22 | | | |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | 49 | 110.27 ^{bc} | 28.42 | | | |
| Asian/Asian American | 20 | 116.10 | 23.41 | | | |

Note. ** $p < .01$. Superscripts a, b, c, and d represent significant difference between means for each measure based on ethnicity. RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988); BES= Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984); DTS= Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980); IJS= Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981).

Pearson Product Moment correlations were conducted to examine the relationships between the continuous variables, specifically how BMI scores were related to participants' RAS, BES, DTS, and IJS scores. As shown in Table 11, participants' BMI scores were negatively related to their BES total scores, $r = -.37, p < .001$, indicating that participants with higher BMI scores tended to have lower total BES scores. There were no other significant relationships with BMI scores.

Finally, Pearson Product Moment correlations were conducted to examine the relationships between the RAS, BES, DTS and IJS scores. As shown in Table 12, all scores were significantly correlated with the others, r s ranging from .17 to .75, $ps < .01$, indicating that participants who had higher scores on one of the scales tended to have higher scores on the other scales.

Table 11

Pearson's Product Moment Correlations between BMI, RAS, BES, DTS, and IJS

| | BMI | RAS Total | BES Total | DTS Total | IJS Total |
|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| RAS Total | -0.06 | | | | |
| BES Total | -0.37** | 0.20** | | | |
| DTS Total | -0.04 | 0.75** | 0.17** | | |
| IJS Total | -0.01 | 0.17** | 0.17** | 0.24** | |

Note. ** $p < .01$. RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale (Hendrick, 1988); BES= Body Esteem Scale (Franzoi & Shields, 1984); DTS= Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980); IJS= Interpersonal Jealousy Scale (Mathes & Severa, 1981).

Primary Analysis

Primary analyses were conducted to test the nine hypotheses. Hypotheses 1-6 were tested using simple path analysis and hypotheses 7-9 were tested using mediation analyses (Baron & Kenny, 1996). Significance was set at the $p < .05$ level although overall regression models are mentioned as marginally significant at $p < .10$ when the path coefficients for those models are significant at $p < .05$. Only path coefficients (Beta's) that are significant at $p < .05$ are discussed in this section.

Ethnicity was significantly related to each of the four scores of body esteem, jealousy, trust, and relationship satisfaction. Therefore all analyses were split by ethnic

group and are reported individually. In addition, BMI was significantly related to body esteem, and therefore BMI was included as a covariate in the analyses that involve body esteem. Finally, relationship length and relationship status were significantly related to trust and are included as covariates in the analyses that involve trust.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis stated that body esteem would be directly and positively associated with one's relationship satisfaction. Linear regressions were conducted to test a potential relationship between body esteem and relationship satisfaction for each ethnic group. For Caucasian participants, the model predicting relationship satisfaction from body esteem and the covariate of BMI was marginally significant and accounted for 3.8% of the variance in predicting relationship satisfaction, $F(2, 90) = 2.81, p = .066, Adj. R^2 = .038$. Controlling for BMI, higher levels of body esteem predicted increased levels of relationship satisfaction, $Beta = .273, t = 2.36, p = .020$. BMI was not a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction.

For Hispanic participants, the model predicting relationship satisfaction from body esteem and the covariate of BMI was significant and accounted for 24.2% of the variance in predicting relationship satisfaction, $F(2, 46) = 8.65, p = .001, Adj. R^2 = .242$. Controlling for BMI, higher levels of body esteem predicted increased levels of relationship satisfaction, $Beta = .606, t = 4.15, p < .001$. BMI was not a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction. The direct path from body esteem to relationship satisfaction was not significant for African American or Asian American participants.

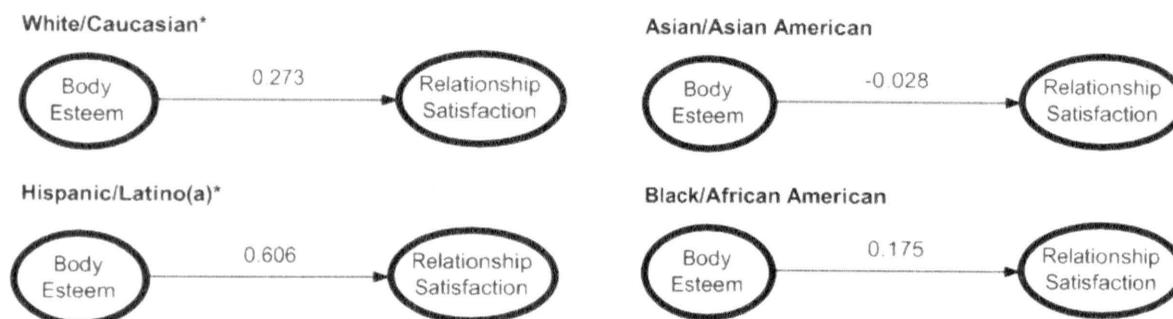


Figure 2. Direct pathways from body esteem to relationship satisfaction. Asterisk indicates significance found.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis stated that body esteem would be directly and positively associated with trust. Linear regressions were conducted to test potential relationship between body esteem and trust for each ethnic group. For Caucasian participants, the model predicting trust from body esteem and the covariates of BMI, relationship length, and relationship status was significant and accounted for 4.8% of the variance in predicting trust, $F(7,85) = 1.67$, $p = .128$, $Adj. R^2 = .048$. Controlling for BMI, relationship status and relationship length, higher levels of body esteem predicted increased levels of trust, $Beta = .267$, $t = 2.22$, $p = .029$. In addition, being engaged compared to being in another type of committed relationship was predictive of higher trust, $Beta = .216$, $t = 2.07$, $p = .042$. BMI and relationship length were not significant predictors of relationship satisfaction. For Hispanic participants, the model predicting trust from body esteem and the covariates of BMI, relationship length, and relationship status was significant and accounted for 28.0% of the variance in predicting trust, $F(7,$

41) = 3.66, $p = .004$, $Adj. R^2 = .280$. Controlling for BMI, relationship status and relationship length, higher levels of body esteem predicted increased levels of trust, $Beta = .421$, $t = 2.88$, $p = .006$. In addition, being in a relationship for less than 1 year compared to being in a relationship for more than 2.5 years was predictive of higher trust, $Beta = .484$, $t = 3.01$, $p = .004$. BMI and relationship status were not significant predictors of relationship satisfaction. The direct path from body esteem to relationship satisfaction was not significant for African American or Asian American participants.

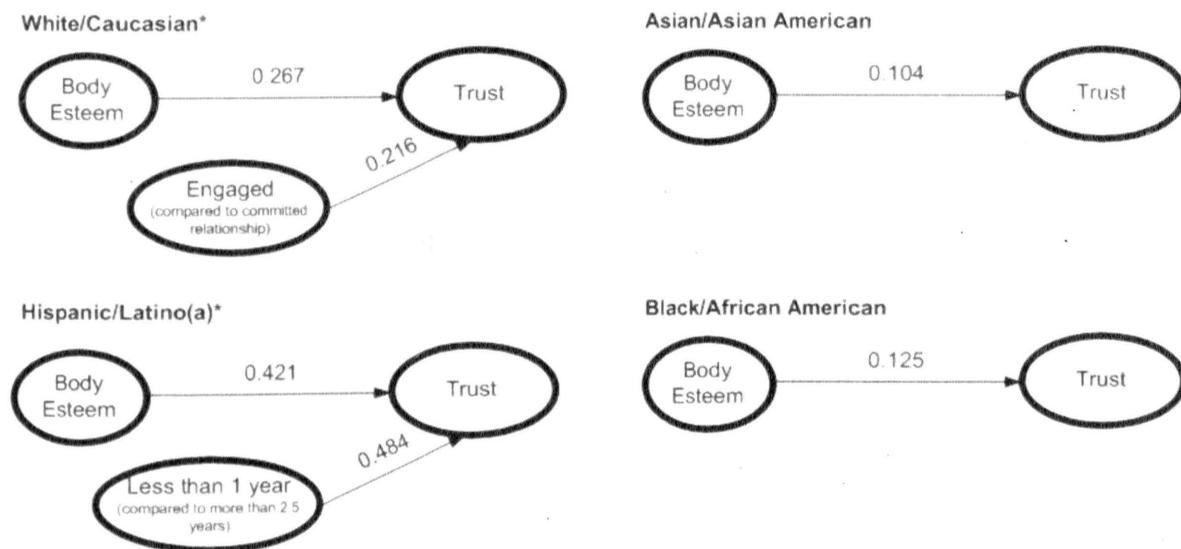


Figure 3. Direct pathway from body esteem to trust. Asterisk indicates significance found.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis stated that body esteem would be directly and negatively associated with jealousy. Linear regressions were conducted to test potential relationship between body esteem and jealousy for each ethnic group. For Caucasian participants, the

model predicting jealousy from body esteem and the covariate of BMI was significant and accounted for 7.5% of the variance in predicting relationship satisfaction, $F(2, 90) = 4.71, p = .011, Adj. R^2 = .075$. Controlling for BMI, higher levels of body esteem predicted increased levels of jealousy, $Beta = .299, t = 2.64, p = .010$, contrary to the prediction of Hypothesis 3. BMI was also a significant predictor of jealousy, $Beta = .297, t = 2.62, p = .010$, indicating that higher BMI was associated with more jealousy.

For Hispanic participants, the model predicting jealousy from body esteem and the covariate of BMI was significant and accounted for 9.2% of the variance in predicting jealousy, $F(2, 46) = 3.42, p = .041, Adj. R^2 = .092$. Controlling for BMI, higher levels of body esteem were not significantly associated with jealousy, $Beta = -.047, t = -.30, p = .768$. However, BMI was a significant predictor of jealousy for Hispanic participants, $Beta = -.382, t = -2.39, p = .021$, indicating that lower BMI was associated with more jealousy. The direct path from body esteem to jealousy was not significant for African American or Asian American participants.

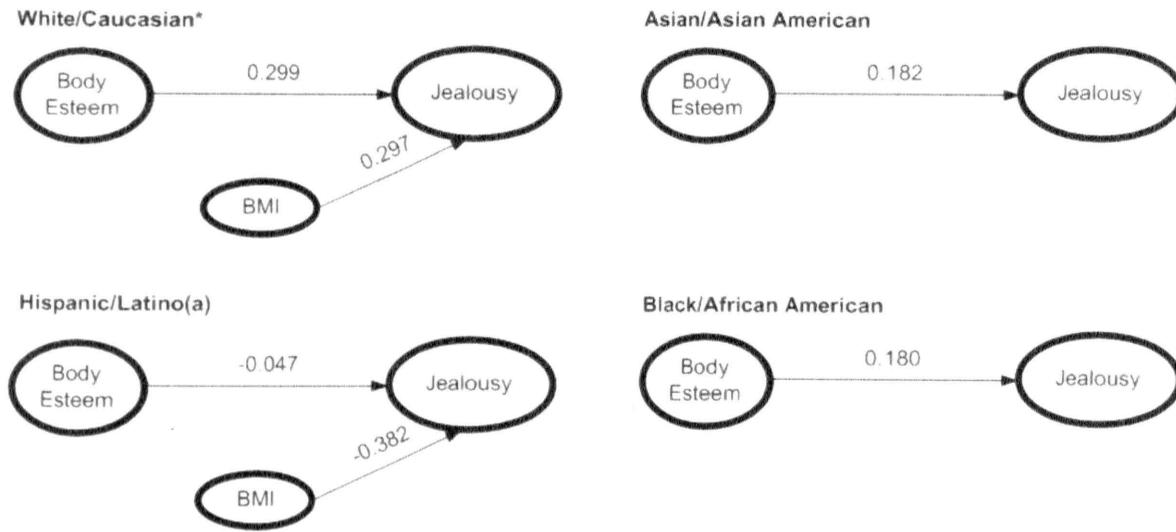


Figure 4. Direct pathway from body esteem to jealousy. Asterisk indicates significance found.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis stated that trust would be directly and negatively associated with jealousy. Linear regressions were conducted to test potential relationship between trust and jealousy for each ethnic group. The model predicting jealousy from trust and the covariates of relationship length and relationship status was not significant for Caucasians, $F(6, 87) = 1.19, p = .322, Adj. R^2 = .012$. However, higher levels of trust predicted increased levels of jealousy when controlling for relationship status and relationship length, $Beta = .259, t = 2.43, p = .017$. For African American participants, the model predicting jealousy from trust and the covariates of relationship length and relationship status was marginally significant and accounted for 9.8% of the variance in predicting jealousy, $F(6, 58) = 2.16, p = .060, Adj. R^2 = .098$. Controlling for relationship

status and relationship length, higher levels of trust predicted increased levels of jealousy, $Beta = .374, t = 2.87, p = .006$. In addition, being engaged compared to being in a committed relationship was predictive of lower levels of jealousy, $Beta = -.290, t = -2.38, p = .021$. Relationship length was not a significant predictor of jealousy. The direct path from trust to jealousy was not significant for Hispanic or Asian/Asian American participants.

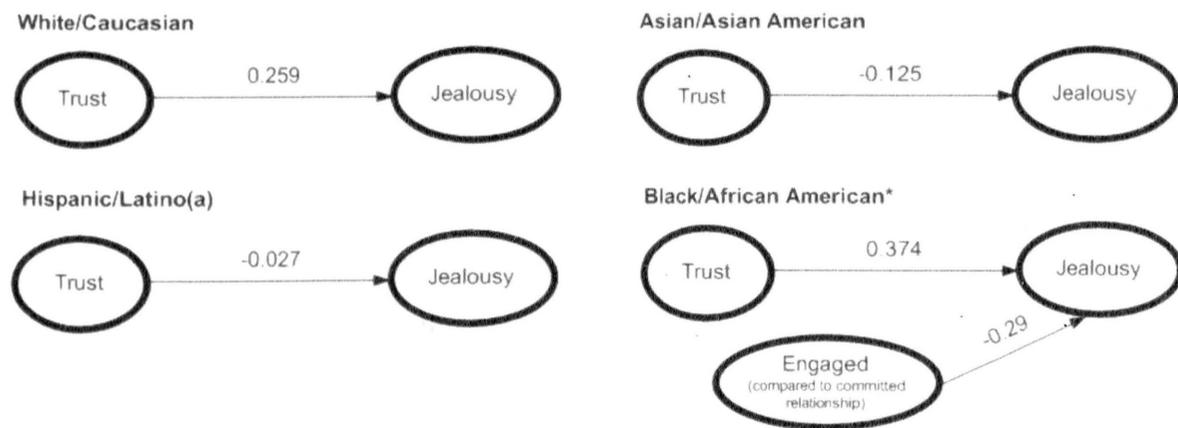


Figure 5. Direct pathway from trust to jealousy. Asterisk indicates significance found.

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis stated that trust would be directly and positively associated with relationship satisfaction. Linear regressions were conducted to test the relationship between trust and relationship satisfaction. The model containing trust and the covariates of relationship status and relationship length was significant for Asian/Asian American participants, $F(4, 15) = 9.12, p = .001, Adj. R^2 = .631$; Caucasian participants, $F(6, 87) = 16.33, p < .001, Adj. R^2 = .497$; African American participants, $F(6, 58) = 12.02, p < .$

001, *Adj. R*² = .508; and Hispanic participants, *F* (6, 52) = 7.61, *p* < .001, *Adj. R*² = .452. Across all ethnic groups, higher levels of trust predicted higher relationship satisfaction (Asian/Asian American: *Beta* = .884, *t* = 5.39, *p* < .001; Caucasian: *Beta* = .719, *t* = 9.46, *p* < .001; African American: *Beta* = .759, *t* = 7.87, *p* < .001. *Beta* = .774, *t* = 6.23, *p* < .001). The covariates of relationship length and relationship status were not significant predictors of relationship satisfaction for any of the ethnic groups.

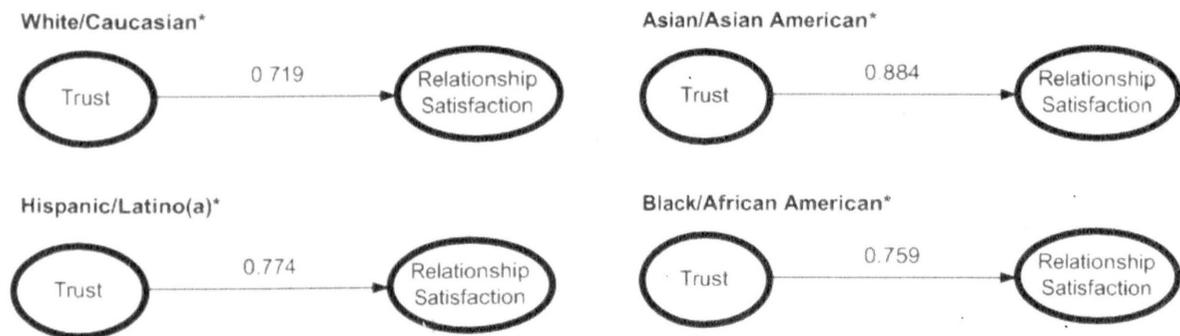


Figure 6. Direct pathway from trust to relationship satisfaction. Asterisk indicates significance found.

Hypothesis 6

The sixth hypothesis states that jealousy would be directly and negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. Linear regressions were conducted to test potential relationship between jealousy and relationship satisfaction for each ethnic group. For Caucasian participants, the model predicting relationship satisfaction from jealousy was significant and accounted for 6.3% of the variance in predicting relationship satisfaction, *F* (1, 92) = 7.26, *p* = .008, *Adj. R*² = .063. Higher levels of jealousy predicted

increased levels of relationship satisfaction, $Beta = .270$, $t = 2.70$, $p = .008$. The direct path from jealousy to relationship satisfaction was not significant for African American, Hispanic, or Asian/Asian American participants.

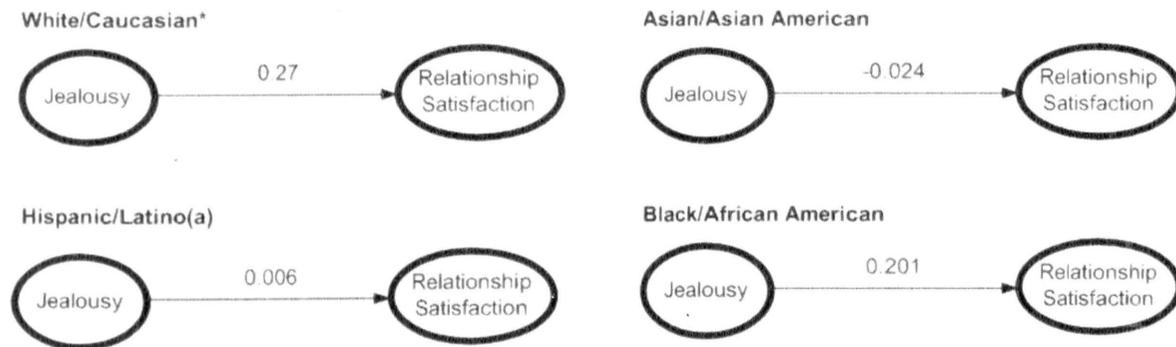


Figure 7. Direct pathway from jealousy to relationship satisfaction. Asterisk indicates significance found.

Hypothesis 7

The seventh hypothesis stated that body esteem would be indirectly associated with jealousy via trust. A series of linear regressions were conducted to test the potential mediation of trust on the relationship from body esteem to jealousy. For Caucasian participants, the model containing body esteem and the covariate of BMI was significant and accounted for 7.5% of the variance in predicting jealousy, $F(2, 90) = 4.71$, $p = .011$, $Adj. R^2 = .075$. Higher levels of body esteem predicted increased levels of jealousy, $Beta = .299$, $t = 2.64$, $p = .010$. Additionally, higher BMIs predicted increased levels of jealousy in Caucasian participants, $Beta = .297$, $t = 2.62$, $p = .010$.

For Hispanic participants, the model containing body esteem and the covariate of BMI was significant and accounted for 9.2% of the variance in predicting jealousy, $F(2, 46) = 3.42, p = .041, Adj. R^2 = .092$. An examination of the coefficients revealed the BMI was a significant negative predictor of jealousy, $Beta = -.382, p = .021$, indicating that lower BMI was associated with more jealousy for Hispanic participants. Controlling for BMI, body esteem was not a significant predictor of jealousy for Hispanic participants. Because there was not a significant model predicting jealousy from body esteem, the potential mediation of trust could not be tested for the Hispanics, African American, or Asian American participants. Therefore, further testing of Hypothesis 7 was conducted on Caucasian participants only.

For Caucasian participants, the model containing body esteem and the covariates BMI, relationship length, and relationship status was not significant, $F(7, 85) = 1.67, p = .128, Adj. R^2 = .048$. Because both BMI and relationship length were not significant predictors of jealousy, the overall model predicting jealousy was conducted only including body esteem and relationship status, yielding a significant model, $F(4, 89) = 2.59, p = .042, Adj. R^2 = .064$. Higher levels of body esteem predicted increased levels of trust, $Beta = .267, t = 2.15, p < .035$. Additionally, compared to those living with or married to their partner, those who were engaged predicted increased levels of trust, $Beta = .216, t = 2.05, p < .044$.

The model containing both body esteem and trust as well as the covariates BMI, relationship status, and relationship length was not significant in predicting jealousy, F

(8, 84) = 1.89, $p = .091$, $Adj. R^2 = .064$. Further analysis revealed that higher levels of body esteem was significant in predicting higher levels of jealousy, $Beta = .262$, $t = 2.14$, $p = .036$. Higher levels of trust was a marginal predictor of higher levels of jealousy, $Beta = .211$, $t = 1.96$, $p = .053$; however, a Sobel test indicated that when trust was added to the model, the relationship between body esteem and jealousy did not significantly decrease, indicating that the relationship from body esteem to jealousy is not accounted for by trust.

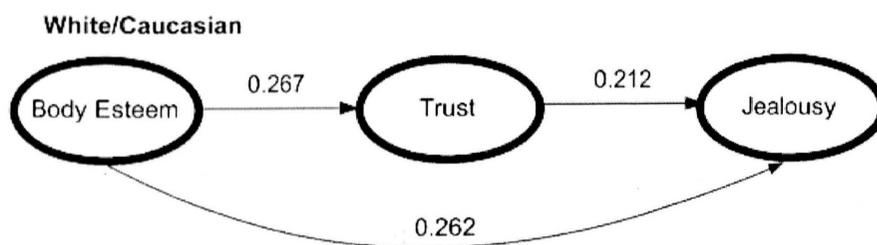


Figure 8. Indirect pathway from body esteem to jealousy through trust.

Hypothesis 8

The eighth hypothesis stated that body esteem would be indirectly associated with relationship status via jealousy. A series of linear regressions were conducted to test the indirect pathway or the potential mediation of jealousy on the relationship between body esteem and relationship satisfaction. The model containing body esteem and the covariate BMI was marginally significant in predicting relationship satisfaction for Caucasians, $F(2, 90) = 2.81$, $p = .066$, $Adj. R^2 = .038$, and was significant for Hispanics, $F(2, 46) = 8.65$, $p = .001$, $Adj. R^2 = .242$. The model predicting relationship satisfaction was not

8.65, $p = .001$, $Adj. R^2 = .242$. The model predicting relationship satisfaction was not significant for other ethnic groups; therefore, further analysis of these groups could not be conducted. Higher body esteem significantly predicted increased relationship satisfaction scores for both Caucasians, $Beta = .273$, $t = 2.36$, $p = .020$, as well as Hispanics, $Beta = .606$, $t = 4.15$, $p < .001$.

The model containing body esteem and the covariate BMI was significant in predicting jealousy for both Caucasians, $F(2, 90) = 4.71$, $p = .011$, $Adj. R^2 = .075$, and Hispanics, $F(2, 46) = 3.42$, $p = .041$, $Adj. R^2 = .092$; however, body esteem was only a significant predictor of jealousy for Caucasian participants, $Beta = .299$, $t = 2.64$, $p = .010$. For Caucasian participants, increased BMI predicted increased jealousy $Beta = .297$, $t = 2.62$, $p = .010$. Conversely, for Hispanic participants, increased BMI predicted decreased jealousy, $Beta = -.382$, $t = -2.39$, $p = .021$. Because body esteem was only predictive of jealousy for Caucasian participants, the mediation could only be tested on this subsample.

In order to test the mediation effect of jealousy on the relationship from body esteem to relationship status, a hierarchical linear regression was conducted with body esteem and the covariate BMI in the first block and jealousy in the second block. The first block was marginally significant, $F(2, 90) = 2.81$, $p = .066$, $Adj. R^2 = .038$; however, when jealousy was added into the second block, the overall model predicting relationship satisfaction became significant, $F(3, 89) = 3.50$, $p = .019$, $Adj. R^2 = .075$, and accounted for a significantly higher amount of the variance in relationship status than the first block,

*Adj. R*² = .047, *F* (1, 89) = 4.66, *p* = .034. Higher body esteem predicted increased relationship satisfaction, *Beta* = .273, *t* = 2.36, *p* = .020, in the first block, and when jealousy was added to the model, the relationship between body esteem and relationship satisfaction marginally decreased and became insignificant, *Beta* = .205, *t* = 1.74, *p* = .085. These results provide evidence that the relationship from body esteem to relationship satisfaction may be partially mediated by jealousy; however, a Sobel test revealed only marginal findings for the significance of the mediation (Sobel = 1.81, *SE* < .01, *p* = .067). Lastly, higher levels of jealousy predicted higher levels of relationship satisfaction, *Beta* = .228, *t* = 2.16, *p* = .034.

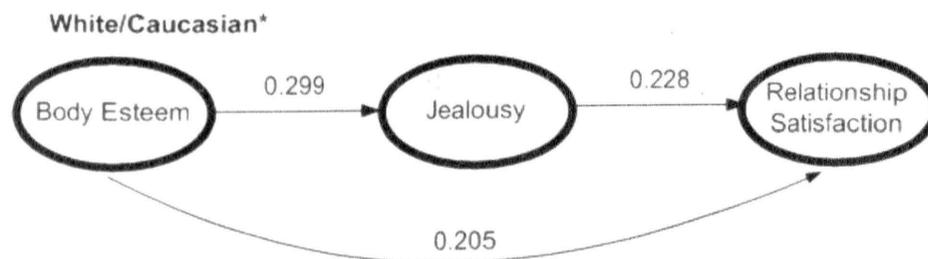


Figure 9. Indirect pathways from body esteem to relationship satisfaction through jealousy. Asterisk indicates significance found.

Hypothesis 9

The ninth hypothesis stated that trust would be indirectly associated with relationship satisfaction via jealousy. The indirect path from trust to relationship satisfaction via jealousy was predicted to be significant at *p* < .05. A series of linear regressions were conducted to test the potential mediation effect of jealousy on the

relationship from trust and relationship satisfaction. The model containing trust and the covariates relationship status and relationship length was significant for Asian American participants, $F(4, 15) = 9.12, p = .001, Adj. R^2 = .631$; Caucasian participants, $F(6, 87) = 16.33, p < .001, Adj. R^2 = .497$; African American participants, $F(6, 58) = 12.02, p < .001, Adj. R^2 = .508$; and Hispanic participants, $F(6, 52) = 7.61, p < .001, Adj. R^2 = .452$. As determined in the analysis of Hypothesis 5, all ethnic groups experienced higher levels of trust with higher relationship satisfaction, *Betas* ranging from .719 to .884, all $ps < .001$. The overall model predicting jealousy from trust and the covariates of relationship status and relationship length was not significant across all ethnic groups, all ps, ns ; however, further examination of the predictors revealed that higher levels of trust significantly predicted higher levels of jealousy for Caucasians, $Beta = .259, t = 2.43, p = .017$, as well as African Americans, $Beta = .374, t = 2.87, p = .006$. Trust was not significantly related to jealousy for Asian/Asian American or Hispanic participants; therefore, further tests of the potential mediating effect of jealousy on the relationship from trust to relationship satisfaction could only be tested for Caucasian and African American participants.

The overall model containing trust and jealousy and the covariates relationship length and relationship status was significant for both Caucasian participants, $F(7, 86) = 14.29, p < .001, Adj. R^2 = .538$, and African American participants, $F(7, 57) = 10.15, p < .001, Adj. R^2 = .555$. For both groups, higher levels of trust predicted higher levels of relationship satisfaction, *Betas* ranging from .694 to .769, all $ps < .001$; however, jealousy

was not significantly related to relationship satisfaction, indicating that jealousy does not serve as a mediator in the relationship from trust to relationship satisfaction.

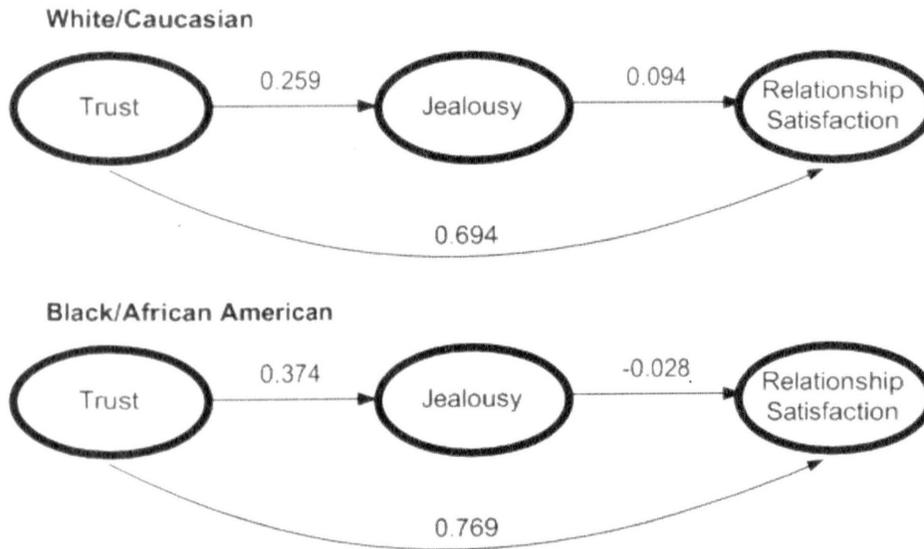


Figure 10. Indirect pathways from trust to relationship satisfaction through jealousy.

Summary

The path analyses and mediations used to test the hypotheses were conducted on each of the four ethnic groups separately; the direct pathways described in Hypotheses 1-6 were assessed using path analysis and the indirect pathways described in Hypotheses 7-9 were tested using mediation analyses. Findings revealed many of the direct paths were significant. The partial mediation of the relationship between body esteem and relationship satisfaction through jealousy was marginally significant for Caucasian participants; however, no mediation relationship was found for the other ethnic groups or for Hypotheses 7 and 9. Table 12 shows the breakdown of findings based on the participants' ethnicity.

Table 12

Summary of Significant Findings Based on Ethnicity

| Race/Ethnicity | Significant Findings |
|------------------------|--|
| White/Caucasian | H1. High body esteem predicted high relationship satisfaction H2. High body esteem predicted high trust H3. High body esteem predicted high jealousy H5. High trust predicted high relationship satisfaction H6. High jealousy predicted high relationship satisfaction H7: High body esteem predicted high relationship satisfaction with jealousy as a mediator |
| Black/African American | H4. High trust predicted high jealousy H5. High trust predicted high relationship satisfaction |
| Hispanic/Latino(a) | H1. High body esteem predicted high relationship satisfaction H2. High body esteem predicted high trust H5. High trust predicted high relationship satisfaction |
| Asian/Asian American | H5. High trust predicted high relationship satisfaction |

Note. H identifies the corresponding hypothesis

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Summary of Substantive Findings

The present study explored the relationships between body esteem, trust, jealousy, and relationship satisfaction using path analysis. For Caucasian participants, findings indicate a significant direct pathway between body esteem and relationship satisfaction, body esteem and trust, body esteem and jealousy, trust and jealousy, trust and relationship satisfaction, and jealousy and relationship satisfaction. Findings indicated significant direct pathways between body esteem and trust and trust and relationship satisfaction for Hispanics. Significant indirect pathways were found between trust and jealousy and trust and relationship satisfaction for African American participants. Finally, significant direct pathways were found between trust and relationship satisfaction for Asian Americans. However, there was only one marginally significant indirect pathway from body esteem to relationship satisfaction through jealousy. Figures 11, 12, 13, and 14 show a summary of findings based on the proposed model for each ethnicity.

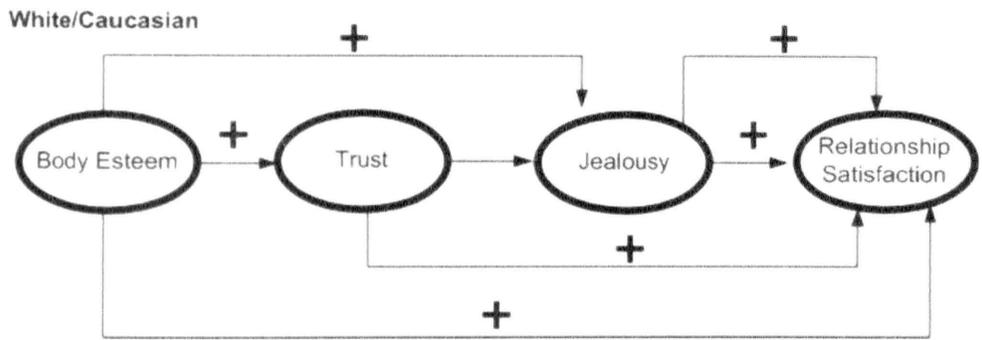


Figure 11. Summary of significant findings for Caucasians. Plus signs indicate a positive significant relationship between variables.

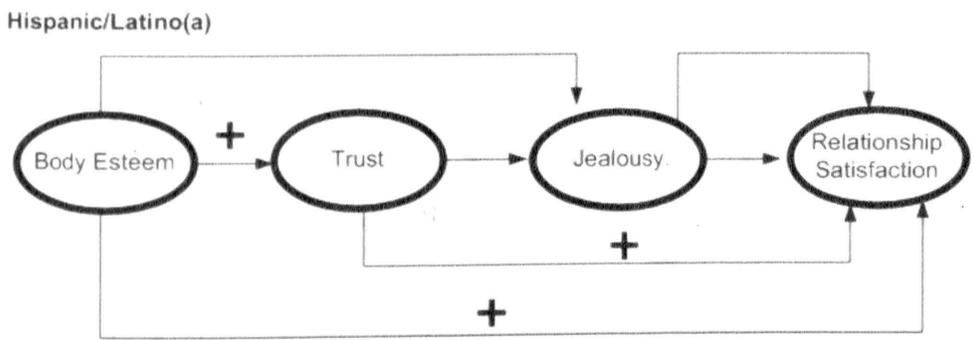


Figure 12. Summary of significant findings for Hispanics. Plus sign indicates a positive significant relationship between variables.

Black/African American

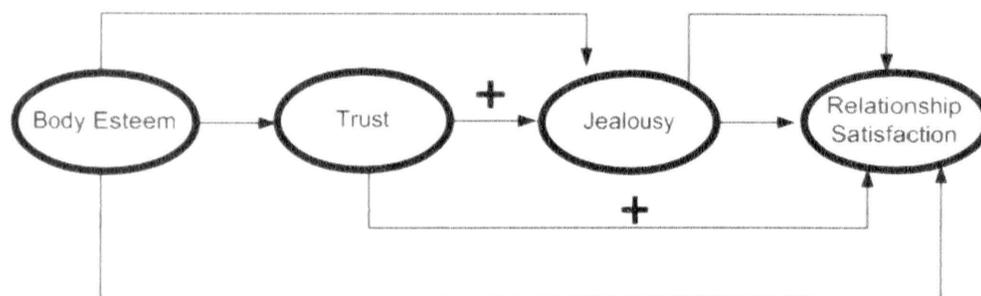


Figure 13. Summary of significant findings for African Americans. Plus sign indicates a positive significant relationship between variables.

Asian/Asian American

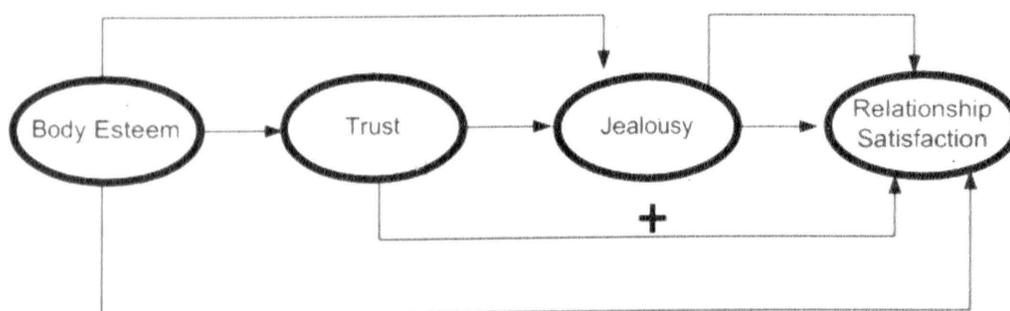


Figure 14. Summary of significant findings for Asian Americans. Plus sign indicates a positive significant relationship between variables.

Integration of Findings with Existing Research

Ethnicity and culture affect how individuals interact and perceive the world around them; the results of this study varied based on the women's ethnicity. Caucasian women experience greater relationship satisfaction and trust in their partners than African American, Asian American, or Hispanic women. Caucasian and African American

women experience more jealousy toward their partners than Hispanic or Asian American women. As there have been few prior studies to compare these findings to, this study provides initial evidence that ethnic differences between levels of jealousy, trust, and relationship satisfaction occur and should be further explored. Of particular note is the fact that Caucasian women reported both higher trust levels and higher jealousy levels as compared to Hispanic women. Due to the Hispanic culture traditionally valuing a larger body size (Gil-Kashiwabara, 2002), Hispanic women may be less likely to evaluate themselves as inferior to other women when they have a larger body weight. As a result, Hispanic women may not fear a threat to their relationship and experience less jealousy and greater trust towards their partner.

Regarding body esteem, African American women were found in this study to have lower body esteem than Caucasian and Hispanic women. This is contrary to other research that has identified African American women as having higher body esteem compared to Caucasian women (Henriques & Calhoun, 1999). Women with low body esteem feel the pressure of societal norms, which historically has been more common in White women (Henriques & Calhoun, 1999). However, this pressure may be becoming more widespread across ethnicities and may be affecting African American women just as much, if not more, than Caucasian women. The gap between women of varying ethnicities' body satisfaction has diminished over time, which may be due to the increase in body dissatisfaction for African American women (Roberts, Cash, Feingold, & Johnson, 2006). Frisby (2004) suggested that African American women may have greater

dissatisfaction with their bodies due to societal norms. Media predominantly portrays the ideal woman as Caucasian and thin. However, African American women may compare themselves to the few African American women portrayed in the media as a standard of beauty and often experience lower body esteem (Frisby, 2004).

Body Esteem and Relationship Satisfaction

The current findings are consistent with prior research suggesting that women who have high body esteem also have high relationship satisfaction (Murray & Holmes, 2000; Sciangula & Morry, 2009). Women with low body esteem may have conflicted beliefs about themselves and how their partners view them causing greater disturbance within the relationship (Murray & Holmes, 2000). Similarly, Sciangula and Morry (2009) also found that women who perceive themselves negatively often underestimate their partners' perception of them and will evaluate events more negatively than women who perceive themselves positively. Current findings suggest that both Hispanic and Caucasian women will negatively evaluate their bodies and use this evaluation to estimate the stability of the relationship as well as how their partner evaluates them. Therefore, the more a woman evaluates her body negatively, the more she feels dissatisfied with her relationship and questions her partner's commitment and attraction to her. As this pathway was not significant for African American or Asian American women, African American and Asian American women's body esteem may be less relevant to their relationships. There is no study to explain why body esteem may not be relevant to their relationships but African American and Asian American women's

cultures may focus less on bodies and more on other qualities, such as intelligence or personality.

Jealousy and Relationship Satisfaction

Similar to body esteem, the experience of jealousy in a relationship was not related to relationship satisfaction for Hispanic, African American, or Asian American women in the current study. Previous studies on relationships have mainly observed Caucasian women (Flora & Segrin, 2000; Hendrick & Hendrick, 2008); therefore, there are no studies to compare to the current findings in non-Caucasians. Contrary to previous studies (Sheets et al., 1997), Caucasian women were found to have greater satisfaction in their relationship when experiencing higher jealousy. One possible explanation is that Caucasian women believe jealousy is a positive attribute in the relationship because it may show a desire to maintain the relationship. Therefore, how women love and how they perceive the jealous behaviors in the relationship could potentially impact relationship satisfaction. However, regardless of the relationship quality, jealousy is a relationship maintenance behavior exhibited based on one's love style (Goodboy & Myers, 2010). The two types of love identified by Goodboy and Myers (2010) that positively predict jealousy are ludus, the game-playing love, and mania, the possessive love. Women who fall into one of these two love styles experience jealousy regardless of their satisfaction in their relationships. Future research should determine if Caucasian women fall into one of these two love styles more often than women of different ethnicities, causing a greater experience of jealousy within the relationship.

Trust and Relationship Satisfaction

Women of all ethnicities experienced higher relationship satisfaction when they trusted their partners. Consistent with previous findings by Campbell et al. (2010) and Zak et al. (1998), women who trust their partners and perceive high trust from their partner are more likely to experience satisfaction within the relationship. Therefore, women who view their partners and themselves as predictable, dependable, and faithful will have greater satisfaction. Trust does not, however, affect relationship satisfaction indirectly through jealousy. Instead trust may affect relationship satisfaction through other potential factors such as commitment, communication, and conflict resolution. Campbell et al. (2010) noted that women often evaluate trust in their relationships based on commitment, love, and benevolence from their partners. When women have low trust in their partner, they may question their commitment, decrease communication, and conflict resolution may cease. Hendrick and Hendrick (2008) identified communication and commitment as important components for relationship satisfaction. Consequently, if low trust results in potentially lower commitment, less communication, and decreased conflict resolution, then there may be lower relationship satisfaction.

Trust and Body Esteem

Caucasian and Hispanic women with high body esteem demonstrated high trust in their partners. Although there are no studies connecting trust to body esteem, the connection could be explained by the social comparison theory. Women with high body esteem may perceive their significant other to be committed to the relationship due to

comparing themselves to other women and considering their bodies superior. As a result of this social comparison, women who have high satisfaction with their body image may develop more trust in their partners because they consider the partner to be committed, reliable, and reciprocative (Campbell et al., 2010; Cash et al., 2004). When Caucasian and Hispanic women evaluate and compare themselves to other women, they may see themselves as superior. This social comparison may result in a perceived commitment and trust in a partner because they may not fear the loss of their partner to another woman.

Jealousy and Body Esteem

Findings for Caucasian women correlate with previous findings by Massar and Buunk (2009) that suggest women's jealousy is based on self-perception of their bodies. Women often compare themselves to other women and base their own self-perceptions on the comparison (Myers & Crawther, 2009). If a woman perceives another woman to be superior, then the woman comparing will experience greater jealousy (Massar & Buunk, 2009). It was also found women were more likely to experience jealousy when comparing themselves to body shapes as compared to a more detailed figure with limbs and a face (Massar & Buunk, 2009). One possible explanation for the lack of findings amongst Hispanic, Asian American, and African American women is that they may be processing more than just a body shape during comparison with other women. Possible explanations of this social comparison may be due to the overrepresentation of thin, White women in the media (DeBraganza & Hausenblas, 2007), causing more

characteristics to be compared. These characteristics may include hair style and color, skin tone, stature, clothing and fashion style, or facial features. Thus they may experience less jealousy than Caucasian women who could be processing only body shape.

Although body esteem is directly associated with jealousy, trust does not mediate this relationship. This suggests that body esteem directly affects jealousy and other factors than trust may indirectly affect one's jealousy. As previously discussed, current results suggest that high body esteem is related to high jealousy and both are related to high trust. As this is an unusual finding, it would require further study. Trust occurs when women have confidence that their partners can be relied on despite worries and fears (Campbell et al., 2010). Jealousy is experienced when there is a perceived or actual threat to the relationship (Greenberg & Pyszczynski, 1985). Using the definition above, women can have jealousy with or without trusting their partners. Also, it could be that women's trust is affected by their jealousy instead and thus directionality may be an important consideration for future research.

Jealousy and Trust

The perceived dependability, predictability, and faithfulness of a partner should affect the level of jealousy women experience in a relationship. Interestingly, findings suggested that high levels of trust among African American women were related to high levels of jealousy. However, this was not true for Caucasian, Hispanic, or Asian American women. The analyses controlled for both relationship length and status, suggesting that no matter how long an African American woman has been in the relationship or how she

identifies her relationship status, she will experience jealousy when she has high trust in her partner. No current research supports finding high trust with high jealousy, and in contrast, have supported the connection between low trust with high jealousy (Carson & Cupach, 2000; Zak et al., 2001). This unexpected finding could be supported by the importance of the relationship to the women. If there is high trust in a relationship, there may be more importance placed on the relationship. In this case, there may be a greater likelihood to become jealous if a threat to the relationship presents itself due to a greater fear of losing the partner to a more superior woman. Therefore, if trust is high in a relationship, then there may be more jealousy experiences.

Additional Variables of Interest

Preliminary analysis indicated that the length of a relationship as well as relationship status was associated with trust, jealousy, and body esteem in participants. Women in relationships less than one year were found to have higher body esteem and trust in their partner than those in relationships greater than one year. However, being in a relationship less than one year was predictive of greater jealousy within a relationship. Although there is no research suggesting the reason for the results, it may be due to the relationship still being new and unstable, causing uncertainty in one's perception of the partner's commitment. Since women highly regard their partners' perception of their appearance (Cash et al., 2004), a new relationship could affect how they view their bodies and intensify the belief that the partner finds them attractive. Trust may be higher in a new relationship due to fewer negative behaviors to evaluate when examining the level of

trustworthiness. When getting acquainted, people may only display their positive attributes and hide unwanted characteristics and behaviors to appear more attractive (Hancock & Toma, 2009). Women who identified their relationship status as engaged were found to have lower jealousy than those who identified their relationship as committed, living together, or married. These findings could be due to having the reciprocation of commitment to the relationship. If someone feels commitment from the other partner they are less likely to experience jealousy (Sheets et al., 1997). Lemieux and Hale (2002) found women who identified their relationship status as engaged, compared to dating or married, experienced greater intimacy, passion, and commitment within their relationships. Therefore, the status of being engaged may provide women with the feeling of commitment and love towards and from their partner that is stronger than when in other types of committed relationships. In summary, women may experience less jealousy when feeling a sense of commitment from their partner and this feeling may be greatest when the partners are engaged.

This study determined that individuals' BMI is related to their jealousy, body esteem, and ethnicity. The Hispanic participants had an average BMI higher than other ethnicities. Previous research by Swartz, Strath, Parker, Miller and Cieslik (2007) reported similar findings of higher BMI for Hispanics and African American women compared to Caucasian women. Women's BMI correlated positively with their body esteem for all ethnicities but varied based on ethnicity for jealousy. For example, participants with a higher BMI tended to have higher body esteem. These findings are

contrary to previous findings suggesting that women with high BMI have lower body esteem (Mendelson, Mendelson, & Andrews, 2000). Women could possibly experience greater body esteem when they have a high BMI if they perceive their body size as smaller than actual size or if the women are comparing themselves to other women who have a larger BMI than they, they may have a high body esteem. While there is currently no research to support a connection between jealousy and BMI, it was hypothesized that higher jealousy would be related to higher BMI for all ethnicities. Interestingly, high BMI was a significant predictor of higher jealousy for Caucasians and lower jealousy for Hispanics. However, the differences could be explained by cultural differences and expectations. For example, curvier and larger bodies are considered healthier and the ideal body in Hispanic culture (Gil-Kashiwabara, 2002). Women with high BMI in cultures that teach them to love a full figured body may have higher body esteem because they are socialized to think bigger is beautiful. Hispanic women with high BMI will then be more likely to feel superior when comparing themselves to other women, resulting in lower jealousy.

Implications

Implications for Theory

Although this study examined a model and was not based on theory, this model does support the social comparison theory. Social comparison theory proposes that women compare their bodies to others' bodies to evaluate their level of beauty (Festinger, 1954; Myers & Crowther, 2009). Body comparisons may be due to the need for

acceptance and often results in body dissatisfaction (Myers & Crowther, 2009). The current study found that a woman's BMI is related to her body esteem, jealousy, and ethnicity. Interestingly, in this study Hispanic women had high body esteem and jealousy when they had high BMI. Hispanic women in this study possibly evaluated their bodies as more superior than the women's bodies to which they are comparing themselves to (Festinger, 1954). In addition, women with high body esteem based on comparison with others may not fear the loss of a partner to another and may not experience jealousy.

Other possible theories that may be supported by the results in this study include self objectification theory and evolution theory. According to this theory self objectification develops when a woman learns to evaluate and view her body solely as an object rather than appreciating its abilities or health (McKinley, 2006). When a woman's body is objectified by peers, family, and other important figures in her life, she may be more likely to objectify her own body and develop negative views of herself. Younger, college age women experience the highest relation of body dissatisfaction to self objectification compared to older women (McKinley, 2006). The findings of this study could indicate that heterosexual women may feel objectified by others, which in turn causes them to objectify themselves by evaluating their self-worth based on the perception of their bodies. Additionally, the theory of evolution proposes that men and women select their partners based on attractiveness (Confer, Perilloux, & Buss, 2010). If women base their self-worth on attractiveness, which in turn affects mate selection and

mate retention, then women with poor body esteem may experience more jealousy for fear of losing their partners to another woman.

Implications for Clinicians

The current findings once again emphasize the need to consider ethnicity in working with women. Clinicians should be aware of the differences in how women of different ethnicities perceive themselves and how these self-perceptions affect interactions with important people in their lives, specifically romantic partners. As individuals' values, experiences, and perceptions differ based on their culture and ethnicity, it is important to take these into consideration in the therapeutic setting (Collins & Arthur, 2010). Over the past few decades, researchers have examined the importance of multicultural counseling and have developed models, such as the model created by Collins and Arthur, for use in therapeutic settings. Collins and Arthur suggested therapists should be aware of both their own culture and biases as well as the culture and world perceptions of the client. They also suggested that therapists create a culturally sensitive therapeutic environment. Clinicians should consider how women's culture and ethnicity affects their body esteem and relationship satisfaction and then tailor therapy to each individual's needs.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2007) has developed guidelines for working with women of diverse backgrounds. The guidelines suggest clinicians should be aware of the diverse backgrounds, challenges, experiences, identity development, and biases towards women (APA, 2007). Once cognizant of women's

diversity, the guidelines suggest that clinicians use theories and assessments that are appropriate, recognize their own biases, use effective treatment strategies for diverse populations, provide strength and empowerment to overcome challenges, and provide appropriate resources that are encouraging and aware of diversity issues (APA, 2007). Based on the current results, previous research, and APA guidelines (2007), clinicians working with women should be aware of diversity, how it affects women in their daily lives, be encouraging, and utilize resources and assessments that are appropriate for diverse populations. Additionally, APA (2002) created guidelines for working with women or men of varying ethnic backgrounds. The guidelines suggest that clinicians should be aware of their differences and biases. In addition, clinicians should work towards understanding and accepting of ethnic differences, use appropriate assessments and resources, and tailor the techniques used in therapy for the individual's needs (APA, 2002).

Additionally, women's body image seems to play a role in how they trust, experience jealousy, and ultimately the satisfaction in their relationship. Utilizing these findings in the therapeutic setting may provide additional support, understanding, and a basis for treatment strategies. The therapist can provide additional support to the client by helping build self-esteem. Understanding and acceptance may be provided through empathy and helping the partner understand what the woman is going through emotionally. Additionally, the clinician should utilize therapeutic techniques that are aimed at decreasing insecurities and building trust within the couple's relationship.

Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) for couples encourages examination of these insecurities and expression of needs between the couple to increase understanding, develop more positive interactions, and build relationship satisfaction (Mosser & Johnson, 2008). The clinician uses the therapeutic setting to build security within the relationship and allow expression of emotions and needs (Mosser & Johnson, 2008). A safe environment may help encourage women discuss how their body esteem affects trust, jealousy, and satisfaction with their relationship.

Based on the current findings and prior research, clinicians working with women who are experiencing low relationship satisfaction should work on building the client's body esteem. Prior research suggests that women's body image is affected by the media (Monteath & McCabe, 1997) and social comparison (Myers & Crowther, 2009). Therefore, clinicians should challenge negative thoughts about one's appearance and self-worth based on media and cultural expectations. Because the media and social norms have an impact on women's body esteem, it would also be imperative to critically discuss the portrayal of women in the media.

Implications for Researchers

While the current study informs research regarding the multivariate nature of the predictors of relationship status, further examination of several key variables is warranted. Future research should determine whether the current study's finding of a relationship between high body esteem and high BMI can be replicated. Additionally, researchers should continue to examine the ethnic differences for models of relationship

satisfaction as well as how the partner's ethnicity affects the woman's perceptions. It would also be beneficial to utilize qualitative research to evaluate the reasoning behind experiences of jealousy within the relationship when a woman has a high body esteem, trust, or relationship satisfaction as this was an unexpected finding. Possible reasons could include high investment in the relationship or denial of problems with the relationship.

Due to a small sample size of non-heterosexual women, this study was unable to examine the role of sexual orientation in the current model. Few studies have delved into individuals' sexual orientation, body image, and the resulting relationship satisfaction (Sanchez & Kiefer, 2007; Wiederman, 2000). However, these studies do not examine the difference between heterosexual and non-heterosexual individuals. Future research may consider examining gender and sexual orientation with the current model. Since current findings illustrate the importance of considering diversity, future research on gender and sexual orientation with this model may reveal different patterns of findings as different aspects of diversity are considered.

Examination of more advanced models of psychological constructs provides critical information for researchers. It establishes and reinforces more enriched models of connections between multiple concepts. When considering future research in this area, it is important to note the significant and nonsignificant pathways found in this study to develop new models and possible pathways that connect body esteem to relationship satisfaction. For example, pathways that were found to be nonsignificant that included

trust and jealousy may become significant if jealousy is expected to affect trust instead of trust to jealousy, as used in this model. Additionally, future research should include pathways through communication, conflict resolution, love, intimacy, and commitment. Little research has examined the relationship between these areas, body image, and relationship satisfaction; therefore, examining the relationship between the various constructs that may affect relationship satisfaction could prove to be advantageous.

Limitations

Although this study provides useful information regarding body esteem, trust, jealousy, and relationship satisfaction, researchers should be mindful of the limitations in this investigation. Due to convenience sampling, the participants were from a select group of undergraduate psychology students within one university primarily for women in a Southwestern state. Participants were from a school with a student population comprised of predominantly women, which could potentially affect how women feel about themselves and their relationships. Also, because the students received research credit for their participation, the participants may have focused on completion of the survey as opposed to taking time and responding to the questions. This research study was unable to control for participant bias because participants knew the aim of the study.

The study included several options for participants to identify their type of relationship. Participants were able to identify themselves as single, dating, in a committed relationship, living with their partner, engaged, married, or divorced. Committed relationships were the primary focus of this study; therefore, participants who

identified as single, dating, or divorced were excluded from the data. Although reporting their relationship as several years long, many women who participated were excluded from analysis due to identifying the relationship as dating. The subjective nature of defining one's relationship and the inclusion of a dating option could have altered the results of this study. Therefore, even though the definition of a committed relationship as well as the relationship status options were based on prior studies on relationship satisfaction, future research should carefully consider how to assess relationship status.

The participants were able to access the survey online via PsychData. Researchers were unable to control for the number of times a participant took the survey. A few participants completed the survey multiple times, as evident by the survey completed for class credit; however, the participant information was entered separate from the data and there was no way to determine or remove the duplicate surveys. Additionally, the validity of the surveys could have affected the results of the study. While the BES has been found to be valid and reliable with diverse populations (Grabe et al., 2008), the RAS, DTS, and IJS (Couch & Jones, 1997; Larzelere & Huston, 1980; Renshaw, McKnight, Caska, & Blais, 2011) were developed using Caucasian participants and are rarely used with other ethnicities. It is critical that future research examine the use of these assessments in diverse populations.

Conclusions

Women's body image, trust, and jealousy all interact with each other and predict relationship satisfaction in some conditions. Clinicians should utilize these findings to

acknowledge the differences between ethnicities when it comes to women's body esteem, trust, jealousy, and relationship satisfaction. Therapists could utilize the current findings to provide more support, understanding, and direction for treatment strategies.

Researchers, utilizing culturally sensitive assessments, should build on and further examine possible pathways from body esteem to relationship satisfaction within diverse populations. Since differences are apparent between ethnicities, further examination of ethnicity as it relates to constructs in this study would prove beneficial.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The return of this survey constitutes your consent to participate in this study.

Title: An Analysis of Body Esteem, Trust, and Jealousy Pathways to Relationship

Satisfaction

Investigator: Chelsie Ayers.....ayers@twu.edu

Advisor: Shannon Scott, PhD.....srich@twu.edu 940-898-2307

Explanation and Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Chelsie Ayers' thesis at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between body image, trust, and jealousy with relationship satisfaction. You have been asked to participate in this study because you are at least 18 years old and have identified yourself as currently in a committed romantic relationship.

Description of Procedures

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to spend one hour of your time completing a short series of surveys. The surveys will pertain to your body esteem, trust, jealousy, and current relationship satisfaction. You will be able to decide on when and where the online survey will be completed. In order to be a participant in this study, you must be at least 18 years old and are currently in a romantic relationship.

Potential Risks

The surveys will ask questions about your perception of your body, trust, jealous feelings related to a partner, and your current relationship satisfaction. A possible risk in this study is discomfort with these topics and questions. If you become tired or upset you may take breaks and return to the survey as often as needed. You may also stop answered questions at any time and end your participation in the study. If you feel that you need to talk to a professional about your discomfort, a list of resources is provided.

Loss of confidentiality is another potential risk in this study. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. Your name will not be used while completing the surveys. After completing the surveys, you will be directed to another webpage to include personal information to receive course credit for participation. Due to the use of electronic transactions, there is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality in all emails, downloading, and internet transactions. The information will be deleted for all electronic sources at the end of the semester. No information that is provided in the study will include identifying information.

The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Following the completion of this study you will receive two stamps worth 30 minutes each for your class credit. If you would like to know the results of this study we will email them to you.*

Questions Regarding the Study

You may print a copy of this consent form for your records. If you have any questions about the research study you should ask the researchers; their phone numbers are at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu.

The return of this survey constitutes your consent to participate in this study.

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questionnaire

Please mark on the answer sheet that best corresponds to you by either filling in the blank or checking response.

Age: _____

Gender:

_____ 1. Male

_____ 2. Female

_____ 3. Transgendered

Height: _____ feet _____ inches

Weight: _____ pounds

Sexual Orientation:

_____ 1. Heterosexual

_____ 2. Lesbian

_____ 3. Gay

_____ 4. Bisexual

Length of Current or Most Recent Relationship: _____ months _____ years

Have you ever been involved in a committed romantic relationship? _____ Yes _____ No

Race/Ethnicity:

_____ 1. Asian/Asian American

_____ 2. White/Caucasian/European American

_____ 3. Black/African/African American

_____ 4. Hispanic/Latino(a)

_____ 5. Indian/Native American

_____ 6. Other

Relationship Status:

_____ 1. Single

_____ 2. Dating

_____ 3. In a Committed Relationship

_____ 4. Living Together

_____ 5. Engaged

_____ 6. Married

_____ 6. Divorced

APPENDIX C

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

Please mark the answer that best represents your feelings towards your partner.

How well does your partner meet your needs?

| | | | | |
|--------|---|---------|---|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poorly | | Average | | Extremely well |

In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|---------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Unsatisfied | | Average | | Extremely satisfied |

How good is your relationship compared to most?

| | | | | |
|------|---|---------|---|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Poor | | Average | | Excellent |

How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

| | | | | |
|-------|---|---------|---|------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Never | | Average | | Very often |

To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------|---|------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Hardly at all | | Average | | Completely |

How much do you love your partner?

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---------|---|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Not much | | Average | | Very much |

How many problems are there in your relationship?

| | | | | |
|----------|---|---------|---|-----------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Very few | | Average | | Very many |

APPENDIX D

Body Esteem Scale (BES)

On this page are listed a number of body parts or functions. Please read each item and indicate how you feel about this part or function of your own body using the following scale:

- 1 = Have strong negative feelings
- 2 = Have moderate negative feelings
- 3 = Have no feeling one way or the other
- 4 = Have moderate positive feelings
- 5 = Have strong positive feelings

| | | |
|----|--------------------------|-------|
| 1 | appetite | _____ |
| 2 | waist | _____ |
| 3 | thighs | _____ |
| 4 | body build | _____ |
| 5 | buttocks | _____ |
| 6 | hips | _____ |
| 7 | legs | _____ |
| 8 | figure or physique | _____ |
| 9 | appearance of stomach | _____ |
| 10 | weight | _____ |

APPENDIX E
Dyadic Trust Scale

APPENDIX F

Interpersonal Jealousy Scale

These questions ask you about your relationship with your partner. Use the scale below to express your feelings concerning to the truth of the item. For example, if you feel the item is “absolutely true” of your, place a 9 in the blank before the item number. If it is only “definitely true” (that is, not as absolute), then place an 8 in the blank, ect.

Please note that interested sex means who your partner would be interested in while responding to the following questions.

9- Absolutely True, Agree completely

8- Definitely True

7- True

6- Slightly True

5- Neither True nor False

4- Slightly False

3- False

2- Definitely False

1- Absolutely False, Disagree completely

__ 1. If my partner were to see an old friend of his/her interested sex and respond with a great deal of happiness, I would be annoyed.

__ 2. If my partner went out with same sex friends, I would feel compelled to know what he/she did.

__ 3. If my partner admired someone of her/his interested sex I would feel irritated.

__ 4. If my partner were to help someone of his/her interested sex with homework, I would feel suspicious.

__ 5. When my partner likes one of my friends I am pleased.

__ 6. If my partner were to go away for the weekend without me, my only concern would be whether he/she had a good time.

7. If my partner were helpful to someone of her/his interested sex I would feel jealous.
8. When my partner talks of happy experiences of his/her past, I feel sad that I wasn't part of it.
9. If my partner were to become displeased about the time I spend with others, I would be flattered.
10. If my partner and I went to a party and I lost sight of him/her, I would become uncomfortable.
11. I want my partner to remain good friends with the people he/she used to date.
12. If my partner were to date others I would feel unhappy.
13. When I notice that my partner and a person of his/her interested sex have something in common, I am envious.
14. If my partner were to become very close to someone of her/his interested sex, I would feel very unhappy and/or angry.
15. I would like my partner to be faithful to me.
16. I don't think it would bother me if my partner flirted with someone that is his/her interested sex.
17. If someone of my partner's interested sex were to compliment my partner, I would feel that the person was trying to take my partner away from me.
18. I feel good when my partner makes a new friend.
19. If my partner were to spend the night comforting a friend of his/her interested sex who had just had a tragic experience, my partner's compassion would please me.
20. If someone of my partner's interested sex were to pay attention to my partner, I would become possessive of him/her.
21. If my partner were to become exuberant and hug someone of his/her interested sex, it would make me feel good that he/she was expressing his/her feelings openly.

- __22. The thought of my partner kissing someone else drives me up the wall.
- __23. If someone of my partner's interested sex lit up at the sight of my partner, I would become uneasy.
- __24. I like to find fault with my partner's old dates.
- __25. I feel possessive toward my partner.
- __26. If my partner had been previously married, I would feel resentment towards the ex-husband/wife.
- __27. If I saw a picture of my partner and an old date. I would feel unhappy.
- __28. If my partner were to accidentally call my by the wrong name, I would become furious.