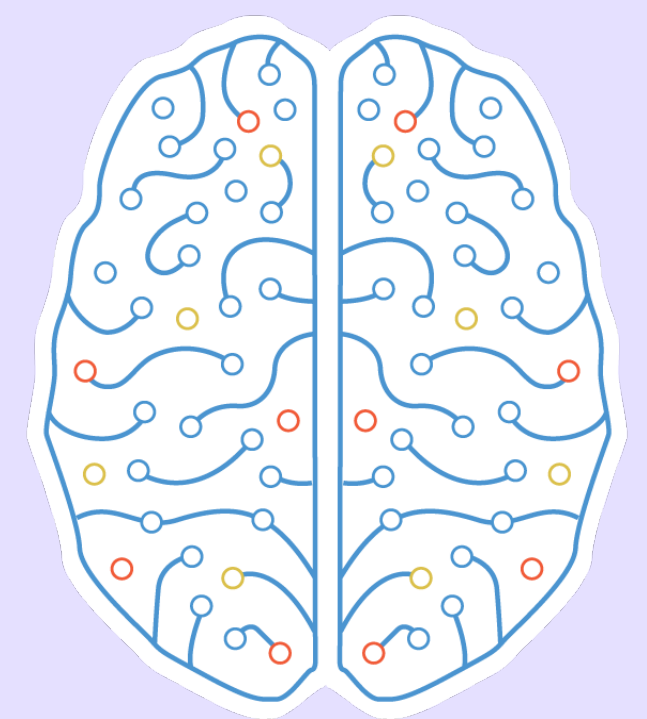




# Self-Objectification Predicts Intuitive Eating and Experiences of Embodiment in Healthy College Students



CAROLINA AFFECTIVE SCIENCE LAB

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## INTRODUCTION

- **Self-objectification** is the internalization of sexual objectification, which is being treated as a body whose greatest value lies in its usefulness to or consumption by others
- Individuals begin to think of themselves in appearance-based terms and of what their bodies can do for others, rather than themselves (e.g., looking good!).
- Often, this leads to vigilant body monitoring of the body's physical appearance (**self-surveillance**), which is linked to eating disorders and other psychological risks.
- **Here**, we examine how self-objectification impacts **intuitive eating**, which is eating according to physiological signals of hunger and satiety, and **experiences of embodiment**, or the diverse experiences of our bodies' engagement with the world.

## METHODS

### Participants

N = 130, 71.8% female, 61% White, M<sub>age</sub> = 19.77, SD<sub>age</sub> = 3.71

### Materials

- Participants recruited from the UNC introductory psychology course completed three randomized questionnaires:
  1. **Objectified Body Consciousness–Self-Surveillance subscale:** 8-item measure examining how individuals engage in body monitoring to fit cultural expectations of physical appearance and avoid negative judgement
  2. **Intuitive Eating Scale–2:** 23-item measure evaluating the extent to which individuals eat in response to physiological (and not emotional) hunger cues
  3. **Experience of Embodiment Scale:** 32-item measure capturing the diverse positive and negative lived experiences individuals endure in their bodies, consisting of subscales examining 1) positive bodily connections, 2) feelings of body discomfort and burden, 3) assertiveness and confidence in one's abilities and interactions, 4) connections to and experiences of bodily desire, 5) responsiveness to various body needs and desires, and 6) ability to resist self-objectification

## RESULTS

Controlling for gender, objectified body consciousness was **statistically significant and negatively predicted** intuitive eating behaviors.

(b = -0.34, 95% CI [-0.51, -0.17], t(97) = -3.93, p < .001)

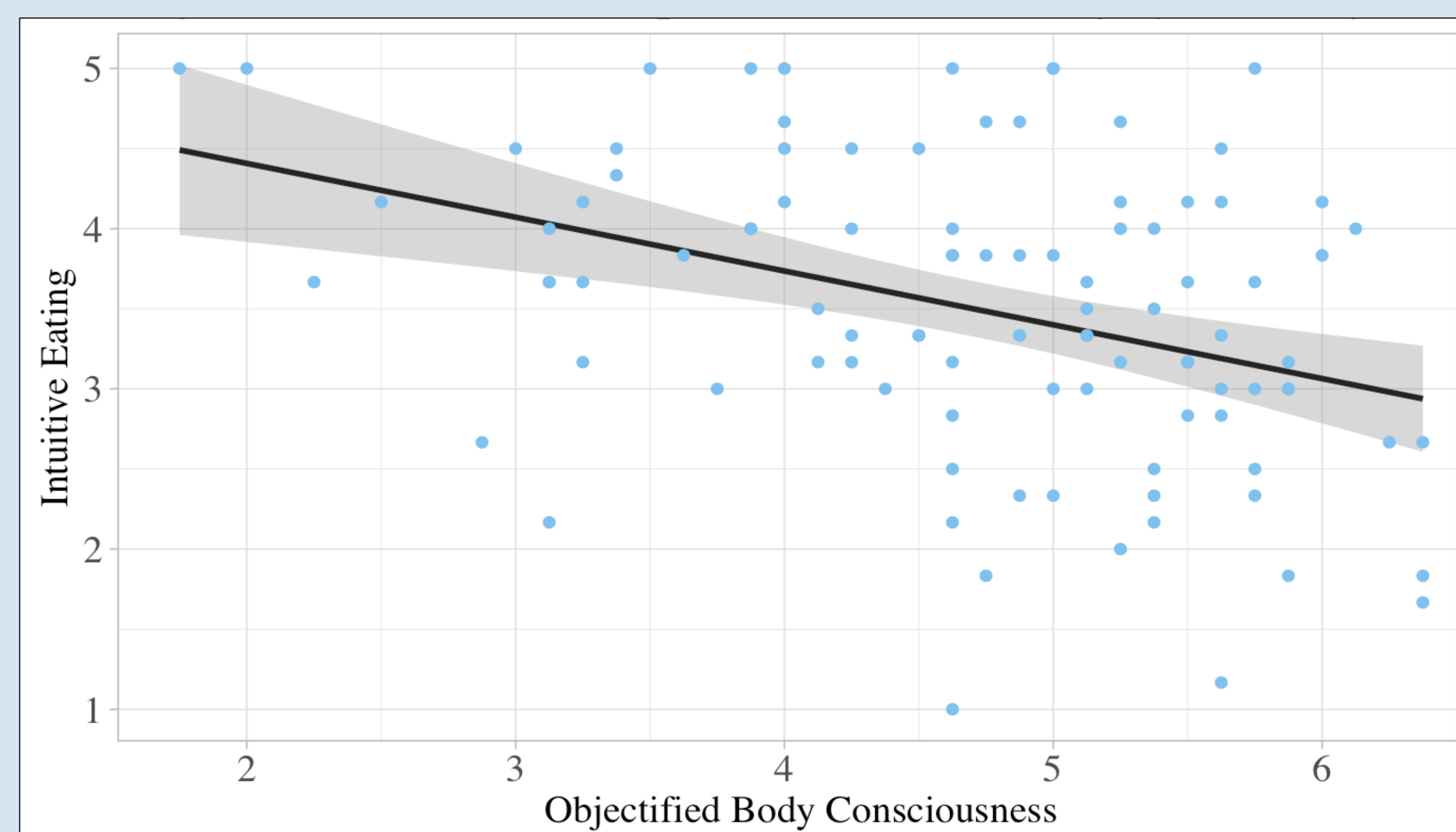


Figure 1: Regression Plot of Self-Reported Intuitive Eating by Objectified Body Consciousness

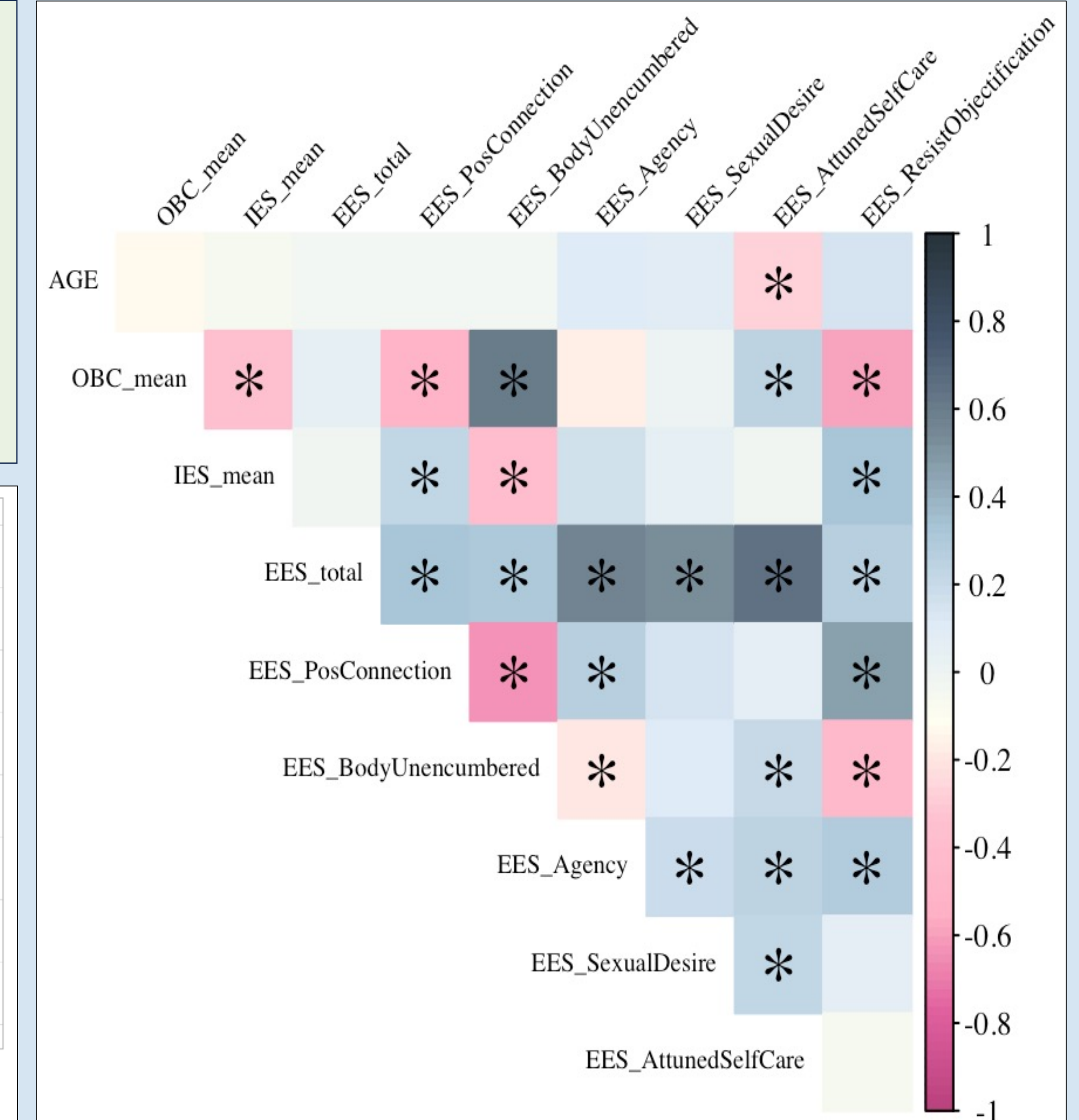


Figure 2: Matrix of Objectified Body Consciousness, Intuitive Eating, and Experiences of Embodiment

## CONCLUSION

- Our findings support previous work indicating that individuals who reported greater body surveillance (e.g., worrying about looks, social comparisons) were less likely to eat intuitively, such as by responding to physiological signals of hunger and making nourishing and flexible food choices. Additionally:
  - Objectified body consciousness negatively predicted experiences of embodiment related to positive bodily connections and resisting self-objectification.
  - Additionally, it positively predicted experiences related to feelings of body discomfort and burden and responsiveness to various body needs and desires.
  - Intuitive eating was positively associated with positive bodily connections and resisting self-objectification, but negatively with body discomfort and burden.
- We suggest exploring how internalized appearance-based attitudes and behaviors influence the way we practice mindfulness in eating and make sense of our lived bodily experiences.
- Finally, our findings create a crucial foundation to explore how disordered eating patterns and diverse bodily experiences manifest through socially constructed self-objectifying body beliefs and behaviors.

### References

