

“I MEAN, THAT’S JUST LIKE THE RULES OF FEMINISM”: ANALYZING
POSTFEMINIST TRENDS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES IN WOMEN

By

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COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND EDUCATION
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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my friends and family who have supported and inspired me along the way

To Busia Leonora,

a strong and inspiring woman. Even though I'm not a "real doctor," I know you would still be proud. Viva!

To Mom,

for instilling feminist values in me from the beginning, for being an independent woman and excellent role model. I am proud to be your daughter.

To my family,

for placing value in education and providing me with support, stability, and sarcasm. I am truly grateful for the sacrifices you've made, everything you've taught me, and the opportunities you've given me.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Gender inequality is a well-documented phenomenon in the United States, with several well-known statistics illustrating this discrepancy. For example, despite comprising half of the workforce, women continue to earn just 78 cents to each man's dollar (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). As of 2014, women hold less than 20% of positions in Congress and run fewer than 5% of Fortune 500 companies (Leahey & Fairchild, 2014), proportions celebrated as the highest percentage in history. Nearly 1 in 5 women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime (Center for Disease Control, 2012). Many women continue to battle mental illness with higher rates of depression and body image disturbance (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Although women continue to be at a disadvantage, facing many disparities in status, financial resources, political power, leadership positions, and human rights, improvements in gender equality have been celebrated in popular media, with many women being depicted as doctors, lawyers, and business leaders. Pop culture icons such as Beyonce and Oprah are deemed some of the most influential people in the world. Based on these media images and improving statistics on gender equality, many writers have asserted that 'feminism is dead' and no longer relevant to the lives of young men and women.

Popular discourse on the relevance and meaning of feminism continues to be a highly debated topic, both within popular media and academia. Evidenced by the statement, "I'm not a feminist, but . . ." many women appear to concomitantly hold feminist values (i.e., believe in equal opportunities for women), yet reject the label. Many scholars have observed this phenomenon in terms of 'postfeminism' – an era in which feminism has been taken into account

but simultaneously rejected as being redundant, out of touch, and no longer necessary (e.g., Genz & Brabon, 2009; McRobbie, 2009).

In addition to the societal and institutional changes that have stemmed from the feminist movement and improved the lives of women, feminism may provide women with personal benefits. Feminism has been found to improve psychological health in women and to provide women with a framework with which to cope and navigate both personal and institutional gender discrimination. Women who identify as feminists have been shown to have higher levels of self-efficacy, autonomy, self-acceptance, and psychological well-being (Eisele & Stake, 2008; Saunders & Kashubeck-West, 2006; Yakushko, 2007). Therefore, continued investigation of feminist self-identification is warranted due to the potential psychological benefits from such identification.

Although various critical frameworks have conceptualized postfeminism (e.g., gender studies, media studies), there is a dearth of psychological research on the topic. The current study seeks to add to the base of knowledge on feminist identification and feminist attitudes by assessing the relevance of feminism in the lives of young women. In addition, the current study aims to investigate the validity of purported postfeminist characteristics by testing a model of postfeminism and analyzing the attitudes and behaviors of young women. This model includes three broad features: (a) attitudes toward gender-role orientation; (b) individualistic/meritocratic beliefs; and (c) sexualization. Finally, the current study seeks to address discrepancies in the psychological literature regarding the psychological health benefits of feminist identification. The study intends to determine the psychological correlates of differing feminist identifications and values by analyzing self-esteem, depression, satisfaction with life, and empowerment.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Brief History of Feminism

In order to understand the nature of postfeminism, one must contextualize postfeminism in historical contexts. Part of the difficulty in defining postfeminism is the difficulty of defining the feminist movement. Feminism is continually evolving and has taken on many different meanings and goals since the ‘first wave.’ Therefore, a closer examination the history of feminism is necessary to understand the roots of postfeminism.

The ‘first wave’ of feminism began in the late 19th century and early 20th century, with its roots of activism being placed at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 (Sanders, 1999). The movement’s goals were primarily focused on women’s suffrage, though the movement was also associated with the temperance and abolitionist movements. In addition to women’s suffrage, first wave feminists also campaigned for modification of divorce law, women’s right to own property, employment, and education. In the United States, the first wave is generally thought to have concluded with the passing of the 19th amendment, which prohibits the denial of U.S. citizens’ right to vote based on sex (Sanders, 1999).

The second wave of feminism is thought to have its origins in the 1960s, growing out of the civil rights movement, anti-war movements, and student protest movements (Thornham, 1999). However, the second wave was far from a unified movement. One strand of the movement, which fought for equal rights, was tied to Betty Friedan and the National Organization of Women (Siegel, 2007). This group was founded after the failure of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A second thread of activists used grass-roots methods, focusing on “consciousness-raising groups.” These groups were non-hierarchical and were not

nationally organized. These consciousness-raising groups were focused on bringing to light women's oppression under the patriarchy. Some of the issues that were discussed included marriage, domesticity, child rearing, domestic violence, and sexual practices (Siegel, 2007).

Early on, factions within the movement began to split, with many individuals having different visions and goals for the movement and different tactics for accomplishing such goals (Siegel, 2007). One camp, the liberal feminists, placed more emphasis on individual transformation as a way of achieving equality of opportunity between sexes in the public sphere. A second faction, radical feminists, took a more aggressive approach to tackling the patriarchy as a political and cultural institution, rather than through personal betterment. In-fighting within these factions increased over time. However, the fighting between factions was more problematic. Due to the lack of structure and formal leadership, many feminist groups soon collapsed, and some scholars identify 1975 as the end of the organized radical feminist movement (Siegel, 2007).

Popular media portrayals of the feminist movement led to what some consider a backlash against the movement (Siegel, 2007). Although the term 'postfeminism' began to gain popularity in the 1980s, Faludi (1991) argues that the term dates back to the press in 1920s – a backlash against first wave feminism. Faludi depicted the modern postfeminism movement as a backlash against the gains of feminism in the previous two decades. Faludi believed that the media and political climate of the 1980s sought to return to a state of pre-feminism. Through the use of negative images of feminists and the feminism movement, feminism was blamed for many of women's problems in the 1980s. Feminism was thought to be the cause of the ills of women, such as becoming ugly, depressed, deteriorating the family unit, and experiencing career burnout. As a result, she posited that the media portrayed a younger generation of women who reviled the

feminism of their mothers. However, Faludi (1991) also posited that, instead of outright attacks against the feminist movement or women's rights, the media have used more covert means to assert their agenda. For example, they have glamorized neoliberal political ideals, such as individual achievement, where women can achieve their goals, especially through consumerism.

During the 1990s, the feminist movement also received harsh critique from many younger women, most of whom had come of age in a time after the second wave (i.e., who were able to reap the benefits of the feminist movement). McRobbie (2004) places the growth of postfeminist ideals as sandwiched between neo-conservative leadership (e.g., George W. Bush's administration adopting abstinence-only policies) and the liberalization of society (e.g., increasing popular support for marriage equality). Much of this critique focused on the puritan nature of the second-wave movement. Roiphe (1993) vehemently argued against the notions of sexual harassment and rape. She claimed that feminism's focus on the victimization of women was self-defeating and increasingly portrayed women as vulnerable victims. Roiphe argued that feminism had ironically returned women to the mindset of the pre-feminist era, in which they were sexually oppressed, passive, pure, and helpless victims.

In another characteristically postfeminist manner, Denfeld (1996) argued that second-wave feminism had already achieved its goal. She posited that her generation has lived under the assumption that women have achieved equal opportunity, specifically in education and sexuality. Similar to Roiphe (1993), Denfeld (1996) believed that second-wave feminism had created a mindset that women were helpless victims. Denfeld argued that second-wave feminism has casted women back to Victorian society in which women are returned to an age of sexual purity, heterosexism, and political helplessness. Due to these attitudes, Denfeld claimed that feminism had alienated too many individuals, lost credibility, and has thus become irrelevant. Under this

assumption, it seems that feminism is no longer needed as a political force. Instead, individual women have the power to make societal changes through their own personal choices (Genz & Brabon, 2009).

Wolf's (1993) criticism of second-wave feminism falls somewhere between that of Faludi (1991) and those of Roiphe (1993) and Denfield (1996). Much like Faludi (1991), Wolf (1993) criticized the media for destroying the second wave's image. However, she was also careful to hold the second wave accountable for some of its image problem. She cited the uncompromising sectors of the feminist movement as the reason the movement was not able to overcome its image problem, thereby alienating many women. Wolf's assessment of the feminist movement is that women should be able to identify their own definitions of feminism, which was found to be unacceptable to many of the hard-line sectors of the second wave. Gamble (1999) described Wolf's criticism of the second wave as seemingly reasonable, though too utopian to be of any worth. Gamble (1999) believed that Wolf has oversimplified the nature of achieving gender equality, especially for the poor or women of color.

Several authors have used a metaphor of mother-daughter generational fighting and rebellion to compare second-wave feminism with postfeminism (e.g., Levy, 2005; Genz & Brabon, 2009; Siegel, 2007; Whelehan, 2005). It seems that the 'daughters of feminism' want to claim a feminism of their own - one that incorporates diversity, sex appeal, and fun. This, in part, is due to the perception of rigidity, exclusivity, and old-fashioned viewpoints of the 'mothers of feminism.' However, many of the 'mothers' criticize postfeminism and the younger generation of feminists for forgetting the struggles of the previous generation (Genz & Brabon, 2009). In addition, many of the critics of postfeminism suggest that it has only repackaged sexism in a covert and barely recognizable form. Instead of helping to eliminate sexism, some authors argue

that the media have adopted politically neoliberal ideals (Douglas, 2010; McRobbie, 2009). Thus, by using feminist language such as ‘empowerment,’ ‘equality,’ and ‘choice,’ women believe they are making progress, whereas other authors believe these women are being oppressed on an unconscious basis (Gill, 2007).

As such, much of the extant feminist literature seems to pit feminism against postfeminism, with the underlying assumption that postfeminism is equated with anti-feminism (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Likewise, some postfeminist writers seek to separate themselves from an outdated version of feminism. Alternatively, others attempt to pit postfeminism against other discourses (e.g., postmodernism, poststructuralism). To date, very little empirical psychological research on postfeminism exists. The majority of the discourse on the phenomenon of postfeminism has taken place in feminist writings and media studies. Postfeminism has its roots in many different disciplines, with each discipline taking a unique approach to defining postfeminism. However, in order to better understand postfeminism, it seems to best to describe it contextually.

Definitions of Postfeminism

‘Postfeminism’ is a highly controversial topic within the context of feminist studies and popular media. Few scholars agree on the exact definition of the term. However, the term is often associated with a conservative backlash against second-wave feminism, poststructuralist discourses (i.e., anti-essentialist critical framework which rejects the notion of binary opposition as reality), and third-wave feminism (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Even the spelling of the term ‘postfeminism’ has been the topic of controversy (i.e., ‘post-feminism’ vs. ‘postfeminism’). Some critics argue that using the prefix ‘post’ assumes a sense of directionality to mean ‘a time after feminism.’ This can either be interpreted as meaning that feminism is no longer in

existence, either because it has completed its mission or failed, signifying a complete break from the movement (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Alternatively, it has been understood as a progression of feminism, synonymous with 'third-wave feminism.' A third interpretation of the word has posited neither a straightforward break nor a direct continuation of feminism (Gill, 2007). Some have argued against attempting to define 'postfeminism,' as it discounts the poststructural nature of the word (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Despite multiple conceptualizations of postfeminism, the current study intends to utilize a definition of postfeminism that includes backlash rhetoric as a break from second-wave feminism because it is considered no longer relevant to the lives of women. This definition, as well as characteristics of postfeminist culture, will be covered in more detail below.

Gill (2007) has delineated three ways in which postfeminism may be understood. The first is an epistemological break from feminism. Generally considered to be a break from second-wave feminism, postfeminism has been associated with many anti-foundationalist and anti-universalist movements such as poststructuralism or postmodernism (Brooks, 1997). Postfeminism in this sense, is often thought of as progression and critical engagement of feminism. This movement has occurred predominantly within academia (McRobbie, 2009). Critiques of second-wave feminism under this definition often involve criticism regarding the white and middle class focus of second-wave politics. Therefore, postfeminism in this context seeks to include the voices of women of color, sexual minorities, a variety of socioeconomic classes, as well as women in developing countries (Brooks, 1997). Postfeminism in this context is less focused on equality between the sexes and a binary conceptualization of gender and sexuality, or singular notion of the patriarchy. Rather, it seeks to turn focus towards discourses

on differences between ‘hegemonic feminism’ and ‘non-hegemonic feminist’ voices and allows for a variety of feminist solutions and tolerance of ambiguity and difference (Brooks, 1997).

Gill’s (2007) second understanding of postfeminism is considered to be a historical shift away from second-wave feminism (i.e., rather than a theoretical shift). This historical shift is sometimes termed “third-wave feminism.” This interpretation of the concept has posited neither a straightforward break nor a direct continuation of feminism. Postfeminism within this context gives an updated definition and image to feminism in order to account for a change in time, political climate, and values that have taken place within the last 3 decades. This brand of postfeminism seeks to eliminate the ‘right way’ of feminism in the second wave. Instead, it seeks to include the variety of ideals and representations of modern women, some of which seek to integrate traditional femininity with feminism (Budgeon, 2013). However, many critics chastise this brand of postfeminism as focused on individual improvement, rather than political action. By creating a narrative based on personal empowerment, individualism, and choice, one is free to ignore external and societal factors that may influence one’s success (Budgeon, 2013). However, others have sought to update feminism’s image, by making it marketable to popular culture, rather than a separatist movement (Genz & Brabon). Third-wave feminism has sought to employ a deconstructivist framework for understanding gender and sexuality (Phoca, 1999). These feminists (e.g., Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Donna Haraway) have sought to eliminate gender and sexual binaries by being inclusive of differences within gender and sexual identities. As such, multiplicity of identifications is chosen at risk of losing a sense of definition and consistency (Budgeon, 2013).

The third conceptualization of postfeminism is considered to be a backlash against the gains of the second-wave feminist movement (Gill, 2007). Postfeminism in this context is pitted

against feminism, blaming feminism for all of women's unhappiness (Faludi, 1991). In this context, postfeminism is mainly viewed as anti-feminist. Alternatively, it may mean that feminism has achieved its goals and is no longer relevant to young women. Feminism in this light is seen to symbolize politically-correct culture, says that women 'can't have it all,' and may view white men as victims. However, many authors do not depict postfeminism, in this context, as simply anti-feminism. Instead, many argue that this branch of postfeminism takes into account and incorporates many feminist principles, while simultaneously depoliticizing them (McRobbie, 2004). Some have termed this phenomenon "retro-sexism" (Whelehan, 2005) or "enlightened sexism" (Douglas, 2010). In this light, popular culture 'knows' about feminism and 'acknowledges' sexism. Therefore, it appears acceptable to revert back to traditional sexism, under the guise that it is seen as being used ironically (Douglas, 2010). The 'knowingness' of this brand of postfeminism is impenetrable to criticism because it is portrayed as being 'in on it'. That is, because feminism has been taken into account, sexist revivals prove that sexism does not exist (Gill, 2007).

Postfeminism vs. third-wave feminism. Postfeminism and third-wave feminism are often differentiated by most feminist scholars. Postfeminism is frequently viewed by scholars as a conservative backlash to second-wave feminism that is born out of popular culture (i.e., as opposed to stemming from within academia) (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Third-wave feminism is often viewed by scholars as an underground feminist movement that embraces more diverse feminist perspectives while attempting to becoming more integrated within popular culture (Siegel, 2007). The notion of third-wave feminism is a logical succession to second-wave feminism. However, most third-wave feminists distinguish themselves from second-wave feminists because they came to age in an era when feminism already existed. Third-wave

feminists tend to embrace postmodernism, individualism, and the usefulness of embracing popular culture (Genz & Brabon, 2009). However, unlike their postfeminist sisters, third-wave feminist do not disown the second-wave ideals and they still attempt to maintain a political agenda. On the contrary, many scholars view postfeminism as a movement completely born out of multiple avenues, such as popular media, academia, and consumerist culture (Genz, 2006). Additionally, many scholars view postfeminism as apolitical and a break from second-wave politics (Genz & Brabon, 2009).

Although little empirical research has been conducted to define characteristics of the postfeminist era, Hall and Rodriguez (2003) conducted an informal content analysis of popular and academic media in order to identify postfeminist claims. The authors identified a primary claim that support for the women's movement has decreased over the last several decades. Three auxiliary claims also emerged. A second defining feature of postfeminism is considered to be "anti-feminist backlash." The authors found the third claim to be that feminism is no longer considered to be relevant to in the lives of women. Finally, Hall and Rodriguez identified the fourth characteristic of postfeminist to be a "no, but..." version of feminism in which women fail to self-identify as feminist despite endorsing beliefs typically associated with feminism.

The current study will focus on postfeminism as a form of backlash against previous eras of feminism and an era in which feminism is no longer relevant to women because it is either outdated or has achieved its goal. In addition to this definition and characteristics proposed by Hall and Rodriguez (2003), Gill (2007) discussed a postfeminist 'sensibility,' in which she delineates several themes of postfeminist media culture, which touches upon the topics of gender-role orientation, individualism/neo-liberal values, and sexualization. The psychological implications of these trends will also be discussed.

Postfeminist Gender-Role Orientation

Gill (2007) outlined several characteristics of postfeminist sensibility that involve gender-role identity and conceptualizations of femininity and masculinity. It appears that there has been a resurgence of traditional (i.e., pre-feminist) gender-roles on the basis of individual choice, rather than societal expectations. Social construction theory offers a perspective in which femininity is determined by cultural scripts. Accordingly, the social construction of femininity and masculinity include ways in which women and men organize their behavior according to societal values in order to determine the appropriate behavior, practices, and expression of needs.

Emphasis of femininity as a bodily property. The first postfeminist theme is an obsessive preoccupation with the body and physical appearance. Gill (2007) argued that femininity as embodied in physical appearance, rather than a social or psychological construct, is now central to the conceptualization of femininity. In previous eras, femininity often embodied nurturance, passivity, emotionality, or maternal characteristics. While this conceptualization of femininity may still be central to some women's identity, many authors argue that the importance of physical appearance has overtaken other characteristics of femininity (Gill, 2007; Douglas, 2010). Since the second-wave movement, these authors have argued that women are less likely to exhibit these passive feminine personality traits, so they now must embody feminine qualities in their physical appearance (Douglas, 2010). It is more socially acceptable to exhibit some masculine personality traits (e.g., independence, leadership skills, dominance) as long as women maintain a feminine and attractive physical appearance (Douglas, 2010; Levy, 2005).

This emphasis on physical appearance can be evidenced by the success and prevalence of the beauty industry, constant bombardment of the advertising of beauty products to women, and

the constant monitoring of celebrities' appearance. There has been a sharp increase in the wedding industry, maternity consumerism, and the growing fashion and beauty industry in the last two decades (Tyler, 2013). Tyler (2013) noted that representations of pregnancy have changed dramatically during this timeframe. Rather than focusing on maternal aspects of motherhood, recent representations seem to increasingly concentrate on sexualized images. Pregnant women are called upon to monitor their figure in order to remain physically attractive. In addition, women are expected to regain their pre-pregnancy bodies quickly after giving birth (Tyler, 2013). The beauty industry has increasingly pushed solutions for women to 'beat the clock' and defy aging through cosmetics and plastic surgery (Negra, 2009). McRobbie (2009) argued that this trend is based on efforts to re-secure femininity in a time of growing female independence and less reliance on men.

Different methodological approaches have been used to conceptualize the notions of masculinity and femininity. For example, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (1974), often considered the gold standard in gender-role inventories, conceptualizes masculinity-femininity as a unifactorial and bipolar approach. However, Bem (1981) indicated that sex-typed men and women tend to follow gender schemas in which they follow social expectations for their behaviors and hold more traditional gender ideologies. The Bem Sex Role Inventory has been retested for concurrent validity (Holt & Ellis, 1998). Holt and Ellis (1998) found that all but two adjectives were validated. However, the magnitude of the differences in desirability has decreased, indicating that there is some movement away from traditional gender-roles (e.g., "act as a leader" also seen as desirable for women) (Holt & Ellis, 1998).

Alternatively, Twenge (1999) found support for a multifactorial approach to gender-role organization. For women, these feminine attributes included appearance, leisure activities,

personality traits, and beliefs about appropriate domestic roles (Twenge, 1999). Collins (2004) identified five elements of dominant femininity: beauty ideals, feminine traits, heterosexual performance (e.g., marriage and motherhood), sexual restraint, and White race. In developing a scale on adolescent femininity, Tolman and Porche (2000) found two negative aspects of feminine ideology. One negative aspect of feminine ideology was that adolescent girls began to lose the ability to stand up for their authentic thoughts and feelings, in order to avoid conflict and maintain relationships. The second negative aspect of femininity was to constantly monitor and objectify their physical bodies, rather than having an authentic connection to what their bodies feel and experience. Tolman, Impett, Tracy, and Michael (2006) found that body objectification, and to a lesser extent inauthentic relationships, accounted for approximately 50% of the variance in depression and poor self-esteem in adolescent females.

Many feminist scholars contend that feminism has made progress in changing women's viewpoints on femininity. Feminism has been purported to advocate for women's freedom to break from traditional gender-roles in relation to both personality traits and physical appearance. Rubin, Nemeroff, and Russo (2004) used qualitative data to study body consciousness in self-identified feminist women. They found that feminists, like other women, have difficulty renouncing the beauty ideal. However, feminism provided women with some strategies to resist cultural beauty practices. Women in the study were able to use cognitive strategies in order to resist the notion that women's worth is determined by their physical appearance. However, women often discussed feeling guilty or ashamed for participating in conventional beauty practices in spite of their feminist ideology. Likewise, Riley and Schraff (2012) analyzed the 'feminism vs. femininity' dilemma and found that most women were ambivalent, yet engaged in conventional beauty practices in a cooperative inquiry study. The participants seem to agree that

femininity was achieved through participating in conventional beauty practices. This sentiment provides evidence for Gill's (2007) notion that femininity is increasingly embodied through physical appearance.

Many authors have argued that women are told through media messages that their worth is determined by their physical appearance (Douglas, 2010; Gill, 2007; Levy, 2005). However, Stuart and Donaghue (2011) found that women engaged in beauty practices primarily as a way of avoiding judgment from other women, rather than emphasizing femininity as a primary reason. These studies indicated that many women engage in these practices as a 'choice' (Riley & Schraff, 2012; Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2007).

Cole and Zucker (2007) measured differences in feminine ideology between White and Black women. The study found that three factors of femininity prevailed (i.e., appearance, personality traits, traditional ideology) for both races. Appearance was significantly related to traits and traditional ideology, although traits and ideology were not related to each other. Black women rated themselves higher on feminine appearance, whereas both racial groups had similar ratings of traits. This suggests that Black women are more interested in traditionally feminine dress and behaviors, yet they were more likely to describe themselves as feminists. Both groups had low scores on traditional ideology, indicating that the rejection of traditional gender-role beliefs may be a common phenomenon. Twenge (1999) also found few correlations between feminist ideology and gender-related attributes for women. This indicates that there is not much difference between gender-stereotyped behaviors for women with feminist attitudes and traditional women. However, it is important to note that Twenge (1999) measured feminist attitudes, rather than feminist self-definitions.

Toler, Suter, and Trautman (2004) analyzed the relationships among gender-role identity,

support for feminism, and feminist self-identification. Results of this study indicated that feminist (i.e., non-traditional) gender-role attitudes were associated with highly masculine women. The authors speculate that negative stereotypes of feminists (e.g., feminists are aggressive and domineering) may prevent feminine women from identifying as feminists.

Some postfeminist movements, such as the “Girl Power” movement propagated by the pop music group the Spice Girls, attempt to reclaim feminine qualities as powerful and empowering (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Under this form of thinking, women are encouraged to use their traditional feminine qualities to advance their status. By creating new meanings for old symbols, these women hope to subvert old notions of femininity. This might include using physical appearance and sexual prowess to get ahead (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Erchull and Liss (2013) found that self-identified feminist women who enjoyed sexualization reported that they perceived the world as unjust, though reported receiving fair treatment themselves. The authors indicated that these women may be receiving benefits from conforming to the beauty standard (Erchull & Liss, 2013). Stuart and Donaghue (2011) found that many women participated in beauty rituals as a method of gaining status among other women and increasing self-confidence. Other qualitative studies show that many women experience pleasure or power from behaviors associated with femininity, particularly those associated with appearance. Nowatzki and Morry (2009) found that strict adherence to a feminine gender-role is associated with acceptance of sexualizing behavior and participation in self-sexualizing behaviors. These studies indicate that many women have difficulty renouncing the beauty ideal because women gain power and status through accommodating them (Collins, 2004; Riley & Schraff, 2012; Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004).

The reassertion of sexual difference. Second-wave feminism sought to eliminate the importance and necessity of traditional gender-roles. However, the postfeminist climate has reverted to celebrating the differences between men and women. Within the postfeminist media landscape, traditional gender-roles are seemingly glamorized or sexualized. With neoliberal underpinnings and using the notion that gender equality has already been achieved, women are now free to choose to revert back to traditional gender-roles. Rather than gender-roles being enforced, they are now celebrated, and thus encouraged (Negra, 2009). McRobbie (2009) termed this cultural phenomenon the ‘dismantling of feminism’ (p. 13). McRobbie stated that feminism is dismantled in popular culture because it is assumed to be common sense, and therefore is no longer necessary. Rather than reverting back to pre-feminism, by taking feminism into account, “girls can be girls again” (McRobbie, 2009, p. 8). Some authors have speculated that type of ‘girlish’ behavior (e.g., acting ditzy, ending statements with a question) seems to make women appear less threatening than women who choose to fully assert themselves (McRobbie, 2009). Popular culture seems to celebrate the end of the era of self-censoring. However, Gill (2007) argued that the representation of gender differences in the media has tended to favor existing gender inequalities because they are seen as being inevitable or even desirable.

Ringrose (2013) qualitatively studied social media networks of teenage girls in the United Kingdom. She noted the ‘pornification’ (i.e., the growing acceptance and popularity of sexual themes and imagery) of many social network profiles. In addition, she commented on the traditional heterosexual gender-roles adopted by these girls. Ringrose (2013) highlighted the girls’ focus on pleasing and servicing men, placing no focus on their own sexual desires. Negra (2009) analyzed the phenomenon of ‘retreatism’ in which working women opt to leave work or life in the city and return home to regain their traditional role as mothers or return to their small

towns. These romanticized media images often portray retreatism as a pathway to recovering the self. The domestic sphere can then be considered a safe haven for women who are struggling with the difficulties of full time work (Genz & Brabon, 2009). Likewise, reality TV shows often reinforce gender stereotypes (e.g., women are catty, airheads, preoccupied with drama), which in turn, influences the way culture views women (Douglas, 2010).

In order to become successful in a male-dominated world, Levy (2005) believes that women have limited options. Levy drew a parallel between these options and that of “Uncle Tomming,” in the sense that conforming to the perceptions of the dominant group (i.e., men) can help one get ahead. In this case, women can get ahead by conforming to the male conception of what women should look like and how they should behave. Alternatively, women can also adopt the behavior of men by treating other women like men would treat them. However, in order for these concepts to be viable, it is necessary for there to be a distinct concept of “maleness” and “femaleness.”

These trends have been predominantly supported by sociological data. Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (2011) analyzed changes in gender attitudes over the past three decades. Two distinct phases of gender attitudes emerged from their analysis. The first phase included a steady liberalization that halted in the mid-1990s. The analysis also revealed a second phase that began in the 2000s, though of a lesser magnitude of change than in preceding decades. The study attributed the change in the first phase to cohort effects, in which younger cohorts tend to be more educated and more liberal on social issues. However, the authors had difficulty explaining period effects, especially the halt of liberalization in the mid-90s, given that the changes seem to be specific to gender attitudes, and not American ideology in general. The authors speculated that feminist backlash was a likely contributor to this change in gender attitudes. Lendon and

Silverstein (2012) found an increase in gender-role egalitarianism for baby boomers from the 1970s until 1985, at which time the attitudes stabilized. The authors also attribute this stall in gender-role egalitarianism to changes in cultural values during this time.

Feminism and antifeminism. Many theorists have noted that a defining characteristic of postfeminist sensibility has been that it takes into account many of the achievements of the feminist movement (McRobbie, 2009). For example, rape, domestic violence, and eating disorders are critiqued in many forums. Powerful and educated female characters are portrayed across many popular TV shows. However, postfeminism is also notable for depoliticizing many of these issues. Women risk being ostracized if they threaten the current political climate, and therefore many important issues remain depoliticized. Studies have shown that women who identified as feminists are more likely to believe in collective action and be more politically involved than women who have feminist-leaning beliefs but do not identify as a feminist (Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, & Crawford, 2001).

Feminist values seem to be depicted alongside antifeminist values. For example, despite the increase in strong female characters in the media, these women are also obliged to uphold the narrow definition of the beauty ideal and seem to gain more value from heterosexual love interests (Douglas, 2010). Negra (2009) highlighted how feminism is often portrayed as the culprit for causing women's problems despite portrayals of women in powerful roles. Many media images show that women cannot 'have-it-all' and must retreat home, instead of raising criticism on the institutional factors that prevent women from comfortably working and raising a family (Douglas, 2010). Likewise, women seem to be caught between contradicting forces of wanting to be successful in school, careers, and family and keeping up with the beauty ideal and being envied by men and women alike (Douglas, 2010). Rudman and Fairchild (2007) measured

stereotypes towards feminism in terms of beauty attitudes and heterosexual relationships. The results indicated that participants perceived beauty to be at odds with feminism. Based on self-ratings, women who rated themselves as more physically attractive were less likely to hold feminist beliefs. Participants consistently perceived conflict between feminist beliefs and romantic relationships. This indicates that both men and women perceive feminism as at odds with physical attractiveness, heterosexual sexual harmony, and romance.

Jackson, Vares, and Gill (2012) used focus groups composed of adolescent girls to analyze how these girls navigate the postfeminist landscape of consumerism, fashion, agency, and beauty. The authors described the ‘push and pull’ between messages regarding femininity as embodied by passivity and purity but simultaneously savvy and agentic. Burkett and Hamilton (2012) echoed the same concerns in which women are empowered and in charge of their sexuality yet forced to accept the terms of heteronormative sexual contracts. The authors indicated that participants often blamed themselves for their experiences of sexual assault due to the current postfeminist climate that emphasizes empowerment and choice. The authors speculated that this postfeminist climate lacks critique of social or institutional forces that may be necessary to change the prevalence of sexual assault.

Individualism, Choice, and Empowerment

Empowerment and choice were central themes in second-wave feminism. However, within a postfeminist sensibility, these themes have been repurposed with an underlying force of individualism and consumerism (Gill, 2007). McRobbie (2009) referred to the disarticulation of feminism in which women are discouraged from coming-together, partly based on the assumption that there is no longer a need for political movement. This disarticulation is often fueled by backlash rhetoric (e.g., see Faludi, 1991), which portrays feminists in a negative light

(e.g., man-hating, angry). McRobbie (2009) also attributed this disarticulation to the rise of neoliberal politics in which social-welfare programs were attacked in favor of political agendas favoring individualism and merit. Neoliberalism can be broadly defined as political and economic ideals that are characterized by privatization, deregulation, and withdrawal of state sponsored programs (Gill & Schraff, 2013). Political topics are rarely touched upon in the postfeminist media. Instead, much attention is focused on self-improvement through personal choices (Gill, 2007). In order for this type of discourse to exist, it must be assumed that women are autonomous agents who are no longer inhibited by the institutional forces of sexism or gender inequality. This assumption also exists due to the notion that women are no longer subservient to men. Instead, they are free to please themselves. For example, makeovers are designed to help women achieve their fullest beauty potential (Lazar, 2013). Women now are afforded the 'right' to be beautiful (Lazar, 2013) and can use their newfound economic power to help themselves achieve this beauty ideal. However, the beauty ideal remains firm and seemingly identical to the male-desired representation of femininity (e.g., slim, white, hairless body, large chest).

Rich (2005) highlighted the complex structure of women's gender dynamics by analyzing the life history of 10 female graduate students. She found that these women generally viewed gender equality as no longer an obstacle in their lives, yet still managed to be constrained by these structured gender dynamics. Rich (2005) argued that individualist discourses have transformed societal problems into individual problems and choices, rather than cultural or societal problems.

Similarly, Jacques and Radkte (2012) conducted a discourse analysis of undergraduate women in order to analyze these women's identity constructions related to how they viewed their

future. The study found that discourse was primarily focused on balancing career with motherhood. Women in this study endorsed personal agency and the freedom to choose their own paths. Most women also endorsed traditional mothering roles (i.e., intensive mothering). The study found that it was acceptable to adopt traditional gender-roles as long as it was a choice. The authors framed these women as positioned in a double-bind situation in which women identify as having personal agency with which to navigate societal pressures. However, by placing the burden on the individual, societal and cultural constraints are ignored. Similar results have been found in a qualitative analysis of sexual assault survivors. Women in this study endorsed feelings of self-blame due to the message that they should have enough sexual agency to prevent their sexual assaults (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012).

Some authors have identified categories of women who appear to have some similar beliefs to feminists, yet decline to self-identify as being a feminist. These ‘non-labelers’ are often found to place more emphasis on individualism and merit than self-identified feminists. Zucker and Bay-Cheng (2010) found that non-labelers were almost indistinguishable from nonfeminists on measures of views and values. Using cluster analysis, Fitz, Zucker, and Bay-Cheng (2012) found that neoliberals might compose a separate group from feminists and nonfeminists. The study found that while neoliberal individuals may hold some similar values to feminists, they tend to score higher on measures of meritocratic and individual values.

Self-surveillance and discipline. Much media attention has focused on women’s constant need for self-improvement via self-monitoring and self-discipline (e.g., makeover television shows, beauty industry marketing campaigns). For example, the beauty industry illustrates the potential for profiting from women’s self-improvement. Wolf (1991) has argued that the fashion and beauty industries have exploited women by creating an unattainable beauty

ideal and profiting off of women's quests to achieve this ideal. Self-monitoring of women's femininity is not a new phenomenon. However, this self-monitoring is distinctively different than the requirements of a previous era. Postfeminist self-monitoring is now thought to be a choice for women to engage in (i.e., they are thought to be 'doing it for themselves'), rather than complying with a standard imposed by men (Levy, 2005; McRobbie, 2009). As such, there seems to be little acceptance of those who do not abide by media standards of beauty despite discussions of empowerment and choice (Negra, 2009).

Several researchers describe other differences of this modern phenomenon in the intensity of the self-regulation, the breadth of what should be monitored, and the inclusion of psychological variables (i.e., self-help culture). For example, Tyler (2013) drew attention to the necessity for pregnant women to monitor their weight during pregnancy and after giving birth. Closely related is what Gill (2007) deems the "makeover paradigm." There has been a notable proliferation in reality TV-shows focusing on makeovers. These shows range from house remodeling/redecorating, to relationship advice, to wardrobe makeovers, to plastic surgery, at the most extreme. In addition, many magazines articles and talk shows are dedicated to similar topics, in which women are called to monitor and transform their bodies, appearances, and even personalities and self-esteem (Press, 2013). These types of media drive home the message that people (though most are targeted at women) are inherently flawed and must participate in some form of transformation, mainly through use of consumer goods. Negra (2009) examined temporal anxiety in which women are pressured to monitor their time. Media images are filled with suggestions of how women can stay organized and manage their time. In postfeminist culture, Negra (2009) maintains that women are constantly forced to race the clock, encouraged

to reach sexual maturity, be married, achieve motherhood, and maintain a youthful appearance, while men do not face these same pressures.

Sexualization of Culture

The third broad category of postfeminist sensibility has to do with the sexualization of culture. Extant literature has exposed the sexualization of culture in which themes of sexual imagery are now predominantly displayed. For example, Gill (2007) has asserted that women have now shifted from being sexual objects to desiring sexual subjects.

According to the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2010), sexualization is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Sexualization occurs when: (a) “A person’s value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics”; (b) “A person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (narrowly defined) with being sexy”; (c) “A person is sexually objectified—that is, made into a thing for others’ sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making”; or (d) “sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person” (p. 1). Each of these actions should be viewed on a continuum, though only one criterion is necessary to be indicative of sexualization.

The Task Force report indicated that women and girls are more likely than men and boys to be objectified and sexualized. The report points to numerous avenues through which sexualization occurs. Media outlets have often been blamed for sexualization. The Task Force cited numerous media outlets for promoting sexualization, including television, music, magazines, sports media, and the beauty industry. However, the report also mentions several other avenues through which sexualization may occur. For example, interpersonal relationships have been found to be a contributing factor to the sexualization of girls. The study found that girls’ relationships with family members, peers, and other adults (e.g., teachers, coaches)

contribute to gender schemas that support sexualization. In addition, sexual evaluation from peers is a normative experience for women in school and the workplace. The Task Force also mentions intrapsychic contributions to sexualization. Some argue that girls choose to sexually-objectify themselves. Self-objectification occurs when one internalizes the observer's view and begins to treat themselves as the observer would treat them.

Several authors have commented on the increase of sexual imagery throughout our culture in recent decades (Douglas, 2010; Levy, 2005; Harvey & Gill, 2013). According to Attwood (2006), the sexualization of culture can refer to an increasing "preoccupation with sexual values, practices and identities; the emergence of new forms of sexual experience; and the apparent breakdown of socially unacceptable rules, categories and regulations designed to keep the obscene at bay" (p. 78). The sexualization of culture can be seen in the pornographic presentation of women in public spaces. Though sexual images of men also exist, women have been especially targeted and at increasingly younger ages. The sexualization of women and girls can be seen in many sexualized advertisements representing women in girlish outfits (e.g., hair in pigtails, school girl uniforms) in sexual poses or marketing thong underwear to pre-teen girls. The increase in popularity of fitness pole dancing classes and Brazilian waxes is also emblematic of the increasing popularity and acceptance of porno-chic culture. Using a postfeminist sensibility, these sexualized representations and themes are usually viewed under the semblance of sexual liberation and empowerment (Douglas, 2010).

However, cultural representations of sexualization are marketed differently to men and women. Gill (2007) commented on the presentation of sexual responsibility to men, via men's magazines, as youthful, fun, and hedonistic. However, women's magazines often portray sexuality as in need of constant monitoring and improvement. It is necessary for women to

present themselves as 'sexy' and 'hot' while simultaneously monitoring their sexual reputations. Levy (2005) notes the necessity for professional women to have sex appeal. For example, Levy observed the phenomenon of female Olympians often posing provocatively in men's magazines, television journalist needing to have a sexy appearance, whereas there is not the equivalent requirement for male athletes, entertainers, or journalists. Some authors have commented on the increasing nature of sexuality as a transfer of power, rather than an act of pleasure or intimacy (Levy, 2005).

Smolak, Murnen, and Myer (2014) analyzed sexualized beauty practices in both college-aged men and women. Focus groups revealed that women tend to engage in transformative behaviors (e.g., wearing low-cut and tight clothing, special hairstyles, special underwear, body hair removal) from their everyday behaviors when attempting to look 'sexy' for the opposite sex. In essence, the authors contend that women base their attractiveness on appearance (i.e., objects). Contrary to this, men were more likely to engage in sexualization primarily through agentic behaviors (e.g., appearing confident).

From sex object to desiring sexual subject. While the sexualized representation of women is not a new phenomenon, the perspective of the sexualization has been shown to change within the context of postfeminism. Gill (2008) argues that the portrayal of women has switched from passive object to active agents of their sexuality. In this sense, women are depicted as being as sexually liberated, desiring, and aggressive as their male counterparts. They often adopt the freedom of sexuality that has traditionally only been afforded by men. Gill (2008) highlighted some positive aspects of this shift in sexual subjectivity. Women's sexual agency appears to be celebrated, rather than punished. In addition, portrayals of lesbian women have become more acceptable, though some argue that these women must conform to feminine standards to achieve

acceptance. However, Gill argued that women's sexual agency is not silenced, but still constructed in very specific ways. As such, it becomes a method through which women must govern themselves.

Halliwell, Malson, and Tischner (2011) conducted an experimental study of Gill's (2008) model of women as desiring sex subjects. In this study, women were assigned to view different types of print advertisements (i.e., sexually passive, sexually agentic, and control). Both sexually passive representations and sexually agentic images were associated with higher weight dissatisfaction, compared to the control group. Women who viewed advertisements framed as agentic sexual subjects reported higher self-objectification than those who viewed the control of passive advertisements. The authors believe that this provides evidence for Gill's (2008) supposition that change in sexual subjectivity encourages internalized self-policing. The authors also indicated that sexually agentic advertisements may be more damaging to women, as they were associated with higher weight dissatisfaction and self-objectification.

Women who embody this notion of postfeminism use their physical appearance and sexuality to empower themselves (Genz & Brabon, 2009). They tend to break themselves from the 'prudish,' 'anti-sex,' and 'political-correctness' of the second wave movement. This distinction allows for women to be the agents of their own objectification, as there is no critique of masculine hegemony (McRobbie, 2009). That is, women freely choose to objectify themselves (Gill, 2007). Women are seemingly choosing to live lifestyles that resemble the porno-chic culture, as exemplified by women who flash their chests for "Girls Gone Wild," emulate Playboy models, or those who take part in fitness pole dancing (Levy, 2005). Harvey and Gill (2013) noted that postfeminist culture has opened access to a larger variety of sexual practices and more information on sexual health and satisfaction. As a result, women must be

always 'up for it' and take part in sexual consumerism (e.g., lingerie, spa treatments). Women who do not buy into this mold of sexuality are castigated for being 'prude' and 'anti-sex' (Harvey & Gill, 2013). However, in a study of women who produce alternative pornography, Attwood (2013) noted how cultural and technological shifts have given rise to the presentation of new forms of feminine sexualities. Attwood argued that these new forms of feminine sexuality allow women to express themselves within their own definitions. However, in mainstream media, some authors have noted that this new form of sexual liberation is based on male sexual desires and places little emphasis on female desires (Douglas, 2010; Levy, 2005). As a result, women are acquiescing to male desires and reinforcing the principle that women are worthless without male attention (Douglas, 2010).

Regehr (2012) conducted a qualitative study designed to analyze the experiences of women who participated in a reality TV show on gaining empowerment through sexualized (i.e., burlesque) dancing. Using Ozer and Bandura's model of self-efficacy (1990; as cited by Regehr, 2012), the study found that all participants believed they achieved some form of self-efficacy as a result of participating in burlesque dance. The participants achieved mastery through learning a new skill (i.e., burlesque). They also accomplished social persuasion by deriving success from group membership. Finally, the participants also experienced changes in emotional state, especially in the finale. Though the women who participated in this TV show believed they were empowered, some argue that their experiences only promote self-objectification.

Yost and McCarthy (2012) examined the phenomenon of heterosexual women engaging in same-sex sexual behavior at college parties. Women in this study engaged in same-sex sexual behavior (e.g., kissing women) at college parties, usually in front of an audience. The study found that while a minority of participants felt empowered by these sexual experiences, the

majority of participants felt sexually objectified. Some women likely felt empowered by having positive reactions from audience members. However, the authors comment that, while they are demonstrating sexual agency, they are drawing upon objectifying images commonly found in the media.

Liss, Erchull, and Ramsey (2011) analyzed the relationship between enjoyment of self-sexualization and other variables. The study found that higher enjoyment of self-sexualization was related to hostile and benevolent sexism, conservative attitudes, and traditional feminine norms (i.e., the importance of romantic relationships, valuing thinness, and investing in appearance).

Sexualization and psychological consequences. Many studies have shown negative consequences of sexualization as it relates to cognitive functioning, body image, sexuality, and other psychological consequences (American Psychological Association, 2010). According to the APA Task Force on Sexualization (American Psychological Association, 2010), at least 38 experiments, 32 surveys, and 2 interview studies have been conducted on exposure to sexualized media and body dissatisfaction, most have which found significant results.

Some studies have shown attention to physical appearance draws on cognitive resources that could be used for other activities (Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, & Twenge, 1998). In this study, male and female students were asked to try on sweaters or swim suits, completing a math test while they waited. The results found that women who tried on the swimsuit performed significantly lower on the math test. There were no differences found in male participants. The authors contend that self-objectification expends mental energy. Furthermore, sexualization and self-objectification have also been found to increase body image dissatisfaction and increased levels of shame (Fredrickson et al., 1998). Women who tried on swimsuits were more likely to

use negative words to describe their bodies, compared to those who tried on sweaters. In this study, the authors found that body shame also predicted restrained eating.

Self-objectification, one aspect of sexualization, has been shown to have deleterious psychological effects. Breines, Crocker, and Garcia (2008) attempted to analyze the effects of self-objectification on psychological well-being in young women. The study found that increases in self-objectification predicted decreased psychological well-being (i.e., decreased sense of feeling alive and being present in the moment), increased levels of involvement in appearance, and increased feelings of both attractiveness and unattractiveness. More specifically, women who base their self-esteem on their appearance appeared to experience greater self-esteem with increased levels of self-objectification. Women with lower trait self-esteem experienced a decrease in well-being with more self-objectification. Women's sense of self-agency and anxiety were not significantly related to self-objectification. Liss, Erchull, and Ramsey (2011) studied the moderating role of enjoyment of sexualization in the relationship between self-objectification and psychological outcomes. The study failed to find significant moderating effects of enjoyment of sexualization in the relationship of self-objectification and depression and self-esteem. The enjoyment of sexualization was not significantly associated with depression or self-esteem.

In analyzing motivations for cosmetic surgery, Calogero, Pina, Park, and Rahemtulla (2010) found that self-surveillance uniquely predicted intrapersonal reasons (i.e., the use of cosmetic surgery to improve self-image and manage feelings of inadequacy), even when controlling for general concerns of self-esteem, sexual objectification experiences, and body shame.

Erchull and Liss (2013) investigated the relationship between the enjoyment of sexualization (i.e., sexualized male attention) and attitudes related to feminism, (i.e., the

recognition of gender inequality, need for social change) among a group of young, heterosexual, self-identified feminist women. The results of the study indicated that feminist women reported significantly lower levels of enjoyment of sexualization compared to a previous study of a general population (i.e., Liss, 2011). Among self-identified feminists, enjoying sexualization was related to traditional gender-role attitudes and acceptance of the gender status quo. This finding indicates that these women were more likely to view the current gender system as fair and were more unaware of gender inequality in general. However, enjoyment of sexualization was not associated with belief in collectivity (i.e., belief in the need for women to work together to achieve goals). The authors found some paradoxical findings in this study. For instance, they observed that feminist women who enjoy sexualization feel empowered and believe that other women should feel empowered. On the other hand, they tend to hold more traditional beliefs about women and believe that they have been treated fairly. It appears that these women feel empowered by sexualization. Nowatzki and Morry (2009) found similar results in their study. Their results indicated that women who hold more traditional gender-roles (e.g., hyperfeminine women) are more likely to engage in self-sexualization (e.g., take pole dancing classes, participate in wet t-shirt contests) and accept the sexualization of culture. In this study, neither benevolent sexism nor hostile sexism predicted with acceptance of sexualization.

A qualitative study of sexual assault survivors highlighted the consequences of women's sexual empowerment yet pressure to conform to heterosexual norms (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012). In particular, women in this study felt that the societal message of promoting their sexual agency should have allowed them to prevent their sexual assaults, therefore producing a sense of self-blame.

Feminist Identity Development

Given the controversy surrounding women's choice to self-identify as a feminist, it is important to discuss the development of feminist identity and personological factors associated with feminist self-identification and feminist attitudes.

Downing and Roush (1985) devised a model of feminist identity development that was initially created to help clinicians assist women struggling with issues related to feminist identity. The model was based on Cross's (1971) work on Black identity development. The first stage, Passive Acceptance, describes a woman who is either unaware or in denial of the prejudices and disadvantages of being a woman. Individuals in this stage tend to avoid situations that may challenge these beliefs, and instead buy into the cultural and institutional norms of patriarchal society. Towards the end of this stage, women tend to develop openness to change and alternative ideas. In the second stage of feminist identity development, Revelation, a woman begins to question societal oppression of women. The revelation stage is usually brought on by a significant life event or slow series of events that causes women to change their perceptions. During this phase, a woman might feel anger towards men and guilt for participating in a system that objectifies women. The third stage of development, Embeddedness-Emanation, is characterized by women feeling connected with other feminist women, who are able to support her new identity. Women in this stage attempt to embrace 'sisterhood' and may feel the need to withdraw from traditionally patriarchal society due to anger. However, it may be difficult for women to navigate this stage, as it is hard to separate oneself from men. In the fourth stage, Synthesis, women are able to integrate their experiences of being a woman to form a positive self-identity. As such, they are able to transcend traditional gender-roles and to engage men on an individual level, rather than making generalizations. Women in this stage are able to channel

their anger towards positive goals. This leads to the final stage, Active Commitment, in which women take their newly formed identity to create meaningful change in society. Although this model is meant to follow a trajectory, it is possible for women to remain at one stage or revert back to previous stages throughout their lifetime. Hyde (2002) asserts that Downing and Roush's model should be considered a dimensional model rather than a stage model.

However, Downing and Roush's (1985) model has been criticized in recent years. Several authors have criticized the available psychological measures of this feminist identity model (e.g., Hansen, 2002; Liss & Erchull, 2010; Moradi & Subich, 2002a). One scale to measure this model was the Feminist Identity Development Scale (FIDS), which looked at each stage separately (Bargad & Hyde, 1991). Alternatively, the Feminist Identity Scale (FIS) combined Synthesis and Active Commitment dimensions (Rickard, 1989). The Feminist Identity Composite (FIC) was developed to address the psychometric concerns of poor reliability found within some subscales of these scales (Liss & Erchull, 2010). The FIC was developed by combining the most reliable items from the subscales of the FIDS and FIS (Fisher Tokar, Mergl, Good, Hill, & Blum, 2000).

In general, however, Downing and Roush's (1985) model has been empirically supported (Moradi & Subich, 2002), although many studies have found significant variance in their findings. Fischer and Good (1994) found that Passive Acceptance was correlated with lower egalitarian gender-role beliefs. Women with higher scores on Revelation and Embeddedness-Emanation also reported a more negative perception of women on campus (i.e., differential treatment of men and women). Another line of criticism may be that this model of feminist identity is losing relevance in the 21st century due to the fact it was created based on the experiences of second-wave feminists (Erchull, Liss, Wilson, Bateman, Peterson, & Sanchez,

2009). As previously discussed, newer generations of women have come to age after the second-wave feminist movement, and have thus reaped the benefits of the movement. This means younger women have access to more opportunities and less stringent gender-roles by which to abide. As such, several studies have attempted to assess the empirical validity of Downing and Roush's (1985) model.

Erchull, Liss, Wilson, Bateman, Peterson, and Sanchez (2009) analyzed the relevance of Downing and Roush's (1985) model by comparing an older cohort of feminists to a younger generation. The authors found that the Passive Acceptance was characterized by younger and nonfeminist identified women. Revelation was not significantly correlated with age or feminist identification. Feminists had a higher score on Embeddedness-Emanation regardless of age. In terms of Active Commitment, older women and feminists received higher scores, though there was no interaction effects between age and feminist identification. Therefore, the authors found some support for the Downing and Roush (1985) model, given the age effects and some stages (i.e., Revelation, Embeddedness-Emanation, and Active Commitment) relation to women's status as self-identified feminists. However, it appears that most women, regardless of feminist identification, appear to hold values similar to that of the Synthesis stage (i.e., believe they are strong, independent, and carry an integrated identity). The authors also failed to find significant differences in prior stage experiences between feminist identified women and nonfeminists in the synthesis stage. The authors speculate that younger generations of women may begin in the synthesis stage. These results were supported by Liss and Erchull (2010), who did not find significant differences between self-identified feminist and nonfeminists on Synthesis scores. However, upon further analysis of women who scored high on Synthesis, the authors found some contradictory results. The authors speculate that these women are independent and empowered,

but unaware of social justice issues and accepting of traditional gender-roles. This speculation seems to be congruent with women who abide by postfeminist culture. Some studies have found that feminist identity is strongest in the Embeddedness/Emanation stage (Henderson-King & Stewart, 1997). In this study, Passive Acceptance correlated negatively with the other scales and positively with positive feelings about men, negative feelings towards feminists, and less endorsement of feminist attitudes. Other studies have found that Passive Acceptance is negatively correlated with involvement in women's organizations, and positively correlated with identity foreclosure (Fischer et al., 2000). Embeddedness-Emanation, Synthesis, and Active-Commitment were negatively associated with identity foreclosure and positively associated with identity achievement.

Feminist identity has also been conceptualized using social identity theory. Under this framework, part of the individual's identity is composed of perceived knowledge and values of one's membership within a social group (Tajfel, 1982). Gurin (1985) outlined four characteristics of group consciousness in women. In the first component, collective orientation, women feel subordinated and call for change in the second component (i.e. discontent). In the third component, legitimacy of disparities, the group disparities are considered unfair. During the fourth component, identification, they may become more aware of gender inequality as an institutional and systemic problem, rather than view problems as an individual issue.

Another line of inquiry has accounted for the diversity within feminist beliefs (Henley, Meng, O'Brien, McCarthy, & Sockloskie, 1998). These authors created a measure designed to assess various approaches to feminism. Conservatives are inclined to keep the gender arrangements as they are (i.e., women in private realms and men in positions of power), usually based on biological justifications or religious views. Liberal feminists believe in equality

between men and women, which they believe should be protected by law. Activism and education is the primary method in which this might be achieved. Radical feminists assert that oppression of women is the fundamental type of oppression. Men are viewed as the oppressors of women, rather than governments or capitalisms, etc. Socialist feminists propose that sexism, racism, and classism are fundamentally intertwined and need to be overcome simultaneously. Cultural feminists seek to promote “feminine values” and increase the importance of traditionally feminine characteristics and occupations. Womanists attempt to increase the recognition of concerns of racism and sexism of people of color.

Helms (cited in Ossana, Helms, & Leonard (1992) developed a model of womanist identity, which describes a stage-wise progression of an externally based definition of one’s womanhood, to an internally derived one. Therefore, identity is not determined by society nor by male stereotypes or norms, but rather a woman is able to define her own values, beliefs, and abilities. In this model, which was based on the stages of Black identity (Cross, 1971), the first stage is Preencounter in which a woman conforms to societal views about her gender. In this stage she acts according to a society which devalues women, and values men (Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992). In the second stage, Encounter, the woman comes into contact with experiences that challenge her preexisting notions of womanhood, and open the possibility of alternative notions of womanhood. In the third stage, Immersion-Emersion, a woman begins to reject the societal definition of womanhood and begins to form self-affirming definitions and closer connections with women. In the fourth stage, Internalization, the woman forms her identity based on her own personal attributes and is not bound by external definitions.

Although these stages are similar to the model of Downing and Roush (1985), there are several important differences. First, Downing and Roush (1985) assert that the pinnacle of health

is feminist identity and social activism (Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992). Second, the womanist identity model emphasizes how women choose to identify themselves, rather than form their identity in relation to men (i.e., in contrast to the feminist identity model) (Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992). Third, the womanist identity model is subsumed under the feminist identity model (Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992). Finally, an understanding of women's oppression by men is not necessary for a womanist identity model (Moradi, Subich, & Phillips, 2002).

Percentage of women who identify as feminists. Historically, most research has placed feminist identification at 15-30% of the general population (Duncan, 2010). According to a poll conducted by the Communications Consortium Media Center in 2012, 56% of women identified as feminist (Smeal, 2013). In contrast, Peltola, Milkie, and Presser (2004) found that approximately 26% of women identified as feminists using National Election Survey from 1992 and General Social Survey data from 1996.

Predictive factors of feminist identity. Feminist identity has been associated with numerous factors. Many studies examine whether individuals identify (i.e., label) themselves as a feminist. Other studies may measure feminist attitudes regardless of identification as a feminist.

Liss, Hoffner, and Crawford (2000) measured self-identified feminists' beliefs as well as others' perception of feminist beliefs. The study found that most people endorsed liberal feminist ideology. Self-identified feminists held stronger feminist beliefs on all feminist perspectives (i.e., liberal, radical, socialist), except for cultural feminist. The study found that nonfeminists viewed feminists as more radical than they were in actuality. Women who did not choose a feminist identity tended to fall between feminists and nonfeminists on the measures of feminist beliefs.

Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, and Crawford (2001) measured factors that contribute to feminist self-labeling and feminist attitudes in college women. The authors found that feminist

self-identification was predicted by having fewer politically conservative beliefs and a less positive evaluation of feminists. Women who identified as a feminist were more likely to believe in collective action and less likely to believe in meritocracy (Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, & Crawford, 2001). Feminists were also more likely to endorse items associated with the Revelation, and Embeddedness-Emanation. In this study, 81% of women who did not self-identify as a feminist endorsed beliefs congruent with the women's movement.

Smith (1999) measured collective self-esteem (i.e., an aspect of identity associated with a social group) in self-identified feminists, antifeminists, and a mixed identity group. As predicted, both self-identified feminists and self-identified anti-feminists held high levels (i.e., significantly higher than the mixed group) of collective self-esteem related to gender. Neither group differed significantly on gender identity being a significant part of their identity. Anti-feminists scored higher on the Public measure, indicating they perceive that others view their gender group positively. Feminists scored significantly higher on the Private scale, indicating that feminists have more positive personal judgments about women.

Nelson, Liss, Erchull, Hurt, Ramsey, Turner, and Haines (2008) studied life experiences and feminist beliefs that predicted feminist self-identification. Using structural equation modeling, exposure to feminism and experience of sexism predicted feminist self-identification, which in turn predicted involvement in collective action. In this study, women who self-identified as feminist were more likely to hold less conservative beliefs, had more liberal and radical beliefs and had a better general evaluation of feminists.

Generational differences. Duncan (2010) examined generational differences (i.e., Baby Boomers versus Generation Xers) in feminist self-labeling, feminist attitudes, components of gender consciousness, and activism. This study surveyed women who were on a bus trip to

participate in a rally in Washington on reproductive freedom. The study found that there were no generational differences on the definition of feminism, evaluation of feminists, feminist attitudes, gender consciousness, and activism for women's rights issues. However, Baby Boomers were more likely to identify as strong feminist than Generation Xers. In this sample, weak feminists were found to hold similar beliefs as strong feminists, but were less committed to self-labeling and activism. They were also similar to nonfeminists in being less educated (i.e., when controlled for age) and scored similarly on the Synthesis scale. However, they mostly seem to represent a middle group, between strong feminists and nonfeminists, on liberal ideology, Passive Acceptance, Revelation, Embeddedness, and Active Commitment. They also scored in the middle on several components of gender consciousness and activism.

Zucker (2004) found that women who came of age before the feminist movement (i.e., members of the class of 1952) were more likely to be nonfeminists than egalitarian or feminist. Women who came of age during the feminist movement and those who were born afterward (i.e., Class of 1972, and Class of 1992) were more likely to be feminists than egalitarians and nonfeminists. There was not a significant difference in feminist activism for the younger two cohorts, signifying that younger women are still engaged in feminist activism, despite some claims of postfeminism being apolitical.

Using National Election Survey from 1992 and General Social Survey data from 1996, however, Peltola, Milkie, and Presser (2004) did not find generational differences in feminist identification between Baby Boom (i.e., born between 1946 and 1959) and Baby Bust (i.e., born between 1960 and 1978) generations.

Impact of stigma. As several authors have speculated, stigma has been cited as one reason why young women do not identify as feminists. The existence of negative stereotypes of

feminists has often been cited as a reason for young women to refuse to identify as feminists. Roy, Weibust, and Miller (2007) analyzed whether negative stereotypes of feminists inhibited feminist self-identification. Participants were asked to read a paragraph which portrayed feminist in a positive, negative, or control condition. The results indicated that women who read about positive stereotypes were twice as likely to identify as feminists. However, women who viewed negative stereotypes were not different from women in the control group. The authors believe that this finding indicates that negative views of feminism are the status quo in western society. Only 16.7% of women in the control group identified as feminists. Ramsey et al. (2007) also indicated that feminists are more likely to have a positive evaluation of feminists than nonfeminists. The study found that self-identified feminists had a positive evaluation, non-labelers had a neutral evaluation, and nonfeminists had a negative evaluation. The study also found that all three groups perceived that others view feminists in a negative light (Ramsey et al., 2007).

Robnett, Anderson, and Hunter (2012) tested a path model to determine how traditional attitudes toward men and women predicted feminist identification. The model demonstrated that traditional gender-role attitudes (i.e., hostile sexism, hostility toward men, and benevolent sexism) predicted negative stereotypes of feminists, which then predicted feminist identification. The study also measured cross-ethnic differences. The results indicated that across all ethnicities, hostile sexism predicted negative evaluation of feminists. For European American women, benevolent sexist beliefs negatively predicted feminist identity. This path was not significant for African American women. Higher levels of hostility toward men predicted negative stereotypes of feminists for Latina women, but lower negative stereotypes for African American women.

Feminist identity vs. feminist attitudes. Several authors have emphasized the importance of distinguishing feminist attitudes from feminist identification. Using data from National Election Study surveys in the U.S., Rhodebeck (1996) found that feminist opinion and feminist identity are two separate constructs.

Zucker (2004) found support for a middle group of women, egalitarians, that falls between feminist and nonfeminist on measures of gender consciousness. However, the egalitarian group was not different from nonfeminists on measures of favorable conditions (e.g., relationships with other feminists) and commitment to feminist activism.

Eisele and Stake (2008) addressed the differential relationship of feminist attitudes and identification to self-efficacy as measured by general self-efficacy, commitment to feminist activism, and feelings of empowerment gained from the participation in women and gender studies classes. The authors found that feminist attitudes, without explicit feminist self-identification, was only weakly connected to self-efficacy. This supports previous research that has found that feminist activism is explicitly connected to feminist identity.

Zucker and Bay-Cheng (2010) examined the assertion that feminist and ‘nonlabelers’ are fundamentally different groups, rather than groups that occupy different positions on a continuum of feminist beliefs. The authors hypothesized that nonlabelers would endorse neoliberal, individualistic attitudes when compared to feminists, who would be more likely to believe in collective action. The authors did not find significant differences among feminists, non-labelers, and nonfeminists in the prioritization of achievement, power, and security. Non-labelers were not statistically different from nonfeminists on ratings of universalism, conformity, and tradition, but were different from feminists. Feminists rated universalism higher than the other groups. Conformity and tradition were rated lower by feminists. Feminists also expressed

the least faith in a meritocracy, while non-labelers were similar to nonfeminists. On measures of sexist attitudes, non-labelers were not distinguishable from nonfeminists and were the highest endorsers of benevolent sexism. In terms of modern sexism, non-labelers scored between feminists and nonfeminists. Based on these results, the authors claim that non-labelers are indistinguishable from nonfeminists in their conformity to social status quo, support of social hierarchy, meritocracy, and low prioritization of social justice issues. They support the notion of distinguishing women between labelers and nonlabelers, rather than three groups.

Fitz, Zucker, and Bay-Cheng (2012) attempted to build on this work, by further analyzing the non-labeler group. They proposed that non-labelers may fall into two separate groups: 1) quasi-feminist, who support feminist attitudes, but who do not adopt the label; and 2) neo-liberals who may adopt some similar beliefs but hold fundamentally different values. Using a cluster analysis, the results were largely in support of the authors' hypotheses. They found that nonlabelers could be classified as quasifeminists, whose levels of sexist beliefs were similar to feminists and lesser to those of neoliberals and nonfeminists. Neoliberals were also found to score higher on meritocratic beliefs than quasi-feminists and feminists. However, neoliberal non-labelers agreed with core beliefs of feminism, which was significantly different than nonfeminists.

Feminism and Psychological Correlates

A key component of feminist therapy has revolved around feminist identity increasing psychological health. As such, several studies have analyzed the psychological impact of feminist identity. However, results have remained inconsistent regarding the relationship between feminist identity or feminist attitudes and psychological health. One methodological issue with this research is the conflation between feminist identity and feminist attitudes.

Saunders and Kashubeck-West (2006) examined the relationship between feminist identity development, gender-role orientation and psychological well-being. The study revealed that both feminist identity and gender-role orientation contributed independently to psychological well-being. Women who scored higher on more advanced stages of feminist identity were found to have higher levels of psychological well-being.

Yakushko (2007) measured satisfaction with life in three groups of women: those with traditional values, those with moderate values, and those with feminist values. Women with feminist values were found to have a higher satisfaction with life than those with traditional values. There were no significant differences among groups on measures of environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, and self-acceptance.

Other studies have measured the relationship between feminist identity and clinical outcomes. Hurt and colleagues (2007) examined whether feminist self-identification was related to clinical outcomes (i.e., depression, eating attitudes, self-esteem). Using a structural equation model, the authors found that feminist identity indirectly affects negative eating attitudes and depression, and self-esteem through conformity to feminine norms and self-objectification. Feminist identity was not directly correlated to these clinical variables.

Tiggemann and Stevens (1998) analyzed women's weight concerns, self-esteem, and feminist attitudes across the life-span. These authors found that feminist attitudes were only significantly negatively correlated with concern about weight in older cohorts (i.e., women over 30). There was no significant effect for women ages 18-29. The authors speculated that concern over weight may be so ingrained in young women that the adoption of feminist attitudes does not serve as a protective factor.

Cash, Ancis, and Strachan (1997) found conflicting results regarding gender-role orientation, feminist identity development, and body image. Using multiple parameters of body image (i.e., evaluation of appearance, affective experiences, and investment in appearance), the authors examined whether traditional gender-role attitudes and identity would be associated with negative body images. The study did not find a significant relationship between feminist identity development and the body image variables.

Snyder and Hasbrouck (1996) have also found inconsistent results regarding stage of feminist development and disturbed eating. Women who were in the Active Commitment stage of feminist identity development were found to have significantly less body dissatisfaction and traits of disturbed eating. However, for women in earlier stages, no significant relationships were found.

Fingerete and Gleaves (2004) attempted to create a structural equation model to analyze the influence of sociocultural, psychological, and feminist variables on body dissatisfaction and internalization of beauty standards. The study found that feminism and self-esteem failed to serve as a protective factor of body dissatisfaction, awareness of beauty standards and internalization of those standards. However, the authors speculated that there might have been a low level of feminist ideology endorsement in their sample.

Eisele and Stake (2008) measured feminist identity, feminist attitudes, self-efficacy (i.e., personal self-efficacy, commitment to activism, and feelings of empowerment) in a sample of women who completed a Women and Gender Studies course. Feminist identity partially mediated the relationship between feminist attitudes and personal self-efficacy and commitment to activism. Feminist attitudes appeared to have an indirect effect on self-efficacy variables,

dependent on feminist identity. Therefore, holding feminist attitudes, without explicitly identifying as a feminist appear to have a weak effect of self-efficacy.

Using an experimental design, Peterson, Tantleft-Dunn, and Bedwell (2006), tested the success of a feminist-based intervention aimed at reducing body image disturbance versus a psychoeducational intervention. The authors speculated that exposure to feminist theory may enable women to be less influenced by the harmful societal standard of beauty and thinness for women. Women in the feminist theory intervention were exposed to feminist theories of body image, eating disturbance, and related research findings. No images of models were used. Participants in the psychoeducational intervention condition were exposed to the sociocultural theory of body image and eating disorders (e.g., airbrushing models). A control condition was included in which participants were assessed but did not receive an intervention. In addition, feminist identification and identity development was assessed before and afterwards. The study found that participants in the feminist theory intervention were more likely to experience an improvement in their physical appearance satisfaction (i.e., without decrease in BMI) when compared with the psychoeducational and control groups. The psychoeducational intervention did not lead to significant improvement over the control group. The study also indicated that women who were exposed to the feminist intervention were more likely to self-identify as feminists. Increases in women's feminist identity were significantly correlated with positive changes in healthy body image.

Dionne, Davis, Fox, and Gorevich (1995) analyzed feminist identification and specific feminist beliefs related to body dissatisfaction. The study indicated that specific beliefs about physical attractiveness, rather than overall feminist identification, were related to body dissatisfaction. The authors speculate that women who hold feminist beliefs may be more likely

to reject societal norms of beauty, which may in turn be related to decreased body image disturbance.

Bay-Cheng and Zucker (2007) examined the relationship between feminist self-identification and sexuality. The authors compared the attitudes of feminist, egalitarian, and nonfeminist undergraduate women in five areas of sexual attitudes. The author's analyzed attitudes toward erotophilia (i.e., one's positive affective or evaluative responses to sexual stimuli), sexual assertiveness, perceived self-efficacy for safer sex, sexual satisfaction, and support for the sexual double standard. The results indicated that feminists scored higher on erotophilia than egalitarians and nonfeminists. However, egalitarians scored highest in self-efficacy of condom use. Egalitarians and nonfeminists were more likely to endorse the traditional sexual double standard than feminists. The authors speculated that egalitarians may align with feminists on self-serving aspects of sexual empowerment, while still endorsing traditional gender norms that may oppress women as a collective group. Notably, there were no differences among feminists, egalitarians, and nonfeminists on measures of general sexual assertiveness and satisfaction.

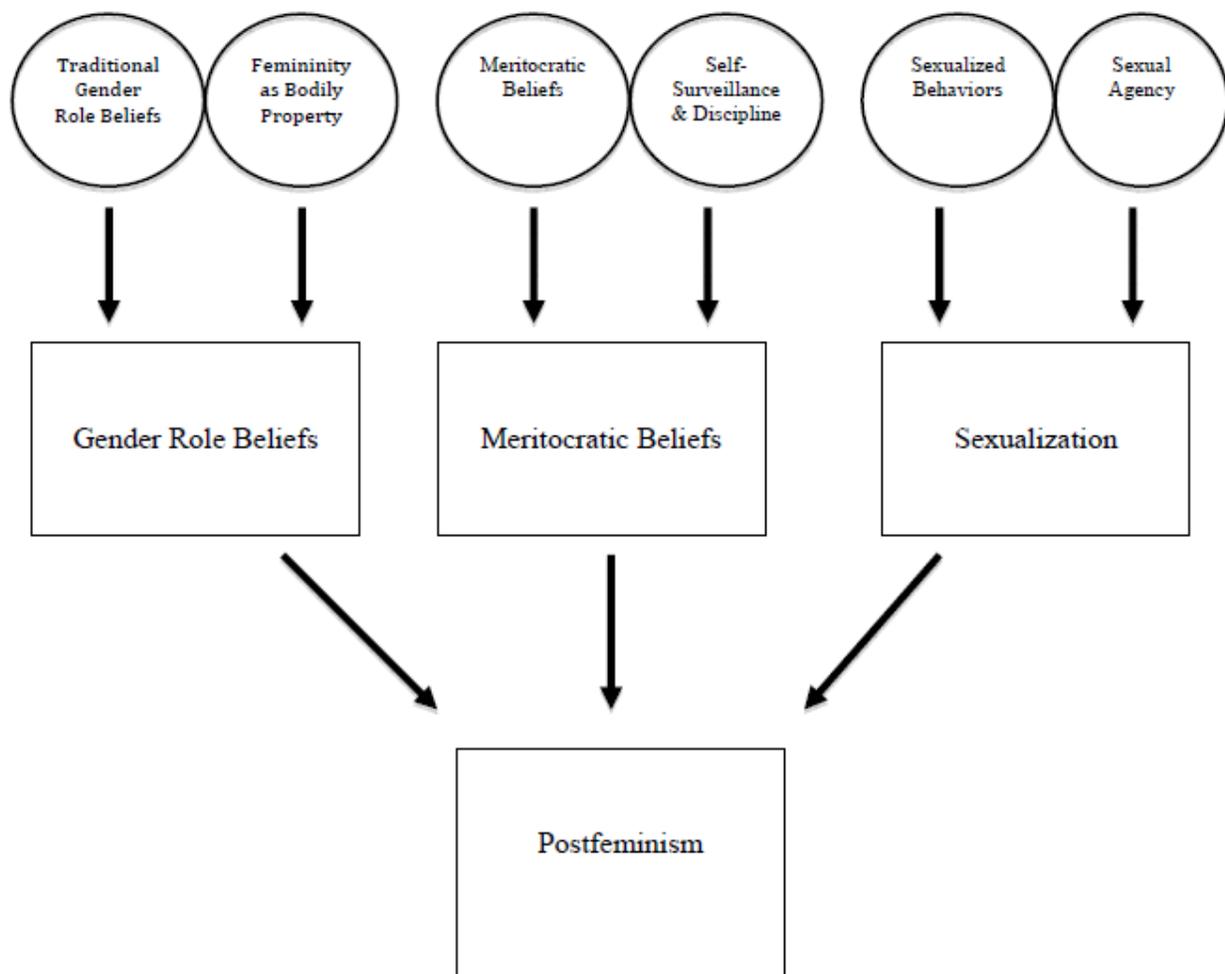
The Current Study

Despite growing body of postfeminist discourses within other academic fields, few psychological studies have empirically investigated the phenomenon of postfeminism. The current study has several aims and hopes to contribute to the body of literature on feminist identification, feminist attitudes, and their psychological correlates. First, the current study attempts to determine the significance of feminism in the lives of young women by analyzing their willingness to self-identify as a feminist, the extent of their feminist attitudes, and beliefs in the tenets of postfeminism.

Second, using the conceptual framework provided by Gill's (2007) model of postfeminist sensibility, the current study will attempt to explore the validity of this model regarding women's beliefs and behaviors (see Figure 1). This model will primarily compare women in three groups: those who self-identify as feminist (feminists); those who do not self-identify as feminist, yet hold some feminist beliefs (postfeminists); and women who do not self-identify as feminists and do not hold feminist beliefs (nonfeminists).

Figure 1.

Gill's (2007) model of postfeminism



Gill's model reflects a societal shift in gender-role identity, sexualization, and individualist/meritocratic beliefs, especially in women who do not self-identify as feminists. Specifically, the current study expects to find the following gender-role attitudes in postfeminist women: an increased emphasis on femininity as a bodily property (i.e., as opposed to femininity embodied in personality traits), and a higher level of endorsement of traditional gender roles when compared to self-identified feminists. The second factor of this model is endorsement of individualism/meritocratic values. Specifically, the current study expects to find higher endorsement of individualistic/meritocratic values by postfeminists. Additionally, the current study expects to find higher levels of self-surveillance in women who do not identify as feminist. The final component of the model involves sexualization. The current seeks to investigate participants' engagement in sexualized behaviors, sexual subjectivity, and sexually agentic behaviors.

The final goal of the study is to compare psychological correlates of feminists, postfeminists, and nonfeminists. Feminist theorists have purported that feminism provides cognitive tools to aid women in battling the negative psychological consequences of feminist issues, such as gender discrimination and sexualization of culture, which are prevalent in modern society. However, research has not completely supported the supposition that feminists are psychologically healthier than nonfeminists. The current study attempts to analyze psychological health in these groups of women by investigating levels of general psychological symptomology, satisfaction with life, self-esteem, and empowerment.

Hypotheses

- H1.* Group membership of feminists, postfeminists, and nonfeminists will be predicted by the following variables: tenets of postfeminism, feminist beliefs, gender-role ideology, sexualized behavior, sexual agency, meritocratic beliefs, and self-surveillance.
- H2.* Self-identified feminists and postfeminists will have significantly higher levels of endorsement of feminist attitudes compared to nonfeminists. Postfeminists and nonfeminists will have significantly higher endorsement of postfeminist beliefs.
- H3a.* Nonfeminists will endorse higher rates of traditional feminine norms than feminists and postfeminists.
- H3b.* Postfeminists will endorse higher rates of traditional feminine norms than feminists.
- H3c.* Endorsement of variables related to physical appearance (i.e., Thinness, Investment in Appearance) will be affected by degree of postfeminist beliefs.
- H4.* Feminists will have significantly lower endorsement of individualistic/meritocratic values than postfeminists and nonfeminists.
- H5.* Feminists will have significantly lower levels of self-surveillance than postfeminists and nonfeminists.
- H6.* Postfeminists will endorse higher levels of sexualized behaviors than feminists and nonfeminists.
- H7.* Both feminists and postfeminists will endorse higher levels of sexual subjectivity and agentic sexual behavior compared to nonfeminists.
- H8a.* Feminists will endorse lower levels of general psychological symptomology than postfeminists and nonfeminists.
- H8b.* Feminists will endorse higher levels of self-esteem than postfeminists and nonfeminists.

H8c. Feminists will endorse higher levels of satisfaction with life than postfeminists and nonfeminists.

H8d. Feminists will endorse higher levels of empowerment than postfeminists and nonfeminists.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Participants and Procedures

Participants were women 18 years of age or older, recruited using a snowballing technique via announcements on social media sites (e.g., Facebook). Recruitment announcements were aimed at recruiting an ethnically and ideologically diverse sample posted on Facebook groups (e.g., “Barbell Babes”; “Kalamazoo College Alumni”; “Muslim Mental Health Conference”; “San Francisco Bay Area Catholic Moms”; “West Asheville Exchange”; “Wine to Weightlifting”; “Women of Color Network”), college research study website postings (e.g., Hanover College psychology department, Reddit research message board; University of Detroit Mercy psychology participant pool and psychology class listserv), and by word of mouth. Participants were offered the chance to enter into a raffle to receive one of several \$50 gift cards or choose to receive documentation of participation for extra credit.

Although this study strove for an ethnically diverse population, prior studies have shown that significantly more Caucasian individuals use the Internet than other groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). Therefore, the sample for this study was expected to be primarily Caucasian. Before completion of data cleaning, the original sample was comprised of 688 cases. In terms of ethnicity, 53.2% of participants identified as White ($n = 365$), 2.2% Black ($n = 15$), 3.5% Asian/Pacific Islander ($n = 28$), and 2.2% Latino/Latina ($n = 15$), 2.0% Middle Eastern ($n = 15$), 2.6% multiethnic ($n = 18$), 2.9% as ‘Other’ ($n = 20$), and 30.8% ($n = 212$) did not select an ethnicity. Ages ranged from 18 to 75 years, with a mean of 31.65 years. With regard to sexual orientation, 54.2% of participants identified themselves as heterosexual ($n = 372$), 3.2% as homosexual ($n = 22$), 8.0% as bisexual ($n = 55$), and 3.2% as queer ($n = 22$).

Measures

Demographic variables. A demographic questionnaire was created to gather information on age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and relationship status. Copies of all measures used in the current study can be found in the Appendix.

Feminist identification. A single-item question was used to assess feminist self-identification (i.e., “Do you consider yourself a feminist?”). Participants were given the following options: “I am a feminist,” “I’m not a feminist, but I am in support of feminist goals,” or “I am not a feminist.” Participants were also able to give a qualitative response to the following question: “Briefly describe your perspectives of feminism.”

Postfeminism. A 4-item questionnaire was created to assess the extent to which participants agreed with the tenets of postfeminism (Gill, 2007). Items included: “I don’t support gender equality,” “There’s no longer a need for the feminist movement,” “Feminism isn’t relevant to my life or values,” and “I don’t want to be associated with the image of feminism or other feminists.” Items were rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” In most of the analyses, these items were used as separate variables. However, when combined into a scale it was found to have an acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .88$) in the current study. Participants were also asked to give a qualitative response to the following question: “If you did not identify as a feminist, briefly describe why.”

Feminist attitudes. The 11-item short form of the Liberal Feminist Attitude and Ideology Scale (LFAIS; Morgan, 1996) was used to assess feminist attitudes (e.g., “A woman should have the same job opportunities as a man”). Participants responded to this measure using a scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 6 (agree strongly). Cronbach’s alpha was found to

be .81 in the original investigation. The study indicated the mean item score for female undergraduates was 4.70 ($SD = .53$) and 5.54 ($SD = .26$) for avowed female feminists.

Gender-role ideology. The Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory-45 (CFNI-45; Parent & Moradi, 2010) is a 45-item scale was used to assess conformity to traditional feminine norms as seen in dominant American culture. Items reflect attitudes toward Thinness, Domestic, Invest in Appearance, Modesty, Relational, Involvement with Children, Sexual Fidelity, Romantic Relationship, and Sweet and Nice. The CFNI was found to have acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .85$) in the original investigation. The original investigation found a mean score for the CFNI to be 83.68 ($SD = 10.81$).

Sexualization. The Sexualizing Behavior Scale (SBS; Nowatzki & Morry, 2009) is a 20-item questionnaire designed to assess a participant's likelihood of participating in sexualizing behavior (Sexualizing Behavior) (e.g., "taking a pole-dancing or strip aerobics class). Participants also assess how acceptable each behavior is for women in general (Sexualizing Acceptance). The scale includes 10 items relevant to sexualizing behavior and 10 filler items describing adventurous activities that are not sexualizing. Participants respond to both versions on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not very likely or not at all appropriate) to 5 (very likely or completely appropriate). Cronbach's alpha was found to be .79 for the Sexualizing Behavior scale and .89 for the Sexualizing Acceptance scale in the original study. Mean item scores for Participation in Sexualized behaviors and Approval of Sexualized behaviors were 2.00 and 2.70, respectively.

The 20-item Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI; Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) was used to assess sexual subjectivity and agentic sexual behavior. The FSSI assesses five sexual subjectivity elements: (1) sexual body-esteem (e.g., "I am confident that others will find

me sexually desirable’), (2) self-entitlement to sexual desire and self-pleasure (e.g. “It is ok to meet my own sexual needs through masturbation”), (3) entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner (e.g., “I think it is important for a sexual partner to consider my sexual pleasure”), (4) self efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure (e.g., “If I were to have sex with someone I would show my partner what I want”), and (5) sexual self-reflection (e.g., “I spend time thinking and reflecting about my sexual experiences”). Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for each item. Cronbach’s alpha for all scales ranged from .79-.87 in the original investigation. According to the original study, the mean item score for the FSSI – efficacy scale was 3.31 ($SD = .99$).

Meritocratic beliefs. The Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory (PMI; Garcia, Pancer, Desmarais, & Jackson, 2005) is a 24-item scale that was used to assess the degree to which participants agree that societal rewards are based off a meritocratic system, using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Sample items from this inventory include “All people who work hard can improve their position in life” and “Individuals are always responsible for their own success.” The measure has shown acceptable reliability ranging ($\alpha = .84-.88$) in some studies (Fitz, Zucker, & Bay-Cheng, 2011). The original study found a mean item score of 3.75

Self-surveillance was measured by the 8-item Surveillance subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS; McKinley & Hyde, 1996). Participants respond to questions on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree) on items designed to indicate the extent to which participants scrutinize their bodies (e.g., I often worry about whether the clothes I’m wearing make me look good”). The measure was found to have

adequate reliability ($\alpha = .79$) (McKinley & Hyde, 1996). The original study found a mean item score for the OBSC to be 4.22 ($SD = .91$).

Psychological Outcome Measures

Clinical symptoms. The Symptom Checklist (SC; Bartone, Ursano, Wright, & Ingraham, 1989), is a 20-item measure designed to measure frequency of psychiatric symptoms experienced within the past few weeks. It can be divided into four subscales called depression/withdrawal (e.g., “Feeling life is pointless, meaningless,” hyper-alertness (e.g., “Taking medication to sleep or calm down,” generalized anxiety (e.g., “Nervous or tense”), and somatic complaints (e.g., “headaches”). Items are measured on a 4-point Likert Scale. Available research suggests that it has good inter-item consistency (e.g., alphas of .90 to .93) and good criterion validity (Soderstrom, Dolbier, Leiferman, & Steinhardt, 2000). This study also found mean scale score to be 15.4 ($SD = 7.6$) for a sample of university women.

Self-esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979), a 10-item self-report scale measured subjective self-esteem. Items included, “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself” and “I wish I could have more respect for myself” and are scored on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Previous research has reported reliability alpha coefficients ranging from .74-.87, test-retest reliabilities ranging from .63-.91 (Wylie, 1989). Joseph, Markus, and Tafarodi (1992) reported a mean scale score of 24.1 for adult women.

Life satisfaction. The 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) measures participants’ general satisfaction with life (e.g., “I am satisfied with my life,” “If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing”). Responses were made on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Diener et al. found an

alpha coefficient of .87. Suggested cutoff scores are as follows: 31 - 35 Extremely satisfied; 26 - 30 Satisfied; 21 - 25 Slightly satisfied; 20 Neutral; 15 - 19 Slightly dissatisfied; 10 - 14 Dissatisfied; 5 - 9 Extremely dissatisfied.

Empowerment. The Personal Progress Scale -Revised (PPS-R; Johnson, Worell, & Chandler, 2005) is a 28-item scale that measures empowerment. Questions were developed to specifically target gendered and cultural empowerment through items such as “I am aware of my own strength as a woman” and “I understand how my cultural heritage has shaped who I am today.” Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale. Items that referred solely to cultural items were not included in the analysis. A factor analysis of the original scale resulted in one overarching factor of empowerment, and demonstrated adequate inter-item reliability ($\alpha = 0.88$). Mean item score was shown to be 4.89 ($SD = .67$) in a sample of women (Luszczynska, Durawa-Scholz, & Knoll, 2012).

CHAPTER 4

Results

Data Cleaning

Prior to running statistical analyses, data were inspected to determine if there were any missing or out-of-range responses. Cases with over 10% of missing item responses were eliminated from the dataset. For all other cases, missing item responses were imputed with neutral response scores (e.g., for a 5-point scale a 3 was imputed) for tests using a Likert-scale. There did not appear to be a systematic pattern to missing data. After cleaning cases for missing data, 8 outliers were eliminated. After completion of data cleaning, the final sample was comprised of 358 cases. In terms of ethnicity (see Table 1), 78.2% of participants identified as White ($n = 280$), 3.1% African-American ($n = 11$), 4.7% Asian/Pacific Islander ($n = 17$), and 2.8% Latino/Latina ($n = 10$), 3.1% Middle Eastern ($n = 11$), 3.6% multiethnic ($n = 13$), and 4.2% as 'Other' ($n = 15$). One case did not report this item. Current U.S. census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014) shows that 62.4% of individuals identify as White; 13.2% identified as Black; 5.4% identified as Asian; 17.4% as Latino; and 2.5% identified as two or more races. Comparing the current sample to U.S. Census data, it appears that ethnic minorities are underrepresented in this sample. Ages ranged from 18 to 75 years, with a mean of 32 years. With regard to sexual orientation, 78.2% of participants identified themselves as heterosexual ($n = 280$), 4.7% as homosexual ($n = 17$), 12.3% as bisexual ($n = 44$), and 3.9% as queer ($n = 14$). According to Chandra, Mosher, Copen, and Sionean (2011), 93.7% identified as heterosexual; 1.1% of women identify as homosexual; 3.5% of women identified as bisexual; 0.6% as 'something else'; and 12.7% of women reported having same-sex sexual contact. Therefore, it appears that non-heterosexual women may be over-represented in the current sample.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Final Sample

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
18-22	109	31
23-33	134	38
34-49	67	19
50+	44	12
Missing cases	4	
Total	358	
Ethnicity		
White	280	78
Other	15	4
Multiethnic	13	3
Asian / Pacific Islander	17	4
Middle Eastern	11	3
African American	11	3
Latina	10	2
Missing cases	1	
Total	358	
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	280	78
Bisexual	44	12
Homosexual	17	4
Queer	14	3
Missing cases	3	
Total	358	

Descriptive Statistics and Reliabilities for all Measures

Means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum scores were calculated for all measures and are reported in Table 2. Also in the table are inter-item reliability coefficients, which were computed for all tests. As can be seen in the table, all scales obtained satisfactory reliability coefficients. With regard to feminist identification, 56.2% of participants endorsed the

label “I am a feminist” ($n = 202$), 32.7% endorsed “I am not a feminist, but I agree with feminist values” (referred to as ‘postfeminists’) ($n = 117$), and 10.9% endorsed “I am not a feminist” ($n = 39$).

Age cohorts were divided by generational classifications based on Pew Research Center’s definitions (Pew Research Center, 2015). The results indicated there was a significant association between age cohort and feminist identification $\chi^2(6) = 26.58, p < .01$. With regard to college-aged millennial cohort (18-22 year old), individuals in this group were significantly more likely to identify as postfeminists ($n_o = 44$) than would be expected ($n_e = 30$) by chance alone. In the post-college millennial cohort (23-33), feminist identification was similar to what would be expected by chance. Participants from Generation X (34-49 years old) were significantly more likely to identify as nonfeminist ($n_o = 13$) than expected ($n_e = 7.5$) by chance. Frequency of feminist identification in the Baby Boomer cohort (50+) age cohort was similar to what would be expected by chance.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and reliability coefficients of the Major Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Reliability
No support for gender equality	1.36	.82	1.0	4.0	-
Feminism is irrelevant	1.52	.72	1.0	4.0	-
Negative image of feminism	1.81	.86	1.0	4.0	-
No need for feminism	1.51	.67	1.0	4.0	-
LFAIS	65.25	8.68	32.00	77.00	.82
CFNI - Total ^a	117.53	13.21	66.00	153.00	.86
CFNI – Thinness	12.36	3.36	5.00	20.00	.86

CFNI – Investment in Appearance	11.68	3.35	5.00	20.00	.82
CFNI – Sexual Fidelity	11.57	4.19	5.00	20.00	.91
SBS – Participation	18.61	5.92	10.00	38.00	.79
SBS – Approval	36.91	9.95	12.00	50.00	.93
FSSI – Efficacy	41.11	6.79	19.00	50.00	.86
OBCS – Surveillance	32.06	9.55	8.00	53.00	.87
Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory	73.27	24.64	24.00	148.00	.94
Symptom Checklist	31.91	8.56	19.00	62.00	.87
Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale	29.94	5.13	14.00	40.00	.81
Satisfaction with Life Scale	24.34	6.32	5.00	35.00	.89
Personal Progress Scale	134.19	19.57	62.00	179.00	.89

Note: CFNI -Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory; SBS - Sexualizing Behavior Scale; FSSI - Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory; OBCS - Objectified Body Consciousness Scale

Relationships among Study Variables

Product-moment correlations among feminist identification, feminist beliefs, postfeminist beliefs, conformity to feminine norms, sexualized behavior, self-surveillance, meritocratic beliefs scores, and psychological variables were calculated and are reported in Table 3.

Intercorrelations between predictor variables are included in Appendix A. Correlations between major study variables and demographic variables are included in Appendix B.

Considering first the correlations between feminist identification and the variables of feminist and postfeminist beliefs, “I am a feminist” was significantly and negatively correlated with “No Need for Feminism” ($r = -.62, p < .01$); “Feminism is Irrelevant” ($r = -.63, p < .01$); and “Negative Image of Feminism” ($r = -.64, p < .01$). “I am a Feminist” was not significantly

correlated with “No Support for Gender Equality,” but significantly and positively correlated with “Feminist Beliefs” ($r = .58, p < .01$). “I’m not a Feminist, but...” was significantly positively correlated with “No Need for Feminism” ($r = .38, p < .01$), “Feminism is Irrelevant” ($r = .34, p < .01$), and “Negative Image of Feminism” ($r = .41, p < .01$). “I’m not a Feminist, but....” was not significantly correlated with “No support for Gender Equality,” but was significantly and negatively correlated with “Feminist Beliefs” ($r = -.34, p < .01$). “I am Not a Feminist” was significantly positively correlated with “Don’t Support for Gender Equality” ($r = .17, p < .01$), “No Need for Feminism” ($r = .41, p < .01$), “Feminism is Irrelevant” ($r = .48, p < .01$), and “Negative Image of Feminism” ($r = .41, p < .01$). “I am Not a Feminist” was also significantly and negatively correlated with “Feminist Beliefs” ($r = -.41, p < .01$).

Looking next at the association between feminist and the other variables, “I am a Feminist” was significantly and negatively correlated with Traditional Feminine Norms ($r = -.24, p < .01$), Domesticity ($r = -.11, p < .05$), Sexual Fidelity ($r = -.26, p < .01$), Involvement with Children ($r = -.21, p < .01$), Romantic Relationships ($r = -.15, p < .01$), Participation in Sexualized Behavior ($r = -.10, p < .05$), and Meritocratic Beliefs ($r = -.50, p < .01$). It was positively and significantly associated with Acceptance of Sexualized Behavior ($r = .11, p < .05$), and Sexual Self-Efficacy ($r = .24, p < .01$). “I’m not a Feminist, but...” was positively correlated with Traditional Feminine Norms ($r = .18, p < .01$), Sexual Fidelity ($r = .13, p < .05$), Romantic Relationships ($r = .13, p < .05$), Investment in Appearance ($r = .11, p < .05$), Involvement with Children ($r = .17, p < .01$), Meritocratic Beliefs ($r = .34, p < .01$), and Participation in Sexualized Behavior ($r = .14, p < .01$). “I’m not a Feminist, but...” was negatively correlated with and Sexual Self-Efficacy ($r = -.18, p < .01$). I am Not a Feminist was significantly and positively correlated with Traditional Feminine Norms ($r = .11, p < .05$),

Sexual Fidelity ($r = .22, p < .01$) and Meritocratic Beliefs ($r = .28, p < .01$). It was negatively correlated with Acceptance of Sexualized Behavior ($r = -.18, p < .01$), Self-Surveillance ($r = -.14, p < .01$), and Sexual Self-Efficacy ($r = -.11, p < .05$).

Last, when considering the correlational findings between feminist identification and psychological correlates, “I am a Feminist” was negatively and significantly correlated with general psychiatric symptoms ($r = -.13, p < .05$). “I’m not a Feminist, but...” was positively associated with general psychiatric symptoms ($r = .20, p < .01$) and negatively correlated with Personal Empowerment ($r = -.11, p < .05$). “I am Not a Feminist” was not significantly correlated with any of the psychological variables.

These findings, especially those significant at the $p < .05$ level, should be interpreted with caution due to the possibility of increased Type I error as multiple correlations were run simultaneously.

Table 3

Correlations between Feminist Identification and the Major Study Variables

Measure	I am not a Feminist	I am not a Feminist, but I support Feminist Views	I am a Feminist
1. No Support for Gender Equality	.17**	-.01	-.09
2. No Need for Feminism	.41***	.38***	-.62***
3. Feminism Is Irrelevant	.48***	.34***	-.63***
4. Negative Image of Feminism	.40***	.41***	-.64***
5. Liberal Feminist Attitudes and Ideology Scale	-.41***	-.34***	.58**
6. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory -Total	.11*	.18**	-.24***
7. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory - Thinness	-.05	.05	-.02

8. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory – Investment in Appearance	-.07	.11*	-.06
9. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory – Sexual Fidelity	.22***	.13*	-.26***
10. Sexualized Behavior Scale – Participation	-.04	.14**	-.10*
11. Sexualized Behavior Scale – Approval	-.18**	-.00	.11*
12. Female Sexual Subjectivity Scale – Efficacy	-.11*	-.18**	.24***
13. Objectified Body Consciousness Scale – Surveillance	-.14**	.03	.06
14. Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory	.28***	.34***	-.50***
15. Symptom Checklist	-.10	.20***	-.13*
16. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale	.05	-.08	.05
17. Satisfaction with Life Scale	-.02	-.06	.04
18. Personal Progress Scale - Revised	.05	-.11*	.07

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Dummy codes were used to classify feminist identification as follows: 1= feminist, 0= other; 1= postfeminist, 0= other; 1= not a feminist, 0= other)

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. The first hypothesis predicted that the group membership of feminists, postfeminists, and nonfeminists would be predicted by the following variables: postfeminism (“Don’t Support Gender Equality,” “No Need for Feminism,” “Negative Image of Feminists,” “Feminism is Irrelevant”) gender-role ideology (CFNI-45), sexualized behavior (SBS), sexual agency (FSSI), meritocratic beliefs (PMI), and self-surveillance (OBCS). A standard discriminant function analysis was performed to test this hypothesis. Assessment of normality and linearity was conducted by evaluating bivariate scatterplots of the IVs. These results indicated that all variables except “No Support for Gender Equality” met the assumptions of

normality and linearity. This variable was subsequently transformed using a log transformation. Analyses were completed using both the original variable and transformed variable. Given that there was not a significant difference between the analyses, the results are reported using the original variable. Homoscedasticity was assessed by examining scatterplots of scores of the two discriminant functions, which were roughly equal in size (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The analysis generated two discriminant functions¹. The first function was significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .402$, $\chi^2(28, N = 358) = 317.75$, $p < .01$, explaining 93.6% of the between-group variance. The second function was also significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .919$, $\chi^2(13, N = 358) = 29.26$, $p < .01$, accounting for 6.7% of the between-group variance.

The structure matrix of correlations between predictors and discriminant functions was used to interpret the meaning of the functions (see Table 4). The correlations between the predictor variables and the first discriminant function were highest for Feminism is Irrelevant, Negative Image of Feminism, No Need for Feminism, LFAIS (negative), Negative Image of Feminism, and PMI. It appears that this function represents anti-feminist beliefs and strong meritocratic values. The best predictors for the second discriminant function were SBS-P, SBS-A, OBSC, CFNI – Investment in Appearance, and No Support for Gender Equality (negative). This function seems to capture highly sexualized behavior and attention to physical appearance with some support for gender equality.

Table 4

Structure Matrix obtained in the Discriminant Function Analysis

	1	2
1. Feminism is Irrelevant	.81	-.30
2. Negative Image of Feminism	.76	.12
3. No Need for Feminism	.75	.02

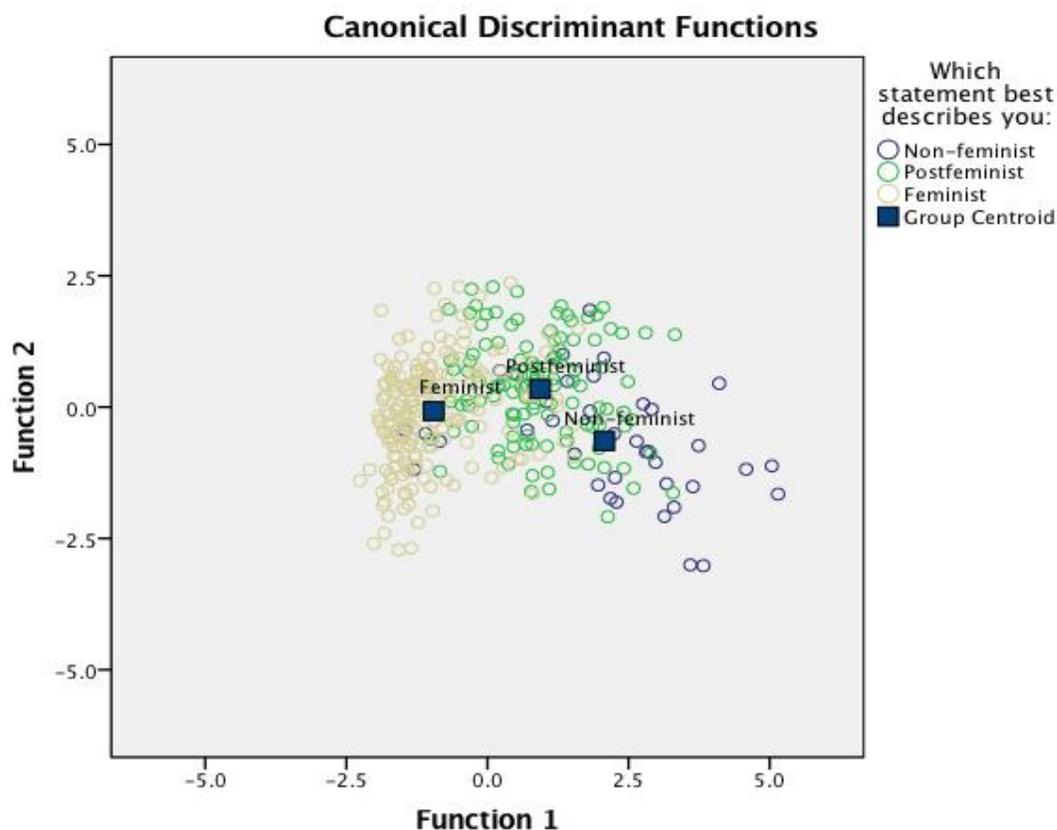
¹ Results of heterosexual-only sample were similar and are presented in Appendix C

4. Liberal Feminist Ideology and Attitudes Scale	-.68	.07
5. Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory	.51	.23
6. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory – Sexual Fidelity	.27	-.15
7. Female Sexual Subjectivity Scale – Sexual Efficacy	-.21	-.19
8. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory - Total	.21	.19
9. Sexualized Behaviors Scale- Participation	.07	.40
10. Objectified Body Consciousness Scale – Surveillance	-.08	.36
11. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory – Investment in Appearance	.02	.38
12. Sexualized Behaviors scale – Approval	-.13	.36
13. No Support for Gender Equality	.11	-.37
14. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory - Thinness	.01	.21

Looking next at the group centroids along the discriminate function (see figure 2), the nonfeminist group was located at the positive end of the continuum of Function 1 (2.08) and on the negative extreme of Function 2 (-.64). Postfeminists fell in the middle of the Function 1 continuum (.95) and the positive end of Function 2 (.34). Feminists fell on the negative extreme of Function 1 (-.95) and on the midpoint of Function 2 (-.07). The results seem to indicate that nonfeminists are maximally separated from the other two group with high scores on anti-feminism/pro-meritocratic beliefs and scores on low sexualized behaviors. Postfeminists were separated with high score on sexualized behaviors and a moderate score on the anti-feminist/pro-meritocratic function. Finally, feminists were separated by low scores on the anti-feminist/pro-meritocratic function and moderate scores on the sexualized behavior function.

Figure 2

Plot of group centroids



For the overall classification of the total sample of 358 participants, 283 (79.1%) were classified correctly, compared to 159 (43.6%) who would be correctly classified by chance alone. Cross-validation classification derived 74.6% accuracy for the total sample. This indicates that the model was accurate in predicting group membership of feminist identification (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

Predicted Group Membership in the Original Classifications of the Discriminant Function Analysis

	I am not a feminist	I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	I am a feminist	Total %
I am not a feminist	22	11	5	39

I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	10	81	26	117
I am a feminist	0	21	181	202

Note. 79.6% of the original grouped cases classified correctly

Table 6

Predicted Group Membership in the Cross-validated Classifications of the Discriminant Function Analysis

	I am not a feminist	I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	I am a feminist	Total %
I am not a feminist	18	15	6	39
I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	12	73	32	117
I am a feminist	0	21	177	202

Note. 74.9% of cross-validated group cases classified correctly.

Hypothesis 2. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine group differences in feminist identification in feminist beliefs (LFAIS) and postfeminist variables (“No support for gender equality,” “No need for feminism,” “Negative Image of Feminism,” “Feminism is Irrelevant”). As shown in Table 7, MANOVA results revealed significant differences among feminist identification on the dependent variables, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .444$, $F(10, 355) = 35.20$, $p < .01$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .332$. ANOVAs were conducted on each dependent variable as a follow-up test to MANOVA. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare group differences on feminist beliefs (LFAIS). There was a significant effect of feminist beliefs for feminist identification, $F(2, 354) = 105.53$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .368$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 55.18$, $SD = 1.10$) was significantly different than the “I am Not a

Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 60.97$, $SD = .64$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 69.67$, $SD = .49$). The “I’m not a Feminist, but...” condition was also significant different than the “I am a Feminist” condition. These results provide support for the hypothesis, in which feminists and postfeminist were thought to score higher on feminist beliefs than nonfeminists.

With regard to the dependent variable “I don’t support gender equality,” ANOVA results emerged significant, $F(2, 357) = 5.10$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .022$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 1.74$, $SD = .13$) was significantly different than the “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 1.34$, $SD = .08$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 1.29$, $SD = .06$). The “I’m not a Feminist, but...” condition did not significantly different from the “I am a Feminist” condition.

With regard to the belief that “There is no longer a need for the feminist movement” ANOVA results revealed a significant effect for feminist identification, $F(2, 357) = 126.76$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .403$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .08$) was significantly different than the “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 1.80$, $SD = .05$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 1.15$, $SD = .04$). The “I’m not a Feminist, but...” condition was also significantly different than the “I am a Feminist” condition.

With regard to the dependent variable “Feminism isn’t relevant to my life or values” ANOVA results revealed a significant effect for feminist identification, $F(2, 357) = 149.62$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .453$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .08$) was significantly different than the “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 1.88$, $SD = .05$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition

($M = 1.15$, $SD = .04$). The “I’m not a Feminist, but...” condition was also significantly different than the “I am a Feminist” condition.

With regard to the dependent variable “I do not want to be associated with the image of feminism or feminists,” ANOVA results revealed a significant effect, $F(2, 357) = 133.35$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .417$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .11$) was significantly different than the “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 2.31$, $SD = .06$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 1.33$, $SD = .05$). The “I’m not a Feminist, but...” condition was also significantly different than the “I am a Feminist” condition.

Taken together, these results partially support this hypothesis, mainly that nonfeminists and postfeminist more strongly endorse postfeminist beliefs than feminists, with postfeminists falling between nonfeminists and feminists. However, postfeminists were not significantly different than nonfeminists on feminist beliefs.

Table 7

Feminist Identification Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate F-statistics for Feminist and Postfeminist Beliefs

Variable	<i>F</i>	Eta ²	Nonfeminists (1)		Postfeminists (2)		Feminists (3)		Post hoc
			<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Feminist Beliefs	105.53	.368	55.18	1.10	60.97 _{ab}	0.64	69.67	0.49	3 > 2 > 1
No Support for Gender Equality	5.10	.022	1.74	0.13	1.34	0.08	1.29	0.06	1, 2 > 3
No Need for Feminism	126.76	.403	2.31	0.08	1.80 _{ab}	0.05	1.15	0.04	1 > 2 > 3

Feminism is Irrelevant	149.62	.452	2.31	0.08	1.88	0.05	1.15	0.05	1 > 2 > 3
Negative Image of Feminism	133.25	.417	2.80	0.11	2.31	0.06	1.33	0.05	1 > 2 > 3

*Note: *p < .01 The number in parentheses in column heads refer to the numbers used for illustrating significant differences in the post-hoc column*

Hypothesis 3a. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine scores on traditional feminine norms measured via the CFNI-45 as a function of feminist identity status (i.e., feminist, postfeminist, not feminist). There was a significant effect, $F(2, 355) = 10.56$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .045$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 121.13$, $SD = 14.66$) was significantly different than the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 114.83$, $SD = 12.71$), but was not significantly different from the “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 120.30$, $SD = 13.14$).

The “I’m not a Feminist, but...” condition was significantly different than the “I am a Feminist” condition. These results provide partial support for this hypothesis, that nonfeminists endorsed traditional feminine norms significantly higher than feminists. However, they did not significantly differ from postfeminists, suggesting that this group is more traditional than self-identified feminists.

Hypothesis 3b. A 2x3 factorial ANOVA was used to explore the effects of postfeminist beliefs on the interaction between investment in appearance and thinness. Investment in appearance and thinness variables were split into high and low groups using a median-split. The results revealed that there was no significant main effect of postfeminist beliefs on investment in appearance (CFNI- Investment in appearance scale), $F(1, 365) = .46$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .001$. The main effect of thinness (CFNI – thinness scale) on postfeminist beliefs was also not significant, $F(1, 365) = 1.30$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .004$. The interaction between the two factors was also not

significant, $F(1, 365) = 2.99, p > .05, \eta^2 = .008$. These results do not appear to support this hypothesis, as higher levels of endorsement of variables related to traditional feminine appearance did not effect postfeminist beliefs.

Hypothesis 4. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare feminist identification group differences on meritocratic beliefs (PMI-R). The result emerged significant, $F(2, 355) = 64.79, p < .01, \eta^2 = .264$, for the three conditions. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 92.77, SD = 3.42$) did not significantly differ from “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 85.33, SD = 1.97$). The “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 62.53, SD = 1.5$), was significantly different from both the “I am Not a Feminist” and “I am Not a Feminist, but...” conditions. These results support this hypothesis in which feminists endorsed significantly lower levels of meritocratic beliefs than postfeminists and nonfeminists.

Hypothesis 5. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare feminist identification group differences on self-surveillance (OBCS). There was a significant effect of feminist identification on self-surveillance, $F(2, 355) = 3.48, p < .05, \eta^2 = .023$, for the three conditions. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 22.28, SD = 1.52$) differed significantly differ from “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 32.53, SD = .89$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 32.52, SD = .67$). The “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition was not significantly different from the “I am a Feminist” condition. These results are contrary to the hypothesis, in which it was posited that feminists would report lower levels of self-surveillance than nonfeminists and postfeminists. However, these results indicate that nonfeminists report significantly lower levels

of self-surveillance than both feminists and postfeminists, who did not significantly differ from each other.

Hypothesis 6. A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if participation in sexualized behaviors (SBS-P), approval of sexualized behaviors in women in general (SBS-A), and traditional sexual norms (CFNI – Sexual Fidelity) differ as a function of feminist identification. MANOVA results revealed significant differences among feminist identification on the dependent variables, Wilks' $\Lambda = .863$, $F(6, 357) = 9.02$, $p < .001$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .069$ (See Table 8). One-way ANOVAs were conducted on each dependent variable as a follow-up test to MANOVA. There was a significant effect of feminist identification on participation in sexualized behaviors, $F(2, 357) = 3.46$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .020$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 17.90$, $SD = .94$) did not significantly differ from “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 19.78$, $SD = .54$) or the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 18.06$, $SD = .41$). The “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition was significantly different the “I am a Feminist” condition. These results indicate that postfeminists endorsed significantly higher levels of participation in sexualized behaviors than feminists, although this difference was not significantly different from nonfeminists.

With regard to approval of sexualized behaviors in women in general (SBS-A), a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare group differences. There was a significant effect of feminist identification on approval of sexualized behaviors, $F(2, 357) = 6.17$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .031$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 31.87$, $SD = 1.57$) significantly differed from “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 36.89$, $SD = .91$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M =$

37.90, $SD = .69$). The “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition was not significantly different from the “I am a Feminist” condition. These results reveal that nonfeminists endorse significantly lower levels of approval of sexualized behavior in other women compared to feminists and postfeminists.

With regard to traditional sexual norms (CFNI – fidelity scale), a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare group differences. There was a significant effect of feminist identification on traditional sexual norms, $F(2, 357) = 16.44, p < .01, \eta^2 = .084$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 14.18, SD = .64$) was significantly different from “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 12.37, SD = .37$) and the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 10.60, SD = .28$). The “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition was also significantly different from the “I am a Feminist” condition. These results indicate that self-identified feminists demonstrated lower endorsement of traditional sexual norms than postfeminists who, in turn, demonstrated lower endorsement of traditional sexual norms than nonfeminists.

When taken together, these results partially support this hypothesis. Nonfeminists appear to demonstrate higher levels of sexually conservative behavior (i.e., less participation in and acceptance of sexualized behavior and higher endorsement of traditional sexual norms). Postfeminists appear to participate significantly more in sexualized behaviors, but also appear to hold more traditional sexual norms than feminists, although less so than nonfeminists. Feminists appear to hold the least belief in traditional sexual norms, but do not appear to engage in sexualized behavior as much as postfeminists, though they indicate that this behavior is acceptable in women in general.

Table 8

Feminist Identification Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate F-statistics for Sexual Behavior Variables

Variable	F	Eta ²	Nonfeminists (1)		Postfeminists (2)		Feminists (3)		Post hoc
			M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Participation in Sexualized Behaviors	3.77*	0.20	17.90	0.94	19.78	0.54	18.06	0.41	2 > 3
Approval of Sexualized Behaviors	5.71*	0.03	31.78	1.57	36.89	0.91	37.90	0.369	1 < 2, 3
Sexual Fidelity	16.65*	0.08	14.18	0.64	12.37	0.37	10.60b	0.28	1 > 2 > 3

*Note: *p < .01 The number in parentheses in column heads refer to the numbers used for illustrating significant differences in the post-hoc column*

Hypothesis 7. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to differences in sexual self-efficacy (FSSI) as a function of feminist identification. There was a significant effect, $F(2, 355) = 10.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .054$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a Feminist” condition ($M = 39.00$, $SD = 1.06$) did not significantly differ from “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 39.37$, $SD = .61$). The “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 42.53$, $SD = .47$) differed significantly from both the “I am Not a Feminist” condition and the “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition. These results provide partial support for this hypothesis in which feminists endorsed the highest level of sexual self-efficacy. However, postfeminists did not differ significantly from nonfeminists.

Hypothesis 8a. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare differences across the feminist identification groups on general psychological symptomology (SC). There was a significant effect, $F(2, 355) = 8.05$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .043$, for the three conditions. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni test indicated that the mean score for the “I am Not a

Feminist” condition ($M = 29.39$, $SD = 1.34$) was significantly different from “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition ($M = 34.37$, $SD = .78$), but not the “I am a Feminist” condition ($M = 30.97$, $SD = .59$). The “I am Not a Feminist, but...” condition was also significantly different from the “I am a Feminist” condition. These results provide partial support for this hypothesis. However, it appears that postfeminists report significantly higher levels of psychological symptomology.

Hypothesis 8b. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate differences in self-esteem (RSES) as a function of feminist identification. There was not a significant effect of feminist identification on self-esteem, $F(2, 355) = 1.31$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .007$. These results do not support the hypothesis that feminists would report significantly higher levels of self-esteem.

Hypothesis 8c. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether or not satisfaction of life (SLS) differed as a function of feminist identification. There was not a significant effect of feminist identification on satisfaction with life, $F(2, 355) = 0.67$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .004$. These results do not support the hypothesis that feminists would report significantly higher levels of satisfaction with life.

Hypothesis 8d. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare group differences on empowerment (PPS). There was not a significant effect of feminist identification on personal empowerment, $F(2, 355) = 2.13$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .013$. These results do not support the hypothesis that feminists would report significantly higher levels of personal empowerment than the other group.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Overview

The current study sought to explore the viability of a model of postfeminism and the significance of feminism in the lives of women by analyzing participants' willingness to self-identify as a feminist and examining the relationships among feminist identification, attitudes and behaviors, and psychological correlates. The first hypothesis was designed to determine if feminist self-identification could be predicted by variables related to traditional feminine norms, especially related to physical appearance and self-surveillance, individualistic/meritocratic beliefs, and sexualized behavior. Subsequent hypotheses examined specific group differences on the aforementioned variables. The remaining hypotheses explored group differences on variables related to psychological health. This section presents an overview of the findings before considering the evidence for each hypothesis separately. It ends with a discussion of the clinical implications, and the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

First, participants were asked to self-identify as either a feminist (Feminists), not a feminist but holding feminist beliefs (Postfeminists), or not feminist (Nonfeminists). It is important to note that participants did not explicitly endorse the postfeminist label, but rather it was subsequently assigned to those who selected the "I'm not a feminist, but I support feminist beliefs." Based primarily on the conceptual framework of Gill (2007), the model described postfeminist culture by proposing that there has been a shift in gender-role identity, sexualized behavior, and individualist/meritocratic beliefs. Specifically, the current study expected to find the following gender-role attitudes in postfeminist women: an increased emphasis on traditional feminine appearance and a higher level of endorsement of traditional gender-roles when

compared to self-identified feminists. The second factor of this model was that postfeminist women would demonstrate higher endorsement of individualism/meritocratic values.

Additionally, the current study expected to find higher levels of self-surveillance in women who did not identify as feminist. The final component of the model involves sexualization, in which postfeminist women were expected to engage more in sexualized behaviors and demonstrate more sexually agentic behavior. This is the first known study that has examined this model of postfeminism on an individual level.

The final goal of the study was to compare psychological correlates of feminists, postfeminists, and nonfeminists. The current study attempted to analyze psychological health in these groups of women by investigating levels of general psychological symptoms, satisfaction with life, self-esteem, and empowerment.

The results of this study generally provided support for Gill's (2007) conceptual model of postfeminism. Group membership of feminists, postfeminists, and nonfeminists was classified beyond that predicted by chance by postfeminist variables (i.e., "Don't Support Gender Equality," "No Need for Feminism," "Negative Image of Feminists," "Feminism is Irrelevant") gender-role ideology, sexualized behavior, sexual agency, meritocratic beliefs, and self-surveillance.

Feminist Identification

In terms of feminist identification, 56.2% of participants endorsed the label "I am a feminist," 32.7% endorsed "I am not a feminist, but I agree with feminist values" (referred to as 'postfeminists'), and 10.9% endorsed "I am not a feminist." Though not specifically hypothesized, these results seem to report much higher levels of feminist identification than most recent studies. Most studies have placed feminist identification at 15-30% of the general

population (Duncan, 2010), with only one known study placing feminist identification at 56% of the population (Smeal, 2012). The percentage of women falling into the nonlabeler/egalitarian/postfeminist category seems to be slightly lower than most studies survey (Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010), as this group tends to be the largest in most studies. In addition, the percentage of nonfeminists in this study seems to be quite lower than most recent studies (Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010). These results may be due to having recruited participants from an online sample, in which participants who were specifically interested in the topic may have opted to take the survey.

Examining feminist identification with regard to generational cohorts indicated that younger women (i.e., college-aged) were significantly less likely than expected to endorse the feminist label, despite nominally support feminist values (i.e., postfeminist). This supports the notion that postfeminism may relate more to younger women than older generations (Douglas, 2010; Levy, 2005). Additionally, in this sample, Gen-Xers were more likely than expected to identify as nonfeminist. This finding lends support to the notion of a feminist backlash that was propagated by those who had come to age after the second-wave feminist movement (Genz & Brabon, 2009).

Correlational Findings

Women who did not identify as feminists (i.e., participants who selected either “I am not a feminists, but I support feminist beliefs,” or “I am not a feminist”) were more likely to endorse the tenets of postfeminism. Specifically, they were more likely to believe that feminism is no longer relevant to their lives or values, less likely to want to be associated with the image of feminists or feminism, and more likely to endorse the belief that feminism is no longer necessary. Lack of support for gender equality was not significantly related to self-identified

feminists or the postfeminist group, but nonfeminists significantly endorsed this item, demonstrating that they do not believe in gender equality. Despite nominally endorsing support for the feminist movement, the postfeminist group demonstrated a negative relationship with feminist beliefs, as did nonfeminists. Self-identified feminists were associated with higher endorsement of feminist beliefs. This is the first known study to measure the women's specific endorsement of the tenets of postfeminism. These findings support a characterization of the shift of feminism to postfeminism as involving these specific beliefs. (Genz & Brabon, 2009; Gill, 2007; Hall & Rodriguez, 2003; McRobbie, 2009).

With regard to association with other variables, self-identifying as a feminist was related to having less traditional feminine norms, especially in the areas of sexual monogamy. Feminist self-identification was also related negatively to participation in sexualized behaviors, although feminist identification was positively associated with approval of the participation in sexualized behaviors by other women. Feminist self-identification by women also was related with higher levels of sexual self-efficacy and lower levels of self-surveillance.

Postfeminist identification was positively associated with traditional feminine norms, especially in the areas of sexual monogamy and investment in appearance. Postfeminist identification was also moderately correlated with meritocratic beliefs. With regard to sexual behavior, postfeminist identification was related to higher participation in sexualized behavior and lower levels of sexual self-efficacy.

Nonfeminist identification was positively correlated with traditional feminine norms, especially sexual monogamy. It was also strongly related to meritocratic beliefs. With regard to sexual behavior, nonfeminist identification was associated with less approval of women

engaging in sexualized behavior and less sexual self-efficacy. Lower levels of self-surveillance were also related to nonfeminist identification.

With regard to psychological correlates, most variables were not significantly related to feminist identification. Feminist identification was associated with less general psychological symptomology. Postfeminist identification was weakly associated with higher levels of general psychological symptomology and lower levels of personal empowerment.

Discussion of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 1 attempted to analyze the relevance of Gill's (2007) model of postfeminism to determine if feminist group identification could be predicted by the following variables: by postfeminist variables (i.e., "Don't Support Gender Equality," "No Need for Feminism," "Negative Image of Feminists," "Feminism is Irrelevant") gender-role ideology, sexualized behavior, sexual agency, meritocratic beliefs, and self-surveillance. The results of current study provided general support for this model's ability to distinguish between various feminist identities (i.e., nonfeminist, postfeminist, feminist), as it successfully classified groups well above what would be expected by chance alone. This finding lends support to the notion that there is a difference between women who choose to identify as a feminist versus those who nominally support feminist beliefs but do not specifically identify as a feminist. In addition, these results generally support Gill's notion of postfeminist characteristics in society, but reflect these qualities with regard to individual beliefs and behaviors. These results give credence to the notion that postfeminism, as theoretically described, is a phenomenon that is different than feminism and nonfeminism.

The discriminant function analysis produced two significant functions. Variables that significantly contributed to the first function were Feminism is Irrelevant, Negative Image of

Feminism, No Need for Feminism, feminist beliefs (negative), and meritocratic beliefs.

Therefore it appears that this function represents antifeminist beliefs and strong meritocratic beliefs. The variables that contributed to the second function were No Support for Gender Equality (negative), approval of sexualized behavior, participation in sexualized behaviors, investment in appearance, and higher levels of self-surveillance. It appears that the second function indicates a strong emphasis on sexualized behavior, appearance, and self-surveillance.

Based on the group centroids, the nonfeminist group was located on the positive end of the anti-feminist/pro-meritocratic continuum and on the negative extreme of the sexualized behavior/appearance conscious function. This finding is consistent with the belief that nonfeminist women are anti-feminist, pro-meritocracy, and more likely to be sexually conservative. The postfeminist group was separated from the other groups with a high score on the sexualized behavior/appearance conscious function and moderate scores on the anti-feminist/pro-meritocratic function. The feminist group was identified by low scores on the anti-feminist/pro-meritocratic function and moderate scores on the sexualized behavior function. The first discriminant function appears to differentiate between the self-identified feminist group and the non-identifiers (i.e., both nonfeminists and postfeminists). Therefore, the belief that feminism is irrelevant to their lives or values, having a negative image of feminists, the belief that there is no longer a need for feminists, lack of support for general feminist beliefs, and strong meritocratic beliefs appear to distinguish women who are willing to identify themselves explicitly as feminists from those who are not. Nonfeminists are most heavily loaded on this function. Postfeminists were positively associated with this function, while feminists were negatively associated. It seems that although these individuals nominally support feminist beliefs, they may demonstrate some antifeminist sentiment, which is consistent with the 'feminist

backlash' postfeminist sentiment (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2009). These results partially contribute to the body of literature that identifies “nonlabelers” as more similar to nonfeminist than feminists. For example, Zucker and Bay-Cheng (2010), found that women who held feminist beliefs, but did not identify as feminists were almost indistinguishable from nonfeminists on some measures of views and values (e.g., social dominance, meritocratic beliefs, sexist attitudes).

The second function increases the separation between the postfeminist group and nonfeminist group beyond what is captured by the first function alone. This indicates those variables that load on the second function—No support for gender equality (negative), approval and participation in sexualized behavior, investment in appearance, and self-surveillance — distinguish the postfeminist group from the nonfeminist group. The postfeminist group is most heavily loaded on this function, with nonfeminists negatively associated with this function, and feminists falling at the midpoint of this function. These results appear to support the notion that postfeminism is highly associated with sexualized behavior and sexual imagery (Douglas, 2010; Levy, 2005). As expected, one distinguishing characteristic is support for gender equality, at least nominally. The other distinguishing characteristics are variables associated with sexualized behavior, self-surveillance, and appearance, rather than their feminist beliefs (i.e., both appear to be somewhat anti-feminist). Perhaps then, what appears to separate postfeminists from their nonfeminist counterparts appears to be their participation in more in sexualized behaviors, approval of sexualized behavior for women in general, concern about their appearance, and engagement in higher levels of self-surveillance with regards to their bodies. According to this notion, postfeminism may be embodied by women who use their physical appearance and sexuality to gain power (Genz & Brabon, 2009). As a group, postfeminists seem to be more

sexually liberal than their nonfeminist counterparts. Feminists are moderately correlated with this group, indicating that they also tend to be more sexually liberal than nonfeminists, though to a lesser extent than postfeminists.

It is interesting to note the variables that did not significantly contribute to either function. Sexual self-efficacy nor sexual fidelity (i.e., approval of casual sexual relationships) did not significantly contribute to group classification. Somewhat surprisingly, general traditional feminine norms did not significantly contribute, nor did the feminine norm of thinness.

Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis two directly analyzed group differences between feminists, postfeminists, and nonfeminists on the tenets of postfeminism and feminist beliefs. The results indicated that there were significant differences between all three groups on measures of postfeminist and feminist beliefs. Specifically, with regard to nominal support for gender equality, as predicted, nonfeminists scored significantly lower than feminists and postfeminists, who did not differ significantly. With regard to the tenets of postfeminism (i.e., feminism is no longer relevant, not wanting to be associated with the image of feminism, and not wanting to be associated with the image of feminism), nonfeminists score significantly higher than postfeminists, who scored significantly higher than feminists. However, with regard to explicit feminist beliefs, postfeminists did not differ significantly from nonfeminists, while feminists score significantly higher on this measure.

The results generally support this hypothesis. As expected, nonfeminist were least likely to nominally support gender equality. It is likely that these women hold very socially conservative beliefs, in which they view men and women have inherently different roles and prefer to keep these arrangements constant (Henley, Meng, O'Brien, McCarthy, & Sockloskie, 1998). These results also align with the prediction that postfeminists were more likely to endorse

the tenets of postfeminism than feminists, though they endorsed anti-feminists beliefs less so than nonfeminists.

However, postfeminists were expected to be similar to feminists on endorsement of feminist beliefs. Therefore, while they may state that they support gender equality, it appears as though they do not hold explicitly feminists attitudes. This finding supports the research of Liss, Hoffner, and Crawford (2000) who found that self-identified feminists held stronger feminist beliefs on all feminist perspectives (i.e., liberal, radical, socialist), except for cultural feminists. However, in the Liss, Hoffner, and Crawford (2000) study, women who did not choose a feminist identity tended to fall between feminists and nonfeminists on the measures of feminist beliefs, which is not congruent with the current study. These results may speak to the depoliticization of issues that is referred to in postfeminist literature (Gill, 2007; McRobbie, 2009). Though most women appear to nominally endorse feminist beliefs, it seems that only those who explicitly identify as feminists endorse items specifically pertaining to feminist political issues. This may also relate to previous findings that indicate that only women who explicitly identify as feminists appear to be committed to activism (Duncan, 2010; Zucker, 2004).

Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3a directly measured group differences between nonfeminists, postfeminists, and feminists on traditional feminine norms. Feminists differed significantly from nonfeminists and postfeminists, both groups endorsing traditional feminine norms significantly higher than feminists. The majority of research shows that feminists are less likely to endorse traditional gender-roles (Mezydlo & Betz, 1980; Toler, Suter, & Trautman, 2004). These results contradict studies that did not find a significant relationship between feminist attitudes and traditional feminine gender-roles (Twenge, 1999). It was predicted that nonfeminists would

score significantly higher than both feminists and postfeminists on this variable. It is somewhat surprising that postfeminists and nonfeminists did not significantly differ on endorsement of traditional feminine norms. Robnett and Anderson (2012) found that traditional feminine values and feminist identification was mediated by the tendency to hold negative views of feminists, which postfeminists were more likely to endorse in the current study. This finding lends support to the notion that postfeminism represents a return to traditional feminine norms as speculated by many (Douglas, 2010; Genz & Barbon, 2009; Gill, 2007; Levy, 2005; Ringrose, 2013).

Hypothesis 3b was designed to test the premise that feminine norms related to physical appearance (i.e., femininity as a bodily property) would be higher for those who endorsed stronger postfeminist beliefs. This was tested by using scales that measured investment in appearance and the value of thinness. This hypothesis was not supported, as higher levels of endorsement of variables related to traditional feminine appearance was not affected by postfeminist beliefs. Several studies have analyzed the relationship between feminist identity and attitudes and the beauty ideal. These studies have shown mixed results, with some authors speculating that the beauty ideal is so pervasive in western society, that feminists have difficulty renouncing the beauty ideal at the same rate as their nonfeminist peers (Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004). Likewise, Riley and Schraff (2012) found that most women engaged in conventional beauty practices despite being ambivalent about the relationship between feminism and femininity. It appears that having stronger feminist attitudes does not relate to endorsing traditional feminine attitudes relating to physical appearance.

Another aspect of this finding may be explained by the benefits that women gain from adhering to conventional beauty practices. Stuart and Donaghue (2011) found that many women participated in beauty rituals as a method of gaining status among other women and increasing

self-confidence. Other studies have found that women have difficulty renouncing the beauty ideal because women gain power and status through accommodating them (Collins, 2004; Erchull & Liss, 2013; Nowatzki & Morry, 2009; Riley & Schraff, 2012; Rubin, Nemeroff, & Russo, 2004). Though not specifically measured, it is speculated that all women, regardless of feminist identity, could benefit from adhering to traditional beauty practices, which may explain the current study's findings.

Hypothesis 4. Group differences on meritocratic beliefs were analyzed to test hypothesis 4, which predicted that feminists would have significantly lower meritocratic beliefs than postfeminists and nonfeminists. The results provided support for this hypothesis as feminists scored the lowest of the three groups. Postfeminists did not differ significantly from nonfeminists on this measure. Many studies have examined the role of neo-liberal (i.e., meritocratic/individualistic) beliefs and non-labelers. The current study aligns with previous research that has identified categories of women who appear to have some similar beliefs to feminists, yet decline to self-identify as being a feminist. In these studies, 'non-labelers' are often found to place more emphasis on individualism and merit than self-identified feminists (Zucker & Bay-Cheng, 2010). Similar to Zucker and Bay-Cheng (2010), the current study did not find significant differences between 'nonlabelers' and nonfeminists. Using cluster analysis, Fitz, Zucker, and Bay-Cheng (2012) found that neoliberals may compose a separate group from feminists and nonfeminists. The study found that while neoliberal individuals may superficially hold some similar values to feminists, they tend to score higher on measures of meritocratic and individual values, reflecting that instead of holding values specific to gender equality, these individuals tend to hold neo-liberal beliefs. Alternatively, these findings may also reflect the

depoliticization of postfeminist culture as postfeminists are much more likely to disregard institutional causes for injustices, but are more likely to attribute injustices to personal factors.

Hypothesis 5. Hypothesis 5 examined group differences in self-surveillance. It was predicted that feminists would endorse lower levels of self-surveillance than postfeminists and nonfeminists. This hypothesis was not supported by the results, as feminists did not report the lowest levels of self-surveillance. Nonfeminists scored significantly lower than both postfeminists and feminists, while feminists did not differ significantly from postfeminists. Previous research on the association of feminism and self-surveillance has been conflicting. The results of the current study are similar to Haines and colleagues (2008), who did not find a significant link between feminist self-identification and self-objectification in a sample of lesbian women. However, another study found that feminist self-identification was negatively related to self-surveillance and body objectification (Hurt et al., 2007).

One reason for these results may be that societal beauty pressures exist for most women, regardless of feminist identification. For example, Fingerete and Gleaves (2004) found that feminism and self-esteem failed to serve as a protective factor of body dissatisfaction, awareness of beauty standards and internalization of those standards. Likewise, Rubin, Nemeroff, and Russo (2004) found that feminists, like other women, have difficulty renouncing the beauty ideal. In this study, women often discussed feeling guilty or ashamed for participating in conventional beauty practices in spite of their feminist ideology. Though feminists may feel ambivalent toward beauty practices, they may still engage in them (Riley & Schraff, 2012). On the contrary, given that nonfeminists tend to be more sexually conservative, they may be less likely to feel pressure to conform to the beauty ideal, and therefore less likely to participate in self-surveillance than feminists and postfeminists.

Hypothesis 6. Hypothesis 6 measured differences in sexualized behavior between the three groups, as related to participation in sexualized behavior, approval of women participating in sexualized behavior, and holding traditional sexual norms (e.g., valuing monogamy vs. casual sexual relationships). It was posited that postfeminists would endorse higher levels of sexualized behaviors than feminists and nonfeminists. With regard to participation in sexualized behaviors, postfeminists scored significantly higher than feminists. There was not a significant difference between nonfeminists and the other groups. With regard to approval of women participating in sexualized behaviors, nonfeminists scored significantly lower than both postfeminist and feminists. Feminists did not differ significantly from postfeminists. With regard to traditional sexual norms (i.e., sexual monogamy), nonfeminists scored significantly higher than the other two groups. Postfeminists also scored higher than feminists on this measure. When considering these three results together, hypothesis 6 is partially supported. Postfeminists appear to participate in sexualized behavior at higher rates than the other groups. However, somewhat paradoxically, they appear to hold more traditional sexual beliefs. On the other hand, while feminists appear to participate in sexualized behavior less than postfeminists, they appear to hold the least traditional sexual norms and approve of women's participation in sexualized behavior at a similar rate as postfeminists. Not surprisingly, nonfeminists endorse the lowest participation and approval of sexualized behavior, and the highest endorsement of traditional feminine sexual norms.

The results provide support for the paradoxical notion of postfeminist sexualization. As proposed by several authors, postfeminism appears to embody a 'porno-chic' culture (Levy, 2005). While feminists were less likely to participate in sexualized behavior, they approved in women making the choice to participate in sexualized behavior, whereas nonfeminists were more

likely to disapprove of this behavior. These results are consistent with Liss, Erchull, & Ramsey (2011), who found that women who were more likely to view the current gender system as fair were more likely to enjoy self-sexualization. These results also provide support for the paradox of sexual behavior in postfeminist culture. Sexualized behavior and sexual imagery are pervasive within postfeminist culture, yet there appears to be the resurgence of traditional feminine norms. Feminists have been found to be least likely to endorse the traditional sexual double standard than egalitarians and nonfeminists (Bay-Cheng & Zucker, 2007). These results provide partial support for Nowatzki and Morry (2009) who found that women who hold more traditional gender-roles (e.g., hyperfeminine women) are more likely to engage in self-sexualization (e.g., take pole dancing classes, participate in wet t-shirt contests) and accept the sexualization of culture. However, in the current study these results do not apply to nonfeminist women who reported the highest traditional feminist norms but the lowest endorsement of sexualized behavior. Liss, Erchull, and Ramsey (2011) found that higher enjoyment of self-sexualization was related to hostile and benevolent sexism, conservative attitudes, and traditional feminine norms (i.e., the importance of romantic relationships, valuing thinness, and investing in appearance). The results of the current study do not provide support for these findings, as participation in sexualized behavior was not significantly related to holding traditional feminine norms. These results may also speak to the ‘virgin-whore’ dichotomy that is theorized to present in postfeminist culture, in which women are expected to both be sexually appealing and sexually liberated, yet sexually conservative so as not to be considered overly promiscuous (Levy, 2005).

Hypothesis 7. Hypothesis 7 predicted that both feminists and postfeminists would endorse higher levels of sexually agentic behavior when compared to nonfeminists. The results provided partial support for the hypothesis, in that feminists endorsed higher levels of sexual

agency than the other groups. Somewhat surprisingly, postfeminists did not differ significantly from nonfeminists on this measure. Some feminist critics assert that one of the healthier aspects of postfeminist culture is the emergence of female sexual subjectivity, versus objectivity (Gill, 2007). However, these results may highlight the paradox that the highly sexualized imagery of postfeminist culture does not actually lead to sexually agentic behavior. This may be because postfeminist sexuality is still focused on the male sexual narrative, rather than female sexual subjectivity (McRobbie, 2009).

The results of the current study are in partial support for the results found by Bay-Cheng and Zucker (2007), who examined the relationship between feminist self-identification and sexuality. The study found that feminists score higher on measures of erotophilia than egalitarians or nonfeminists. However, egalitarians were found to score highest in agentic condom use and there were no differences among feminists, egalitarians, and nonfeminists on measures of general sexual assertiveness and satisfaction.

Another possible explanation may be that participation in sexualized behavior can actually lead to further objectification and negative psychological consequences. For example, Breines, Crocker, and Garcia (2008) found that self-objectification predicted decreased psychological well-being (i.e., decreased feelings of feelings alive and being present in the moment), increased levels of investment in appearance, and increased feelings of both attractiveness and unattractiveness. Yost and McCarthy (2012) examined the phenomenon of heterosexual women engaging in same-sex sexual behavior at college parties (e.g., kissing women at parties) and found that while a minority of participants felt empowered by these sexual experiences, the majority of participants felt sexually objectified. Some women likely felt empowered by having positive reactions from audience members. Therefore, it is possible that

sexual agency may be mediated by feelings of objectification. Bay-Cheng (2015) argues that sexual agency is heavily tied to neoliberal ideals of choice. For example, levels of ‘slutiness’ are more related to control over one’s sexuality versus the number of sexual partners.

One argument against the benefits of postfeminist sexuality is its emphasis on adopting the male sexual narrative rather than genuine female sexual subjectivity. Burkett and Hamilton (2012) echoed the same concerns in which women are empowered and in charge of their sexuality yet forced to accept the terms of heteronormative sexual contracts. The authors indicated that participants often blamed themselves for their experiences of sexual assault due to the current postfeminist climate that emphasizes empowerment and choice. The authors speculated that this postfeminist climate lacks critique of social or institutional forces that may be necessary to change the prevalence of sexual assault. The current study lends support to the supposition that feminism may lead to higher levels of sexual self-efficacy as it allows women to gain empowerment from a critical viewpoint of contemporary society, whereas postfeminists may lack the critical mindset or be subjected to the traditional gender-roles of male-dominated society.

Hypothesis 8. Hypothesis 8 related to psychological correlates of feminist identification. Feminists were predicted to endorse lower levels of general psychological symptomology, higher levels of self-esteem, higher satisfaction with life, and higher levels of empowerment than postfeminists and nonfeminists, despite conflicting evidence in the literature. The results provided very minimal support for these hypotheses. Postfeminists appeared to endorse significantly higher levels of general psychological symptomology than feminists and nonfeminists, who did not differ significantly from each other. However, there was not a significant difference between groups on self-esteem, satisfaction with life, and personal

empowerment. The most surprising finding appears to be that feminists did not report significantly higher levels of personal empowerment. Feminism is often purported to provide women with the cognitive framework to cope with gender inequality, and focuses heavily on personal empowerment. For example, Eisele and Stake (2008) measured feminist identity, feminist attitudes, self-efficacy (i.e., personal self-efficacy, commitment to activism, and feelings of empowerment) after completing a Women and Gender Studies course. The study found that explicit identification of feminism was related to higher self-efficacy.

This results do not support those of Saunders and Kashubeck-West (2006) who found that women who scored higher on more advanced stages of feminist identity were found to have higher levels of psychological well-being or Yakushko (2007) who found that women with feminist values were found to have a higher satisfaction with life than those with traditional values. Instead, the current study appears to support the literature that feminist identity is not directly related to psychological correlates. For example, Hurt and colleagues (2007) noted that feminist identity was not directly correlated to depression, eating attitudes, and self-esteem, though it was indirectly linked to those variables through body objectification and value of thinness.

Previous studies have shown mixed support for feminist self-identification being associated with psychological health. One explanation for the lack of significant findings could be that all women have reaped the benefits of the second-wave feminist movement. Due to the increase in women's rights, it is likely that most women generally feel empowered.

Clinical Implications

The results of the current study may have some implications for clinical work, despite the lack of a strong relationship between feminist identity and psychological correlates found in this

study. Postfeminist identification was shown to be associated with higher levels of general psychological symptomology. Though the exact cause of this finding is unknown, it may be of note to clinicians that women who demonstrate characteristics of postfeminist culture may be of slightly higher risk of psychological symptoms.

Based on the assertion that men have controlled society, and have therefore created the cultural narrative and societal values, feminist therapy offers a critique of this narrative by acknowledging and criticizing the consequences of the power differential between men and women within the therapeutic environment (Miller, 1976). By bringing attention to societal structures and individual relationships that perpetuate this power differential, feminist therapy seeks to shift the narrative to be inclusive of women's voices and experiences (Miller, 1976). Some of the core components of feminist therapy have historically included consciousness raising, social activism, critical analysis of gender-role ideology, and cognitive reframing or resocialization (Israeli & Santor, 2000). While many modern psychotherapeutic orientations are now inclusive of the tenets of feminist therapy, it may be beneficial for clinicians to explore client's attitudes related to feminism, gender-role ideology, sexual agency and sociopolitical values.

One area of clinical exploration may be the presence of meritocratic beliefs. One proposed benefit of strong meritocratic beliefs is that it may motivate people to take personal responsibility for self-improvement (McRobbie, 2009). However, a negative consequence of these beliefs may be that it causes women to blame themselves for experiencing the effects of gender inequality in modern society. Given that women who do not identify as a feminist tend to endorse stronger meritocratic beliefs, they may be more at risk for feelings of guilt or self-doubt than feminist women. For example, these women may be more likely to experience self-blame

for poor job advancement or economic inequality, experiencing sexual assault or gender-based discrimination (Burkett & Hamilton, 2012), or other personality attributes (e.g., lack of assertiveness, passivity). Therapy that is inclusive of feminist values may help reduce self-blame or shame in these women by emphasizing the influence of the current sociopolitical climate on these personal issues and help with cognitive restructuring. By doing so, feminist therapy would help women develop the cognitive schemas necessary to combat the pressures created by these societal issues.

Another important area of clinical attention with regard to postfeminism is the sexualization of culture. There have been many studies documenting the negative consequences of the sexualization of culture (American Psychological Association, 2010), such as the negative the association between sexual objectification and negative psychological outcomes. The current study found that postfeminist women are more likely to engage in sexualized behaviors while simultaneously holding more traditional gender roles and lower levels of sexual self-efficacy. One explanation of these results could be related to cognitive dissonance due to participating in sexualized behavior, which may induce feelings of guilt due to violation of their traditional sexual norms, although this link was not specifically analyzed in this study. Therefore, it may be beneficial to explore the impetus behind sexualized behaviors with regard to both personal and societal pressures in therapy. Helping clients critically evaluate the virgin/whore phenomenon and other gender-role beliefs may reduce feelings of guilt in young women who engage in sexualized behavior. In addition, a sex-positive feminist framework in therapy may help women develop feelings of sexual self-efficacy, while reducing feelings of shame or guilt.

It is also of note that many women in the study placed emphasis on appearance, thinness, and self-surveillance, regardless of feminist self-identification. Clinicians should be aware that

this might be a normative experience most young women face. As with other issues identified here, therapy that is inclusive of feminist tenets is more likely to explore the influence of societal pressure of eating habits and the beauty ideal. By challenging these societal standards, feminist therapy may help women develop self-acceptance and self-confidence.

However, in general, it is important to note that women across the spectrum of feminist identity report high levels of personal empowerment, satisfaction with life, and self-esteem. Using a strength based approach that is typical of most feminist therapies, clinicians can help a client recognize her strengths and assist the client in building upon these strengths in other areas of her life (Evans, Kincade, & Seem, 2010). Finally, feminist therapists might encourage clients to use these personal strengths to make societal changes as well, referred to as feminist praxis.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are several limitations to the present study that should be considered. One limitation is related to the generalizability of the results of the study. One frequently cited limitation of using online surveys is that studies have found Internet users to have significantly higher percentages of Caucasians, young adults, college graduates, and higher income respondents (Sautter et al., 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). These results were reflected in the current study, in which the sample was predominantly Caucasian, more highly educated, and had higher income than data released by the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Ethnic minorities were underrepresented, as were older adults. In terms of further demographic limitations, the participants of this study were generally located in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States, with a smaller proportion of participants being located in Canada. Therefore, the results of this study are most generalizable to individuals living in these areas, and may not reflect the views of rural areas or international samples.

It would be beneficial for future research on postfeminist trends to include a more diverse sample, including a larger proportion of ethnic minorities and rural participants. In addition, it would be interesting to include a larger international sample. Future researchers may wish to compare ethnic/racial differences or differences in socioeconomic status with regard to postfeminist variables. It may also be interesting to further investigate generational differences with regard to specific postfeminist traits, as the current study found some significant differences in feminist identification related to birth cohort.

Another limitation of this study is the self-selected sample. Given that participants were recruited from an online sample listed on social media, research message boards, and by word of mouth, this group may have had a higher interest in the topic than the average person. This may be reflected by the high percentage of women who identified as feminist, which was much higher than most previous studies. Along these lines, the percentage of participants identifying as nonfeminists was disproportionately low compared to the other two groups, which may affect the implications of the study.

Aside from the demographic limitations, additional limitations arise when using online survey data. While it can be hoped that participants were honest in their presentation of themselves, the anonymity of the Internet may have increased the likelihood that participants portrayed themselves in a dishonest way or responded to the survey more than once in order to be entered in the gift card drawing multiple times. It is unknown if this occurred.

With regard to the measures used in the survey, one limitation may be the postfeminist questionnaire that was used, since it was an unvalidated measure. While this may present as a limitation, given the novel nature of this project, no previous questionnaire existed which would have met this project's needs.

One of the most serious limitations of this study could be how postfeminists were classified. Though this project was based on testing a model of postfeminism, it is important to note that participants were not given the option to specifically identify as a ‘postfeminist,’ but rather the postfeminist label was given to those who selected “I’m not a feminist, but I support feminist goals.” In many studies, these participants are labeled as egalitarians or non-labelers. It is clear from the results that both self-identified feminists and nonfeminists embrace some postfeminist ideals. However, the results from the current study seem to support that participants who selected “I’m not a feminist, but I support feminist goals,” were most aligned with postfeminist variables as predicted, lending support to the decision to classify them as postfeminists. However, it may be beneficial for future researchers to develop a more in-depth and empirically validated measure of postfeminist beliefs.

The current study failed to find strong links between feminist identification and psychological correlates, which may partly be due to the psychological correlates that were selected. Future research is needed to examine variables related to body image or eating disturbance, or political activism. It was speculated that postfeminists may be at risk for higher levels of psychological distress due to identity conflict or intrapsychic conflict and. In order to gain more understanding of this conflict, future research could analyze predictors related to the incongruence between ideal and actual self or between hedonic and eudemonic well-being.

Summary and Conclusion

The current study generally supported a model of postfeminism in which feminist self-identification could be reliably predicted by variables related to postfeminist and feminist beliefs, traditional feminine norms, especially those related to physical appearance and self-surveillance, individualistic/meritocratic beliefs, and sexualized behavior. This model seems to validate the

phenomenon of postfeminism on an individual level, which has previously been only described as a societal shift. Although the current study did not explicitly ask participants to identify as postfeminists, women who were characterized as postfeminists were found to fall between feminists and nonfeminists on measures of postfeminist and feminist beliefs. They were found to hold traditional gender-role norms at the same rate as nonfeminists, engage in sexualized behaviors more than feminists and nonfeminists, and hold higher meritocratic beliefs than feminists, on par with nonfeminists. Finally, the current study adds to the conflicting research on the psychological benefits of explicit feminist identification. While feminist identification was not strongly linked to psychological correlates, it is likely that cultural and institutional improvements have benefited women by helping most women feel empowered.

Generally, these results seem to contradict the popular sentiment that “feminism is dead,” as the majority of participants self-identified as a feminist, and the vast majority of participants acknowledged holding feminist values. However, the results of the study also may give some credence to the evolution of feminist beliefs or to a revised image of feminists (e.g., investing in physical appearance, participating in sexualized behaviors).

Although this study did not support the observation that feminist beliefs have been declining, it does give some support to the conceptualization of postfeminism as a backlash against second-wave feminism. The women in this study who were classified as postfeminists seemed to hold antifeminist sentiments, yet nominally acknowledged some support for feminist values, without giving outright support to feminist beliefs. As such, it seems like these women take into account feminist values and support for gender equality, but may concomitantly depoliticize feminist issues. It also lends support to the notion that postfeminism is intertwined

with neoliberal values, in which women are now able to make a choice to revert back to traditional gender-role behavior.

Postfeminism encourages empowerment by relying on women adopting personal change as their method of advancement. Therefore, within postfeminist society, sociopolitical change may be contingent upon the interaction between individuals and their macrosystems. As the cultural narrative has shifted with the gains of the second wave, postfeminist women may be continuing to transmit their views of feminism on a micro-level, rather than attempting to make broader societal change. Some authors describe an even newer version of feminism, fourth-wave feminism, which blends technology and activism (Munro, n.d.). This type of activism utilizes social media to engage communities of women in a discussion and critique of misogyny in media and popular culture. As a result, sociopolitical change may be adopted at a different rate and through a different medium (i.e., via social media ‘call-outs’ vs. meetings or protests). However, it is uncertain if this method will be an effective way to bring about systemic change. Though, it is also debatable whether systemic change is even a goal for postfeminist women. The adoption and glamorization of many postfeminist characteristics in politics and the media wherein by, feminist principles are taken into account alongside antifeminist principles, appears to be indicative of one type evolution of within feminism. It remains to be seen how this notion will continue to evolve.

Appendix A: Intercorrelations between Predictor Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. No Support for Gender Equality	-	.22**	.24**	.17**	-.22**	.07	.01	.02	.08	-.01	-.06	-.09	-.01	.14**	.01	.01	.03	-.03
2. No Need for Feminism	-		.83**	.71**	-.66**	.25**	.05	.05	.31**	.05	-.21**	-.25**	-.01	.56**	.05	.00	.01	-.01
3. Feminism Is Irrelevant	-			.73**	-.66**	-.20**	.02	.05	.25**	.03	-.17**	-.23**	-.07	.54**	.01	-.02	-.02	-.04
4. Negative Image of Feminism	-				-.63**	.19**	.06	.07	.24**	.04	-.13	-.13*	-.04	.46**	.08	-.05	-.04	-.09
5. LFAIS	-					-.20**	.01	-.08	-.32**	-.02	.20**	.36**	.06	-.64**	.01	-.06	-.06	.01
6. CFNI -Total	-						.45**	.50**	.56**	-.09	-.31**	-.24**	.40**	.30**	.11*	-.10	.03	-.21**
7. CFNI - Thinness	-							.31**	.06	.10*	-.05	-.02	.60**	.07	.26**	-.35**	-.25**	-.42**
8. CFNI – Investment in Appearance	-								.03	.13*	-.01	-.06	.47**	.12*	.09	-.10	-.11*	-.21**
9. CFNI – Sexual Fidelity	-									-.34**	-.50**	-.49**	-.07	.39**	.02	.07	.09	.04
10. SBS – Participation	-										.44**	.20**	.12*	.19**	.17**	-.07	-.13*	-.04
11. SBS – Approval	-											.36**	.11*	-.20**	.03	-.11*	-.09	-.03
12. FSSI – Efficacy	-												.00	-.34**	-.05	.07	.04	.20**
13. OBCS – Surveillance	-													-.05	.24**	-.33**	-.23**	-.45**
14. PMI	-														.05	.09	.14**	.07
15. SC	-															-.50**	-.40**	-.42**
16. RSES	-																.62**	.69**
17. SLS	-																	.50**
18. PPS-R	-																	

Note: LFAIS – Liberal Feminist Attitudes and Ideology Scale; CFNI -Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory; SBS - Sexualizing Behavior Scale; FSSI -Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory; OBCS - Objectified Body Consciousness Scale; PMI – Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory; SC – Symptom Checklist; RSES – Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; SLS – Satisfaction with Life Scale; PPS-R – Personal Progress Scale - Revised

Appendix B: Correlation between Demographic
Variables and Major Study Variables

Measure	Age	Education	Income	White	Black	Asian	Latina	Middle Eastern	Heterosexual
I am not a feminist	-.00	-.05	-.05	.01	.14**	-.07	.05	-.06	.16**
I am not a feminist, but support feminist values	-.09	-.13*	.01	-.02	-.02	.10	-.05	.05	.10
I am a feminist	.14**	.16**	.02	.01	-.07	-.06	.01	-.00	-.19**
No Support for Gender Equality	.03	-.04	-.02	-.07	.06	-.03	.13*	.06	.18**
No Need for Feminism	.05	-.05	.01	-.06	.04	.09	-.00	.13*	.18**
Feminism is Irrelevant	.09	-.08	.03	.00	.03	.04	-.03	.08	.19**
Negative Image of Feminism	.03	.00	.05	-.03	.04	.07	-.02	-.00	.19**
LFAIS	.04	.11*	-.08	.04	-.06	-.09	.01	-.10	-.21**
CFNI – Total	-.02	-.03	.16**	-.00	-.07	.09	-.05	.16**	.24**
CFNI – Thinness	-.10	-.08	.11*	-.11*	-.04	.03	-.01	.12*	.03
CFNI – Appearance	-.10	.00	.07	.01	-.03	.01	-.04	.15**	.06
CFNI – Sex	.09	-.08	.14**	-.08	-.01	.12*	-.01	.14**	.28**
SBS-P	-.34**	-.25**	-.13*	-.14**	.12*	-.03	.03	.07	-.09
SBS – A	-.29**	-.09	-.15**	.01	.10	-.05	.03	-.12*	-.24**
FSSI	.10	.22**	.00	.19**	-.06	-.14**	-.07	-.12*	-.16**
PMI	.01	.18*	.13*	-.08	.08	.10	-.01	.10	.30**
OBSC	-.29**	-.06	.05	-.05	.01	.02	.03	.05	-.07
SC	-.32**	-.27**	-.17**	-.11	.01	.01	-.02	.14**	-.12**
RSES	.29**	.21*	.11*	.07	.03	-.14**	.06	-.05	.15**
SLS	.12*	.20**	.19*	.09	-.01	-.03	-.01	-.11*	.13*
PPS-R	.25**	.16**	.00	.08	.01	-.12	.03	-.30	.06

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Dummy codes were used to classify feminist identification as follows: 1= [ethnicity], 0= other; 1= heterosexual, 0= other

LFAIS – Liberal Feminist Attitude and Ideology Scale; CFNI -Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory; SBS - Sexualizing Behavior Scale; FSSI -Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory; PMI – Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory; OBSC - Objectified Body Consciousness Scale; SC – Symptom Checklist; RSES – Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale; SLS – Satisfaction with Life Scale; PPS-R – Personal Progress Scale - Revised

Appendix C: Discriminant Function Analysis of Heterosexual-Only Sample

The analysis generated two discriminant functions. The first function was significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .430$, $\chi^2(28, N = 280) = 228.09$, $p < .01$, explaining 90.7% of the between-group variance. The second function was also significant, Wilks' $\Lambda = .900$, $\chi^2(13, N = 280) = 28.62$, $p < .01$, accounting for 9.3% of the between-group variance.

Structure Matrix obtained in the Discriminant Function Analysis for Heterosexual Participants Only

	1	2
1. Feminism is Irrelevant	.85	-.24
2. Negative Image of Feminism	.77	.14
3. No Need for Feminism	.74	-.00
4. Liberal Feminist Ideology and Attitudes Scale	-.67	.03
5. Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory	.50	.31
6. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory – Sexual Fidelity	.26	-.16
7. Female Sexual Subjectivity Scale – Sexual Efficacy	-.18	-.18
8. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory - Total	.20	.21
9. Sexualized Behaviors Scale- Participation	.08	.45
10. Objectified Body Consciousness Scale – Surveillance	-.07	.37
11. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory – Investment in Appearance	.02	.37
12. Sexualized Behaviors scale – Approval	-.15	.28
13. No Support for Gender Equality	.14	-.35
14. Conformity to Feminine Norms Inventory - Thinness	.00	.25

Predicted Group Membership in the Original Classifications of the Discriminant Function Analysis for Heterosexual Participants Only

	I am not a feminist	I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	I am a feminist	Total
I am not a feminist	23	8	6	37
I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	9	65	25	99
I am a feminist	0	21	123	144

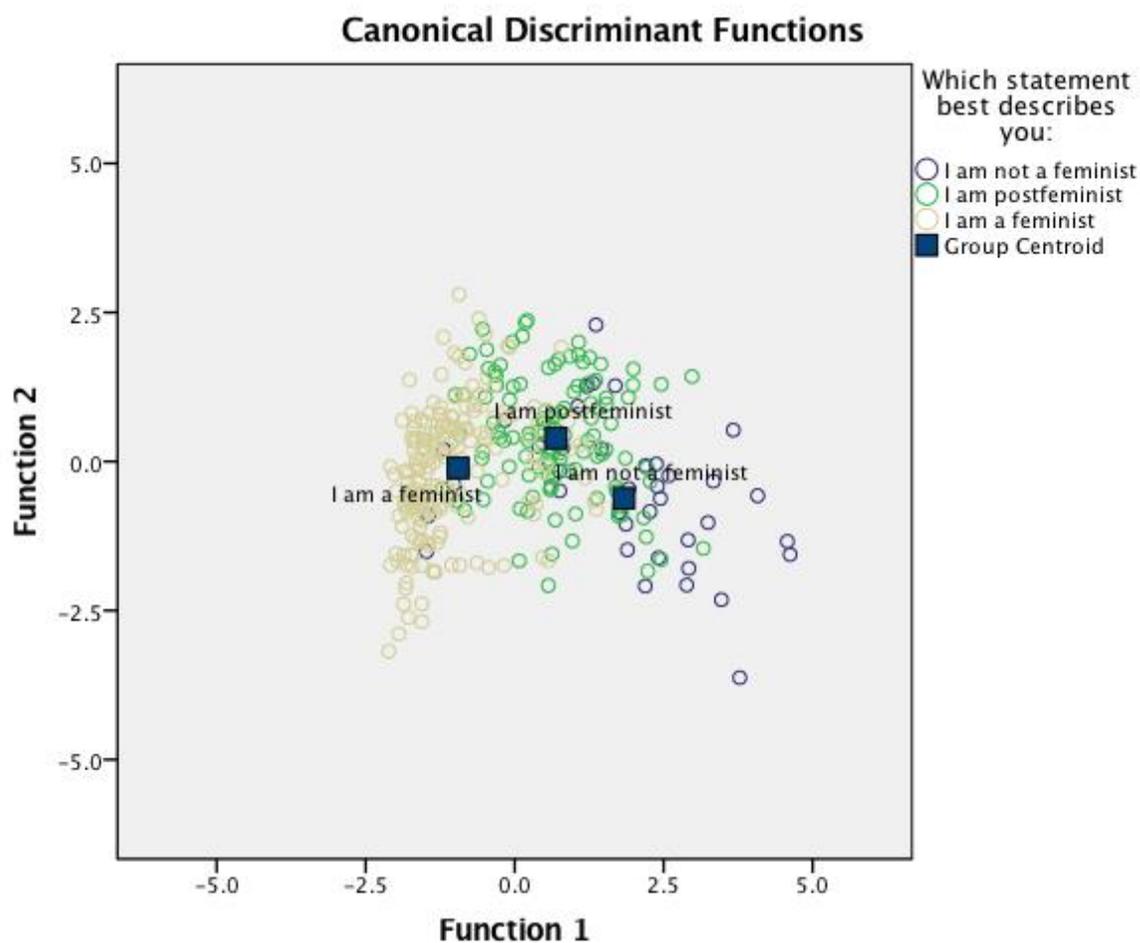
Note. 75.4% of the original grouped cases classified correctly

Predicted Group Membership in the Cross-validated Classifications of the Discriminant Function Analysis for Heterosexual Participants Only

	I am not a feminist	I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	I am a feminist	Total
I am not a feminist	18	13	6	37
I am not a feminist, but I support feminist values	12	57	30	99
I am a feminist	1	27	116	144

Note. 68.2% of cross-validated group cases classified correctly.

Plot of Group Centroids for Heterosexual Participants Only



Appendix D: Research Project Description

RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

“It’s just like the rules of feminism”: Analyzing postfeminist trends and psychological correlates in women

- 1. Explanation of Purpose.** You are being asked to complete a research survey that is investigating various beliefs and behaviors that women engage in and how they relate to feminism and psychological well-being.
- 2. Explanation of the Procedures.** If you take part in this research study, you will be asked to complete several questionnaires. It should take you about 30 minutes to complete the entire survey. This is a one-time participation study. At its conclusion, you will be provided with means to receive overall results of the study when they are available (likely around summer 2015).
- 3. Expected Risks.** During the study you will be asked some questions that have to do with your sexual behavior and preferences, which may make you uncomfortable. It is important to keep in mind that you are under no obligation to answer these questions or continue with the study if you do not wish to do so. Therefore, at any point in the study you are welcome to exit your browser.
- 4. Expected Benefits.** As a participant in this research study, you may be eligible to receive extra credit from your psychology department. Upon completion, you will be provided with a printable form indicating the time and effort you put into the study. Please consult with your professor to see if you qualify for this extra credit. Additionally, information from this study may benefit other people now or in the future. Further, you may participate in a drawing to receive one of three gift cards (see below).
- 5. Confidentiality.** All information collected about you during the course of this study will be completely anonymous. This means that there will be no way for anyone to identify who completed the questionnaires, and what you specifically answered at any point during the study. If you desire to be entered in the optional gift card drawing at the conclusion of the survey, you will be asked to provide a valid e-mail address. This information will be collected through a separate survey, which will ensure that your identity and responses cannot be connected.
- 6. Freedom to Withdraw Consent.** Even though you may consent to participate in this research project, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice against you. Similarly, you should know that the investigator has the right to withdraw you from the research project at any time. For example, if you do not fully complete all questionnaire, you may be withdrawn from the study. Once you have begun the survey you may withdraw by discontinuing the survey or choosing not to submit your results.
- 7. Compensation.** All participants who complete the research protocol will have the option to enter to win one of three \$50 visa gift cards. Students can provide documentation of their participation to instructors for extra credit, as per the procedures and policies of your institution.
- 8. Offer to Answer Questions.** I hereby offer to answer any questions that you might wish to ask concerning the procedures used in this research at this time. Furthermore, I may be reached at berkowml@udmercy.edu. If you have questions concerning your rights as a volunteer, you

may contact Dr. Elizabeth M. Hill, Chair, UDM Institutional Review Board, at hillelm@udmercy.edu.

I hereby state:

a) I have read all of the statements above pertaining to the research project entitled Personality and Moral Judgment: Self-Transcendence and Openness to Experience as Predictors of Emotion Differentiation and I understand them.

b) I hereby consent that I am at least 18 and agree to be a volunteer in this research project.

By checking this box I am indicating I agree with the statements above.

Appendix D: Questionnaire

Demographic Information

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
- Male
 Female
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Some High School
 High School
 Some College
 Associate's degree
 Bachelor's degree
 Master's degree
 Doctoral degree
 Professional Degree (e.g., M.D, J.D.)
 Other: _____
4. What is your major?
- _____
5. What is your household income (or parent's income if you are a dependent)?
- Under \$10,000
 \$10,000 - \$24,999
 \$25,000 - \$34,999
 \$35,000 - \$49,999
 \$50,000 - \$75,999
 \$76,000 - \$99,999
 \$100,000 - \$150,000
 Over \$150,000
7. How would you describe your ethnicity?
- American Indian/Alaska Native
 Black
 Asian
 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
 Latino/Latina
 Middle-Eastern
 Multi-Ethnic
 White
8. In what country were you born?
9. What is your primary sexual orientation?
- Heterosexual
 Homosexual
 Bisexual
 Queer
10. What is your current marital status?
- Single (Never Married)
 Live-in Partner
 Married
 Separated
 Divorced
 Widowed
11. How would you describe your religious affiliation?
- Christian-Catholic
 Christian-Protestant
 Islam
 Judaism
 Hindu
 Buddhist
 Earth-based religion
 Spiritual (not affiliated)
 Atheist/Agnostic
 Other: _____
13. What best describes your religious or spiritual practices?
- Religious but not spiritual
 Spiritual but not religious
 Both religious and spiritual
 Neither religious nor spiritual
12. What is your current relationship status?
- Single
 Cohabiting
 Married
 Separated
 Divorced

Feminist Identification Question

Which statement best describes you:

- 1.) I am not a feminist
- 2.) I am not a feminist, but I am in support of feminist goals
- 3.) I am a feminist

Briefly describe your perspectives on feminism:

Postfeminist Beliefs Measure

0-----1 ----- 2 ----- 3
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

- 1) I don't support gender equality
- 2) There's no longer a need for the feminist movement
- 3) Feminism isn't relevant to my life or values
- 4) I don't want to be associated with the image of feminism or other feminists

If you did not identify as a feminist, briefly describe why:

Feminist Attitudes Measure

The Liberal Feminist Attitudes and Ideology Scale – Short Form (Morgan, 1996)

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. Women should be considered as seriously as men as candidates for the Presidency of the United States.
2. Although women can be good leaders, men make better leaders.
3. A woman should have the same job opportunities as a man.
4. Men should respect women more than they currently do.
5. Many women in the work force are taking jobs away from men who need the jobs more.
6. Doctors need to take women's health concerns more seriously.
7. America should pass the Equal Rights Amendment.
8. Women have been treated unfairly on the basis of their gender throughout most of human history.
9. Women are already given equal opportunities with men in all important sectors of their lives.
10. Women in the U.S. are treated as second-class citizens.
11. Women can best overcome discrimination by doing the best that they can at their jobs, not by wasting time with political activity.

Sexualization Measures

The Sexualizing Behaviors Scale (Nowatzki & Morry, 2009)

How likely are you to participate in the following activities?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5
 Not likely at all Very Likely

How appropriate do you feel it is for women to participate in the following activities?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5
 Not at all appropriate Completely appropriate

- (1) Taking a pole-dancing or strip aerobics class
- (2) Attending a female nude dance bar with male friends or boyfriend
- (3) Bungee jumping off of a bridge
- (4) Going on a caving excursion with friends
- (5) Taking part in a wet T-shirt contest
- (6) Going on a spring break party vacation
- (7) Sky diving
- (8) Going on a heli-ski vacation
- (9) Purchasing a female nude calendar for your boyfriend
- (10) Wearing a T-shirt labeled "porn star,"
- (11) Going on a backpacking trip overseas by yourself
- (12) Going on a whitewater rafting excursion
- (13) Flashing your breasts for the Girls Gone Wild videos
- (14) Dancing provocatively at a dance club with female friends
- (15) Going on a gambling getaway trip to Las Vegas
- (16) Taking scuba diving lessons,
- (17) Having breast augmentation surgery for the purpose of increasing your breast size
- (18) Wearing an item of clothing or having an accessory displaying the Playboy bunny symbol
- (19) Mountain climbing in an area known for its dangerous terrain
- (20) Taking part in motor sport activities such as quading or motocross

The Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (Horne, & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006)

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5
 Not at all true for me Very true for me

1. It bothers me that I'm not better looking
2. It is okay for me to meet my own sexual needs through self-masturbation
3. If a partner were to ignore my sexual needs and desires, I'd feel hurt
4. I would not hesitate to ask for what I want sexually from a romantic partner
5. I spend time thinking and reflecting about my sexual experiences
6. I worry that I am not sexually desirable to others
7. I believe self-masturbating can be an exciting experience
8. It would bother me if a sexual partner neglected my sexual needs and desires
9. I am able to ask a partner to provide the sexual stimulation I need
10. I rarely think about the sexual aspects of my life
11. Physically, I am an attractive person
12. I believe self-masturbation is wrong
13. I would expect a sexual partner to be responsive to my sexual needs and feelings
14. If I were to have sex with someone, I'd show my partner what I want
15. I think about my sexuality
16. I am confident that a romantic partner would find me sexually attractive
17. I think it is important for a sexual partner to consider my sexual pleasure
18. I don't think about my sexuality very much
19. I am confident that others will find me sexually desirable
20. My sexual behavior and experiences are not something I spend time thinking about

Meritocratic Beliefs

The Perceptions of Meritocracy Inventory (Garcia, Pancer, Desmarais, & Jackson, 2005)

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7
 Strongly Agree Neutral Strongly Disagree

1. Gender has little to do with a person's gender
2. Minority groups have fewer opportunities to achieve success than other people
3. Uncontrollable factors often limit one's success, despite a person's best efforts
4. With hard work, people can often move from one social status to another
5. It is very difficult for people from lower class families to achieve a higher status
6. All people who work hard can improve their position in life
7. People from wealthy families are more likely to succeed than people from working-class families
8. Hard work does not always pay off
9. Individuals are responsible for their own financial success
10. In our society the rich get richer and the poor get poorer
11. Many people who make clear and significant contributes are under-rewarded for their work
12. Because of discrimination, race and ethnicity are important determinants of social position
13. All people have equal opportunity to become financially successful
14. Effort is the largest component of success
15. In almost all professions or job positions, those who work hardest will rise to the top
16. Many occupations are under-paid
17. Professional women typically earn less than their male-counterparts do
18. People's wages depend primarily on their ability and skill
19. Many people's efforts go unnoticed and unrewarded
20. People's salaries depend on how well they do at their job
21. Success is possible for anyone who is willing to work hard enough
22. Many people earn far less than they are worth
23. All people have an equal opportunity to succeed
24. Everyone can find work if they work hard enough

Self-Surveillance

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (McKinley & Hyde, 1996)

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

1. I rarely think about how I look
2. I think it is more important that my clothes are comfortable than whether they look good on me
3. I think more about how my body feels than how my body looks
4. I rarely compare how I look to how other people look
5. During the day, I think about how I look many times
6. I often worry about whether the clothes I'm wearing make me look good
7. I rarely worry about how I look to other people
8. I am more concerned with what my body can do than how it looks

Psychological Outcome Measures

Symptom Checklist

Bartone, Ursano, Wright, & Ingraham (1989)

Following is a list of various troubles or complaints people sometimes have. Using the four point rating scale that is provided, please indicate whether or not you experienced any of these over the past few weeks. Record your responses in the spaces provided.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3
 None A little Often Quite a bit

1. Common cold or flu.
2. Dizziness.
3. General aches and pains.
4. Hands sweat and feel damp and clammy.
5. Headaches.
6. Muscle twitches or trembling.
7. Nervous or tense.
8. Rapid heard beat (not exercising).
9. Shortness of breath (not exercising).
10. Skin rashes.
11. Upset stomach.
12. Trouble sleeping.
13. Depressed mood.
14. Difficulty concentrating.
15. Overly tired/lack of energy
16. Lack of appetite/loss of weight.
17. Taking medication to sleep or calm down.
18. Overly tired/lack of energy.
19. Loss of interest in TV, movies, news, friends.
20. Feeling life is pointless, meaningless.

Self-Esteem

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979)

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with my life
2. At times I think I am no good at all
3. I feel like there are a number of good things about myself
4. I am able to do things as well as other people
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of
6. I certainly feel useless at times
7. I am a person of worth, at least equal with others
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself
9. All in all, I feel that I am a failure
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself

Life Satisfaction

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)

How do you feel about your life in general?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

1. In most ways my life is close to ideal
2. The conditions of my life are excellent
3. I am satisfied with my life
4. So far I've gotten the important things I want in life
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing

Empowerment

The Personal Progress Scale –Revised (Johnson, Worell, & Chandler, 2005)

The following statements identify feelings or experiences that some people use to describe themselves. Please answer each question in terms of any aspects of your personal identity that are important to you as a woman, such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, family background, etc. There are no right or wrong answers.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
 Almost Never Sometimes True Almost Always

1. I have equal relationships with important others in my life.
2. It is important to me to be financially independent.
3. It is difficult for me to be assertive with others when I need to be.
4. I can speak up for my needs instead of always taking care of other people's needs.
5. I feel prepared to deal with the discrimination I experience in today's society.
6. It is difficult for me to recognize when I am angry.
7. I feel comfortable in confronting my instructor/counselor/supervisor when we see things differently.
8. I now understand how my cultural heritage has shaped who I am today.
9. I give into others so as not to displease or anger them.
10. I don't feel good about myself as a woman.
11. When others criticize me, I do not trust myself to decide if they are right or if I should ignore their comments.
12. I realize that given my current situation, I am coping the best I can.
13. I am feeling in control of my life.
14. In defining for myself what it means for me to be attractive, I depend on the opinions of others.
15. I can't seem to make good decisions about my life.
16. I do not feel competent to handle the situations that arise in my everyday life.
17. I am determined to become a fully functioning person.
18. I do not believe there is anything I can do to make things better for women like me in today's society.
19. I believe that a woman like me can succeed in any job or career that I choose.
20. When making decisions about my life, I do not trust my own experience.
21. It is difficult for me to tell others when I feel angry.
22. I am able to satisfy my own sexual needs in a relationship.
23. It is difficult for me to be good to myself.
24. It is hard for me to ask for help or support from others when I need it.
25. I want to help other women like me improve the quality of their lives
26. I feel uncomfortable in confronting important others in my life when we see things differently.
27. I want to feel more appreciated for my cultural background.
28. I am aware of my own strengths as a woman.

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ABSTRACT

“I MEAN, THAT’S JUST LIKE THE RULES OF FEMINISM”: ANALYZING
POSTFEMINIST TRENDS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES IN WOMEN

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Gender inequality is a well-documented phenomenon in the United States as evidenced by the wage gap, large discrepancies in women holding positions of power, and the frequency with which women experience forms of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. Despite these discrepancies, women have made social, political, and personal gains in the last several decades. Based on these improvements, popular discourses have asserted that society now embodies ‘postfeminism,’ an era in which feminism is longer relevant to the lives of women.

Although various critical frameworks have conceptualized postfeminism, there is a dearth of psychological research on the topic. The current study sought to investigate the validity of purposed postfeminist characteristics by testing a model of postfeminism and analyzing the attitudes and behaviors of young women. This model included three broad features: (a) attitudes toward gender-role orientation; (b) individualistic/meritocratic beliefs; and (c) sexualization. Finally, the current study sought to address discrepancies in the psychological literature regarding the psychological health benefits of feminist identification. The study intended to

determine the psychological correlates of differing feminist identifications and values by analyzing self-esteem, depression, satisfaction with life, and empowerment.

The results of the current study generally supported a model of postfeminism in which feminist self-identification could be reliably predicted by variables related to postfeminist and feminist beliefs, traditional feminine norms, especially those related to physical appearance and self-surveillance, individualistic/meritocratic beliefs, and sexualized behavior. This model seems to validate the phenomenon of postfeminism on an individual level. Women who were characterized as postfeminists were found to fall between feminists and nonfeminists on measures of postfeminist and feminist beliefs. They were found to hold more traditional gender-role norms at the same rate as nonfeminists, engage in more sexualized behaviors than feminists and nonfeminists, and hold higher meritocratic beliefs than feminists, on par with nonfeminists. Implication for these results, limitations, and directions for future research are further discussed.

Autobiographical Statement

Monisha Berkowski is completing her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Detroit Mercy, where she received her Master or Arts degree in Clinical Psychology in 2012. Monisha completed her undergraduate degree in Psychology at Kalamazoo College in 2008, where she studied abroad for two semesters in Oaxaca, Mexico. In 2014, she completed her APA-accredited internship at Broughton Hospital in Morganton, NC where currently works as a Staff Psychologist.

Monisha has published research in the area of childhood trauma and spiritual beliefs. Her current research interests include modern feminism and the intersection of feminism and sexual behavior. Her clinical interests include adults with serious and persistent mental illness, severe personality disorders, and forensic assessment.

When not pursuing academic endeavors, Monisha enjoys hiking, cooking, crossfit, backpacking through Latin America, and spoiling her dog, Todd.