

Double Standards and Objectification: Unveiling Inequalities and Ethical Implications behind Nudity

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Abstract. Nudity has been a considerable and controversial moral topic in worldwide society. People are almost certainly used to wear clothes and take it for granted. The debate of whether or not wearing clothes is immoral has risen. However, there exist different acceptance levels of nudity for men and women. Double Standards on dress codes are apparent everywhere, such as the varied swimsuits for males and females. Females must wear an additional piece of fabric to cover their boobs, whereas topless males are everywhere. However, the acceptance of nudity level has increased throughout history, such as in Asia. From inhibiting women to revealing legs and feet, modern females can show legs and feet now. Therefore, it can raise the assumption that people can reveal more of their body parts if the so-called “sensitive” body parts are not “sensitive” anymore. This article examines the moral standard and the overall acceptance rate of people's nudity, considering religious, philosophical, cultural, and societal aspects. The study's experiment will be accomplished by the implicit association test and interview method.

Keywords: Morality, Nudity, Gender Differences, Implicit Association Test.

1. Introduction

Throughout history, societies have imposed norms and restrictions on the exposure of particular body parts, particularly for women. These cultural practices reflect the significance of modesty and the perception of female purity in ancient societies. An example of such restrictions can be found in ancient China, where women were forbidden from showing their feet or legs, with severe consequences for any accidental exposure. While these practices may seem irrational in modern times, they underscore the values and beliefs prevalent in bygone eras. This raises the question of whether the liberation of historically sensitive body parts like feet suggests a potential future liberation of other body parts, like breasts and buttocks.

Moreover, contemporary society reveals a stark disparity in the acceptance of body exposure between men and women. Male nipples are commonly exposed in public spaces like swimming pools and beaches, while women's swimwear consistently includes breast coverage. This unequal treatment indicates a gendered double standard regarding exposure, prompting inquiries into the relationship between societal acceptance of exposure levels and morality.

This paper aims to delve into the complex dynamics surrounding the exposure of body parts, examining the historical context, cultural perceptions, and ethical considerations associated with these practices. By scrutinizing the discrepancy in exposure acceptance between genders and exploring the underlying moral implications, we seek to shed light on the potential for a more equitable and inclusive understanding of body autonomy and societal standards.

In doing so, we aim to uncover the inequalities and biases in our society regarding body exposure. By acknowledging and addressing these double standards, we can work towards achieving gender equality, promoting body autonomy, challenging social norms, fostering body positivity, and empowering individuals to embrace their bodies authentically. This exploration of double standards in nudity levels holds significant meaning as it not only reveals societal disparities but also catalyzes progressive change in how we perceive and accept the human body.

To accomplish these objectives, this paper will engage with historical accounts, cultural analysis, and ethical frameworks to comprehensively understand the subject matter. By critically examining the historical practices and contemporary disparities, we can initiate discussions that contribute to a

more inclusive and egalitarian society, where body autonomy is respected and individuals are liberated from oppressive standards of modesty and gendered expectations.

Through this exploration, we hope to challenge conventional notions, broaden perspectives, and foster a society that embraces body diversity, respects individual choices, and cultivates a more egalitarian understanding of nudity and exposure.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions

Before beginning the literature review, the study needs to consider the extent of morality and exposure level to the standard of evaporation.

First, morality is a word that has blurred boundaries, and it's hard to define if a specific word or deed can be considered moral. According to Gert, B. and Gert, J., morality has two senses: descriptive and normative. For descriptive senses, a society or a group puts forward specific codes; Normative senses refer to specific conditions put forward by rational people [1].

Second, specifically in this study, the standards of morality will be defined by participants' feelings on male and female nude body parts. If the participant suggests negatively, their comments will be immoral, whereas if the participant suggests positively, they will be moral. This is important because it gives the paper a standard and evaluation point.

2.2. Different Acceptance of Exposure for Each Gender

In the extent of acceptance of exposure for males and females, Miller and Burgoon did a study based on this, "The Morality of Clothing: A Review and Exploration of Moral Values in Clothing Research," which also provides a thorough examination of the moral judges based on people's clothing and wearings.

As they look at how clothing might support societal norms and send moral messages, it stresses how moral judgments about decency, modesty, and appropriateness are frequently used to evaluate clothing choices. Interestingly, this paper found the presence of gender-specific standards for attire and body exposure. It draws attention to the fact that women's fashion decisions are scrutinized more closely than men's, frequently resulting in prejudice and stereotypes [2].

2.3. Results of Previous Studies

2.3.1. Religious and Philosophical Perspective

During the Song dynasty in China (960-1279), women faced significant restrictions in their language, behaviors, and dress due to the prevailing influence of Neo-Confucianism. The ideology of Neo-Confucianism, which blended elements of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, reinforced traditional gender roles and hierarchical social structures.

Under the influence of Neo-Confucianism, women were expected to adhere to strict codes of conduct and exhibit virtues aligned with the traditional female role. The emphasis on chastity, modesty, and obedience became central to the expectations placed on women. These expectations were reinforced through various social and cultural mechanisms, including literature, teachings, and societal norms.

Suyue Liu, in her work, draws attention to the impact of these expectations on women, particularly about the concept of purity [2]. The Three Books and Four Virtues, foundational texts in Confucianism, played a significant role in shaping societal values and norms. However, Liu argues that the concept of female virtue, derived from these texts, has been distorted and turned into a force that marginalizes and oppresses women. The prevailing notion of female chastity became a tool for controlling women's behavior and limiting their autonomy. Women were expected to prioritize their roles as wives and mothers, subordinating their needs and desires to those of their families and

husbands. This social pressure to conform to rigid gender roles often suppressed women's voices, ambitions, and individuality.

Also, in Tang Dynasty China, women were expected to conform to traditional female roles [3]. The concept of "male superiority and female inferiority" penetrated many women's lives and became increasingly intense. In works like "Nü Lunyu" (Discourses on Women) and "Nü Xiaojing" (Classic of Filial Piety for Women), the most concrete manifestation of this concept is the demand for women to be submissive. In Discourses on Women, it is stated: "When a woman marries, her husband becomes her priority. Their marriage is the result of karmic ties from past lives. Comparing one's husband to heaven, this duty is not trivial. Love and affection naturally arise with the husband being strong and the wife being gentle. In the domestic sphere, they should treat each other with reverence and respect." It is believed that the "husband being strong and the wife being gentle" is the proper way.

The Song and Tang dynasty documents showed a philosophical perspective on females at an inferior place.

2.3.2. Cultural Perspective

In Negy and Winton's study, "A Comparison of Pro- and Anti-Nudity College Students on Acceptance of Self and of Culturally Diverse Others," they sought to understand the connection between attitudes toward nudity and acceptance of oneself and others from various cultural backgrounds [4]

The result of Nergy and Winton's study shows the effects of nudity on three aspects: (1). Self-Acceptance Level: When compared to the anti-nudity group, the pro-nudity group displayed much higher levels of self-acceptance. This is related to this study because it shows that people who view nudity more favorably may also have better degrees of self-acceptance. (2). Acceptance of Cultural Diversity: Compared to the anti-nudity group, the pro-nudity group showed a higher tolerance level for people from different cultures. This research suggests a connection between favorable attitudes about nudity and a more welcoming and inclusive attitude toward people from other ethnic backgrounds. (3). According to the study, Men in the pro-nudity group reported higher levels of self-acceptance and multicultural acceptance than women in the same group. This suggests that attitudes about nudity and acceptance may alter depending on the gender.

2.3.3. Societal Perspective

Yingying Huang's assertion highlights the insidious nature of oppression women face in male-dominated societies [5]. In such societies, where men predominantly hold power and influence, women are often subjected to systemic biases and patriarchal norms that shape their beliefs and behavior. Over time, these societal values become deeply ingrained, and women may internalize and accept them without conscious awareness.

The influence of a male-dominated society's values on women's beliefs and perceptions is profound. Societal norms dictate what is acceptable or desirable for women, defining their roles, expectations, and limitations. Women may be socialized from a young age to conform to these gendered expectations, perpetuating the cycle of male dominance and female subordination.

The impact of societal values on women's beliefs extends beyond their understanding of gender roles. It can affect their relationships, education, career choices, and self-image. Women may internalize messages that undermine their self-worth, abilities, and aspirations, leading to self-doubt and limited personal and professional growth opportunities.

Moreover, societal values' influence can manifest subtly, making it harder to recognize and challenge. Women may unknowingly adopt certain behaviors or beliefs reinforcing their subordination, perpetuating the system that oppresses them. For instance, they may prioritize the needs and desires of others over their own, downplay their achievements, or internalize the idea that their worth is tied to their appearance or ability to fulfill traditional gender roles.

Also, the issue of nipple freedom raises essential discussions about gender equality and the double standards surrounding nudity in the current world. In many societies, there is a stark contrast between

accepting male toplessness and the limited visibility of female nudity in public spaces. This disparity has sparked movements and advocacy efforts to challenge these double standards and promote body acceptance and gender equality.

In recent years, a growing movement has advocated for women's right to be topless in public, similar to men. Supporters argue that the differential treatment of male and female nudity perpetuates societal norms that objectify and sexualize women's bodies. They contend that equalizing the rules and expectations for both genders would promote body acceptance and challenge the notion that female bodies should be hidden or controlled.

3. Experiment

The proposed experiment will utilize the Implicit Association Test (IAT) method, a psychological tool used to measure implicit biases or unconscious attitudes and beliefs that individuals may hold to investigate the associations between exposure levels and moral evaluations [6]. Here, the study will expand on the steps involved in experimenting and highlight its potential implications.

Step One: Introduction and Instructions. The experiment will begin by introducing the subjects to the purpose of the study while emphasizing that it aims to measure reaction speed. By framing the experiment this way, the subjects are less likely to guess the actual purpose, reducing potential biases and increasing their response efficiency.

Step Two: Task Completion. In this step, the subjects will be presented with a visual task. The presentation will have a plus sign to direct the subjects' attention, followed by two images. These images will depict scenes with different levels of morality and individuals with varying exposure levels. Additionally, a phrase will accompany the images.

Step Three: Response Measurement. The subjects will be required to associate the phrase with the corresponding image. Individuals representing low-exposure levels will be presented with morally virtuous scenarios. The subjects will then determine which word is more consistent with each image. The reaction time (RT1) will be measured during this process.

Data Processing and Analysis. The collected data will be analyzed by comparing RT1 (associated with low-exposure individuals and moral scenarios) and RT2 (associated with high-exposure individuals and moral scenarios). If RT1 is significantly greater than RT2, it would suggest that individuals have a stronger association between high-exposure individuals and low-moral scenarios. Consequently, this indicates lower moral evaluations for high-exposure groups.

Expanding on the Experiment: Besides the proposed IAT, it may be beneficial to incorporate further measures to understand the subject matter comprehensively. For instance, subjects could be asked to rate the sexual attractiveness of individuals with different levels of exposure. This additional component would allow for exploring how exposure levels influence perceptions of attractiveness and potentially shed light on societal beauty standards and objectification.

Implications and Limitations: This experiment aims to uncover implicit associations between exposure levels and moral evaluations. The findings can provide insights into societal attitudes toward body exposure, shedding light on potential double standards and biases. By highlighting these associations, we can challenge societal norms, promote body autonomy, and foster discussions around gender equality and body positivity.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of the experiment. While widely used, the IAT method has its limitations, including potential biases and reliance on response time as a measure. Additionally, the experiment may be influenced by cultural and individual variations in moral evaluations and attitudes toward body exposure. Thus, the applicability of the findings should be carefully considered.

In conclusion, this experiment seeks to uncover implicit associations between exposure levels and moral evaluations using the IAT method and incorporating additional measures. By exploring these associations, we can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of societal attitudes towards body exposure, promoting inclusiveness and challenging existing double standards.

4. Inspiration

Fostering a more equal and just society requires recognizing and combating objectification and double standards. We may endeavor to advance gender equality, individual autonomy, and moral standards that value and respect every person's inherent worth and dignity by exposing the disparities fueled by double standards and the dehumanizing impacts of objectification. We can only build a society that upholds equity, inclusivity, and respect for all by collective efforts and a commitment to change [7-10].

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has explored the complex and multifaceted relationship between exposure, sensuality, and morality. It has shed light on how these concepts intertwine and influence one another, taking into account religious, philosophical, societal, and cultural perspectives. The findings of this study suggest that societal norms and values play a significant role in shaping perceptions and judgments regarding exposure and sensuality. Religious and philosophical beliefs often contribute to the establishment of moral frameworks, which, in turn, influence societal expectations and norms surrounding issues of modesty, sexuality, and body image. Future research could expand on these findings by conducting cross-cultural studies examining how different religious and philosophical perspectives impact attitudes toward exposure and sensuality. By comparing societies with diverse cultural backgrounds and belief systems, researchers can better understand the complex interplay between these factors.

Although no data has been collected at this stage, the study has outlined the result of previously related papers and the detailed steps in the Implicit Association Test lab design.

It is crucial to acknowledge the limitations and challenges inherent in the experiment. One notable limitation is the need to enhance the objectivity of image selection. A pretest has been proposed as a potential solution to address this concern. By conducting a pretest, researchers can ensure that the chosen images effectively represent the intended exposure levels and align with the study's objectives.

In the future, the study encourages further research, emphasizing the importance of studying sexual modesty within the broader context of social factors, gender equality, and belief systems. By delving deeper into these areas, researchers can better understand the intricate dynamics surrounding exposure, sexuality, and morality. This expanded knowledge can contribute to challenging societal norms, promoting gender equality, and fostering discussions on body autonomy and positive body image.

Moreover, future research endeavors should strive to address the limitations identified in this study. By refining methodological approaches, researchers can enhance the validity and reliability of their findings. Additionally, exploring the potential cultural variations in attitudes towards exposure, sensuality, and morality would provide valuable insights into the influence of cultural contexts on these dynamics.

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