

# Researcher finds men strip for self-esteem boost

July 9 2015

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A new study from the University of Colorado Denver finds that male exotic dancers, or strippers, remain committed to stripping because it enhances their self-concept.

The study by Maren Scull, an instructor of Sociology in the CU Denver College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, was published online this month in *Deviant Behavior*, the only [scientific journal](#) that specifically addresses behaviors that violate [social norms](#). Scull's research focuses on how exotic dancing influences the way male strippers view themselves.

"Because stripping is a stigmatizing occupation, it has the capacity to negatively affect exotic dancers' self-definitions," Scull said. "I looked into what motivates men to continue dancing and found that stripping led to feelings of mattering, mastery and enhanced self-esteem."

Scull spent almost two years interviewing and observing male strippers who dance for women in an American strip club. She found that unlike many female strippers who report that it is the money that motivates them to remain involved in exotic dance, male strippers continue dancing because they experience higher self-esteem and self-confidence.

In fact, while the majority of the men interviewed said they became strippers for money, few earned more than \$100 per shift; substantially less than female dancers in the same club. Instead, Scull found that men continued to strip because it made them desirable and feel good about themselves.

"Initially women who dance for men may experience a boost in [self-esteem](#), but after time they suffer from a diminished self-concept," said Scull. "My research finds that men who dance for women generally experience positive feelings of self-worth. So much so, that men will continue to strip even when it is no longer financially lucrative."

Scull suggests these gendered differences are due to the fact that men and women ascribe different meanings to the objectification they experience while stripping. Female dancers may be more inclined to define [sexual objectification](#) as negative, because as women, they experience it more frequently than [men](#).

Males, on the other hand, enjoy being objectified by audience members, Scull found. They did not define objectification with disempowerment and instead noted that they felt positive about being desirable.

Provided by University of Colorado Denver

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