

**The Effect of Number of Sexual Partners on the  
Sacredness of Sex, Sexual Anxiety, Endorsement of Promiscuity, and Time to Sex**

By

Stephanie Kandlik

Honors Thesis

Department of Psychology

Western Illinois University

May 2007

Honors Thesis Approval  
Psychology Department  
Western Illinois University

May 11, 2007


I hereby recommend that the honors thesis prepared under my supervision by:


Stephanie Kandlik


entitled

**The Effect of Number of Sexual Partners on the  
Sacredness of Sex, Sexual Anxiety, Endorsement of Promiscuity, and  
Time to Sex**

Be accepted in partial fulfillment of the department in University Honors.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Thesis Advisor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Reader

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Department Chair

## Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract.....	2
Introduction to Study One.....	4
Method of Study One.....	10
Results of Study One.....	12
Discussion of Study One.....	13
Introduction to Study Two.....	14
Method of Study Two.....	15
Results of Study Two.....	16
Discussion of Study Two.....	19
References.....	21
Appendix: Study Materials.....	30

Running head: THE EFFECT OF NUMBER OF SEXUAL PARTNERS ON THE

**The Effect of Number of Sexual Partners on the  
Sacredness of Sex, Sexual Anxiety, Endorsement of Promiscuity, and  
Time to Sex**

Stephanie Kandlik

Western Illinois University

### Abstract

This study looked at number of sexual partners participants had had, the extent to which they believed that sex is sacred, their sexual anxiety, their endorsement of sexual promiscuity, and the time to sex in their most recent relationship. Two studies were carried out. The hypothesis tested in Study One was that a negative relationship would be found between the number of sexual partners participants had had and the time between first meeting their most recent partner romantically and engaging in sex and that this relationship would be mediated by the belief that sex is not sacred, low sexual anxiety, and the endorsement of sexual promiscuity. College students filled out measures of the extent to which they believed that sex is sacred, their sexual anxiety, their endorsement of sexual promiscuity, and the time to sex in their most recent relationship. Number of sexual partners was not correlated with time to sex; thus the hypothesis was not supported and mediational analyses were not carried out. However, number of sexual partners was correlated with the belief that sex was not sacred, low sexual anxiety, and endorsement of sexual promiscuity. Study Two was carried out to test the hypotheses that number of sexual partners was causally related to the belief that sex is not sacred, low sexual anxiety, and the endorsement of sexual promiscuity. To do this, participants filled out measures of number of sexual partners, the belief that sex is not sacred, low sexual anxiety, and the endorsement of sexual promiscuity at the beginning and end of a semester. Number of sexual partners at the beginning of the semester was correlated with the belief that sex was not sacred at the end of the semester and vice versa. Since the first correlation was not larger than the second, causation could not be inferred. Similar

analyses were carried out for low sexual anxiety and endorsement of sexual promiscuity. Although number of sexual partners was found to be correlated with the belief that sex was not sacred and endorsement of sexual promiscuity, no evidence of causation was found. Thus the hypotheses of Study Two were not supported.

**The Effect of Number of Sexual Partners on the  
Sacredness of Sex, Sexual Anxiety,  
Endorsement of Promiscuity, and Time to Sex**

Why do people choose whether or not to have sex, and with whom? David Buss (2003) suggests that humans' sexual decisions are based on an innate desire to pass on their genes. He sees sexual behavior as rooted in a need for reproduction. However, men and women behave differently when making sexual decisions, even though their basic goal is the same. One major factor is the amount of investment put into reproduction. The energy and effort put into reproduction is radically different for each sex (Trivers, 1985). Men do not have to give or invest very much. All they need is the will, a short amount of time for copulation, and sperm. All of these things are usually readily available. Women, however, must deal with many more issues. There is the long pregnancy, the painful and dangerous birth, and the nursing and care of the child. This is the evolutionary reason given to explain why women are more selective in mating.

Men and women also differ in the number of offspring they are able to create. A man could impregnate many, many women in a year; whereas a woman can only produce about one child per year on average, no matter how much sexual activity or how many partners she chooses to engage. Because a woman knows her capacity for childbearing is limited, she must be more careful with whom she chooses to pass down her genes.

Given these concerns, Buss (2003) believes that men and women have evolved different ways of making sexual decisions. Buss suggests that there are two basic mating strategies—short and long term. Long term mating strategies are based on commitment,

and short-term ones are based in promiscuity. Men will fare better if they embrace a short term mating strategy, that is, impregnate as many women as they can and therefore have many opportunities to pass on their genes. Women have less reproductive opportunity. They want a committed relationship so that they get help in raising the child and increase the chances of the child living to adulthood. Women prefer long term mating strategies.

Men and women often experience disagreement over what is the best type and frequency of sexual intercourse (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004). Because women are the ones who are most at risk and have the most investment in sex, they get to choose the type and frequency of sex. In the past, this has led to sex mostly occurring only in marriage.

Freud took a similar view on sexual decision-making. Freud (1960) believed that civilization would fall with the widespread practice of promiscuous sex. He thought children needed the social structure of a family with committed parents. He suggested that this is why all societies celebrate marriage as the model relationship. He believed that this caused people to be neurotic because they were sexually frustrated and unsatisfied.

Sex outside of marriage was infrequent until 1960, when the birth control pill was invented and everything changed. Birth control freed women to engage in promiscuous behavior that only men had enjoyed in the past. Women no longer had to view sexual activity in terms of reproduction and the beginning of a family and responsibility. Because of this, promiscuity skyrocketed. Age of virginity loss declined and number of

partners increased (Oliver, 2000). People even experimented with open marriage. People hoped that the sexual freedom that existed before marriage could continue after marriage. What they did not account for was jealousy, which has kept open relationships to a minimum (Mathes, 1992).

The freedom of the '60s remained until AIDS struck in the 1980s. AIDS made sex become something to be very cautious about – for both sexes. Since then age of virginity loss has increased and the number of sexual partners decreased, although they never reached their 1950s low again (Hyde and Oliver, 2000).

Many other factors influence how and why people make the sexual decisions they do. A number of studies have been done on people's sexual decision-making process. McCabe and Killackey (2004) explored the sexual decision making of women. They used the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) to explain how young women make sexual decisions. One tool they used was the Sexual Attitude Questionnaire, which they adapted from the McCabe and Collins 1984 scale. The questions included a section about parental approval for sexual activity and the individual's best friend's approval for the same activities. The last questions involved the individual's own feelings towards a person engaging in various sexual behaviors. Participants were also asked if they themselves would participate in said behaviors. The subjects then were questioned about the control they perceived having over engaging in these behaviors. These subjects were given a follow-up questionnaire about their sexual habits six months later. They were also asked to give the age at which they first participated in various sexual actions and the age of their partner on that occasion.

McCabe and Killackey (2004) found that mean age was positively correlated with sexual activity. They also found that the strongest predictor of a women's sexual behavior was her perceived control over that behavior. They also found that past experience did not predict future intentions: "A surprising finding from this study was that past experience did not predict current intentions for any of the behaviors. This may be related to the context within which women find themselves. They may or may not have intended to engage in the behaviors that they experienced in the past, but this experience has not made these women more or less willing to engage in these behaviors in the current situation. Thus, the experiences that women have with a particular sexual partner at one point in time do not appear to shape their intention to engage in that same behavior in the future" (p. 24). They suggest that the reason for this is that perhaps in the past the women did not make the decision to engage in the behavior, and the lack of control made them hesitant to make the choice to participate in that activity in the future. The study also mentions that it seems to be the immediate thoughts and emotions that cause women to make their sexual decisions; they do not engage in a more logical assessment of their religious beliefs and the influences of family and friends in making sexual decisions.

Chambers (2003) suggests that Janis and Mann's (1977) seven steps of vigilant decision-making could be applied to sexual decision-making. The seven steps of vigilant decision making include seeing how important goals and values are related to the choice, weighing the positive and negative consequences of each course of action, and going over them again before making the final decision (Janis and Mann, 1977). Chambers also uses Janis and Mann's (1977) Model of Conflict Decision Making, which states that making a

decision deals with commitment and a risk of loss. Chambers (2004) study of college women's sexual health practices found that women who were older when they had their first sexual experience were more likely to practice safe sex.

Hulton (2001) applied the Transtheoretical Model of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983) to figure out why adolescents were making the sexual choices they were making. This model suggests that individuals make a gradual change from old behavior to new. The steps include contemplation, preparation and action (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983). Some of Hulton's survey items endorsing abstaining from sex involve personal beliefs about sex. But Hulton also took safety into consideration with items like, "I am a virgin because that ensures I will not get AIDS or STDS" or "being a virgin guarantees that I won't get pregnant" (Hulton, 2001). Her survey also includes statements about how parents/teachers/friends influence a person's decision to have sex. When Hulton ran into problems finding support for her model, she stated, "Perhaps the weighing of Pros and Cons of a situation does not have salience with their decision-making patterns. This may be especially true of students who have some type of cognitive impairment. At least seven previous studies have determined that an important variable in adolescent sexual decision making is the level of cognition" (p. 110). However, failure to find support for her decision-making model may not be due to any cognitive defect on part of the adolescents, but may be due simply to the 'heat of the moment vs. harsh light of day' theory suggested by McCabe and Killackey (2004).

Knox, Cooper and Zusman (2001) conducted a relatively simple study to find out about the sexual attitudes of college men and women. They found that men were six times more hedonistic than women and suggested that this was due to socialization.

Schooler's (2005) study on body shame and sexual decision making revealed that women with higher levels of body shame are less sexually experienced and less likely to be sexually assertive.

Concerning promiscuity, Schmitt (2004) linked it and infidelity with the big five personality traits. This study found that low agreeableness and conscientiousness were linked with infidelity worldwide (Schmitt, 2004). Promiscuity, on the other hand, was related to extraversion (Schmitt, 2004).

Paradise, Cote, and Minsky's (2001) study showed that virgins and sexually active women stated very different reasons for making the decision to have sexual intercourse or not. Virgins usually gave the reasons that sex was to be engaged in when they were older, when they got married, or simply because they did not see it as the 'right thing for me now' (Paradise et al., 2001). Also, religious beliefs were a common reason cited for not being sexually active (Paradise et al., 2001). Sexually active women were more likely to state reasons such as 'I like having sex' or 'I like/love the person' (Paradise et al., 2001). This suggests that while virgins hold a sacred view of sexual intercourse, sexually active women see it as something to enjoy, and/or engage in while dating an individual.

## **Study One**

### ***Hypotheses***

This study was conducted to test the hypothesis that a negative relationship exists between the number of sexual partners a person has had and the length of time it takes for him or her to engage in sex; and that this relationship is mediated by a decrease in the

belief that sex is sacred and should be reserved for marriage or at least a committed relationship, an increase in the endorsement of promiscuous sex, and a decrease in sexual anxiety.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

Participants were college students aged eighteen to thirty-eight. There were seventy women and fifty-four men in this study. The mean age of a participant was 21.36 with a standard deviation of 2.55. For year in school, most of the participants (47) were seniors, with 41 juniors, 19 sophomores, 13 freshmen and 4 graduate students. Most participants were Caucasian (109), with eleven African-American participants, two Asian-Americans, and two Hispanics. Course credit was given for participation in this study.

### ***Measures***

The Demographics Questionnaire asked for gender, age, year in school, race, dating status, virginity status, number of sexual partners, and time between meeting their latest sexual partner romantically and having intercourse with them.

The Sacredness of Sex Scale (SOSS) measured the extent to which people believed that sex is sacred and should be saved for marriage or at least a committed relationship. The items stated that either (a) sex is a sacred thing to be shared by two people in love, or (b) sex is just an activity humans engage in for fun and sex is no big deal. Sex-is-sacred item examples include the following: "sex is a sacred act"; "sex is something one should only do with their true love"; "sex is something you should only

have with someone you will spend your whole life with”, and lastly, “when I have sex, I know I am in love with my sexual partner”. Sex-is-not-sacred items include: “sex is just something to do, like watching a movie”; “sex is about pleasure, like eating ice cream”; “when I get hungry I eat, when I get horny I have sex”, and “sex is like scratching an itch”. Sex-is-sacred and sex-is-not-sacred items were mixed together. The subject responded to items using the following scale: very true(5), true(4), neither true nor false(3), false(2), and completely false(1). Items stating that sex is not sacred were reverse coded so that total scores measured the extent to which participants believed that sex is sacred. Total scores were computed by summing over items after reverse-scoring the sex-is-not-sacred items. There were a total of forty items when the scale was created. However, an item analysis shortened it to twenty-nine items. Internal consistency reliability was .88.

The next survey participants filled out is the Sexual Anxiety Scale (SAS). This scale measured how anxious an individual was about sexual intercourse. It covered a range of possible sources of anxiety, including pregnancy, STDs, awkwardness, discomfort, and guilt. Reliability was .83.

Lastly, the participants completed Simpson & Gangestad’s 1991 Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI), which measures promiscuity (Buss, 2003). It contains questions such as “How many partners have you had sex with in the past year?”

### ***Procedure***

The participants filled out informed consent forms giving them a basic idea of the study’s purpose and the risks and benefits of the surveys. Then, each person was given the surveys and asked to fill them out. Some filled them out in a group setting and some

took the surveys home to complete them. Participants were given envelopes to put their completed surveys in to protect participants' anonymity.

### Results

The means and standard deviations for demographic variables, Number of Partners, Time to Sex, Sacredness of Sex Scale Scores, Sexual Anxiety Scale Scores, and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory Scores are found in Table One.

To test the hypothesis that a negative relationship exists between number of sexual partners and the time meeting a new romantic partner and engaging in sex and that this relationship is mediated by a decrease in the belief that sex is sacred and should be reserved for marriage or at least a committed relationship, an increase in the endorsement of promiscuous sex, and a decrease in sexual anxiety the test of mediation proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986) was used. The following steps were taken: first, the Sacredness of Sex Scale (mediating variable) was regressed on the Number of Sexual Partners (independent variable); second, the Time to Sex (dependent variable) was regressed on the Number of Sexual Partners (independent variable); third, Time to Sex (dependent variable) was regressed on both the Number of Sexual Partners (independent variable) and the Sacredness of Sex Scale (mediating variable). Mediation is demonstrated if the first two coefficients are significant and if the two multiple regression coefficients are such that the dependent-independent variable coefficient becomes insignificant while the dependent-mediating variable coefficient remains significant. Fulfilling the first requirement the Numbers of Partners-Sacredness of Sex Scale beta coefficient was significant,  $-.32, p < .001$ . However, the second requirement that the Number of Partners-Time to Sex beta coefficient be significant was not supported,  $-.11, p = .28$ . Since a

relationship between Number of Partners and Time to Sex was not found, the Sacredness of Sex Scale could not mediate the relationship. Furthermore, the Sexual Anxiety Scale and the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory could not act as mediators either.

When Number of Partners was regressed on the Sexual Anxiety Scale a significant beta coefficient of  $-.25$  ( $<.01$ ) was found. Similarly, when Number of Partners was regressed on the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory, a significant beta coefficient of  $.94$  ( $p<.001$ ) was found. When the Sexual Anxiety Scale and the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory were separately regressed on Time to Sex, neither beta coefficient was significant.

The intercorrelations of the demographic measures and various scales are found in Table Two. Therefore, it seems that Number of Partners is related to the Sacredness of Sex Scale, Sexual Anxiety Scale, and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory. However, it was not clear what the direction of causation was. Did the number of people slept with influence people's attitudes towards sex, or did people's attitudes towards sex influence how many sexual partners they had? Study II was created to answer this question.

### **Discussion**

The results of this research show that although sexual experience, operationalized as number of sexual partners, was correlated with a decrease in the belief that sex was sacred, a decrease in sexual anxiety, and an increase in the endorsement of promiscuity, sexual experience was not correlated with a decrease in time between meeting the most recent romantic partner and sex. Furthermore, decreases in the belief that sex is sacred and sexual anxiety and an increase in the endorsement of sexual promiscuity was not correlated to a decrease in time between meeting the most recent romantic partner and

sex. It may be that time to sex is influenced by so many situational and random factors that it is not affected by sexual experience or any of the measures correlated with sexual experience.

It makes sense that sexual experience should reduce an individual's belief that sex is sacred, something to be saved for marriage or at least a committed relationship. After having sex with the fourth partner it is sort of hard to believe that you are saving sex for marriage etc.

It also makes sense that people are less anxious about sex the more experience they have. Once one engages in sexual intercourse, s/he learns skills and gains confidence that reduces her/his anxiety that sexual intercourse is something worrisome.

It is pretty clear why sexual promiscuity and number of partners were correlated. People envision themselves engaging in more sexual acts after they have been with a greater number of sexual partners.

Even if the results did not end up supporting the hypothesis, interesting results were found. It was found that when people's number of sexual partners increased, their views on how sacred sex is and their anxiety about sex decreased and their endorsement of promiscuous sex increased.

### **Study Two**

Study One found support for the idea that number of sexual partners was strongly connected with scores on the following questionnaires: Sacredness of Sex Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory and Sexual Anxiety Scale; the question arose as to which affected the other. It is proposed that the more partners one has had, the less special sex is viewed, the more positive promiscuous sex is viewed, and the less sexual

anxiety is experienced. Even though the results of Study One showed the two variables were strongly linked, the only way to tell whether number of sexual partners causally influenced the other variables was by doing a longitudinal study. Three hypotheses were tested:

- 1.) There is a negative causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has had and his or her belief that sex is sacred.
- 2.) There is a negative causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has had and his or her sexual anxiety.
- 3.) There is a positive causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has had and his or her endorsement of promiscuous sex.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

Participants were college students aged eighteen to thirty-two. There were eighty women and twenty-one men in this study. The mean age of participants was 20.7, with a standard deviation of 2.06. For year in school, the highest percentage was seniors at 34.7%, followed by juniors at 29.7%, sophomores at 27.7%, and freshmen at 5.9%. Most participants were Caucasian (91%), with four African-American participants, one Asian-American, and two Hispanics. Participants were asked to give their dating status. The

highest number of the participants were “dating exclusively” at 42.6%, with “not dating” coming in a close second with 31.7%. “Dating casually” made up 13.9%, “engaged/living together” made up 8.9%. Only one subject was married, making up 1%. Course credit was given to students who chose to participate in this study.

### *Measures and Procedures*

Participants were given a packet of questionnaires with the Demographic, Sacredness of Sex Scale, Sociosexual Orientation Inventory, and Sexual Anxiety Scale and were asked to fill them out. Then they were asked to fill out the same packet again at the end of the semester. It was hoped to find that an increase in the number of sexual partners would lead to a decrease in the attitude that sex is a sacred act, a decrease in their sexual anxiety, and an increase in their endorsement of promiscuous sexual behavior. Questionnaires were identified by the last four digits of participant’s social security numbers, so that the initial questionnaires could be matched with the later questionnaires. Participants received course credit for participating, and also signed informed consent forms.

### **Results**

The means and standard deviations for demographic variables, Number of Partners, Time to Sex, Sacredness of Sex Scale Scores, Sexual Anxiety Scale Scores, and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory Scores for both the beginning and end of the semester are found in Table Three.

The results will be presented in terms of the three hypotheses being tested. A summary of the results is found in Table Five. The first hypothesis was that there is a negative causal relationship between the Number of Sexual Partners an individual has

had, and his/her belief that sex is a sacred act. To test this hypothesis, Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester was correlated with Sacredness of Sex Scale scores at the end of the semester and Sacredness of Sex Scale scores at the beginning of the semester were correlated with Number of Partners at the end of the semester. If the first correlation (Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester and Sacredness of Sex Scale scores at the end of the semester) is greater than the second correlation (Sacredness of Sex Scale scores at the beginning of the semester and Number of Sexual Partners at the end of the semester), it can be concluded that there is a negative causal relationship between the Number of Sexual Partners an individual has and their belief that sex is a sacred act. The first correlation (Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester and Sacredness of Sex Scale scores at the end of the semester) was  $-.23$  ( $p < .05$ ) and the second correlation (Sacredness of Sex Scale scores at the beginning of the semester and Number of Sexual Partners at the end of the semester) was  $-.31$  ( $p < .005$ ). Clearly, the first correlation is almost the same as the second correlation. Therefore, the first hypothesis, that there is a negative causal relationship between the number of sexual partners a person has had and their belief that sex is a sacred act, was not supported. Even though a significant negative relationship between Number of Sexual Partners and the Sacredness of Sex Scale was found, there is no evidence about the direction of the causation.

The second hypothesis was that there is a negative causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has had and their sexual anxiety. To test this hypothesis, Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester was correlated with scores on the Sexual Anxiety Scale at the end of the semester and scores on the

Sexual Anxiety Scale were correlated with Number of Sexual Partners at the end of the semester. If the first correlation (Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester and Sexual Anxiety Scale scores at the end of the semester) is greater than the second correlation (Sexual Anxiety Scale scores at the beginning of the semester and Number of Sexual Partners at the end of the semester). It can be concluded that there is a negative causal relationship between the Number of Sexual Partners an individual has, and their Sexual Anxiety. The first correlation (Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester and Sexual Anxiety Scale scores at the end of the semester) was  $-.09$  ( $p > .05$ ) and the second correlation (Sexual Anxiety Scale scores at the beginning of the semester and Number of Sexual Partners at the end of the semester) was  $-.14$  ( $p > .05$ ). Neither correlation was statistically significant. Therefore, the second hypothesis that there is a negative causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has had and their sexual anxiety was not supported.

The third hypothesis was that there is a positive causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has had and their endorsement of promiscuous sex. To test this hypothesis, Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester was correlated with Sociosexual Orientation Inventory scores at the end of the semester and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory scores at the beginning of the semester were correlated with Number of Sexual Partners at the end of the semester. If the first correlation (Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory scores at the end of the semester) is greater than the second correlation (Sociosexual Orientation Inventory scores at the beginning of the semester and Number of Sexual Partners at the end of the semester) it can be concluded that there

is a positive causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has and their endorsement of promiscuous sex. The first correlation (Number of Sexual Partners at the beginning of the semester and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory scores at the end of the semester) was .58 ( $p < .001$ ) and the second correlation (Sociosexual Orientation Inventory scores at the beginning of the semester and number of sexual partners at the end of the semester) was also .58 ( $p < .001$ ). Obviously, the first and second correlations are exactly the same. Therefore, the third and final hypothesis, that there is a positive causal relationship between the number of sexual partners an individual has had and their endorsement of promiscuous sex, was not supported. Although a significant positive relationship was found between Number of Sexual Partners and endorsement of promiscuous sex, there was no evidence that could lead to a conclusion about direction of causation.

### **Discussion**

Study One initially found a strong negative relationship between the number of sexual partners and various attitudes towards sex. This study was conducted longitudinally to find out if number of partners caused the various attitudes towards sex. Participants gave their opinions on sexual practices, and reported information about their number of sexual partners at the beginning and the end of the semester. This study found a negative correlation between number of sexual partners and how sacred an individual viewed sex. No significant results were found between number of sexual partners and sexual anxiety. A positive correlation was found between number of sexual partners and endorsement of promiscuity. However, this study failed to find any causal relationships between number of partners due to the belief in the sacredness of sex, sexual anxiety or

the endorsement of promiscuity. This could be because the length of time between data collections was not of a sufficient length. Two months seems too little time for participants to gain sexual partners to influence attitudes, as hypothesized. If this study is to be carried out a third time, a much longer period of time between testings is recommended. Perhaps then causation would be found.

## References

- Ajzen, I. (1985). From intentions to actions: A theory of planned behavior. In J. Kuhl & J. Beckmann (Eds), *Action-control: From cognition to behavior*, (pp. 11 – 39). Heidelberg: Springer.
- Baumeister, R.F. and Vohs, K.D. (2004). Sexual economics: sex as female resource for social exchange in heterosexual interactions. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8, 339-363.
- Buss, D. M. (2003). *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating*. New York: Basic Books.
- Byers, S. E.; Randall, H. E. What is sex? Students' definitions of having sex, sexual partner, and unfaithful sexual behavior. *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 12, 87-96.
- Chambers, K. B. (2003). Safer sexual decision making in adolescent women: Perspectives from the conflict theory of decision-making. *Issues of Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 26, 129-143.
- Chambers, M. K. (2004). A conceptual model of sexual health practices of older adolescent college women (University of Texas, 2004). *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: the Sciences and Engineering*, 64, 5446

- Freud. (1961). *Civilization and its Discontents*. W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.: New York.
- Hulton, L. J. (2001). Application of the transtheoretical model of change to adolescent decision-making. *Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 24, 95-115.
- Hyde, T.S., and Oliver, M.B. (2000). Gender differences in sexuality: Results from Analysis. In C.B. Travis and J. W. White (Eds.), *Sexuality, Society and Feminism* (pp. 57-77). Washington, D.C. American-Psychological Association.
- Janis, I. L., & Mann, L. (1977). *Decision-making: A psychological analysis of conflict, choice, and commitment*. New York: Free Press.
- Knox, D., Zusman, M. E., & Cooper, C. (2001). Sexual values of college students. *College Student Journal*, 35, 24-27.
- Mathes, E.W. (1992). *Jealousy: The Psychological Data*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- McCabe, M. P. & Killackey, E. J. (2004). Sexual decision making in young women. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 19, 15-27.

Paradise, J. E., Cote, J., Minsky, S., Lourenco, A., & Howland, J. (2001). Personal values and sexual decision-making among virginal and sexually experienced urban adolescent girls. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 28* 404-409.

Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1983). Stages and process of self-change of smoking: Toward an integrative model of change. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 51*, 390–395.

Schmitt, D. P. (2004). The big five related to risky sexual behavior across 10 world regions: differential personality associations of sexual promiscuity and relationship infidelity. *European Journal of Personality, 18*, 201-319.

Schooler, D E. (2005). The contexts of body shame (University of Michigan, 2005). *Dissertation Abstracts International:Section B: The Sciences and Engineering, 65*, 5439.

Trivers, R. (1985). *Social evolution*. Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings.

**Table 2.***Intercorrelations Demographic and Sexual Attitudes Variables*

Demographic and Sexual Attitudes Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Demographic and Sexual Attitudes Variables									
Gender (1)									
Age (2)		-.06							
Dating Status (3)		-.22	.11						
Number of Sexual Partners (4)		.07	.16	.09					
Time to Sex (5)		-.06	-.10	.18	-.11				
SOSS (6)		-.14	-.06	.12	<b>-.32</b>	-.03			
SAS (7)		-.05	-.09	<b>-.27</b>	<b>-.25</b>	-.14	<b>.32</b>		
SOI (8)		<b>.22</b>	.06	-.02	<b>.94</b>	-.06	<b>-.48</b>	<b>-.30</b>	

- Bolded numbers indicate significant results.

**Table 3.**

*The Means and Standard Deviations for Demographics Number of Partners, Time to Sex, Sacredness of Sex Scale Scores, Sexual Anxiety Scale Scores, and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory Scores at the Beginning and End of the Semester*

	Means	Standard Deviations
Gender	0.21	0.41
Age	20.70	2.06
Dating Status	2.32	1.06
Number of Sexual Partners 1	4.25	5.40
Time to Sex 1	101.38	163.13
SOSS 1	91.52	14.14
SAS 1	38.18	8.75
SOI 1	52.40	31.75
Number of Sexual Partners 2	5.06	6.35
Time to Sex 2	93.79	155.64
SOSS 2	92.22	14.36
SAS 2	37.78	8.79
SOI 2	54.24	32.33

**Table 4.***Intercorrelations of Demographics and Sexual Attitudes Variables for Study Two*

Demographic And Sexual Attitudes Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Gender (1)</b>										
<b>Age (2)</b>	.16									
<b>Dating Status(3)</b>	-.16	.14								
<b>Number of Sexual Partners (4)</b>	.09	.24	-.04							
<b>SOSS- Time 1 (5)</b>	-.24	-.16	.14	-.34						
<b>SAS – Time 1 (6)</b>	-.32	-.21	-.19	-.22	.24					
<b>SOI – Time 1 (7)</b>	.40	.10	-.19	.70	-.60	-.15				
<b>Number of Sexual Partners – Time 2 (8)</b>	.18	.23	-.12	.98	-.31	-.14	.72			
<b>SOSS – Time 2 (9)</b>	-.41	-.80	.17	-.23	.76	.25	-.53	-.26		
<b>SAS – Time 2 (10)</b>	-.26	-.21	-.21	-.09	.14	.57	-.07	-.09	.12	
<b>SOI – Time 2 (11)</b>	.44	.05	-.21	.58	-.52	-.16	.85	.65	-.61	-.10

\***Bolded numbers indicate significant figures.**



**Table 5.**

*Correlations Between Number of Partners and Sacredness of Sex Scale Scores,  
Sexual Anxiety Scale Scores, and Sociosexual Orientation Inventory Scores  
at the Semester's Beginning and End*

Semester Beginning	Semester End
Number of Partners -----→ -.23 (p<.05) -----→	Sacredness of Sex
Sacredness of Sex -----→ -.31 (p<.005) -----→	Number of Partners
Number of Partners -----→ -.09 (n.s.) -----→	Sexual Anxiety
Sexual Anxiety -----→ -.14 (n.s.) -----→	Number of Partners
Number of Partners-----→ +.58 (p<.001) -----→	Sociosexual Orientation
Sociosexual Orientation-----→ +.58 (p<.001) -----→	Number of Partners

**Appendix: Study Materials**

Western Illinois University  
Department of Psychology  
Informed Consent Form

Romantic Love, Part 2, Consent Form

1. Purpose: The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between sexual attitudes and behaviors and how they change over time. You will answer questions about your sexual attitudes and experiences twice, once at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. Your name will not be on your questionnaire so your anonymity will be protected. However, you are requested to put the last four digits of your social security number on the questionnaires so that the early ones can be matched up with the later questionnaires. Since the researchers do not know what your social security number is, your anonymity is protected. The study will take less than 30 minutes.
2. Potential Risks: This study presents no risks or discomforts.
3. Benefits for the Participants: Participation in this study will provide you with an understanding of research design. Once the study is completed (at the end of the semester) the research will be explained in greater detail so that participants will have a better understanding of sexual behavior.
4. Confidentiality: Participants will not put their names on the questionnaires so as to protect participant anonymity.
5. Rights: If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or any other questions contact the primary researcher, Eugene W. Mathes, 298-1547, Wg. 117, or the Chair of the Institution Research Board, Beth Seaton, 298-1191, Sherman 320.
6. Termination: You may terminate your participation in this research at any time without penalty.

I have read the above and agree to voluntarily participate in this research.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_

**Romantic Relationships Questionnaire**

1. Last four digits of your social security number: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Hopefully, you will fill out these questionnaires again at the end of the semester; the last four digits of your social security number will allow us to match this questionnaire with that one.)

2. Gender: \_\_\_ male; \_\_\_ female

3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Year in school: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Race: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Current dating status: \_\_\_ not dating  
                                  \_\_\_ dating casually  
                                  \_\_\_ dating exclusively  
                                  \_\_\_ engaged/living together  
                                  \_\_\_ married

7. Have you ever had sexual intercourse? \_\_\_yes; \_\_\_no

8. If yes, with how many different persons have you had sexual intercourse?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. If yes, for your most recent sex partner, how long was it between  
meeting romantically<sup>2</sup> and sexual intercourse? \_\_\_\_\_ (Answer  
in days and/or months.)

## Attitudes toward Sex Scale II

Respond to the items found below using the following scale:

1 = definitely false

2 = false

3 = neither true nor false

4 = true

5 = definitely true

- 1.) Sex is just something to do, like watching a movie.
- 2.) Sex is a sacred act.
- 3.) Sex is about pleasure, like eating ice cream.
- 4.) Sex is something one should only do with their true love.
- 5.) When I get hungry I eat, when I get horny I have sex.
- 6.) Sex is the most valuable gift a woman can give a man.
- 7.) Sex is like scratching an itch.
- 8.) Sex is something you should only have with someone you will spend your whole life with.
- 9.) Sex is expected if you're dating someone.
- 10.) Sex is a sacrament of marriage.
- 11.) People should have sex in a relationship to find out if they are compatible with each other.
- 12.) When I have sex, I know I am in love with my sexual partner.
- 13.) Having sex for the first time changes your outlook on life.
- 14.) Sex is an expression of your love.
- 15.) Sex is glorified in the media. In real life it is not like that at all.
- 16.) Sex signifies a committed relationship.

- 17.) Sex is a basic human need. People shouldn't be so uptight about it.
- 18.) Sex and marriage go hand in hand.
- 19.) Becoming sexually active is part of becoming an adult, like drinking alcohol or getting your drivers license.
- 20.) Having sex outside of marriage makes me feel ashamed and guilty.
- 21.) Mixed messages in the media confuse people about their true sexual nature.
- 22.) Sexual experience helps you in future relationships.
- 23.) Men can be promiscuous but a woman's virginity is sacred.
- 24.) Sex is a tool used for getting what you want.
- 25.) Both men and women should feel free to express their sexuality.
- 26.) If you have sex with your partner you'll lose his or her respect.
- 27.) Sex is a way to bring a couple together and keeping them together.
- 28.) Once a woman reaches a certain age, being a virgin is shameful.
- 29.) If you have sex with your partner, he or she will no longer want to marry you.
- 30.) Knowing someone wants me sexually makes me feel good.
- 31.) Once I've had sex with my partner, I feel I cannot refuse to have sex with that partner again as long as we are together.
- 32.) I feel people view me differently (negatively) if they know that I've had sex.
- 33.) If you can't have sex with the one you love, have sex with the one you're with.
- 34.) There is nothing shameful or sinful about sex if both parties are consenting adults.

\_\_\_ 35.) I believe people should have a series of long-term monogamous relationships.

\_\_\_ 36.) Sexual behavior is a direct result of your upbringing.

\_\_\_ 37.) Sexual relations can lead to love.

\_\_\_ 38.) There are sexual practices that should never take place, even between two consenting adults.

\_\_\_ 39.) Waiting until marriage for sex leads to disappointment and unrealistic expectations.

\_\_\_ 40.) People curb their sexual impulses for fear of public ridicule.

## Attitudes toward Sex Scale II

Respond to the items found below using the following scale:

1 = definitely false

2 = false

3 = neither true nor false

4 = true

5 = definitely true

- \_\_\_ 1.) Sex is just something to do, like watching a movie.
- \_\_\_ 2.) Sex is a sacred act.
- \_\_\_ 3.) Sex is about pleasure, like eating ice cream.
- \_\_\_ 4.) Sex is something one should only do with their true love.
- \_\_\_ 5.) When I get hungry I eat, when I get horny I have sex.
- \_\_\_ 6.) Sex is the most valuable gift a woman can give a man.
- \_\_\_ 7.) Sex is like scratching an itch.
- \_\_\_ 8.) Sex is something you should only have with someone you will spend your whole life with.
- \_\_\_ 9.) Sex is expected if you're dating someone.
- \_\_\_ 10.) Sex is a sacrament of marriage.
- \_\_\_ 11.) People should have sex in a relationship to find out if they are compatible with each other.
- \_\_\_ 12.) When I have sex, I know I am in love with my sexual partner.
- \_\_\_ 13.) Sex is an expression of your love.
- \_\_\_ 14.) Sex signifies a committed relationship.
- \_\_\_ 15.) Sex is a basic human need. People shouldn't be so uptight about it.
- \_\_\_ 16.) Sex and marriage go hand in hand.

- 17.) Becoming sexually active is part of becoming an adult, like drinking alcohol or getting your drivers license.
- 18.) Having sex outside of marriage makes me feel ashamed and guilty.
- 19.) Sexual experience helps you in future relationships.
- 20.) Sex is a tool used for getting what you want.
- 21.) Both men and women should feel free to express their sexuality.
- 22.) Sex is a way to bring a couple together and keeping them together.
- 23.) Knowing someone wants me sexually makes me feel good.
- 24.) I feel people view me differently (negatively) if they know that I've had sex.
- 25.) If you can't have sex with the one you love, have sex with the one you're with.
- 26.) There is nothing shameful or sinful about sex if both parties are consenting adults.
- 27.) Sexual relations can lead to love.
- 28.) There are sexual practices that should never take place, even between two consenting adults.
- 29.) Waiting until marriage for sex leads to disappointment and unrealistic expectations.

**Sex Anxiety Scale**

Respond to the items found below using the following scale:

- 1 = definitely false
- 2 = false
- 3 = neither true nor false
- 4 = true
- 5 = definitely true

- \_\_\_ 1. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because of the possibility of sexually transmitted diseases.
- \_\_\_ 2. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because of the possibility of pregnancy.
- \_\_\_ 3. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I don't like taking off my clothes in the presence of someone of the opposite sex.
- \_\_\_ 4. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I don't like the way my body looks.
- \_\_\_ 5. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I find looking at another person's naked body disgusting.
- \_\_\_ 6. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I don't like body fluids.
- \_\_\_ 7. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I think sex is dirty.
- \_\_\_ 8. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because it makes me feel guilty.
- \_\_\_ 9. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I think it is immoral outside of marriage.
- \_\_\_ 10. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I am afraid that I will not please my partner.
- \_\_\_ 11. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I may fail (e.g., fail to achieve an erection (men) or orgasm).
- \_\_\_ 12. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I might be awkward.
- \_\_\_ 13. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because it brings up

issues of commitment.

\_\_\_ 14. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I don't like being touched.

\_\_\_ 15. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because it makes me feel used.

\_\_\_ 16. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I might be too fast or too slow.

\_\_\_ 17. The thought of having sex makes me anxious because I am not sure about what people of the opposite sex want or expect.

### Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

Please answer the following questions honestly. For the questions dealing with behavior, write your answers in the blank spaces provided. For the questions dealing with thoughts and attitudes, circle the appropriate number on the scales provided.

1. With how many different partners have you had sex within the past year?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many different partners do you foresee yourself having sex with during the next 5 years? (Please give a specific, realistic estimate.) \_\_\_\_\_

3. With how many different partners have you had sex on one and only one occasion?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How often do (did) you fantasize having sex with someone other than your current (most recent) dating partner?

- \_\_\_ never
- \_\_\_ once every two or three months
- \_\_\_ once a month
- \_\_\_ once every two weeks
- \_\_\_ once a week
- \_\_\_ a few times each week
- \_\_\_ nearly every day
- \_\_\_ at least once a day

5. Sex without love is OK. (Circle the number which most closely corresponds to your attitude.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

\_\_\_\_\_

I strongly disagree                      I strongly agree

6. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying <sup>3</sup>casual<sup>2</sup> sex with different partners.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

\_\_\_\_\_

I strongly disagree                      I strongly agree

7. I would have to be closely attached to someone (both emotionally and psychologically) before I could feel comfortable and fully enjoy having sex with him or her.

### Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

Please answer the following questions honestly. For the questions dealing with behavior, write your answers in the blank spaces provided. For the questions dealing with thoughts and attitudes, circle the appropriate number on the scales provided.

1. With how many different partners have you had sex within the past year?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How many different partners do you foresee yourself having sex with during the next 5 years? (Please give a specific, realistic estimate.)\_\_\_\_\_

3. With how many different partners have you had sex on one and only one occasion?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How often do (did) you fantasize having sex with someone other than your current (most recent) dating partner?

- \_\_\_ never
- \_\_\_ once every two or three months
- \_\_\_ once a month
- \_\_\_ once every two weeks
- \_\_\_ once a week
- \_\_\_ a few times each week
- \_\_\_ nearly every day
- \_\_\_ at least once a day

5. Sex without love is OK. (Circle the number which most closely corresponds to your attitude.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

\_\_\_\_\_

I strongly disagree

I strongly agree

6. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying <sup>3</sup>casual<sup>2</sup> sex with different partners.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

\_\_\_\_\_

I strongly disagree

I strongly agree

7. I would have to be closely attached to someone (both emotionally and psychologically) before I could feel comfortable and fully enjoy having sex with him or her.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

---

I strongly disagree

I strongly agree