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Sex Differences in Sadomasochistic Attitudes, Fantasies, and Behaviors in a College Population

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Abstract

This study examined sex differences in the impact of sexual fantasies and behaviors on attitudes about sadomasochism (SM). Current empirical literature suggests men are more likely to fantasize and participate in SM related behaviors than are women. Furthermore, past studies report that men endorse more dominant related behaviors whereas women endorse more submissive and love-related behaviors. Due to this, we predicted that men will endorse more SM fantasies (hypotheses 1) and behaviors (hypotheses 2) than will women. Additionally, we predicted that SM fantasies and SM behaviors will predict SM attitudes more strongly in men than in women (hypotheses 3).

The sample consisted of 502 undergraduate students at a Midwestern University. Participants were either recruited through an online recruitment system (SONA) or through participating classrooms. All participants completed a series of questionnaires online through SurveyMonky on their own time. A series of t-tests were conducted to test hypotheses 1 and 2. Results showed women reported more SM fantasies and SM behaviors than men, however the difference was only significant for SM behaviors. To test hypotheses 3 we conducted a series of multiple regressions. Results showed a three way interaction on SM attitudes with SM fantasies, SM behaviors, and sex. Consistent with hypothesis 3, these predictors explained more variance in men than for women.
Sex Differences in Sadomasochistic Attitudes, Fantasies and Behaviors

Tracy Tittelbach & Brad J. Sagarin, Ph.D

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This study examined sex differences in the impact of sexual fantasies and behaviors on attitudes about sadomasochism (SM). Current empirical literature suggests men are more likely to fantasize and participate in SM related behaviors than are women. Furthermore, past studies report that men endorse more dominant related behaviors whereas women endorse more submissive and love-related behaviors. Due to this, we predicted that men will endorse more SM fantasies (hypotheses 1) and behaviors (hypotheses 2) than will women. Additionally, we predicted that SM fantasies and SM behaviors will predict SM attitudes more strongly in men than in women (hypotheses 3). The sample consisted of 502 undergraduate students at a Midwestern University. Participants were either recruited through an online recruitment system (SONA) or through participating classrooms. All participants completed a series of questionnaires online through SurveyMonky on their own time. A series of t-tests were conducted to test hypotheses 1 and 2. Results showed women reported more SM fantasies and SM behaviors than men, however the difference was only significant for SM behaviors. To test hypotheses 3 we conducted a series of multiple regressions. Results showed a three way interaction on SM attitudes with SM fantasies, SM behaviors, and sex. Consistent with hypothesis 3, these predictors explained more variance in men than for women.
Sex Differences in Sadomasochistic Attitudes, Fantasies and Behaviors

With movies like *National Lampoons Van Wilder* to *Euro Trip*, college students uphold a reputation for being sexually active and engaging in various risky behaviors. Furthermore, with many researchers being on a college campus, it comes as no surprise that an abundance of empirical research has been done on the sex lives of college students. College is often a time of sexual exploration for many students. With such abundance of literature on sexual fantasies and behaviors, there is very little research done on sadomasochism (SM). The goal of this study was to help fill this gap by examining sexual attitudes, fantasies, and behaviors associated with SM in a college population.

**Perspectives**

**Clinical**

Within the clinical psychology community, the definition of SM has evolved over the decades with each new edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM;* American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1952; 1968; 1980; 1987; 1994; 2000). In the early editions of the *DSM*, sexual sadism and sexual masochism were not included (APA, 1952; 1968). However, in the *DSM-III* (1980) the practice of inflicting (sexual sadism) or receiving (sexual masochism) psychological and/or physical pain for sexual arousal was sufficient for a diagnosis. The *DSM-III-R* (1987) added a time constraint (e.g., last over six months) and that these urges must either be acted upon or cause distress. More recent editions maintained the diagnostic categories, but added criteria that the behaviors must cause "clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning" (APA, 2000, p. 573). For a more detailed review see Krueger (2010a, 2010b).

**Media**
As the definition of what constitutes a pathological sexual act evolved, so did psychological inspiration. Television shows and movies often portray suspects as sadistic individuals who must rape or inflict pain on their victims in order to receive sexual gratification (Yost, 2010). A classical example can be found in the movie *88 Minutes* (produced by R. Emmett; directed by J. Avent, 2007). The plot revolves around a psychopathic serial killer who sadistically tortures, rapes, then murders his victims. Depictions of SM in this negative light suggest to viewers such acts are done upon non-consenting individuals which often leads to rape and murder.

In recent years, however, there has been an increase of SM related advertisements to portray SM as fun and kinky. Dannon® produced a yogurt commercial in 2003 depicting a happy married couple acting out a common SM-role playing scene. In more recent TV ads, IKEA® has come out with various scenarios ranging from role-playing scenes to a married couple engaging in dominance/submission. With mainstream media providing contradictory messages, the public is faced with an inconsistent perception of SM practitioners.

**Practitioners**

Among the SM community, the acronym BDSM is preferred since it encompasses a greater diversity of behaviors than just sadism and masochism alone. BDSM stands for bondage and discipline (B&D), Dominance and submission (D/s), and sadism and masochism (SM or S&M) (Williams, 2006). Common behaviors include, but are not limited to, humiliation (e.g., verbal humiliation), infliction of pain (e.g., spanking), role-playing, and restriction (e.g., bondage) (Lawrence & Love-Crowell, 2008). To some practitioners, BDSM is seen as an alternative lifestyle often incorporating into their daily lives (Damon, 1985; Lawrence & Love-Crowell, 2008; Williams, 2006; Yost, 2010), form of creative sexual expression (Williams,
2006), and an outlet for otherwise taboo desires (Palandri & Green, 2000; Yost, 2010). Although there are several dozen BDSM clubs and organizations, secrecy is often maintained among members for the fear of societal disapproval or social sanction (Palandri & Green, 2000; Yost, 2010). With the creation of the Internet, practitioners have found a new outlet for their desires through role-playing chatrooms and forums (Palandri & Green, 2000; Williams, 2006).

Research

In contrast to the clinical perspective that views SM as an unhealthy sexual practice, modern researchers have found SM practitioners quite the opposite. Sandnabba, Santilla, Alison, and Nordling (2002) found self-identified SM practitioners were highly educated and mentally sound. Sagarin et al. (2009) found that many practitioners who engage in SM activities reported increased relationship closeness with their partner. Additionally, Sagarin et al. found the majority of observed scenes included some form of aftercare; interactions prior to the end of the scene that bring both individuals back into reality and make sure both individuals are in a healthy mind-state. It has been suggested that some practitioners engage in SM activities to escape themselves and their daily lives to a fantasy world to relieve stress (Baumeister, 1988).

Sexual Fantasies

Everybody fantasizes at sometime during their lifetime (Hsu et al., 1994; Zurbriggen & Yost, 2004). Fantasies can be about anything from becoming famous to an escape to a favorite vacation spot; it can be a fleeting thought or an intricate story, whether real or imagined (Wilson, 1978). Commonly reported fantasies are often of a romantic or sexual nature. Men report fantasizing about various sexual activities including sex with several partners at once, sex with a stranger, and being involved in an orgy (Davidson, 1985; Hsu et al., 1994; Person et al., 1989). Women, on the other hand, tend to fantasize about a romantic lover, being rescued by one who
will become their lover, and getting married (Hariton & Singer, 1974; Hsu et al., 1994; Person et al., 1989). Gender differences have also been found in the frequency of sexual fantasies. Davidson (1985) found men reported fantasizing more frequently than women (38% and 28% respectively). Researchers have found that higher frequency of sexual fantasies occurs during masturbation and since males participate in masturbation more often than females, this can be one possible explanation for gender differences (Kinsey, 1948; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995).

Several researchers have found it is not uncommon for both genders to fantasize about SM related behaviors (Katchadourian & Lunde, 1972; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Men report significantly higher levels of sexual arousal to SM related fantasies than women (Donnelly & Fraser, 1998) and see themselves as being the dominant figure (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995; Person et al., 1989). Women are more likely to report sexual arousal to submissive roles such as being bound, forced to expose their body to their seducer, and forced to have sex (Hariton & Singer, 1974; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995; Person et al., 1989). However, Yost and Zurbriggen (2006) found that women who believe they do not have to be in a committed relationship to have sex tend to have dominant fantasies.

**Sexual Behaviors**

A majority of college students have engaged in some sort of sexual behavior whether it is caressing another individual or sexual intercourse (Davidson, 1985; Person et al., 1989). One of the differences between men and women lies in the intent behind the sexual behavior. Leigh (1989) found men stressed more importance on physical pleasure and relief of sexual tension whereas women stressed emotional closeness and the desire to express love to their sexual partner. Carroll, Volk, and Hyde (1985) asked participants to answer a series of 24 questions relating to sexual attitudes, behaviors, and motives for sexual intercourse. When participants
were asked “What would be your primary reason for refusing to have sexual intercourse with someone?”, 54% of women compared to 21% of men endorsed “not enough love/commitment”. Men were significantly more likely to have sex without emotional involvement (84% men, 42% women), have six or more sexual partners (57% men, 19% women), and find the best way to relieve sexual tension is through sex (80% men, 25% women).

Connolly (2006) found men were more likely to report that they were mostly or exclusively dominate (51.4%) compared to women reporting being mostly or exclusively submissive (63%). Men endorsed behaviors such as “whipping/beating partner” or “flagellation” compared to women who endorsed behaviors such as “being forced to submit to sexual acts” and “bondage” (Hsu et al., 1994; Moser & Levitt, 1987; Person et al., 1989; Sandnabba, Santtila, Alison, & Nordling, 2002). Hsu et al. (1994) found that there is a strong correlation between recent sexual fantasies and the corresponding sexual experience ($r = .86$ men; $r = .91$ women). Such high correlations suggest that those who fantasize about particular behaviors more likely have participated in them. Thus, men will both fantasize and participate in dominating behaviors with women participating and fantasizing about submissive behaviors.

Sexual Attitudes

Fugere et al. (2008) conducted a literature review on gender differences in sexual attitudes. Across many studies, the authors found men tended to have more permissive attitudes towards sex than did women. For example, men would indicate that they are more accepting of sex without commitment. Oliver and Hyde (1993) found an effect size of 0.81 with men having more permissive attitudes than women towards casual sex. This effect size decreased greatly when Peterson and Hyde (2010) conducted a more recent meta-analysis, finding an effect size of 0.45. Oliver and Hyde also found that men were more accepting of sex within a committed
relationship than were women. However, Peterson and Hyde found the opposite effect with women being more accepting than men. Several researchers have come up with different explanations behind why there is such a sex difference in attitudes toward sex. Feldman, Turner, and Araugjo (1999) propose that our attitudes stem from learned gender roles. Women are more often concerned with relationships and emotional closeness than they are with sexual relations due to the way they were raised. Another suggestion that is similar to the learned gender roles is the social learning theory. This theory proposes each gender is exposed to different attitudes and behaviors which are reinforced differently. For example, men are often reinforced for having sex with multiple partners with their peers and are considered ‘studs’ for ‘scoring’. If women were to replicate this behavior, they would be seen as ‘loose’ or ‘sluts’, often being punished and looked down upon by her peers (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Both of these theories are evidence of the double-standard faced by women. Men often reward other men for permissive behaviors, reinforcing positive attitudes towards sexual behaviors. Women, on the other hand, tend to be shunned and disapproved of other women who commit similar acts. Peterson and Hyde (2010) believe that because of the changes in effect sizes since Oliver and Hyde’s 1993 study shows the slow shift in sexual attitudes within the genders. They state that this might be due to the increasing images in the media that are depicting women of being accepted for such behaviors.

Little research has been done on attitudes towards SM behaviors. Davies and O’Meara (2007) found college students who considered themselves sadistic tried to justify their behavior through various rationales such as “protecting oneself” or “fear response to the prospect of being hurt”. Those who didn’t consider themselves sadistic suggested sadists were “selfish individuals for whom the infliction of pain was reinforcing”, “incapable of empathy” and “apathetic towards others’ physical state”. Furthermore, participants were asked to provide attributes of themselves.
Individuals who identified themselves as nonsadistic provided more positive attributes than those who were sadistic. Yost (2010) created an attitudinal scale measuring attitudes towards SM by looking at if SM behavior is considered morally wrong, if SM behaviors is linked to violence, if SM behaviors are unacceptable form of sexuality, and if SM behaviors carry over into daily activities.

With little empirical research on attitudes towards SM, this present study expands beyond Yost (2010) by looking at observed sex differences in SM attitudes with their relation to BDSM fantasies and practiced behaviors. For the purpose of this study, we will adopt Weinberg, Williams, and Moser's (1984) definition of SM, "the deliberate use of physical and/or psychological "pain" to produce sexual arousal" (p. 379).

**Hypotheses**

This study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: men will endorse more SM related fantasies than will women

H2: men will endorse more SM related behaviors than will women

H3: SM fantasies and SM behaviors will predict SM attitudes. This will be stronger for men than for women.

As previously noted, researchers have found men report higher frequencies of SM related fantasies (Davidson, 1985), SM related behaviors (Donnelly & Fraser, 1998), and are more open-minded about sex in general (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Therefore, we expect men to report higher numbers of SM fantasies and behaviors. Based off of prior findings, we suspect when an individual who both fantasizes and participates in SM related behaviors are more likely to have a positive attitude towards SM. We predict this will be stronger in men than women.
Method

Participants

Five hundred and two undergraduate students at Northern Illinois University participated in this study. The sample consisted of 326 women (64.9%). Ages ranged from 18 to 53 years ($M = 20.4, SD = 3.2$). Participants were ethnically diverse (66.7% Caucasian, 12.4% Black/African American, 8.6% Latino/Hispanic, and 4.2% Asian American). The sample was prominently heterosexual (86.3%) (5% Bisexual, 1.2% Gay, and 0.8% Lesbian).

Measures

Attitudes About Sadomasochism Scale (ASMS). The ASMS (Yost, 2010) is a 23-item self-report measure designed to measure attitudes towards SM with four subscales: (a) Socially Wrong (12 items; e.g., “Sadomasochists just don’t fit into our society”), (b) Violence (5 items; e.g., “People who engage in SM are more likely to become involved in domestic violence”), (c) Lack of Tolerance (4 items; e.g., “Sadomasochists are just like everybody else”), and (d) Real Life (2 items; e.g., “Submissives are passive in other aspects of their lives (besides sex”)).

Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from $1 = \text{disagree strongly}$ to $7 = \text{agree strongly}$. Each of the ASMS subscales demonstrated strong internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha values ranging from $.78$ to $.95$ (Socially Wrong: $\alpha = .95$; Violence: $\alpha = .92$; Lack of Tolerance: $\alpha = .78$; Real Life: $\alpha = .89$). The total score was reverse coded so a higher total score will indicate a positive attitude.

Sociosexual Orientation Inventory- Revised (SOI-R). The SOI-R (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008) is a 9-item self-report measure designed to measure ones willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual acts with three subscales: (a) Behavior (3 items; e.g., “With how many different partners have you had sex with in the past 12 months?”), (b) Attitude (3 items; e.g.,
"Sex without love is OK"), and (c) Desire (3 items; e.g., "In everyday life, how often do you have spontaneous fantasies about having sex with someone you have just met?"). Responses are rated on a 9-point Likert scale. A high total score indicates an unrestricted sociosexual orientation (e.g., higher promiscuous behavioral tendency). The SOI-R demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$).

**Wilson Sexual Fantasy Questionnaire (WSFQ).** The WSFQ (Wilson, 1988) is a 37-item self-report measure designed to measure the presences of sexual fantasies and behaviors with four subscales: (a) Intimate (9 items; e.g., "Having intercourse with a loved partner"), (b) Exploratory (9 items; e.g., "Sex with two other people"), (c) Impersonal (9 items; e.g., "Watching others having sex"), and (d) Sadomasochistic (10 items; e.g., "Being forced to do something"). This measure was modified by the current authors for the purpose of this study. Two identical measures were used, one to assess sexual fantasies and the other to assess sexual behaviors over a period of 6 months.

**The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (SDS).** The SDS (Crowne and Marlow, 1960) is a 33-item self-report measure designed to measure participants tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner (e.g., "I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings"). Responses are rated either true or false. Higher total score indicates a desire to appear socially acceptable in their responses. The SDS demonstrated strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$).

**Procedures**

Data were collected from two different participant pools. One hundred and eighty-eight of the participants were recruited from upper-division psychology courses (129 women; 46 men; 13 missing data). One member from the research team entered participating classrooms to
provide a brief overview of the study. All students were given a document which provided a link to SurveyMonkey. Some of the participants received extra credit for completing the study. Three hundred and fourteen of the participants were recruited from the introductory to psychology course through an online recruitment system (SONA) (197 women; 105 men; 12 missing data). Upon completing the study, participants received research credit for the course. Participants completed the questionnaires individually and took on average 15 to 20 minutes to complete. To ensure anonymity, participant IP addresses and e-mail addresses were not recorded.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1. All ASMS subscales showed strong internal consistency with alphas ranging from .78 to .93, and a total score $\alpha = .95$. All SOI-R subscales showed strong internal consistency with alphas ranging from .80 to .85, however the total score showed moderate internal consistency with $\alpha = .67$. Lastly, the SDS showed moderate internal consistency with $\alpha = .77$.

Zero-order Correlations

Zero-order correlations among all measures are presented in Table 2 (exception of ASMS and SOI-R subscales; see Table 3 and Table 4 respectively). All fantasy subscales were highly inter-correlated with the strongest correlation between Impersonal and Exploratory ($r = .71, p < .01$). The behavior subscales showed moderate to high inter-correlation with the strongest association between Sadomasochism and Exploratory ($r = .52, p < .01$). The relationship between Impersonal and Exploratory behaviors ($r = .49, p < .01$) were not as strong as the relationship between their corresponding fantasies ($r = .71, p < .01$). There is a strong correlation
between all fantasy subscales and their corresponding behavior (e.g., Intimate Fantasy and Intimate Behavior).

Sadomasochism and Intimate fantasies showed a stronger correlation to the ASMS SM Total than the other fantasy subscales \( (r = .28, p < .01; r = .27, p < .01 \text{ respectively}) \). Similar results were found among the behavior subscales, with both Sadomasochism \( (r = .24, p < .01) \) and Intimate \( (r = .24, p < .01) \) behaviors correlating strongest with the ASMS SM Total. Among all the fantasy and behavior subscales, Impersonal and Exploratory fantasies correlated strongest with the SDS \( (r = -.25, p < .01; r = -.28, p < .01 \text{ respectively}) \). Similar results were found when correlating ASMS SM Total with the SOI-R \( (r = .48, p < .01; r = .50, p < .01 \text{ respectively}) \). This suggests individuals who fantasize about impersonal behaviors (e.g., watching others have sex) and exploratory behaviors (e.g., participating in an orgy) responded in a socially desirable manner. Furthermore, these individuals were found to have a higher unrestrictive sociosexuality, indicating they are more open about the sexuality and are more promiscuous.

Zero-order correlations among all measures broken down by sex are presented in Table 5. Women had a slightly higher correlation between SM fantasies and SM behaviors than men \( (r = .59, p < .01; r = .55, p < .01 \text{ respectively}) \). Similar to zero-order correlation among all measures, all fantasies had moderate to strong correlation between each other. The strongest relationship for both sexes was between Impersonal and Exploratory fantasies \( (r = .70, p < .01; r = .69, p < .01 \text{ respectively}) \). All behaviors were strongly inter-correlated for both sexes, however men had slightly stronger correlations. Strongest correlation for men was between SM and Exploratory \( (r = .58, p < .01) \). Strongest correlation for women was between Impersonal and Exploratory \( (r = .48, p < .01) \), however men were still higher \( (r = .53, p < .01) \).
Men had a stronger correlation between SM fantasies and ASMS Total \( (r = .34, p < .01) \) than women \( (r = .29, p < .01) \). However, women had a stronger correlation between SM behaviors and their attitudes \( (r = .31, p < .01) \) than men \( (r = .14, p > .05) \). Interesting to note that men correlated higher with SM fantasies \( (r = -.16, p > .05) \) than women \( (r = -.13, p < .05) \) on the SDS, however the correlation for women was found significant. In regards to SM behaviors, women had a higher correlation \( (r = -.19, p < .05) \) then men \( (r = -.06, p > .05) \). These finding may be due to there being more women represented in the sample. Women who fantasized about SM had a strong correlation with the SOI-R \( (r = .38, p < .01) \) then men \( (r = .11, p > .05) \). Both sexes had a strong correlation between SM behaviors and SOI-R \( (r = .30, p < .01 \) for both men and women).

Strongest correlation for men was between Impersonal fantasy and SDS \( (r = -.27, p < .01) \) whereas women’s strongest was with Exploratory fantasy \( (r = -.30, p < .01) \). In regards to the SOI-R, men correlated higher with Intimate behavior \( (r = .44, p < .01) \) than women \( (r = .23, p < .01) \) where as women correlated higher with Exploratory fantasy \( (r = .52, p < .01) \) than men \( (r = .42, p < .01) \).

**Sex Differences in SM Fantasies and SM Behaviors**

It was predicted men would endorse more SM fantasies (hypothesis 1) and SM behaviors (hypothesis 2). To test these hypotheses a series of t-tests were conducted (see Table 6). With respect to hypothesis 1, there was no significant sex differences in endorsement of SM fantasies with men endorsing fewer than women (men: \( M = 2.12, SD = 2.80 \); women: \( M = 2.33, SD = 2.42 \)), \( t(475) = 0.86, p = 0.39 \). With respect to hypothesis 2, there was a significant difference in endorsement of SM behaviors, but women \( (M = 1.41, SD = 1.76) \) endorsed more than men \( (M = 1.06, SD = 1.81) \), \( t(475) = 2.00, p = .047 \).
It was predicted that the relationship between both SM fantasies and SM behaviors combined will predict SM attitudes in which will be stronger for men than women. To test this hypothesis, we regressed SM attitudes on SM fantasies, SM behaviors, sex, and their interaction. The three way interaction was significant, $\beta = .040$, $t(468) = 2.375$, $p = .018$. To understand this interaction, simple regression models were ran for women and men in which SM attitudes on SM fantasies, SM behaviors, and their interaction. In support of hypothesis three, these predictors explained more variance for men ($R^2 = .185$) than women ($R^2 = .115$) (See Figure 1 and 2).

Lastly, a series of t-tests were conducted to see if there were any sex differences in dominant/submissive fantasies and/or behaviors. Men reported significantly more dominant SM fantasies ($M = 1.11$, $SD = 1.43$) than women ($M = 0.68$, $SD = 1.02$), $t(475) = -3.79$, $p < 0.01$. Conversely, women endorsed significantly more submissive SM fantasies ($M = 1.21$, $SD = 1.40$) than men ($M = 0.67$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(475) = 4.02$, $p < 0.01$. In regards to SM behaviors, men reported significantly more dominant SM behaviors ($M = 0.54$, $SD = 0.92$) than women ($M = 0.30$, $SD = 0.67$), $t(475) = -3.20$, $p < 0.01$. Whereas women endorsed significantly more submissive SM behaviors ($M = 0.77$, $SD = 1.05$) than men ($M = 0.31$, $SD = 0.75$), $t(475) = 4.83$, $p < 0.01$.

**Discussion**

The goal of the present study was to examine sex differences in the impact of sexual fantasies and behaviors on attitudes about SM. It was predicted men would endorse more SM fantasies and SM behaviors, and the combination of the two would act as predictors for attitudes towards SM for both sexes but more strongly for men. Past literature found men fantasized more about sexual activities (Davidson, 1985; Hsu et al., 1994) whereas women fantasize more about romantic activities (Hariton & Singer, 1974; Hsu et al., 1994). In the present study, men and
women responded on four subscales, three of which are considered to be promiscuous (sadomasochism, impersonal, and exploratory). Although men fantasized significantly more than women on two of the three promiscuous subscales (impersonal and exploratory), women were found to fantasize more about SM. Additionally, there was no sex difference when it came to romantic fantasies.

Similar to fantasies, prior research has found women engaged in more passionate, romantic behaviors (Leigh, 1989; Person et al., 1989) while men engaged in more permissive activities (e.g., casual sex, extramarital sex, etc...) (Carroll, Volk, & Hyde, 1985; Peterson & Hyde, 2010). The present results showed mixed evidence with women endorsing more intimate behaviors but also engaging in more SM and exploratory behaviors. Davidson (1994) asked participants what their partner's reaction would be if they should become aware of their sexual fantasies. He found women tended to believe their partners would have a more positive and accepting reaction while men believed the opposite. Due to this, women in the present study may feel more comfortable asking their partner to engage in nonconventional activities than men would.

Consistent with prior research, men in the present study were more accepting of noncommittal, loveless sex. Hendrick, Hendrick, Slapion-Foote, and Foote (1985) found men endorsed similar items such as "I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him/her", "casual sex is acceptable", and "It is okay to have ongoing sexual relationships with more than one person at a time". However, there was no sex difference found in attitudes towards SM. Although nonsignificant, women had a slightly more positive attitude than men. This finding is not surprising given the fact women reported more SM fantasies and SM behaviors. This finding supports the mere exposure effect which states the more familiar you are
with something (e.g., the more exposed you are to an object), the more likely you will have a positive attitude towards it.

Women endorsed more SM fantasies and behaviors; however, it was not as strong of a predictor for their attitudes towards SM when compared to men. This suggests that women may still internalize a double standard that may attenuate the relationship between their fantasies and behaviors and their attitudes. This double standard might not apply as strongly to others, however, as evidenced by women holding slightly more positive SM attitudes that did men.

Results from this study suggest a possible shift in societal norms towards generally taboo topics. In contrast to prior studies, women are slowly becoming more accepting of their sexual fantasies and behaviors that are atypical of their gender. Even though results from this study found mixed evidence for women being more romantic while men being more permissive, such findings indicate that the double standard may still be in effect but slowly dissolving over time.

There were several limitations with this study. Participants were not randomly sampled across the college campus. Instead, participants were drawn from the psychology department which may cause a slight bias. We tried to counteract this bias by sampling from the introduction to psychology course (which is a general education course). Second, the use of college students from a rather liberal college makes it hard to generalize to the entire college student population. Lastly, the fantasy and behavior questionnaires left out several fantasies and behaviors that one might engage in and would have endorsed had they been included. Future studies should replicate this study in another college campus to see if the effects were due to the campus being relatively liberal. Furthermore, replication outside of a college campus would help assist in making the results more generalizable to the population.
References


Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Reliability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>$M (SD)$</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>ASMS$^a$ Socially Wrong</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.14 (1.35)</td>
<td>.95</td>
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<td><strong>ASMS$^a$ Violence</strong></td>
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<td>4.68 (1.14)</td>
<td>.95</td>
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*Note. N = 470-487.*

$^a$ASMS = Attitudes about Sadomasochism Scale

$^b$SDS = Social Desirability Scale

$^c$SOI-R = Sociosexual Orientation Inventory - Revised
### Table 2

**Zero-Order Correlation Among All Measures**

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*Note. N = 477 - 482. Bolded correlations are significant at p < .05. Remaining correlations are significant at p < .01

<sup>a</sup>ASMS = Attitudes about Sadomasochism Scale

<sup>b</sup>SDS = Social Desirability Scale

<sup>c</sup>SOI-R = Sociosexual Orientation Inventory - Revised
Table 3

*Inner-Correlation among ASMS subscales*

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*Note.* N = 474-476. *All correlations are significant at p < .01*

<sup>a</sup>ASMS = Attitudes about Sadomasochism Scale
Table 4

*Inner-Correlation among SOI-R subscales*

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*Note.* N = 486-487. *All correlations are significant at p < .01*

*a*SOI-R = Sociosexual Orientation Inventory - Revised
Table 5

Zero-Order Correlation Among Measures Broken Down By Sex

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Note. N = 477 - 482. ** Correlations are significant at p < .01; * Correlations are significant at p < .05.

<sup>a</sup>ASMS = Attitudes about Sadomasochism Scale; <sup>b</sup>SDS = Social Desirability Scale; <sup>c</sup>SOI-R = Sociosexual Orientation Inventory - Revised
Table 6

Sex Differences Between Means on All Measures

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<th>p-value</th>
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<td>1.06 (1.81)</td>
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<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMS&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; – Violence</td>
<td>3.17 (1.50)</td>
<td>3.34 (1.43)</td>
<td>-1.19</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMS&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; – Attitude Total</td>
<td>3.28 (1.16)</td>
<td>3.40 (1.07)</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMS&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt; - SM Attitude&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.72 (1.16)</td>
<td>4.60 (1.07)</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDS&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt; – Total Score</td>
<td>0.47 (0.16)</td>
<td>0.46 (0.15)</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt; – Behavior Facet</td>
<td>2.37 (1.40)</td>
<td>2.65 (1.82)</td>
<td>-1.83</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt; – Attitude Facet</td>
<td>3.93 (2.15)</td>
<td>5.61 (2.36)</td>
<td>-7.69</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt; – Desire Facet</td>
<td>3.11 (1.77)</td>
<td>5.31 (1.98)</td>
<td>-12.13</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt; – Total Score</td>
<td>3.14 (1.38)</td>
<td>4.52 (1.55)</td>
<td>-9.81</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant SM Fantasy</td>
<td>0.68 (1.02)</td>
<td>1.11 (1.43)</td>
<td>-3.79</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant SM Behavior</td>
<td>0.30 (0.67)</td>
<td>0.54 (0.92)</td>
<td>-3.20</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive SM Fantasy</td>
<td>1.21 (1.40)</td>
<td>0.67 (1.24)</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive SM Behavior</td>
<td>0.77 (1.05)</td>
<td>0.31 (0.75)</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>Note.</sup> N = 476-477.

<sup>a</sup>ASMS = Attitudes about Sadomasochism Scale
<sup>b</sup>Attitude Total from ASMS Reverse Coded
<sup>c</sup>SDS = Social Desirability Scale
<sup>d</sup>SOI-R = Sociosexual Orientation Inventory – Revised
Figure 1. Regression of SM attitudes on SM fantasies, SM behaviors and their interaction in men. 1 SD is one standard deviation above the mean.
Figure 2. Regression of SM attitudes on SM fantasies, SM behaviors and their interaction in women. 1 SD is one standard deviation above the mean.

\[ R^2 = 0.115 \]
Appendix A

Wilson Sexual Fantasy Scale - Revised - Fantasies

Please read over each statement and indicate which items you have fantasized about within the past 6 months.

1. Making love out of doors in a romantic setting, e.g., field of flowers, beach at night
2. Having intercourse with a loved partner
3. Intercourse with an anonymous stranger
4. Sex with two other people
5. Participating in an orgy
6. Being forced to do something
7. Forcing someone to do something
8. Homosexual/lesbian activity
9. Receiving oral sex
10. Giving oral sex
11. Watching others have sex
12. Whipping someone
13. Spanking someone
14. Being whipped
15. Being spanked
16. Taking someone's clothes off
17. Having your clothes taken off
18. Making love elsewhere than bedroom (e.g., kitchen, bathroom)
19. Being excited by materials or clothing (e.g., rubber, leather etc.)
20. Causing pain to my sexual partner
21. My sexual partner causing me pain
22. Mate-swapping
23. Activities concerned with urination, etc.
24. Being tied up
25. Tying someone up
26. Exposing oneself provocatively to a sexual partner
27. Transvestism (wearing clothes of the opposite sex)
28. Being promiscuous
29. Having sex with someone much younger than yourself
30. Having sex with someone much older than yourself
31. Being irresistible by the opposite sex
32. Being seduced as an 'innocent'
33. Seducing an 'innocent'
34. Being embarrassed by failure of sexual performance
35. Using objects for stimulation (e.g., vibrators)
36. Being masturbated to orgasm by a partner
37. Masturbating a partner to orgasm
38. Kissing passionately

Intimate themes – 1, 2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 36, 37, 38
Exploratory themes- 4, 5, 8, 22, 28, 31, 32, 33
Impersonal themes- 3, 11, 19, 23, 29, 30, 34, 35
Sadomasochistic themes- 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27
Appendix B

Wilson Sexual Fantasy Scale - Revised - Behaviors

Please read over each statement and indicate which items you have participation in within the past 6 months.

1. Making love out of doors in a romantic setting, e.g., field of flowers, beach at night
2. Having intercourse with a loved partner
3. Intercourse with an anonymous stranger
4. Sex with two other people
5. Participating in an orgy
6. Being forced to do something
7. Forcing someone to do something
8. Homosexual/lesbian activity
9. Receiving oral sex
10. Giving oral sex
11. Watching others have sex
12. Whipping someone
13. Spanking someone
14. Being whipped
15. Being spanked
16. Taking someone’s clothes off
17. Having your clothes taken off
18. Making love elsewhere than bedroom (e.g., kitchen, bathroom)
19. Being excited by materials or clothing (e.g., rubber, leather etc.)
20. Causing pain to my sexual partner
21. My sexual partner causing me pain
22. Mate-swapping
23. Activities concerned with urination, etc.
24. Being tied up
25. Tying someone up
26. Exposing oneself provocatively to a sexual partner
27. Transvestism (wearing clothes of the opposite sex)
28. Being promiscuous
29. Having sex with someone much younger than yourself
30. Having sex with someone much older than yourself
31. Being seduced as an ‘innocent’
32. Seducing an ‘innocent’
33. Being embarrassed by failure of sexual performance
34. Using objects for stimulation (e.g., vibrators)
35. Being masturbated to orgasm by a partner
36. Masturbating a partner to orgasm
37. Looking at erotic pictures or films
38. Kissing passionately

Intimate themes – 1, 2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 35, 36, 38
Exploratory themes- 4, 5, 8, 22, 28, 31, 32
Impersonal themes- 3, 11, 19, 23, 29, 30, 33, 34, 37
Sadomasochistic themes- 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27
Appendix C

Attitudes About Sadomasochism Scale

Instructions: For each of the following statements, please note whether you agree or disagree, using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>disagree strongly</td>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>mildly</td>
<td>neither agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>mildly</td>
<td>agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
<td>agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the following definitions when considering your responses:

Sadomasochism: sexual practices that involve dominance and submission (the appearance that one person has control over the other), sometimes involve role-playing (such as Master-slave or Teacher-student), are always consensual (all partners participate willingly and voluntarily).

Sadomasochist: Someone who deliberately uses physical stimulation (possibly pain) and/or psychological stimulation and control to produce sexual arousal and to achieve sexual pleasure.

Dominant: Someone who always or mostly is the person in control during an SM sexual encounter.

Submissive: Someone who always or mostly is the person who does not have control during an SM sexual encounter.

__1__ Sadomasochists just don't fit into our society.

__2__ Practicing sadomasochists should not be allowed to be members of churches or synagogues.

__3__ Sadomasochism is a perversion.

__4__ Sadomasochistic behavior is just plain wrong.

__5__ Sadomasochism is a threat to many of our basic social institutions.

__6__ I think sadomasochists are disgusting.

__7__ Sadomasochistic activity should be against the law.

__8__ Parents who engage in SM are more likely to physically abuse their children.

__9__ Sadomasochism is an inferior form of sexuality.

__10__ If I was alone in a room with someone I know to be a Dominant, I would feel uncomfortable.

__11__ SM rarely exists in a psychologically healthy individual.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disagree strongly</td>
<td>disagree moderately</td>
<td>disagree mildly</td>
<td>neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>agree mildly</td>
<td>agree moderately</td>
<td>agree strongly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. If I was alone in a room with someone I knew to be a Submissive, I would feel uncomfortable.

13. People who engage in SM are more likely to become involved in domestic violence.

14. A Dominant is more likely to rape a romantic partner than the average person.

15. A Dominant is more likely to rape a stranger than the average person.

16. A dominant is more likely to sexually molest a child than the average person.

17. A variety of serious psychological disorders are associated with sadomasochism.

18. Sadomasochists are just like everybody else.

19. Sadomasochism is erotic and sexy.

20. Many sadomasochists are very moral and ethical people.

21. Sadomasochistic activity should be legal, as long as all participants are consenting adults.

22. Submissives are passive in other aspects of their lives (besides sex).

23. Dominants are aggressive and domineering in other aspects of their lives (besides sex).

Note: Items 18 through 21 should be reverse scored prior to computing subscale scores. To create the Socially Wrong subscale score, average Items 1 through 12; the Violence subscale, average items 13 through 17; the Lack of Tolerance subscale, average items 18 through 21; and the Real Life subscale, average items 22 and 23. A full scale score can be computed by averaging responses to all 23 items.
### Appendix D

The Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R)

Please respond honestly to the following questions:

1. With how many different partners have you had sex within the past 12 months?
   
   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5-6 | 7-9 | 10-19 | 20 or more |

2. With how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse on *one and only one* occasion?
   
   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5-6 | 7-9 | 10-19 | 20 or more |

3. With how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse without having an interest in a long-term committed relationship with this person?

   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5-6 | 7-9 | 10-19 | 20 or more |

4. Sex without love is OK.

   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

   Strongly disagree

   Strongly agree

5. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying “casual” sex with different partners.

   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

   Strongly disagree

   Strongly agree

6. I do *not* want to have sex with a person until I am sure that we will have a long-term, serious relationship.

   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

   Strongly disagree

   Strongly agree

7. How often do you have fantasies about having sex with someone with whom you do *not* have a committed romantic relationship?

   • 1 – never
   • 2 – very seldom
   • 3 – about once every two or three months
   • 4 – about once a month
   • 5 – about once every two weeks
   • 6 – about once a week
   • 7 – several times per week
   • 8 – nearly every day
   • 9 – at least once a day

8. How often do you experience sexual arousal when you are in contact with someone with whom you do *not* have a committed romantic relationship?
9. In everyday life, how often do you have spontaneous fantasies about having sex with someone you have just met?

• 1 – never
• 2 – very seldom
• 3 – about once every two or three months
• 4 – about once a month
• 5 – about once every two weeks
• 6 – about once a week
• 7 – several times per week
• 8 – nearly every day
• 9 – at least once a day

Items 1–3 should be coded as 0 _ 1, 1 _ 2, . . . , 10 _ 19 _ 8, 20 or more _ 9; they can then be aggregated to form the Behavior facet. After Item 6 is reverse coded, Items 4–6 can be aggregated to form the Attitude facet. Aggregating Items 7–9 results in the Desire facet. Finally, all nine items can be aggregated as the total score of global sociosexual orientation.