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ROMANTIC COUPLES AND PARTNER USE OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT
MATERIAL: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COGNITIONS FOR
DYADIC AND SEXUAL SATISFACTION

BY

ANA J. BRIDGES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

This dissertation examined the relationship between use of sexually explicit material (SEM) and sexual and relationship satisfaction. Three hypotheses were examined: (1) negative interpretations of a partner's SEM use would be related to lower dyadic satisfaction; (2) interactive SEM use would result in more negative partner interpretations of that use; and (3) distressed couples would be less reliable reporters of each other's SEM use. The study also explored how feminist values, depression, and sexual functioning correlated with interpretations of a partner's SEM use. Participants were 217 couples in exclusive heterosexual relationships solicited through Internet sites devoted to psychological studies. Couples had been together for an average of 9.16 years ($SD = 8.03$). Of the participants, 70.5% of men ($N = 153$) and 57.1% of women ($N = 124$) reported using SEM. The first research hypothesis was partially supported: both direct and mediated effects were present. For women, her SEM use was directly and positively related to sexual and dyadic satisfaction, but the effects of her male partner's SEM use were fully mediated by her interpretations of that use. For men, the full model also better fit the data compared to the direct and mediational models, but did not account for much variance in couple satisfaction. Men's SEM use was directly and negatively correlated with sexual satisfaction. When men reported more distressing interpretations of a partner's use of SEM, the dyad reported lower levels of satisfaction. However, higher female partner use of SEM resulted in more positive interpretations of her use and more positive relationship outcomes. The second hypothesis was unsupported. There was no evidence that participants whose partners used interactive SEM were more distressed than

participants whose partners used more conventional materials. The third hypothesis was unsupported. Couples exhibited high reliability in reporting one another's use of SEM, but distressed couples were just as reliable reporters as well-functioning couples. Results from exploratory analyses revealed that sexual functioning and feminist values were not related to SEM use or distress over partner SEM use. In women, higher levels of depression were related to higher levels of distress over a partner's SEM use.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
 Chapter I: Statement of the Problem.....	 1
Chapter II: Justification for and Significance of the Study.....	8
Marital Stability.....	9
Marital Satisfaction.....	10
Sexual Satisfaction.....	11
Personality Factors.....	12
Relationship Factors.....	12
Behavioral Factors.....	13
Gender Differences.....	15
 Emotional and Sexual Infidelity.....	 15
Defining Pornography.....	18
Studies in Sexually Explicit Materials.....	19
SEM and Romantic Relationships.....	20
Sexual Scripts in SEM.....	23
Partner's Use of SEM and Distress.....	26
Gender Norms.....	29
 Couples' Reliability.....	 31
Research Hypotheses.....	33
 Chapter III: Research Design.....	 36
Overview of Study and Hypotheses.....	36
Participants.....	37
Procedures.....	38
Recruiting the Respondent's Partner.....	39
Compensation.....	39
Measures.....	40
Demographic Information.....	40
Use of Sexually Explicit Material.....	40
Types of SEM.....	41
32-PDS.....	41
Dyadic Adjustment Scale.....	42
Sexual Satisfaction.....	43
Sexual Dysfunction.....	45
Feminist Awareness.....	45
Depression.....	47
Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment.....	47

Ethical Considerations.....	48
Methodological Limitations.....	50
Chapter IV: Results.....	53
Completers versus Early Withdrawers.....	53
Successful versus Unsuccessful Partner Recruiters.....	53
Scale Structures and Reliability.....	54
32-PDS.....	54
Feminist Perspectives Scale.....	55
Index of Sexual Satisfaction.....	56
Intimacy/Passion/Commitment.....	57
Patient Health Questionnaire-9.....	58
Dyadic Adjustment Scale-7.....	58
Data Cleaning.....	58
Sexually Explicit Material Use.....	59
Cognitions, SEM Use, and Satisfaction.....	61
Measurement Model.....	62
Female Participants.....	64
Male Participants.....	67
Conclusion.....	70
Interactive versus Non-interactive SEM Use.....	71
Conclusion.....	72
Couple Reliability in Reporting.....	72
Conclusion.....	74
Feminism and Interpretations of a Partner's SEM Use.....	74
Conclusion.....	75
SEM Use and Depression.....	75
Conclusion.....	76
SEM Use and Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment.....	76
Conclusion.....	76
Sexual Functioning and Dyadic Satisfaction.....	77
Conclusion.....	77
Chapter V: Discussion.....	78
Impact of SEM Use on Dyadic Satisfaction.....	78
Reliability of Partner Reports of SEM Use.....	84
Clinical Implications.....	85
Limitations and Future Directions.....	87

Appendices.....	93
Appendix A: Participant Solicitation Message.....	93
Appendix B: Consent Form for Research.....	94
Appendix C: Debriefing Message for First Respondent....	96
Appendix D: Demographic Questions.....	98
Appendix E: Assessing Use of SEM.....	100
Appendix F: 32-Pornography Distress Scale.....	105
Appendix G: Dyadic Adjustment Scale-7.....	108
Appendix H: Sexual Satisfaction Measures.....	109
Appendix I: Sexual Dysfunction Questions.....	112
Appendix J: Select Items from the Feminist Perspectives Scale.....	113
Appendix K: Patient Health Questionnaire-9.....	115
Appendix L: Intimacy, Passion, Commitment Scale.....	116
Bibliography.....	163

List of Tables

Table	Page
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Full Sample.....	118
Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Couple Sample.....	120
Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Participants Who Completed the Survey versus Those Who Withdrew Prematurely.....	122
Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of Participants Who Successfully Recruited Their Partners and Those Who Did Not.....	123
Table 5. 32-PDS Principal Components Loadings.....	124
Table 6. Feminist Perspectives Scale Principal Components Loadings.....	125
Table 7. Index of Sexual Satisfaction Principal Components Loadings.....	126
Table 8. Triangular Love Theory Principal Components Loadings.....	127
Table 9. Correlation Matrix.....	128
Table 10. Summary of Model Fit Indices for Men and Women.....	143
Table 11. Reliability of Partner Reports for Frequency of SEM Use as a Function of Couple Distress.....	144
Table 12. Reliability of Partner Reports for Duration of SEM Use as a Function of Couple Distress.....	145

List of Figures

Figure	Page
Figure 1. Measurement Model.....	146
Figure 2. Female Direct Effects Model.....	147
Figure 3. Female Mediation Effects Model.....	148
Figure 4. Female Full Model.....	149
Figure 5. Female Full Model with Covariates.....	150
Figure 6. Male Direct Effects Model.....	151
Figure 7. Male Mediation Model.....	152
Figure 8. Male Full Model.....	153
Figure 9. Male Full Model with Covariates.....	154
Figure 10. Structural Model for Couples' Consistency.....	155
Figure 11. Use of SEM and Levels of Depression.....	156
Figure 12. Female Depression and Interpretations of a Partner's Use of SEM.....	157
Figure 13. Male Depression and Interpretations of a Partner's Use of SEM.....	158
Figure 14. Female Model of Impact of SEM Use on Intimacy, Passion, Commitment.....	159
Figure 15. Male Model of Impact of SEM Use on Intimacy, Passion, Commitment.....	160
Figure 16. Impact of Sexual Functioning on Dyadic Satisfaction...	161
Figure 17. Impact of Sexual Functioning on Use of SEM.....	162

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Pornography is big business. A recent report by Adult Video News (AVN, 2006) estimated annual sales to be at approximately \$12 billion dollars. The most frequently searched term on the internet is “sex” (Wallace, 1999). Production of pornographic materials is increasing. For example, 13,000 new adult videos titles were released in 2006, a 60% increase from 1996 (AVN, 2006). Annual rentals of sexually explicit videos increased from 75 million in 1986 (Stack, Wasserman, & Kern, 2004) to 950 million in 2005 (AVN, 2006). In addition, the increase of personal computers available in many households has accompanied a dramatic rise in use of adult materials, primarily due to the “Triple A Engine” of Internet pornography (it is accessible, affordable, and seemingly anonymous; Cooper, Putnam, Planchon, & Boies, 1999).

The increased production, availability, and use of adult materials suggests that therapists will be increasingly required to help individuals and couples deal with issues that may arise from such use. Yet, research in the area of sexually explicit material has left the clinician with few tools to understand how this use relates to relationship and sexual functioning. Generally, empirical investigations of adult materials have focused on (a) the link between pornography and violence, particularly rape proclivity (e.g. Fisher & Grenier, 1994), and (b) how the material affects the (usually male) viewer’s attitudes (e.g. Malamuth & McIlwraith, 1988; Cooper, Scherer, Boies, & Gordon, 1999). Only a handful of research studies thus far have examined the way a romantic partner’s use of sexually explicit material affects the

non-using partner. Of these, one examined couples where the user was in treatment for a “sexual addiction” (Schneider, 2000), one was a qualitative study of the meanings women ascribed to their partner’s sexually explicit material use when the user was considered, by her, to have a “pornography addiction” (Bergner & Bridges, 2002), and a third was a survey designed to assess the prevalence of distressed feelings towards a partner’s use of sexually explicit material in a broader, more diverse sample of women (Bridges, Bergner, & Hesson-McInnis, 2003).

What these studies all suggested was that, among other things, a partner’s use of sexually explicit material can interfere with the sexual functioning and general quality of that relationship, as reported by the non-using partner. There were differences in the meanings women ascribed to their partner’s use of such material (Bridges et al., 2003). Some women felt the activity was fairly neutral and did not impact their relationships positively or negatively. Some women were relieved their partners used this material rather than relied on her to fulfill all of his sexual needs. Some even saw the use as enhancing their lovemaking. However, about 30% of women in a broad sample (Bridges et al., 2003) were distressed about their partner’s use of sexually explicit material and felt it negatively impacted their relationships in a variety of domains, including feeling a sense of decreased intimacy, of being a sexual object rather than participant during lovemaking, and of decreased self-esteem. Bridges et al. (2003) suggest that factors such as the marital status and length of the relationship, the amount of time the partner spent viewing the material, and the woman’s age were related to her distress.

The current study, thus, extends previous research in this area in several ways. Specifically, it sought to clarify how use of sexually explicit material related to relationship and sexual satisfaction. Prior studies examined only the female partner's perceptions of her male partner's use. This study examined perceptions for *both* men and women in heterosexual romantic couples. Using Albert Ellis's Rational Emotive Theory (Ellis, 1962; Ellis, Shaughnessy, & Mahan, 2002), Cognitive Social Learning Theory (Mischel, 1973), and previous research findings, the current study explored the relationship between sexually explicit material use and sexual satisfaction.

Both Rational Emotive Theory and Cognitive Social Learning Theory suggest that the same event (in this case, a partner's use of sexually explicit material) may have very different consequences or effects for different people because events themselves do not necessarily lead to a particular outcome, but rather the *interpretation* of these events. Our responses to stimuli, or external events, are filtered through cognitive schemas. These schemas, according to Social Learning Theory, arise from childhood events, learning by observing others, and the socialization process. Support for this relationship already exists in the arena of couple functioning: a meta-analysis on longitudinal studies of marriages found a strong link between maladaptive attributions of a partner's behavior and satisfaction with the romantic relationship (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

If the extent to which a romantic partner's use of sexually explicit material will lead to distress is tied to the degree to which the interpretations of the event are rational and helpful (Ellis et al., 2002), then women who believe they have *failed* their partners by not being as sexually "beautiful" or available as female models, who see

the event as simply *awful and unlivable*, who believe that their partners are engaged in the degradation of women, or who view their partners as *sick* and sexually addicted are more likely to be distressed. Each of these beliefs, according to Ellis, is an example of an irrational belief. It is not the case that a woman whose partner views sexually explicit media has necessarily failed her partner! Nor is it usually the case that a partner's SEM use creates an unlivable, inescapable, awful situation from which the person is rendered helpless to improve.

Understanding the meanings people ascribe to the use of sexually explicit material suggests we can understand the likely consequences of that use. For example, a woman who interprets her partner's sexually explicit material use as being essentially "about her," or otherwise makes internal and maladaptive attributions, will be understandably distressed, while another woman who sees the use as peripheral to their own self-worth and sexual desirability may not be bothered by it.

For people who are very distressed over the use, we are likely to see a negative impact on their reported sexual and relationship satisfaction, among other things. Likewise, people who are not distressed over the use are not likely to report interference with their sexual and relationship satisfaction, and perhaps those people who feel it has a positive effect will report even higher levels of satisfaction. Thus, cognitions become a *mediator* between sexually explicit material use and sexual satisfaction.

Events that are highly distressing (such as rape) can be made further distressing by how the events are interpreted. For example, Cognitive Processing Therapy (Resick & Schnicke, 1996) focuses on helping rape victims re-interpret the

rape event in a way that challenges self-blaming attributions (such as, “This would not have happened if I had not agreed to go to his home after the party”) but also does not over-accommodate such that danger and awful things are around every corner (such as, “No man can be trusted”). According to Resick and Schnicke, these two responses contribute to psychopathological symptoms in the rape victim. The therapeutic goal, therefore, becomes helping women interpret the rape in a more realistic way without over-accommodating or self-blaming. Similarly, understanding interpretations of a partner’s use of sexually explicit material would be helpful therapeutically. The event in and of itself may be quite distressing, particularly in the case of a partner using pornography that includes degrading images and tells a particular story about women’s role vis-à-vis men. In such a case, being upset by the event would not be considered irrational or illogical (Ellis, 2000). In fact, feeling upset over a partner who derives pleasure at the expense of another’s dignity and well-being would be perfectly understandable and may, in fact, be more adaptive and appropriate than feeling neutral or positive. However, to the extent that women are either (a) blaming themselves for their partner’s use of SEM, or (b) over-accommodating, such as viewing all men as active degraders of women, they are more likely to have difficulties finding an acceptable resolution to their circumstances and situations.

Of interest as well is that additional data from Bridges and colleagues (2003) suggested that the female partners of men who used interactive SEM (media where there is some level of relationship between the sexual object and the user—e.g. erotic emailing, sending another person nude photographs of yourself, or “hot chatting”) were much more likely to be distressed about this use *regardless* of how frequently it

occurred. The suggestion here is that she perceives the sexually explicit material to interfere with her relationship in the measure that it poses a more traditional romantic “threat.” The current study examined this further, using both men and women.

One final consideration is that the two previous studies by Bridges (Bergner & Bridges, 2002; Bridges et al., 2003) were unable to determine the extent to which women were accurate reporters of their partner’s use of sexually explicit material, since data was not collected from their male partners. This study queried both partners in the romantic relationship to assess the consistency between each person’s report of their own and their partner’s use.

This current study has the potential to be very informative to clinicians and others. Knowing whether partners are accurate reporters of the other’s behavior is important. If partners were found to be highly reliable in reporting each other’s SEM use, working with an individual on the couple’s problem might be reasonable. If, however, couples were *not* accurate reporters, it behooves the clinician to treat these sorts of problems in couples’ therapy to obtain a more accurate picture of the relationship circumstances, thereby intervening more effectively.

Findings regarding the importance of cognitions also have therapeutic implications. If a person’s interpretations of their partner’s sexually explicit material use was found to be a mediator between the use and their sexual and relationship satisfaction, the implications for psychotherapy become obvious—focusing on the person’s cognitions and defining the extent to which they are willing to accommodate that use while retaining their values would become key. Ellis (2000) makes clear that focusing on cognitions, behaviors, and emotions should be done while paying great

attention to the social context. Thus, in no way should support for a mediational model suggest the situation is fair and not degrading, or that the problem resides solely “in her head.” Rather, reducing unhelpful beliefs, particularly those that result in self-blame for the partner’s use of adult materials, would assist the client in considering and taking more effective actions, whether they be to reduce anger and hostility while maintaining the relationship, or to increase self-esteem and positive regard even when exiting the relationship. Furthermore, the current study only examined two possible relationship constructs that could be affected by a partner’s use of sexually explicit media—sexual and global relationship satisfaction. Other variables one could hypothesize to be related to romantic partner’s use of SEM (including feelings of self-esteem and body image) were not assessed.

If the research supported a direct relationship between increased sexually explicit material use and decreased sexual and relationship satisfaction (as Kenrick, Gutierrez, & Goldberg, 1989 have suggested), there were both therapeutic and policy implications. Therapeutically, a couple that wishes to remain together would have to work on decreasing the use of such material. Finally, clinicians would be well-advised to explore with their clients the sorts of (mis)educational messages portrayed in many pornographic media and consider how these messages, above and beyond one's own interpretations of a partner's use of such materials, might impact the well-being of the couple.

CHAPTER II

JUSTIFICATION FOR AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This dissertation sought to examine the relationships among use of sexually explicit material (SEM), the interpretations of SEM use in romantic relationships by one or both partners, and sexual and relationship satisfaction. I begin by reviewing factors related to relationship satisfaction, and, in particular, sexual satisfaction. Next, sexually explicit material and pornography (as possible threats to relationship satisfaction) are discussed. I examine the difficulties encountered in defining pornography and provide examples of the ways pornography has traditionally been researched. Finally, I discuss studies that have explicitly examined use of adult (i.e., sexually explicit) materials and dyadic satisfaction, focusing on how the current study sought to expand on the knowledge and insight previously acquired.

Examining factors related to dyadic satisfaction is important, as dyadic satisfaction can have enormous implications for individual and family health and well being. Couples who are in satisfactory relationships are less likely to divorce (Bruce & Kim, 1992), live longer (Berkman & Breslow, 1983), and have lower rates of mental illness (Bruce & Kim, 1992).

What are characteristics of satisfactory relationships? According to Social Exchange Theory (Sprecher, 1998), well-functioning relationships are those that provide us with greater perceived rewards than costs. Researchers have examined multiple constructs to determine what factors are related to perceived rewards or satisfaction in romantic relationships, including arguments, helping behaviors, sexual

behaviors, number of children, childhood trauma, premarital relations, and personality factors (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Generally these studies have not examined theoretical relationships among the variables and relationship satisfaction (Weis, 1998). Thus, the information we have is piecemeal.

A meta-analysis of 115 longitudinal studies on marital satisfaction and stability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995) reveal a number of factors that significantly relate to rewards and costs of romantic relationships. The authors begin by drawing a distinction between relationship satisfaction and stability. One can be in a highly stable but unsatisfactory relationship, or in an unstable but very satisfactory relationship. Factors related to marital stability will be discussed first, following by factors relating to marital satisfaction.

Marital Stability

When examining multiple longitudinal studies, a number of variables emerged as important to predicting marital stability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Factors that positively relate to relationship stability included positive behaviors by the husband and wife, attitude similarity between the couple, marital satisfaction, husband's employment, personality similarity, and socioeconomic factors (specifically, education and family income).

Factors that related to relationship instability included husband's and wife's negative behaviors, high scores on Eysenck's neuroticism scale, high levels of negative interactions, parental divorce for either partner, particularly for husbands, stress, and depression. Premarital pregnancy was associated with less marital stability for wives, but not husbands. Premarital cohabitation was also associated with lower

relationship stability levels. Wife employment had almost no effect on marital stability for women, but had a negative effect for men. Finally, an unhappy childhood was associated with lower stability of romantic dyads.

Marital Satisfaction

Karney and Bradbury (1995) found a number of variables related to relationship satisfaction. Largest effect sizes for what positively influences marital satisfaction were obtained for husband's positive behaviors, the positive behaviors of the couple, husband's income, similarities in personality, sexual satisfaction, and wife's avoidant behaviors (e.g., avoiding discussing certain topics). Interestingly, husband's income was found to be a predictor of marital satisfaction for wives, but not for husbands.

When examining factors related to relationship dissatisfaction, Karney and Bradbury found large effect sizes for couple's negative behaviors, husband's negative behaviors, stress, marital duration (the longer the couple had been together, the more unsatisfactory was the relationship), higher levels of emotionality (for wives, emotionality expressed during conflict; for husbands, emotionality during any type of interaction), maladaptive attributions, an unhappy childhood, and, for women only, depression. Interestingly, sexual satisfaction was found to be associated with marital satisfaction, but not marital stability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

While the results of this meta-analysis are informative, generalizability is affected by sample demographics, sample size, methodology, and analyses. The participants were generally White and middle-class (75%). Over half of the studies (53%) did not have a large enough sample size to detect medium effects, and nearly

70% were underpowered to find small effects. While all studies reviewed were longitudinal, 61% collected data over a period of 5 years or less. Most used self-report measures, and unsophisticated univariate statistics to analyze the data. Only 7 of the 115 studies used structural equation modeling, allowing for less measurement error and taking into account intercorrelations among variables. However, the study does provide valuable information about what factors appear to be related to relationship stability and satisfaction. I now turn to examine one of these factors, sexual satisfaction, in greater detail.

Sexual Satisfaction

Romantic relationships are usually seen as different from friendships and other intimate relationships because they generally include a sexual component. While satisfaction in the relationship as a whole is not dictated by satisfaction with the sexual component, it nonetheless remains an important aspect of successful dyadic functioning. Indeed, most measures of marital or dyadic satisfaction include items that assess sexual functioning (cf. Spanier, 1976). This relationship has been found both in Western (Karney & Bradbury, 1995) and Eastern cultures (Renaud, Byers, & Pan, 1997).

Research has asked the question of whether or not couples' sexual satisfaction scores are related, and if sexual satisfaction can predict relationship dissolution. A longitudinal study of 101 unmarried heterosexual couples (Sprecher, 2002) found only a moderate correlation between partner sexual satisfaction scores ($r = .37$). Sprecher also found that low levels of sexual satisfaction were associated with relationship

dissolution for men, but not women. A summary of research exploring factors related to sexual satisfaction follows.

Personality Factors. Anger has been found to be negatively associated with sexual satisfaction (Belanger, Laughrea, & Lafontaine, 2001). In particular, a woman's trait anger (the perception that many situations are frustrating or annoying), how much she held in her anger, and her husband's state or situational anger were all associated with lower levels of satisfaction for her. For men, his state anger, how much he held his anger in, and how often his wife expressed her anger were associated with lower levels of sexual satisfaction. On the other hand, the extent to which a person perceived their partner as being able to control his or her anger was associated with higher levels of sexual satisfaction.

Not surprisingly, perfectionism has been found to be negatively related to sexual satisfaction. In a study of 74 married and cohabiting romantic couples, Habke, Hewitt, and Flett (1999) found that even after controlling for marital satisfaction and depression, perfectionism negatively impacted sexual satisfaction.

Relationship Factors. Yela (2000) found that higher levels of commitment and intimacy were positively related to sexual satisfaction in a group of university students in Spain. Furthermore, for women sexual satisfaction was also associated with higher levels of erotic passion, open communication, and lower levels of jealousy. For men, greater sexual permissiveness and length of relationship, and lower levels of jealousy were related to sexual satisfaction.

McCabe (1999) also found that for women, feelings of increased sexual intimacy are associated with higher levels of sexual satisfaction. Indeed, perceived

relationship quality was a better predictor of relationship integrity over time for women than sexual satisfaction (Sprecher, 2002). The opposite was found true for men.

Behavioral Factors. Most studies show a positive correlation between frequency of sexual activity and general relationship happiness (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997; Yela, 2000). One research study suggested that the relationship between sexual and marital happiness is more complicated, and should include a measure of negative interactions (Howard & Dawes, 1976). They created a formula to explain the relationship: overall satisfaction was equal to frequency of sexual activity minus the number of arguments the couple had in a given time period. This sort of analysis is consistent with Social Exchange theories of sexual and relationship satisfaction (Sprecher, 1998), in which the ratio of rewards (frequent sexual contact) to costs (arguments) predicts satisfaction levels.

However, Brehm, Miller, Perlman and Campbell (2002) report that the relationship between sexual and relationship satisfaction is not that direct. What seems to be important is the difference between the level of sexual activity a person actually experiences in their relationship and the level they desire. When there is little or no discrepancy between actual and desired levels of sexual contact, romantic partners report higher levels of satisfaction. Thus, some researchers have adopted a discrepancy score measure of sexual satisfaction in relationships. For example, Greeff and Malherbe (2001) were interested in investigating whether women and men experienced marital intimacy and satisfaction differently. Fifty-seven couples completed a series of questionnaires that assessed demographic information, the

degree of intimacy the person felt towards their spouse, and marital and sexual satisfaction levels. They found that men reported less sexual intimacy than women (which the authors say may indicate men are less satisfied with their sexual experiences). They also found that men were more dissatisfied with the recreational aspects of their marriages than women. Of interest, the researchers found that women had greater discrepancy scores between the social and sexual intimacy they experienced with their husbands versus the intimacy they desired. The authors also found a significant positive correlation between intimacy levels and marital satisfaction.

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (1986) posits that relationships comprise three dimensions: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy involves sharing thoughts and secrets, passion can be viewed as intensity of feelings for the person (not just sexual passion), and commitment is the degree to which the person is invested in maintaining the relationship. The ideal in our culture is for our romantic relationships to be high on all three components (a state known as "consummate love"). However, the natural cycle of most romantic relationships is such that intimacy and commitment increase with time, while passion decreases. This natural decrease in passion is, unfortunately, interpreted by many as indicating a "falling out of" love, and sexual and relationship satisfaction may decline as a result.

Not surprisingly, sexual dysfunction has a strong, negative relationship to one's own sexual satisfaction (McCabe, 1999), particularly in men (Schiavi, Mandeli, & Schreiner-Engel, 1994). Thus, research examining sexual satisfaction ought to include measures of sexual functioning.

Gender Differences. In general, men are more likely than women to report higher levels of sexual satisfaction, higher levels of desired sexual contact, show more positive attitudes towards sex, and see their female partners as more sexually dysfunctional (McCabe, 1999; Renaud et al., 1997). However, some studies have found that women reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction than men (Sprecher, 2002). At this point gender differences in sexual satisfaction remain unclear. Having examined numerous factors related to sexual and relationship well-being, I now turn to examine threats to romantic relationships; in particular, infidelity.

Emotional and Sexual Infidelity

Perhaps the largest threat to relationship satisfaction is infidelity. Infidelity is a nebulous construct. Traditional definitions of infidelity have emphasized the sexual exclusivity of most committed romantic relationships. According to these definitions, infidelity occurs when sexual intimacy occurs between one member of the dyad and a third party (Bevan & Samter, 2004). Other definitions are more inclusive, encompassing situations where intimate relationships develop between one partner and someone outside of the dyad, but where sexual intimacy is not a necessary component of infidelity. Some theorists argue for two types of infidelity: emotional and sexual (Cann, Mangum, & Wells, 2001). Emotional infidelity is said to occur when one's romantic partner forms a deep emotional attachment to someone outside of the couple, while sexual infidelity is defined as sexual encounters (usually intercourse) occurring between one member of the romantic dyad and someone outside of the dyad.

Evolutionary theorists, theorists who purport that human behavior is largely driven by the biological need to procreate, have argued that these two types of

infidelity are differentially distressing to men and women (Symons, 1979). According to this perspective, because men invest a great deal of resources in and support their offspring, but cannot be completely certain of their paternity, sexual infidelity by their partners casts doubt as to their likely paternity, and thus is more distressing. In contrast, women become much more upset by emotional infidelity because it could indicate a lack of commitment by the male to the long-term success of her children. Since she is in need of the resources and support he provides, evolutionary theory states that a woman seeks emotional investment from her partner. Relationships that may compromise this emotional investment in her are theoretically more distressing to women.

The evolutionary theory of romantic infidelity has received some empirical support, both nationally and cross-culturally (Buss et al., 1999; Buunk, Angleitner, Oubaid, & Buss, 1996). Cann and colleagues (2001) investigated how men and women respond to two types of infidelity scenarios: a deep emotional (but nonsexual) attachment between a partner and another person, or a sexual (but not emotional) encounter between a partner and another person. Participants read a vignette representing these forms of infidelity, then indicated by forced choice which hypothetical romantic transgression they found most distressing. Results indicate that 68% of women found the emotional infidelity vignette most distressing, while 73% of men found the sexual infidelity vignette as most distressing. Both men and women were similar in how upset they believed they would become, regardless of the type of infidelity. Regression analyses revealed that for women, distress was related to high levels of romantic beliefs and low endorsement of sexual activity for pleasure. For

men, distress was related to high endorsement of sex as both an important dyadic activity, and a means of communication. The authors conclude that their results support an evolutionary model of romantic infidelity.

One of the obvious limitations in this study, however, was the use of hypothetical scenarios to determine distress levels (Cann et al., 2001). It is unclear whether or not this gender distinction would emerge in a real-life situation. The scenarios used may have been confounded, too, as the “sexual but not emotional” transgression was not entirely clear (that is, participants may have readily inferred an emotional attachment in this scenario). Furthermore, none of the participants were married, so level of commitment, something previously shown to be related to emotional infidelity (Bridges et al., 2003), may also limit the generalizability of the findings.

Nannini and Meyers (2000) present an alternative to the evolutionary model to explain gender differences in response to romantic infidelity, based on social learning theory. They emphasized the role of cognitive schemas, or interpretations of the infidelity. Participants read three infidelity scenarios: sexual infidelity only, emotional infidelity only, or both sexual and emotional infidelity. The researchers found that women reported higher levels of subjective distress for *all* infidelity scenarios than men, that women felt less responsible for the infidelity of their partners than men, and that sexual infidelity (alone or accompanying emotional infidelity) was more distressing than emotional infidelity alone, regardless of gender.

The authors conclude that cognitions matter in determining levels of jealousy following a romantic breach of fidelity, and that people are more likely to accept some

personal responsibility for a partner's emotional infidelity rather than a sexual infidelity (feeling that they somehow "drove" their partner away; Nannini & Meyers, 2000). This may explain the greater distress reported to sexual infidelity. To the extent that a person can take some responsibility for the romantic transgression of their partner, they also gain subjective control over the situation, and perceive themselves as having more influence over its future occurrence. A sense of control may, in turn, mitigate the distress felt over the transgression.

A romantic partner's use of sexually explicit material does not clearly fall into either the emotional infidelity or the sexual infidelity categories delineated above. People generally do not form "close, emotional attachments" to pornographic material. Although masturbation has been seen as a sexual transgression historically (Money, 1999), more recently, masturbation and viewing erotica have been considered to be sexually liberating (Strossen, 1993). How, then, does sexually explicit media impact romantic relationships, if at all? In order to answer this question, I now turn to a review of the literature on sexually explicit material. After discussing problems with the definitions of pornography, I will review empirical studies in psychology that examine the effects of pornography and erotica, emphasizing how it appears to impact both sexual and relationship satisfaction.

Defining Pornography

Pornography has been difficult to define politically as well as empirically. Additionally, whether or not and how it may differ from erotica has been the subject of considerable debate. Diana Russell (1993) suggests pornography is "material that combines sex and/or the exposure of genitals with abuse or degradation in a manner

that appears to endorse, condone, or encourage such behavior” (p. 3). Pornography differs from erotica in that it may contain sexism, racism, and homophobic depictions. Lott (1994) concurs, emphasizing that pornography specifically shows women being sexually dominated, degraded, humiliated, coerced, or beaten. Some researchers have found that women respond positively to erotica but not to pornography (e.g. Senn, 1993). However, much research designed to examine the effects of pornography have not made such a distinction; rather, erotica and pornography are combined in the study of “sexually explicit material” (e.g. Brosius, Weaver, & Staab, 1993). Others suggest the distinction is important but detracts from feminist critiques of its harm or that it is commonly understood to be “the material sold in pornography shops for the purpose of producing sexual arousal for mostly male consumers”(Dines, Jensen, & Russo, 1998, p. 3). Thus, drawing firm conclusions about the effects of pornography becomes a difficult task.

A recent content-analysis of best-selling sexually explicit videos (Wosnitzer, Scharrer, Bridges, Sun, & Liberman, under review) suggests most sexually explicit material available to consumers meets criteria for Russell’s (1993) definition of pornography; material that is sexually explicit and degrading, presented such that the degradation is condoned. Russell’s definition is the one I will use.

Studies in Sexually Explicit Materials

Traditionally, research on the effects of sexually explicit material (SEM) has focused on how it impacts the (usually male) participant or user. A number of studies have investigated the relationship between pornography use and general attitudes towards women, and have generally found more negative attitudes following

pornography exposure (Padgett, Brislin-Slutz, & Neal, 1989; Zillmann & Bryant, 1984). For example, studies found that beliefs in the rape myth¹ and reported willingness to rape increased in participants following exposure to pornography (Malamuth, 1984; Senn, 1993). Other studies focusing on more global levels of aggression found they increased following exposure to pornography (Donnerstein, Donnerstein, & Evans, 1975).

Some research has examined how personal factors such as personality variables (Zuckerman & Litle, 1986) or history of sexual abuse (Silbert & Pines, 1984) have related to the use of SEM. In general, findings suggest that extraversion is related to higher levels of SEM usage, but the relationship between SEM use and sexual abuse history remains unclear.

Sexually Explicit Materials and Romantic Relationships

Research on how adult materials affect romantic relationships has been conflictual. Some studies suggest sexually explicit material does not change subjective evaluations of romantic partners. For example, Amelang and Pielke (1992) compared ratings of love for romantic partners after participants either read erotic material or an essay on the mating habits of birds. The authors found no changes in participants' ratings of their romantic partners following exposure to erotic written material. However, they used a small sample size (54 women and only 16 men) and the participants read the erotic material while in a group. This may have significantly moderated the arousing effect of the material. Additionally, the erotic text cannot be considered pornographic, and thus it may be that pornography, and not erotica, would

¹ The rape myth is the belief that women enjoy being coerced into sexual contact (Russell, 1993).

have resulted in lower ratings of love for a romantic partner. A further critique that applies to many studies on the effects of sexually explicit material is that its use in a laboratory does not mimic its use in the “real world,” where consumers freely choose the pornography and perhaps masturbate to the material.

In a two-part study (Kenrick et al. 1989), researchers were interested in seeing what effects short-term exposure to a Playboy or Penthouse centerfold would have on participants’ later evaluations of a “normal” woman’s attractiveness or on their wives. They hypothesized that models whose physiques conformed to or exaggerated culturally idealized sexual attractiveness, such as those often depicted in these popular men’s magazines, might skew a person’s perceptions of what an average person looks like when naked. In the first part of their study, they found that for both men and women, exposure to the female centerfold models significantly lowered judgments about the attractiveness of the “average” attractive persons. This occurred regardless of the participant’s subjective feelings about the images (whether or not they found them to be pleasant). In the second study, centerfolds from Playgirl were used along with the Playboy and Penthouse centerfolds. After viewing the opposite sex models, participants were asked to rate how sexually attractive they felt their mate was (the control condition involved viewing abstract art slides). They found that for men in the experimental condition, ratings of their female partner’s attractiveness and scores on Rubin’s Love Scale were significantly lowered compared to the males in the control condition. Women’s ratings were not influenced by the type of material to which they were previously exposed. The authors discuss how their study supports the notion that males find physical attractiveness to be more central to their sexual responding than

women in this culture, and that consumption of popular pornographic magazines may adversely affect males' commitments to monogamous relationships. They caution that these results may be simply due to the beauty of the models, as defined by the cultural ideals of the time, and not the nudity per se. This empirical finding validates women's experiences that they are being unfavorably compared to the impossible ideal portrayed in pornography and erotica (Bergner & Bridges, 2002). Here we see that even in a short, experimental situation that involves a one-time exposure to popular pornographic depictions, there are negative consequences for males' evaluations of their romantic partner's attractiveness and how in love with them they feel.

Zillmann and Bryant (1988) wanted to examine how repeated exposure to common, nonviolent pornography affected participants' ratings of sexual satisfaction with their romantic partners. Over a six-week period, participants viewed either pornographic videotapes or sexually innocuous comedic acts taken from prime time television. Interestingly, the study found significant declines in sexual satisfaction for both men and women following repeated exposure to pornography. Sexual satisfaction decreased in these areas, specifically: partner's displays of affection, their physical appearance, sexual curiosity, and their actual sexual performance. Also of great interest was that responses to more general items of satisfaction (e.g. general life happiness, satisfaction in non-romantic relationships, and so forth) remained unchanged following exposure to either pornography or the innocuous videotape. Therefore, the reduction in satisfaction was specific to the sexual partner of the participant, not a decline in satisfaction overall. This provides very strong experimental evidence for the way that nonviolent, common pornography can

negatively impact sexual satisfaction, via expectations. The researchers explain that it may not be the nudity per se, but the projection of a world of great beauties where sexual energy and desire abound that may lead to the dissatisfaction, and that other types of media (e.g. soap operas or romance novels) may also decrease sexual satisfaction in mates.

One study examined this in further detail. Shapiro and Kroeger (1991) were interested in how popular media affected beliefs about intimate relationships and, in turn, relationship satisfaction. They asked 109 adults about the types of popular media they used (e.g. television dramas, romantic movies, psychological self-help books, rock music, and romance novels) and assessed both their satisfaction in their current romantic relationship and their beliefs about relationships. They found that, as hypothesized, people who were exposed to higher levels of romantic popular media use also held more unrealistic and dysfunctional views about romantic relationships. Furthermore, married women who had high levels of romantic media also were less satisfied with their current romantic relationships. This was not true for single men and women or for married men. These findings suggest that perhaps previous research findings of decreased satisfaction with romantic relationships following exposure to pornography are due to the messages pornography sends about what romance should be like. This supports the notion that it may not be the nudity per se that is responsible for the observed effects, but the scripts about sexual readiness and availability.

Sexual Scripts in Sexually Explicit Material. Sexual scripts seen in pornographic and sexually explicit media provide information to the viewer about the roles and status men and women hold in sexual encounters. This information, in turn,

may influence both sexual and relationship satisfaction. Scripts that emphasize culturally accepted beauty standards, sexual availability, the excitement of sexual novelty, and sex outside of a primary romantic relationship will almost always lead to a reality that falls short of such expectations. This, in turn, can decrease sexual and relationship satisfaction.

To examine the sorts of messages SEM provides to its viewers about relationships and sex, Brosius and colleagues (1993) did a content analysis of a random sample of 50 pornographic heterosexual videotapes. They found that the tapes typically portrayed a “reality” where men and women were not equals in sexual and social roles, but where the following were “true.” First, women were shown as more sexually active than men, younger, and more expressive (demonstrating by far more delight in the sexual interaction). Second, women were frequently depicted in subordinate positions (e.g. kneeling down in front of her partner). A third “reality” in pornographic tapes reviewed was the frequent sexual contact among essentially strangers. Sex between committed partners was rarely present. This content analysis reveals that the beliefs about men and women provided in pornography are skewed to show women as always available and eager for men’s sexual pleasure and that highly pleasurable sexual encounters usually take place outside of committed romantic relationships.

A more recent content analysis of 50 best-selling adult videos (Wosnitzer et al., under review) revealed a similarly grim “reality” characterized by inequality and violence. Nearly half of the 304 scenes analyzed contained verbal aggression, while over 88% showed physical aggression. Seventy percent of aggressive acts were

perpetrated by men. Women were overwhelmingly portrayed as the victims of aggression: 87% of acts were committed against women. This content analysis was the first to examine how victims responded when aggressed. By far the most common responses victims expressed when aggressed were either pleasure or neutrality. Fewer than 5% of the aggressive acts provoked a negative response from the victim, including flinching and requests to stop the action. This pornographic "reality" was further highlighted by the relative infrequency of more positive behaviors, such as verbal compliments, embracing, kissing, or laughter. These positive behaviors were portrayed in fewer than 10% of the scenes analyzed.

The importance of the sexual scripts usually seen in pornography of the sort analyzed by Brosius and colleagues (1993) and Wosnitzer and colleagues (under review) may explain why women are more likely to respond negatively to it compared to men. In short, media that portrays women as subordinates, sexually ready and intimate with virtual strangers, and objects of aggression, coupled with a lack of emphasis on intimate relationships and more positive behaviors, likely results in negative reactions to women consumers. If this is the case, then SEM that better adheres to women's romantic and sexual scripts ought to be better received by women than traditional made-by-men pornography. Mosher and MacLan (1994) argued just that. Pornography rarely includes elements of affection, relationships, expressions of love, and often involves males ejaculating outside of the female's body. Additionally, she expresses great, almost orgasmic pleasure as he does so. It also usually involves a lack of foreplay. If the fact that this sort of romantic depiction is a far cry from women's romantic scripts, then femme SEM (made by women for women) should

produce greater sexual arousal and more positive affect in women, since it focuses less on the genitals and male pleasure, and more on slower, sensual sexual pleasures and relationships. The authors did a study where men and women were assigned to either view “conventional” or “femme” SEM. They assessed general attitudes towards pornography, sexual arousal, and (48 hours later), masturbation and coital activity. They found that men liked all types of SEM and all of it increased either post-viewing sexual activity (both solitary and otherwise). Women, on the other hand, were more disgusted by the “conventional” male pornography and, conversely, reported more sexual arousal and less negative affect following exposure to the femme SEM. Additionally, they engaged in higher levels of sexual intercourse following exposure to femme SEM (although there was no increase in levels of masturbation). The authors say these results support their theory that conventional pornography is a turn-off to women because it does not fit their sexual scripts.

Partner’s Use of Sexually Explicit Material and Distress. While many research studies have focused on intrapersonal effects of sexually explicit material, few studies have been conducted that examine its interpersonal effects. Clark and Wiederman (2000) conducted a study to examine gender differences in reactions to a partner’s hypothetical use of sexually explicit materials and masturbation. Using Script Theory, the researchers argued that societies have prescribed norms for appropriate and inappropriate sexual contact. In Western societies, extradyadic sexual activities (i.e. sexual infidelities) are generally considered unacceptable. If they are to be carried out, they should be done in secret, and the betrayed partner should feel hurt, rejected, or jealous. Clark and Wiederman hypothesized that these sexual scripts

apply to behaviors other than intercourse. Specifically, they hypothesized that viewing sexually explicit material and masturbating are violations of the dyadic sexual script, and so would produce negative reactions in the nonusing romantic partner. Furthermore, they hypothesized that this would be especially true for women, because of the sexual double standard that exists in Western cultures (which permits men greater sexual expressivity). The researchers also believed that the use of sexually explicit material would be more upsetting than solitary, unassisted masturbation, since the object of sexual desire would more clearly *not* be the dyadic partner in the former case.

Participants were 444 students who had been or were in a serious, committed heterosexual romantic relationship. Clark and Wiederman (2000) measured affective and cognitive responses to hypothetical infidelity vignettes. Results indicate that women had fewer positive reactions and more negative reactions to the vignettes. Men were more likely to view a partner's use of sexually explicit material as an attempt by the partner to enhance the sexual experiences of the dyad. Both men and women disagreed slightly that the behaviors were due to problems in the romantic relationship, particularly in the case of unassisted masturbation. Overall, the researchers found that participants did not react negatively to this sort of extradyadic sexual activity, perhaps because the scenarios were hypothetical, and all described the sexual activity as taking place when the partner was out of town. It is conceivable that reactions would have been considerably more negative if the vignettes had indicated that the partner was available at the time of the behavior, since it would more clearly

show the partner *choosing* the sexually explicit material and/or masturbation over sexual relations with their partner.

When examining use of sexually explicit material in a “real world” context, it becomes obvious that some romantic partners experience very strong, negative, distressing reactions. Bergner and Bridges (2002) conducted a qualitative study to examine the meanings women ascribed to their male partners’ SEM use. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, they sought out women who identified their partners as pornography “addicts,” were quite upset over this use, and were seeking help from an online, anonymous, public forum. Results indicate that for this population, a partner’s use of pornography was associated with numerous devastating interpretations about her role in his use, his moral character, and the state of their romantic relationship. Themes included seeing oneself as the reason for a partner’s excessive pornography use (“I am not attractive enough,” “I should be more available”), seeing the partner as uncaring or selfish (“If he loved me, he wouldn’t hurt me this way,” “I’ve told him it bothers me and he still uses pornography; he must not care about me”), and viewing the relationship as a farce (“We pretend like everything is fine, but really our relationship is sick and unhealthy”).

In order to determine how prevalent these distressing attitudes about a partner’s use of sexually explicit media were for a larger, more representative sample, Bridges et al. (2003) conducted a web-based survey. Nearly one-third of women surveyed reported moderate to high levels of distress about their partner’s use of such material. These findings were not related to whether or not the woman viewed sexually explicit material herself, suggesting perhaps it is not only the sexual scripts,

but what the use says to her about her place in the relationship that matters. Women reported feeling like their partners were not interested in making love to them, but rather were picturing the women they had seen in the sexually explicit material during sexual intercourse. They also felt their partners were less trustworthy, usually because he'd keep the use a secret from her (even when she did not object to it). Nearly three quarters of women surveyed reported feeling like the sexually explicit material negatively affected their self-esteem. Some felt they had failed their partners sexually; if they had been better sexual partners, their partners never would have had to turn to such material for sexual satisfaction.

Gender Norms. It is prudent to consider how gender norms influence the context in which SEM use occurs. Gender roles are to a great degree prescribed by societies (Lott, 1994). In Western societies like that of the United States, the attitude remains that “good” women are not sexually forward and, in fact, should temper the demanding male sexuality. “Bad” women, such as those portrayed in pornography, are sexually promiscuous, while also remaining, ironically, a “slave” to the male master (Lott, 1994). Cowan, Lee, Levy, and Snyder (1988) found that in a sample of X-rated videotapes, 82% contained themes of dominance and 78% contained themes of exploitation of women. Men who view pornography could be subscribing to this world view, and it is this that may be objectionable to their female partners (just as it would be were he to actually behave in a demeaning manner towards her).

Gender roles in Western societies also permit men a greater range of sexual behaviors than women (Clark & Wiederman, 2000). An interesting study by Alexander and Fisher (2003) sought to examine how gender norms for use of sexually

explicit material might account for the differences in self-reports of sexual behavior between men and women. They hypothesized that when completing self-report measures regarding sexual practices, men's and women's responses reflect, in part, a false accommodation to gender norms. These normative responses are given to avoid the potential consequences of deviating from gender role expectations. However, impression management ought to be mitigated if the participant believes the researcher has a way of assessing the veracity of the responses. A "bogus pipeline" was used to determine if, under conditions where the participant was completing self-report measures of sexual behavior while presumably monitored by a polygraph machine, gender differences would decrease. They found that when participants' motivation shifted from self-enhancement (wanting to appear gender-consistent) to self-protective (wanting to avoid being caught in a lie), men's and women's reports of autonomous sexual behavior (masturbation and the use of hard- and soft-core erotica) were more similar, although still significantly different. Planned comparisons revealed that men responded consistently under all experimental conditions, while women's reports of autonomous sexual behavior increased in the bogus pipeline condition.

While we cannot conclude whether SEM viewers choose the materials because they conform to their sexual, gender, and romantic scripts, or whether sexually explicit material has an active role in creating those scripts, when examining the research findings in general a few statements can be made. First, it appears that sexually explicit material does have an effect on romantic relationships. Specifically, the material appears to affect how attractive people find their real-world partners and how in-love with them they report being. Second, other types of romantic material may

also have this effect, suggesting perhaps it is not the nudity in sexually explicit materials that accounts for these findings, but what they tell the viewer about romance, sex, and men's and women's roles. Third, even while research may provide examples of both positive and negative evaluations of sexually explicit media, some women report being very upset by their romantic partner's adult materials use and believe this use has negative effects on their self-esteem, on their appraisals of their partners, and on their romantic relationships. Because relatively few studies have examined women's perceptions of male users of sexually explicit material, and none thus far have examined the dyad when assessing how the material may affect romantic relationships, the proposed study has the potential to contribute significantly to our knowledge. We turn to one final consideration before describing the research hypotheses and methodology: how reliable couples are at reporting each other's sexual behaviors.

Couples' Reliability

Knowing whether or not couples are reliable reporters of each other's behaviors, sexual and otherwise, is important if we are to draw conclusions about dyadic situations while having access to only one member of the couple, as is often the case in research and psychotherapy. I will discuss two studies that have been done to examine couples' reliability in reporting sexual behaviors.

One study examined couples' knowledge of each other's HIV risk behaviors (Ellen, Vittinghoff, Bolan, Boyer, & Padian, 1998). Risk behaviors assessed included a partner having multiple sex partners in the previous few months, men who had sex with other men, using crack cocaine in the previous few months, and a history of

injected drug use. One hundred couples were recruited for the study and interviewed separately about their own and their partner's risky behavior. The results suggest that, with regards to these behaviors, oftentimes couples are not aware of or accurate reporters of their partner's behavior. More than one-third of participants believed their partners were not engaging in risky behavior when, in fact, they were. Substantial agreement between couples was found for a history of injected drug use, but poor agreement for a history of men having sex with men. Other risky behaviors showed moderate agreement. Due to the small sample size and low power, the researchers were unable to determine how factors such as relationship length, age, and commitment levels related to reliability. It would be interesting to examine whether this general finding of participants consistently underreporting risky behaviors by their partners is true for SEM use, as well.

Ochs and Binik (1999) conducted a study to examine couple's reliability in reporting 68 sexual behaviors. Couples were to indicate what behaviors they had performed with their partners in the previous two weeks. Behaviors ranged from dining out and wearing sexy clothing to fellatio and numerous sexual intercourse positions. They found substantial agreement among members of the dyad on whether or not they had engaged in the sexual behavior ($\kappa = .67$). Their study was limited, primarily in that couples were very well-functioning, which may lead to greater concordance, but also in that participants were reporting on sexual behaviors that had occurred *between* themselves and their partners. It seems reasonable to hypothesize that, when reporting on sexual behaviors that occur outside of the dyad, concordance rates will decrease.

Research Hypotheses

The current study tested four research hypotheses.

1. The first draws from Ellis's Rational Emotive Behavior Theory (Ellis et al., 2002), and Mischel's Cognitive Social Learning Theory (1973), both of which highlight the importance of how people interpret events in their environment as determinants of their emotions and subsequent behaviors. The first research hypothesis was that a structural model emphasizing the role cognitions played in the determination of sexual and relationship satisfaction and a romantic partner's use of sexually explicit material would provide a better fit to the data than a structural model that emphasized direct relationships or a full model with both direct and mediated relationships. This would be consistent with data from Nannini and Meyers (2000) that found cognitions were important in determining how distressing participants felt about a hypothetical breach of infidelity by their partners. Specifically, when infidelity was seen as being the result of actions of *both* members of the dyad, the betrayed partner was less distressed than when it was seen as the responsibility of only one partner.
2. The second research hypothesis also drew on Social Learning Theory (Mischel, 1973) and stated that if a romantic partner's use of sexually explicit materials approximated that of sexual and emotional infidelity, the event would be more distressing. Specifically, sexually explicit exchanges that occurred with an *actual other*, where the potential for both a "real world" sexual and emotional connection existed (for example, by sending erotic emails over the Internet, or having "cybersex") would have significantly greater negative effects on both relationship and sexual satisfaction. According to Social Learning Theory, these sorts of events would be

filtered through situation-specific cognitive schemas that related to more traditional infidelity scenarios, and therefore would have meanings that were more similar to feelings of betrayal and hurt that accompany infidelity.

3. The third research hypothesis sought to expand our understanding of how reliable couples were at reporting each other's sexual behaviors. Previous research suggests that couples are quite reliable when they are reporting on sexual behaviors that occur between both members of the dyad (Ochs & Binik, 1999). However, when asked to report on extradyadic risky sexual behaviors, reliability was moderate or poor (Ellen et al., 1998). In the current study, respondents indicated both their actual use of sexually explicit material and their estimation of how often their partners used such material. Thus, estimates of reliability of responding were able to be obtained. It was hypothesized that since participants were reporting behaviors that tended to occur outside of the dyad (autonomous sexual behaviors), reliability would be moderate. Furthermore, well-functioning couples were hypothesized to show greater reliability than dissatisfied couples.

4. The fourth research hypothesis investigated the role that feminist values played in interpretations of a romantic partner's use of sexually explicit materials. A cluster analysis performed on data from Bridges et al. (2003) suggested women fell into three groups. Group one was characterized by generally neutral to positive interpretations of their romantic partner's SEM use. The women in this first group tended to be younger, living with their partners (as opposed to married or dating), had partners who viewed sexually explicit materials less frequently than the other two groups, and considered themselves the least religious. Group two was characterized by mild to

moderate levels of distress over their partner's use of SEM. This group had the highest mean age of the three groups, were more likely to be married or living with their partners rather than dating, and considered themselves to be the most religious of the three groups. Finally, group three was characterized by the highest levels of distress regarding their partner's use of SEM. Group three women were, on average, 31 to 35 years of age, almost exclusively married, and had partners who viewed SEM more frequently and for longer periods of time compared to the other two groups. A closer look at these clusters suggested that perhaps the women in the second group were women who did not possess high levels of feminist awareness or who possessed values that were more traditional and conservative. Given that the second group was more religious and tended to be older compared to the other two groups, this hypothesis seemed reasonable. If so, it may be that women with higher levels of feminist awareness would be more distressed by a partner's SEM use, in part due to the degradation of women often portrayed in such media. Thus, the fourth hypothesis of this research examined the possibility that as participants' feminist awareness levels increased, they would find their partner's use of adult materials more distressing.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Overview of Study and Hypotheses

The current study had four specific aims. First, it sought to examine the relationship between a partner's use of sexually explicit material and sexual and relationship satisfaction. It was hypothesized that a person's interpretations of their partner's use of such material would mediate the relationship between a partner's actual use and both sexual and relationship satisfaction levels. Thus, people who made a number of negative, distressing attributions about a partner's use of sexually explicit media would show significantly lower levels of sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction than participants who made relatively neutral or positive attributions. Furthermore, models examining the direct relationships between both a participant's own use of sexually explicit material and their interpretations of their partners use on sexual and relationship satisfaction were examined for men and women separately.

Second, the study sought to compare structural models of these relationships for people whose partners use interactive versus non-interactive sexually explicit material. It was hypothesized that respondents whose partners used interactive material would show significantly lower levels of relationship and sexual satisfaction than those whose partners used non-interactive sexually explicit materials.

Third, the study sought to determine how reliably couples reported each other's use of sexually explicit material. Previous research suggests couples achieve moderate reliability when reporting on sexual behaviors that occur outside of the dyad

(Ellen et al., 1998). It was hypothesized that moderate reliability would be obtained for the sample as a whole. Previous research also suggests that well-functioning couples may be more reliable reporters of each other's behaviors than more distressed couples (Ochs & Binik, 1999). To investigate this further, consistency in responses from couples who were distressed were compared to those who were satisfied. It was hypothesized that the distressed couples would show lower levels of consistency in couples' responses.

Fourth, the study sought to examine how awareness of feminist values impacted interpretations of a partner's use of sexually explicit material. It was hypothesized that participants who held higher levels of feminist values would show greater levels of distress at a partner's use of sexually explicit material than participants who held lower levels of feminist values, after accounting for the frequency of such use.

Participants

Participants were solicited through Internet sites that are devoted to psychological studies (www.studyresponse.com, www.studentresearcher.com, www.psychdesign.com, and www.socialpsychology.org). These websites create links to online psychological surveys. In one case (Psych Design) the website has a database of over 500 potential study participants. Reasons for choosing the Internet as the medium of survey administration included the ability to gather a large sample from a variety of geographical locals, the importance of anonymity in responding to sensitive questions about sexuality, and automated data entry to reduce input errors.

Those meeting criteria for participation (aged 18 years or older, currently in a heterosexual romantic relationship) were notified via email about the study. Solicitation continued until full data had been collected for approximately 200 couples who reported being in an exclusive relationship (exclusivity is defined below).

A total of 1336 participants provided at least partial data. Of these, 1007 viewed the entire 6-page web-based survey (75.4%), meaning that they were presented with the opportunity to answer each item. However, many participants did not provide complete data for all survey items. Table 1 provides descriptive information for the full sample. A total of 231 partners were successfully recruited (22.9% of completers' partners). Nearly every partner who was recruited into the study viewed the full 6-page survey (93.9%). Only 14 recruited partners discontinued their participation prematurely, resulting in a final sample of 217 heterosexual couples. See Table 2 for demographic characteristics of the couples. Couples had been together for an average of 9.16 years ($SD = 8.03$). Two-third of couples were married to one another (65.7%); 15.2% were dating; 10.4% were cohabiting; and 8.4% were engaged. Thirty percent of the couples did not have children. On average, couples reported having 1.56 children ($SD = 1.43$).

Procedures

Data for the current study were gathered through an Internet-based survey. The researcher posted a message to consenting Internet message boards that included information about study eligibility and an explanation of the nature of the study (Appendix A). To ensure absolute confidentiality, participants were not asked to provide their names or any other identifying information on the questionnaire.

People who chose to participate were directed to a web page with an informed consent form (Appendix B). Following consent, participants were directed to a series of web pages containing all of the measures described below. Upon completion, participants were directed to a debriefing page (Appendix C) and provided with an opportunity to receive a copy of the research results and enter a drawing for gift certificate via email. The session was estimated to take approximately one-half hour.

Recruiting the Respondent's Partner. In order to facilitate the recruitment of the second member of a romantic dyad, the debriefing web page asked respondents to 1) generate a special code for their data, and 2) email their partner with information about the study, its web address, and the special code. A computer program allowed participants to enter their email address, their partner's email address, and the special code. This program then automatically sent an email about the study to the partner from the participant's email address (Appendix A). Alternatively, the participant was given the option to print the debriefing page and provide the information to their partner personally. It is important to note that email addresses were *not* stored in the same data file as questionnaire responses, nor was there any way to tie an email address with a certain questionnaire response. The only information that was stored was the couple's unique code so that both participants' responses could be identified and matched. Because of this, there was no way to determine how many participants recruited partners through email versus a printed recruitment message.

Compensation

Participants had the option of entering drawings for their time and effort. Once data collection was complete, a drawing was held for all participants that had

completed the survey. Twenty participants were randomly selected to receive compensation in the form of Amazon.com gift certificates (Amazon.com is a large cyberstore that sells, among other things, books, movies, compact disks, toys, clothing, and electronics). Two \$100 prizes, four \$50 prizes, four \$25 prizes, and ten \$10 prizes were awarded.

Measures

Demographic Information. Demographic information was gathered on all participants (Appendix D). Respondents were asked to indicate their age, gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, income, religiosity, marital status, relationship length, relationship exclusivity, and number and ages of children from a series of pull-down menus. Exclusivity was measured by asking participants to indicate whether they never, rarely, or regularly dated someone other than their romantic partner.

Use of Sexually Explicit Material. To assess each participant's use of sexually explicit material, information was obtained about the amount of time the participant views, the frequency of their use, the types of materials (e.g., written materials, photographs, videos, Internet), content (e.g., nude men or women, heterosexual sex, lesbian or gay sex), and the use of such material as a couple (Appendix E). For duration of SEM use, an 8-point Likert scale was used where 1 was "less than one hour per month" and 8 was "more than 2 hours per day." For frequency of SEM use, an 8-point Likert scale was used where 1 was "less than once per month" and 8 was "multiple times per day."

For the reliability analyses, participants were asked to report the amount of time they believed their partners viewed sexually explicit materials, the frequency of

their partner's use, and the types of material their partner used. Participants were also asked to select from a list all the reasons why they viewed sexually explicit materials and why they believed their partner viewed such materials. Reasons for use of sexually explicit media included, "relaxation/stress reduction," "boredom," "as part of my lovemaking with my partner," and "relationship problems with my partner."

Types of SEM. SEM types were divided into two categories: noninteractive and interactive. Noninteractive SEM included books, stories, or sexually explicit published writings; photographs of persons other than the partner; videos of persons other than the romantic partner; and internet websites featuring stories, photographs, or movies of persons other than the partner. Interactive SEM included sexually explicit internet chatting with someone other than the partner; sexual telephone conversations (pay-per-call or otherwise) with someone other than the romantic partner; and strip clubs. SEM type was coded from 0 to 2, where 0 was "no SEM use," 1 was "noninteractive SEM use," and 2 was "interactive SEM use." If participants indicated that they used both interactive and noninteractive SEM, a "2" was coded.

32-PDS. To assess the participant's cognitions or interpretations of their partner's use of sexually explicit material, a modified version of the Pornography Distress Scale was used (32-PDS, Bridges et al., 2003—Appendix F). The modifications were (1) replacing the word "pornography" with "sexually explicit material," and (2) modifying pronouns for male participants. The 32-PDS was developed to assess the extent to which female respondents endorse distressing or negative attributions of their partner's use of SEM. Using a 7-point Likert scale from

1 ("agree completely") to 7 ("disagree completely"), respondents indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the 32 items. Sample items include, "Sometimes I feel like if I had done a better job as his partner, my partner would not be viewing SEM," and "I see my partner's SEM use as a harmless pastime." The 32-PDS has a Cronbach alpha of .98, demonstrating excellent internal reliability. Positive-worded items are reverse-scored, such that higher scores indicate greater levels of distressing interpretations of a partner's SEM use. A simple average of all items is used to determine scores, which can range from 1 to 7.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale. To assess overall relationship satisfaction, the 7-item short form of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, or DAS-7, was used (Hunsley, Best, Lefebvre, & Vito, 2001; Appendix G). The DAS-7 is a subset of the original, 32-item DAS (specifically, items 8, 10, 11, 25, 27, 28, and 31; Spanier, 1976). It is a self-report scale designed to assess the quality of a romantic dyad. Three items assessing agreement on important aspects of the relationship are scored on a 6-point Likert scale from 0 ("always disagree") to 5 ("always agree"). Three items assessing frequency of coupled activities are scored on a 6-point Likert scale from 0 ("never") to 5 ("more often [than once per day]"). The final item assesses overall relationship happiness and is scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 0 ("extremely unhappy") to 6 ("perfect"). Scores on the DAS-7 are obtained by adding each item and can range from 0 to 36, with higher scores indicating greater levels of satisfaction. A cut-off score of 16 is used to categorize people into distressed and nondistressed groups. Cronbach's alpha for the DAS-7 was .79 for both clinical and community samples, indicating adequate internal consistency (Hunsley et al., 2001). The DAS-7 was determined to have

similar content validity as the original DAS. Criterion validity was also demonstrated (the DAS-7 scores of couples seeking counseling versus a community sample were significantly different; Hunsley et al., 2001). The DAS-7 also was shown to have construct validity, as scores on it correlated highly with scores on other scales designed to measure marital satisfaction (Hunsley, Pinsent, Lefebvre, James-Tanner, & Vito, 1995).

Sexual Satisfaction. To assess sexual satisfaction, three measures were used. First, the Index of Sexual Satisfaction, or ISS, was used (Hudson, Harrison, & Crosscup, 1981; Appendix H). This is a 25-item self-report scale that is designed to assess the degree of sexual satisfaction within a respondent's romantic relationship. Sample items include, "Sex is fun for my partner and me," and "I feel that sex is something that has to be endured in our relationship." Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents indicate the frequency with which they agree with the statements, from 0 ("rarely or none of the time") to 4 ("most or all of the time"). Scores are obtained by adding the responses to all 25 items and can range from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating greater sexual dissatisfaction. A clinical cut-off score of 28 was recommended by the researchers to be used to classify people as showing clinically significant sexual problems versus those without. Cronbach's alpha for the ISS was .916 (N = 1167). Test-retest reliability over a one-week period was .93 (N = 79). The ISS has been shown to have discriminant validity (it can distinguish between clinical groups of patients with known sexual problems, and those with no known sexual concerns). It has also been shown to have good criterion validity (scores were related to the presence of sexual problems). Convergent validity was also demonstrated (ISS

scores correlated with other measures designed to assess sexual satisfaction in relationships). Furthermore, the ISS does not correlate with demographic variables such as age, sex, educational achievement, income, and sexually liberal/conservative attitudes (Hudson et al., 1981).

Second, a discrepancy score between the participant's actual and preferred levels of sexual contact was calculated (Brehm et al., 2002). Specifically, participants were asked to indicate how often they had sexual relations with their partner by indicating a number (1-30) and an amount of time (per week, per month, or per year). Scores were then converted into an average per month such that, if a participant indicated that they had relations 2 times per week, this was converted into 8 times per month (multiplying by 4). Similarly, if a participant indicated that they had sexual relations 6 times per year, this was converted into 0.5 times per month (dividing by 12). A similar procedure was used to determine desired frequency of sexual relations. Scores on these two items, therefore, could range from 0 to 120 times per month.

A discrepancy score was obtained by subtracting the desired frequency of sexual relations (per month) from the actual frequency of sexual relations (per month). Positive scores indicated that the participant wanted more frequent sexual contact with their partner, while negative scores indicated that the participant wanted to reduce the frequency of sexual contact. Brehm and colleagues determined that frequency of sexual contact (previously thought to be relatively synonymous with sexual satisfaction) was less accurate at determining satisfied versus unsatisfied couples, but sexual satisfaction levels were predicted when using a discrepancy score between the actual amount of sexual contact and the desired amount.

Third, items #6 and #29 of the DAS, which assess sexual satisfaction, were used. Item #6 asks the respondent to indicate the extent of agreement or disagreement between themselves and their partner for “sex relations,” with a Likert scale from 0 (“always disagree”) to 5 (“always agree”). Item #29 asks the respondent to indicate if there has been a difference of opinion or problem in the romantic relationship during the past few weeks where one person in the dyad was too tired for sex (dichotomous response; yes or no).

Sexual Dysfunction. In addition, items that measured sexual dysfunction were included (American Psychiatric Association, 1994), as previous research suggests that sexual dysfunction is strongly related to sexual dissatisfaction (McCabe, 1999; Appendix I). The questions were obtained from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition (DSM-IV; APA, 1994). A total of seven items comprised this scale: six questions were asked of every respondent and a final question was gender-specific. All items ask respondents to indicate the frequency with which they experienced the problem in the past year, from 1 (“always or almost always”) to 4 (“never”). Scores were obtained by adding the responses to the 7 items and could range from 7 to 28, with higher scores indicating greater sexual functioning. Sample items include, “Pain during sex” and “Anxiety about sexual performance.”

Feminist Awareness. In order to measure awareness of feminist perspectives, items from the Feminist Perspectives Scale (FPS) were used (Henley, Meng, O’Brien, McCarthy, & Sockloskie, 1998; Appendix J). The FPS is a 78-item scale designed to assess attitudes towards women. Unlike other scales, the FPS was specifically designed to differentiate between different types of feminists (liberal, radical, social,

cultural, and women of color) and conservative views of women. Items assessing each type of feminism were selected from a larger initial pool of items, such that the FPS's factor structure supports the six theoretical perspectives (that is, items within a subscale show high internal consistency, and items across subscales generally show low correlations). The FPS has been shown to be reliable. Internal reliability among the subscales were between .58 and .84. Four-week test-retest reliabilities were between .72 and .82 (Henley et al., 1998). In addition, the FPS has construct validity; respondents who scored high on liberal, radical, and women of color subscales also showed significantly more positive attitudes towards women than those who did not, while respondents who scored high on the conservative feminist subscale showed significantly more negative attitudes towards women (Henley et al., 1998).

For the proposed study, 20 items from the FPS's 78 items were used. The 20 items were selected based on their reported factor loadings to represent four of the six feminist perspectives originally represented (Henley et al., 1998). Five items from each of the conservative, liberal, radical, and cultural perspectives were chosen. The decision not to include the social and women of color perspectives was made based on the high subscale correlation between the radical and social feminist perspectives and complex findings for the women of color perspective (for a more detailed analysis, the reader is referred to the original article outlining the development and validation of the FPS; Henley et al., 1998).

A 7-point Likert scale is used to indicate the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with items on the FPS, from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Sample items include, "People should define their marriage and family roles in ways

that make them feel most comfortable," and "Men prevent women from becoming political leaders through their control of economic and political institutions." Scores were obtained by adding participant responses to each of the items for liberal, radical, and cultural feminism and could range from 15 to 105. The conservative feminism items are not included in the global feminism score, according to the authors (Henley et al., 1998).

Depression. In order to assess depressive symptoms in respondents, the nine-item version of the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ) was used (Kroenke, Spitzer, & Williams, 2001; Appendix K). The PHQ-9 assesses depressive symptoms based on DSM-IV criteria for major depressive disorder on a 4-point Likert scale. Respondents indicate the frequency with which they experience certain depressive symptoms, from 0 ("not at all") to 3 ("nearly every day"). Sample items include, "Feeling tired or having little energy" and "Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless." Scores are obtained by adding the responses to the 9 items and can range from 0 to 27, with higher scores indicating greater probability of a depressive disorder. Scores below 5 indicate the absence of depression, those between 5 and 10 indicate mild depressive symptoms, while scores above 10 suggest moderate to severe depression. The PHQ-9 has excellent internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$), and 48-hour test-retest reliability (.84). It also has construct validity, with person diagnosed with a depressive disorder scoring significantly higher than those without (Kroenke et al., 2001).

Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment. Finally, the proposed study included a measure based on Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (Sternberg, 1986). According to this model, love can be thought of as a triangle whose three corners

represent intimacy (feelings of closeness, connectedness), passion (physical attraction, motivation) and commitment (the decision to love the other, and to maintain that love over time). Lemieux and Hale (2000) developed a scale designed to adequately measure each of these components (Appendix L). The scale contains items from Sternberg's original Triangular Love Scale (Sternberg, 1988), as well as from the Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986), Lund's Commitment Scale (Lund, 1985), and the Miller Social Intimacy Scale (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982). The resulting 19-item scale was found to have excellent internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$). Additionally, higher scores were related to higher levels of relationship satisfaction, indicating construct validity (Lemieux & Hale, 2000). Items are assessed on a Likert scale from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). One item is reverse-scored, such that higher scores indicate greater levels of intimacy, passion, and commitment. Total scores are obtained by adding the items after reverse-scoring and can range from 19 to 133. Total scores for the Intimacy and Commitment subscales can range from 6 to 42, while total scores for the Passion subscale range from 7 to 49. Factor analyses revealed simple structure and support for a 3-factor solution.

Ethical Considerations

A primary ethical consideration for this research was confidentiality. Participants were asked to provide general demographic data only. If, after completing the survey, the participant wanted to be included in the drawing, they had the opportunity to provide their email address to the researcher. Email addresses were stored in a separate secure data file from the questionnaire responses, and did not contain information that tied a certain email address with a questionnaire entry.

Furthermore, in order to avoid having the questionnaire data and email data files in the same order, the email data files randomly shuffled the order of email addresses. Once they had completed the survey, participants were eligible to enter a drawing. At the conclusion of the data collection stage of the research, twenty participants were randomly selected and sent an Amazon.com gift certificate to the email address they had provided. The reason for choosing to compensate participants with an online gift certificate was that it did not require participants to provide any identifying information beyond an electronic mail address.

A second ethical consideration was that of informed consent. Participants were provided with a consent form and an explanation of the study's requirements, along with compensation opportunities, prior to beginning the session. They were asked to indicate that they agreed to participate after reading the consent form online. The consent form emphasized the confidential nature of the participant's responses. In addition, the consent form included information regarding the possibility of experiencing negative emotions related to their participation in the study. Electronic mail addresses and telephone numbers for the researcher and her major professor were included in both the consent form and the debriefing form. It is important to recognize that participants were self-selected and could stop participating at any time without penalty; therefore, one can assume they were willing to share their experiences.

A third ethical consideration was that of Internet security in maintaining confidentiality and data integrity. Internet sites that hosted this research on their computers (such as www.psychdesign.com) encode data to help ensure confidentiality. Internet sites that linked to this research from their pages allowed participants to

access the questionnaires hosted on the researcher's secure network. The questionnaire data were kept in a password-protected computer file and data were encrypted.

A fourth ethical consideration was that of avoiding harming the participants. Conceivably, participants could have become upset by the content of the material described in the questionnaires. However, participants were free to skip any items they felt uncomfortable answering, and withdraw from the experiment at any time without penalty. It is important to remember that although this research may have reminded participants of potentially disturbing events, the researcher herself did not cause the events.

Methodological Limitations

A notable methodological limitation anticipated was that of attrition. In particular, Internet surveys may be more susceptible to attrition due to boredom or competing environmental demands (e.g. a ringing telephone). Exiting an internet survey is as simple as one click of the mouse or one press of a button. Ross, Daneback, Mansson, Tikkanen, and Cooper (2003) analyzed demographic data of men and women who began participating in an Internet-based survey on sexuality, but dropped out, versus those participants who completed the questionnaire. A total of 3,614 participants began filling out the 175-item online survey, with 51% of them (1,851) completing it. The first 25 items assessed demographics. Analyses of participants who dropped out (exiters) to those who answered all questions (completers) by gender revealed the following. First, more men than women dropped out (50.6% compared to 42.9%). For men only, exiters were more likely to be

heterosexual, in a committed sexual relationship, have lower educational levels, live in small or rural towns, be older, and access the survey via modem (versus high-speed internet access). For women, completers were more likely to be in a sexual relationship and live alone. Men were also more likely to drop out early compared to women (50% of those men who dropped out did so by the 25th question, while 50% of those women who dropped out did so by the 49th question). Based on their findings, the authors recommend that when collecting data via a web-based survey, the questionnaires ought to be short and contain critical items early on. Otherwise, significant biases may exist in the research. The largest limitation in this study was that researchers did not offer any incentives for participation. Other studies have found that offering incentives for web-based research does not increase initial interest in the project, but does lower attrition rates (Frick, Bachtiger, & Reips, 2001). This study examined the difference between completers and exiters in more detail: results are presented in the following section.

A second potential methodological limitation in the current research was that of multiple response submission. It is conceivable, especially when a financial incentive is offered, that people were motivated to submit responses more than once. Many research studies attempt to deter this practice by placing a special marker file on the user's computer, called a *cookie* (cf. Bridges et al., 2003). The web program looks to see if a new visitor already has this cookie file on their computer, and if so, will disallow a second submission. The use of cookies was not advisable for this research project because it was anticipated that many couples would access the survey from the same computer, such as via a home computer. Fortunately, research has shown that

multiple submissions by the same individual are extremely rare occurrences in online research (Mustanski, 2001).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Completers versus Early Withdrawers

Analyses comparing participants who chose to view the entire 6-page survey with those who discontinued their participation early are summarized in Table 3. Results indicated that completers were more likely to be older ($M=34.64$, $SD=10.84$) than early withdrawers ($M=31.02$, $SD=11.07$; $p < 0.001$). Women were more likely to prematurely withdraw their participation than men; $\chi^2(1) = 4.28$, $p = 0.04$. Minority participants were more likely to withdraw early than Caucasian participants; $\chi^2(1) = 22.08$, $p < 0.001$. Completers were also more likely to report higher annual incomes than noncompleters [$\chi^2(5) = 17.69$, $p < 0.01$] and to have more children than noncompleters ($M_{completers}=1.32$, $SD=1.48$; $M_{withdrawers}=1.01$, $SD=1.39$; $p = 0.01$). Completers were more likely to be married to their partners; $\chi^2(1) = 17.19$, $p < 0.001$.

Successful versus Unsuccessful Partner Recruiters

A comparison of participants who successfully recruited their romantic partner for the survey versus those whose partners did not participate indicated important differences among the two groups (Table 4). Men were significantly more likely to successfully recruit their partner for participation than women; $\chi^2(2) = 102.71$, $p < 0.001$. Many of the additional differences between successful and unsuccessful recruiters may be attributable to male gender. For example, they showed lower levels of distress over a partner's SEM use ($M_{recruiters}=1.93$, $SD=1.18$; $M_{nonrecruiters}=2.29$, $SD=1.36$; $p < 0.01$), lower levels of feminist awareness ($M_{recruiters}=57.17$, $SD=16.72$; $M_{nonrecruiters}=61.09$, $SD=13.92$; $p < 0.01$), and lower rates of depression ($M_{recruiters}=4.09$,

$SD=5.17$; $M_{\text{nonrecruiters}}=6.25$, $SD=6.33$; $p < 0.001$). Successful recruiters were significantly older ($M_{\text{recruiters}}=36.19$, $SD=10.80$; $M_{\text{nonrecruiters}}=33.78$, $SD=10.86$; $p < 0.01$), had been in their relationships for longer ($M_{\text{recruiters}}=8.90$, $SD=7.68$; $M_{\text{nonrecruiters}}=7.54$, $SD=8.17$; $p < 0.05$), were more likely to be married rather than dating their partner; $\chi^2(8) = 43.77$, $p < 0.001$, and had more children ($M_{\text{recruiters}}=1.52$, $SD=1.45$; $M_{\text{nonrecruiters}}=1.17$, $SD=1.51$; $p < 0.01$). Successful recruiters also showed lower levels of intimacy ($M_{\text{recruiters}}=35.51$, $SD=7.92$; $M_{\text{nonrecruiters}}=33.96$, $SD=7.55$; $p < 0.05$) and commitment ($M_{\text{recruiters}}=37.44$, $SD=7.00$; $M_{\text{nonrecruiters}}=35.80$, $SD=7.64$; $p < 0.01$). There was a trend for participants whose partners used sexually explicit materials to not recruit their partner for study participation; $\chi^2(4) = 8.33$, $p = .08$.

Scale Structures and Reliability

Preliminary analyses included calculating Cronbach's alpha to determine scale internal consistencies and conducting principal components analyses on each of the measures to verify scale constructs and factor loadings. Analyses were conducted using SPSS version 11.5. Data from the full sample ($N = 1007$) were used for these analyses; however, recruited partner data were removed from the sample to avoid violating the assumption of independence. Furthermore, sample sizes varied as a function of missing data. Therefore, sample sizes used for each set of analyses will be specified below.

32-PDS. Using data from the all participants who completed the 32-PDS and who indicated that their partners used sexually explicit materials ($N = 678$), internal consistency of the 32-PDS was calculated. Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.984$, indicating very high internal consistency. This is consistent with prior findings (Bridges et al., 2003)

where α was found to equal 0.987. To further examine the 32-PDS factor structure, a principal components analysis was performed. Examination of the scree plot revealed a possible 2-component solution. Velicer's minimum average partial (Velicer, 1976) also suggested a 2-component solution best fit the data. Furthermore, examination of the pattern matrix suggested a 2-factor solution best fit the data. Using an orthogonal (Varimax) rotation, items fell into one of two components: (1) negative interpretations of a partner's SEM use, and (2) neutral/ positive interpretations (see Table 5).

Feminist Perspectives Scale. Using complete data from the full sample ($N = 718$), internal consistency of the Feminist Perspectives Scale (FPS) was calculated. Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.839$ for all items comprising the total FPS score. Each of the proposed subscales was examined for internal consistency. Reliability of the Liberal Feminism subscale was $\alpha = 0.758$. Reliability of the Radical Feminism subscale was $\alpha = 0.772$. Reliability of the Cultural Feminism subscale was $\alpha = 0.709$. Finally, reliability of the Conservative Feminism subscale was $\alpha = 0.744$. Results are consistent with prior findings on the full version of the Feminist Perspectives Scale, which found subscale reliabilities to be between 0.58 and 0.84 (Henley et al., 1998).

To further examine the factor structure of this reduced version of the FPS, a principal components analysis was performed. Examination of the scree plot revealed a possible 2-, 3-, or 4-component solution. Velicer's minimum average partial (Velicer, 1976) suggested a 2-component solution best fit the data. However, examination of the rotated component loadings and graphs of component loadings in 3-dimensional space suggested that a 3-component solution best fit the data. Using an orthogonal (Varimax) rotation, items fell into one of three components: (1) radical

feminist perspective, (2) liberal feminist perspective, and (3) conservative perspective (see Table 6). The first component primarily captured radical feminist views that societal structures, values, ideals, and ways of thinking need to be changed in order to make gender roles more equitable. The second component focused primarily on individual choices and freedoms and operating within existing social structures to change women's roles. The third component involved both the acceptance of traditional, patriarchal values and the rejection of more liberal perspectives regarding sexual and gender choices. Three items had complex loadings: (1) Homosexuality is not a moral issue, but rather a question of liberty and freedom of expression, (2) Homosexuals need to be rehabilitated into normal members of society, and (3) Heterosexuality is the only natural sexual preference.

Index of Sexual Satisfaction. Using complete data from the full sample ($N = 703$), internal consistency of the Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS) was calculated. Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.920$. Results are remarkably consistent with a prior finding of $\alpha = 0.916$ (Hudson, Harrison, & Crosscup, 1981).

To further examine the factor structure of the ISS, a principal components analysis was performed. Examination of the scree plot revealed a possible 3- or 4-component solution. Velicer's minimum average partial (Velicer, 1976) suggested a 3-component solution best fit the data. Using an oblique (Promax) rotation, items fell into one of three components: (1) high sexual satisfaction, (2) low satisfaction/lower arousal than partner, and (3) low satisfaction/higher arousal than partner (see Table 7). Items that loaded on the first component captured high levels of satisfaction with the frequency, variability, and role that sex played in the relationship. The second

component included items that suggested low sexual desire compared with one's partner and a low level of sexual satisfaction. Similarly, third component items suggested low sexual satisfaction but a higher level of sexual desire than the partner. Correlations between first component (high sexual satisfaction) and the second and third components (low satisfaction/low arousal and low satisfaction/high arousal) were $r = -0.279$ and $r = -0.492$, respectively. The second and third components had a correlation of $r = 0.218$. One items had complex loadings: I think that sex is wonderful.

Intimacy/Passion/Commitment. Using complete data from the full sample ($N = 735$), internal consistencies of the composite Triangular Theory of Love scale (Lemieux & Hale, 2000) were calculated. Cronbach's alpha for the *intimacy* items was $\alpha = 0.930$. Cronbach's alpha for the *passion* items was $\alpha = 0.948$. Cronbach's alpha for the *commitment* items was $\alpha = 0.917$. Overall internal consistency for the composite scale, including all items from all three constructs, was $\alpha = 0.955$. Results are consistent with the authors' prior finding of $\alpha = 0.89$ (Lemieux & Hale, 2000).

To further examine the factor structure of this composite scale, a principal components analysis was performed. Examination of the scree plot revealed a possible 3-component solution. Velicer's minimum average partial (Velicer, 1976) also suggested a 3-component solution best fit the data. Using an oblique (Promax) rotation, items fell into the expected three components: (1) intimacy, (2) passion, and (3) commitment (see Table 8). Items that loaded on the first component captured a high sense of psychological and emotional closeness to partner. The second component included items that suggested high sexual satisfaction and sexual arousal

by partner. The third component items suggested a strong sense of commitment to the continuity of the relationship. Correlations between first component (intimacy) and the second and third components (passion and commitment) were $r = 0.683$ and $r = 0.657$, respectively. The second and third components had a correlation of $r = 0.493$. One item had a complex loading: My partner and I are very affectionate toward one another.

Patient Health Questionnaire-9. Using complete data from the full sample ($N = 745$), the internal consistency of the nine-item version of the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9; Kroenke et al., 2001) was calculated. Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = 0.919$. Results are consistent with Kroenke and colleagues' prior finding of $\alpha = 0.89$.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale-7. Using complete data from the full sample ($N = 758$), the internal consistency of the seven-item version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS-7; Hunsley et al., 2001) was calculated. Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = 0.829$. Results are consistent with prior findings of $\alpha = 0.79$ for both clinical and community samples (Hunsley et al., 2001).

Data Cleaning

Prior to completing analyses for couples, each variable was examined to check for accuracy of data entry, missing values, and normality of distributions. Histograms, Q-Q plots, box plots, and variable skew and kurtosis values were examined. When necessary, square root and logarithm transformations were used. Univariate and multivariate outliers were identified and either deleted or brought in closer to data ranges, resulting in complete data for 217 couples. Missing data were

estimated using maximum likelihood estimation. A correlation matrix for couples' data is presented in Table 9.

Sexually Explicit Material Use

The majority of the participants reported using sexually explicit materials. Specifically, 70.5% of men (N = 153) and 57.1% of women (N = 124) reported viewing sexually explicit materials. For both male and female users, the average amount of time spent using SEM was 1-2 times per week for 1-2 hours total. Only 7 men and 3 women reported using SEM daily. Twenty-two percent of male users reported use that was less than once per month, while 29% of female users reported this infrequent use.

For men, the most common type of SEM used was videos (73.9% of male SEM users). The second most common medium for SEM use was the Internet (52.9%), followed by pictures/magazines (51.0%). For women, videos were also the most common type of SEM used (70.2%), followed by the Internet (37.9%) and pictures/magazines (36.3%). Cybersex (sexually explicit Internet chatting) was rare, with only 3.3% of men and 3.2% of women endorsing this activity. The various types of SEM were assigned to one of two categories: interactive SEM and non-interactive SEM. Interactive SEM was considered to be any material that involved interacting with an actual other. Therefore, cybersex with strangers or friends, telephone sex, and strip clubs were categorized as interactive. In contrast, sexually explicit books, photographs, videos, and websites were all considered to be non-interactive. The use of interactive adult material was relatively infrequent, endorsed by 19.0% of male SEM users and 11.3% of female SEM users.

The most frequently endorsed content in the SEM viewed was sexual relations between men and women. For men, nude women and lesbian sex were the second and third most common SEM contents. For women users, lesbian sex was followed by nude women and nude men. Only 6.5% of men reported using SEM that showed actors being degraded, while 7.2% stated that degradation was suggested. Similarly, 5.6% of women reported using degrading SEM and 4.8% reported that degradation was suggested. None of the SEM users, regardless of gender, endorsed viewing SEM in which harm occurred or was suggested.

Participants were asked to indicate all possible reasons why they used SEM. For men, the most common reason provided was for private/solo sexual stimulation (66.0%). This was also the most frequently reported *primary* reason for male use of SEM (37.9% of users). The second most common reason for SEM use for men was as part of lovemaking with their romantic partner (49.0%). Other reasons included curiosity (39.2%), boredom (35.3%), to reduce stress (33.3%), and because SEM was easily available (35.9%). Fewer men reported using because of relationship problems. For example, only 13.7% of male users stated that a reason for their SEM use was because they wanted to have sexual relations more often than their partner. Less than 2% reported SEM use due to a personal sexual problem and an additional 9.8% reported SEM use due to a partner's sexual problem. Relationship problems that were not sexual in nature were reported as reasons for SEM use by only 6.5% of male users.

Reasons for women's use of SEM differed somewhat than that of men. The most common reason for SEM use endorsed by women in this study was as part of lovemaking with their partners (66.1% of female users). This was also the most

frequently reported *primary* reason for SEM use (43.5% of users). Other common reasons included solo sexual stimulation (50.0%), assisting in fantasizing (44.4%), and curiosity (45.2%). Only 7.3% of female users stated that they used SEM because their male partners did not want to be intimate as often as they did. Four percent reported SEM use due to a personal sexual problem and an identical percent reported SEM use due to a partner's sexual problem. Relationship problems that were not sexual in nature were reported as reasons for SEM use by only one female user.

Participants were also asked to provide information about what they perceived as possible reasons for a partner's SEM use. On the whole, men correctly reported the primary and most common reason for their female partner's use of SEM was as part of the couple's lovemaking (59.5% estimated). In contrast, women incorrectly identified couple lovemaking as the most frequent reason why their partners viewed SEM (63.6%). Private sexual stimulation was the second most frequent reason for male partner SEM use (57.1%). When asked to identify the main reason why their partner used SEM, couple lovemaking and private sexual stimulation were tied at 35.7%. Only two women and one man reported feeling their partner used SEM because of problems in their relationship.

Cognitions, Sexually Explicit Material Use, and Satisfaction

The first specific aim sought to examine the relationship between a partner's use of adult materials and both relationship and sexual satisfaction for men and women in romantic dyads. Multiple steps were taken in order to determine these relationships. First, a measurement model was evaluated in order to determine what variables best measured each of the latent constructs. Next, a series of models were fit

to the data and compared: first for men, then for women. Finally, covariates were added to the full models in order to evaluate the role of cognitions in relationship and sexual satisfaction, after controlling for depression, feminist awareness, and sexual functioning. Analyses were conducted using EQS version 5.7b (Bentler, 1995). Models were evaluated based on numerous macro and micro fit indices. Macro fit indices included the overall chi-square values, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). CFI values of 0.90 are considered adequate, while those at or above 0.95 suggest good model fit (Bentler & Wu, 1993). RMSEA values of approximately 0.08 indicate adequate model fit, while values below 0.05 suggest good fit (Bentler & Wu, 1993). For adequately fitting models, micro-level indices were examined, including the number and strength of significant paths. R squared values for the dependent variables in each model were also examined.

Comparisons of models were made using two procedures. First, nested models were compared to full models using chi-square difference tests (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000) with an alpha level of 0.05 to determine significance. Models that were more parsimonious while maintaining the explanatory power of the full model were accepted in favor of the full model. Second, Akaike Information Criterion values (AIC values; Akaike, 1987) were examined. While these values cannot be interpreted in an absolute sense, differing models' relative AIC values can be compared. Models with lower AICs are considered to provide better fit. Each step will be discussed in turn.

Measurement Model. Prior to evaluating structural models, a measurement model was evaluated based on *a priori* specified indicators. Results suggested model

specification problems. First, the latent variable “sexual satisfaction” was not well-indicated by the discrepancy score between actual and desired frequency of sexual contact. Second, when considered as separate outcome variables, correlations between men’s and women’s sexual satisfaction were very high, causing linear dependency and subsequent errors in model evaluations. Similar difficulties were found in men’s and women’s relationship satisfaction, as measured by the 7-item version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Therefore, a new model was specified in which relationship satisfaction for the couple was one endogenous variable, indicated by his and her DAS-7 scores, while sexual satisfaction for the couple was the second endogenous variable, indicated by his and her ISS scores (Figure 1).

Results suggested that SEM use was well-indicated by frequency of adult materials use, duration of use, and type of materials (none, non-interactive, and interactive). The correlation between men’s and women’s SEM use in these dyads was 0.50. Couple relationship and sexual satisfaction were well-indicated by DAS-7 and ISS scores, respectively. Evaluation of cognitions regarding a partner’s SEM use, however, resulted in differences for men and women. Specifically, women’s cognitions were not well-indicated by the two factor scores derived from the 32-PDS. Therefore, analyses for women included the average 32-PDS score only, rather than the two factor scores resulting from the principal components analysis on the measure. In contrast, men’s cognitions were best indicated by the two 32-PDS factor scores and, in fact, attempts to use their average 32-PDS score resulted in problems with model convergence.

Female Participants. Figure 2 provides the model and standardized path coefficients for examining the direct effects of sexually explicit material use on dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction. The model resulted in an inadequate fit to the data; χ^2 (39, N=217) = 208.89, $p < .001$. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.90. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.14. The Akaike Information Criterion was 130.89. Although three of the four paths were significant, examination of R^2 values for the dependent variables confirmed that the direct effects model was inadequate at explaining the variance in relationship ($R^2 = .025$) or sexual satisfaction ($R^2 = .038$).

Figure 3 provides the model and standardized path coefficients for examining mediated effects of sexually explicit material use on dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction. Results suggested this mediational model provided adequate fit to the observed data and better fit than the direct effects model previously described; χ^2 (39, N=217) = 140.99, $p < .001$, CFI=0.94, RMSEA=0.11, AIC=62.98. The model resulted in more variance explained for relationship ($R^2 = .130$) and sexual satisfaction ($R^2 = .144$) compared to the direct effects model. Significant paths were observed between male partner's use of sexually explicit material and the female participant's 32-PDS score. Specifically, the more he endorsed use of SEM, the more distressing cognitions she endorsed regarding his use. Furthermore, there were significant paths between her 32-PDS and dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction. The more distressing her cognitions regarding his use (i.e., higher 32-PDS score), the lower were the couple's sexual and relationship satisfaction. There was no significant path between her use of SEM and her 32-PDS.

Figure 4 provides the model and standardized path coefficients for examining the full effects of sexually explicit material use on dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction. Fit indices suggested adequate model fit; $\chi^2 (35, N=217) = 129.46$, $p < .001$, CFI=0.95, RMSEA=0.11, AIC=59.46. There was an increase in R squared values for the dependent variables compared to the direct and mediated effects models: $R^2=.164$ for relationship satisfaction and $R^2=.179$ for sexual satisfaction. Significant paths were observed between male partner's use of sexually explicit material and the female participant's 32-PDS. Once again, the more he endorsed use of SEM, the more distressing cognitions she endorsed regarding his use. There were significant paths between her 32-PDS and dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction: more distressing cognitions regarding his use was related to lower sexual and relationship satisfaction. Direct effects were also observed. Specifically, the woman's own use of sexually explicit material was positively related to sexual and relationship satisfaction. In contrast, the male partner's own use of sexually explicit material did not exert a direct effect on couple dyadic and sexual satisfaction; instead, her cognitions regarding his use mediated the relationship. There was no significant path between her use of SEM and her interpretations of his use.

In order to determine whether the two nested models (direct effects and mediational effects) produced significantly worse fits to the observed data than the full model, chi-square difference tests were conducted. Comparing the female direct effects model to the female full model resulted in $\chi^2_{diff} (4)=79.43$, $p < .001$. Comparing the female mediational effects model to the female full model resulted in $\chi^2_{diff} (4)=11.53$, $p=.02$.

Results suggest this full model provided a significantly better fit to the observed data when compared to the direct effects model and a slightly better fit than the mediational model previously described. In essence, both direct and mediated effects were present and differed by who was using sexually explicit material. Her own use was directly and positively related to her sexual and dyadic satisfaction. In contrast, the effects of her male partner's SEM use were fully mediated by her interpretations of that use: the more distressing she found it to be, the lower were both dyadic and sexual satisfaction.

In order to determine whether relationships observed in the full model could be better accounted for by her levels of depression, sexual dysfunction, and endorsement of feminist values, three covariates were added to the full model (Figure 5). The inclusion of the covariates resulted in somewhat worse macro model fit indices than the full model previously described; χ^2 (65, N=217) = 229.33, $p < .001$, CFI=0.91, RMSEA=0.11. However, R^2 values for the dependent variables suggest that this model accounted for more variance in relationship ($R^2=.164$) and sexual satisfaction ($R^2=.265$) than the full model without covariates, particularly for sexual satisfaction. Results indicated that higher depression levels in the female participants were significantly related to lower dyadic and sexual satisfaction. Similarly, higher sexual dysfunction was associated with lower sexual satisfaction, but not dyadic satisfaction. Higher endorsement of feminist values was not related to dyadic satisfaction but was associated with lower sexual satisfaction. Despite the inclusion of these covariates, the same direct and mediated relationships between SEM use and couple satisfaction continued to be observed.

Male Participants. Figure 6 provides the model and standardized path coefficients for examining the direct effects of sexually explicit material use on dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction. Results suggest this model did not provide adequate fit to the observed data; χ^2 (48, N=217) = 298.90, $p < .001$, CFI=0.87, RMSEA=0.16, AIC=202.90. Although three of the four paths were significant, examination of R^2 values for the dependent variables confirmed that the direct effects model was inadequate at explaining the variance in relationship ($R^2=.025$) or sexual satisfaction ($R^2=.038$).

Figure 7 provides the model and standardized path coefficients for examining mediated effects of sexually explicit material use on dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction. Results suggest this mediational model provided nearly adequate fit to the observed data and a better fit than the direct effects model first described; χ^2 (48, N=217) = 196.79, $p < .001$, CFI=0.92, RMSEA=0.12, AIC=100.79. However, the model did not result in an increase in variance explained for relationship ($R^2=.026$) and sexual satisfaction ($R^2=.039$) compared to the direct effects model. Significant paths were observed between a female partner's use of sexually explicit material and his 32-PDS scores. In contrast to expectations, the more she endorsed use of SEM, the less distressing cognitions he endorsed regarding her use. Furthermore, there was a significant path between his 32-PDS and sexual, but not dyadic, satisfaction. Specifically, higher 32-PDS scores were related to lower couple sexual satisfaction. There was no significant path between his use of SEM and 32-PDS.

Figure 8 provides the model and standardized path coefficients for examining the full effects of sexually explicit material use on dyadic sexual and relationship

satisfaction. Results suggest this full model provided nearly identical fit to the observed data as the fully mediated model previously described; χ^2 (44, N=217) = 188.20, $p < .001$, CFI=0.92, RMSEA=0.12, AIC=100.20. There was a small increase in R squared value for relationship satisfaction ($R^2=.068$) and a more notable increase in sexual satisfaction ($R^2=.136$). Significant paths were observed between female partner's use of sexually explicit material and the male participant's 32-PDS. Once again, the more she endorsed use of SEM, the less distressing cognitions he endorsed regarding her use. There were significant paths between his 32-PDS and both dyadic and sexual satisfaction. As before, the more distressing were his cognitions regarding her use, the lower were sexual and relationship satisfaction. Direct effects were also observed. Specifically, the man's own use of sexually explicit material was negatively related to sexual satisfaction. In contrast, the female partner's use of sexually explicit material did not exert a direct effect on couple dyadic and sexual satisfaction; instead, his cognitions regarding her use mediated these relationships. There was no significant path between his use of SEM and his interpretations of her use.

In order to determine whether the two nested models (direct effects and mediational effects) produced significantly worse fits to the observed data than the full model, chi-square difference tests were conducted. Comparing the male direct effects model to the male full model resulted in $\chi^2_{\text{diff}}(4)=110.70$, $p < .001$. Results suggest that the direct effects model was significantly worse at explaining relationships among variables compared to the full model. Comparing the male mediational effects model to the male full model resulted in $\chi^2_{\text{diff}}(4)=8.59$, $p=.07$. The p-value obtained in this comparison suggests that the mediational model was not statistically significantly

different from the full effects model at explaining relationships among the variables. However, examining the micro level fit indicators of the full model suggests that there are significant mediational *and* direct effects. Furthermore, examining the R squared values in the full and mediational model dependent variables strongly suggest that more variance in dyadic and sexual satisfaction is being accounted for by the full model. Therefore, it was concluded that the full model was supported by the data for men.

In order to determine whether relationships observed in the full model could be better accounted for by his levels of depression, sexual dysfunction, and endorsement of feminist values, three covariates were added to the full model (Figure 9). The inclusion of the covariates resulted in slightly worse model fit than the mediational and full models previously described; $\chi^2 (77, N=217) = 278.87, p<.001, CFI=0.90, RMSEA=0.11$. However, R squared values for the dependent variables suggest that this model accounted for more variance in relationship and sexual satisfaction than the full model without covariates. Specifically, R squared for relationship satisfaction rose to .166 and R squared for sexual satisfaction rose to .247. Results indicated that higher depression level in the male participants was significantly related to lower dyadic, but not sexual, satisfaction. Higher sexual dysfunction was associated with lower sexual and relationship satisfaction. Higher endorsement of feminist values was not related to dyadic or sexual satisfaction. With the inclusion of these covariates, the relationships between his 32-PDS scores and dyadic and sexual satisfaction changed. Specifically, his distressing cognitions over her use no longer predicted either

relationship or sexual satisfaction. However, the higher his own use of sexually explicit material, the lower was the couple's sexual satisfaction.

Similar models were compared for women and men using only their own sexual and relationship satisfaction as outcome variables. Results were nearly identical to those obtained when dyadic sexual and relationship satisfaction were modeled together.

Conclusion. Table 10 provides a summary of model fit indices for both men and women for direct, mediational, full, and full plus covariates models. The first research hypothesis was partially supported for both women and men. For women, both direct and mediated effects were present and differed by who was using sexually explicit material. Her own use was directly and positively related to sexual and dyadic satisfaction. In contrast, the effects of her male partner's SEM use were fully mediated by her 32-PDS scores: the more distressing she found his use to be, the lower were both dyadic and sexual satisfaction. For men, the mediational and full models appeared to provide similar fit to the data, and better fit when compared to the direct effects model. When examining R squared values for the dependent variables, however, the full model clearly provided better explanatory power than the mediational model. Specifically, when men endorsed more distressing interpretations of a female partner's use of sexually explicit material, as evidenced by higher 32-PDS scores, the dyad had lower reported levels of satisfaction. Interestingly, however, for male participants, higher female partner use of sexually explicit material was correlated with *lower* distress over her use. Men also reported direct effects of their own use of SEM on sexual satisfaction. As a man's SEM use increased, the couple's

sexual satisfaction decreased. Additionally, when covariates were included in the model, male mediated paths were no longer significant, but the direct path linking male SEM use to decreased sexual satisfaction remained significant. This provides further support for retaining the full model, rather than the mediational model, for men.

Interactive versus Non-interactive Sexually Explicit Material Use

The second specific aim sought to examine whether sexually explicit exchanges that occur with an *actual other*, where the potential for both a “real world” sexual and emotional connection exists (for example, by sending erotic emails over the Internet, or having “cybersex”) had significantly greater negative effects on both relationship and sexual satisfaction. Participants were categorized according to whether their partner’s use of sexually explicit materials was “interactive” (meaning it involved the user actually interacting with another in a sexual exchange) versus more conventional or “non-interactive” use, where no possibility for an escalation to a live encounter would likely exist (such as viewing models in a pornographic magazine).

While initially a multisample structural analysis was intended to be used to compare participants whose partners used interactive sexually explicit material to those whose partners used more conventional materials, only 22 of the 434 participants (4 men and 18 women) reported having a partner whom they believed used interactive materials. Given the small sample size of this group, structural equation models could not be fitted to each group and subsequently compared. Instead, a t-test was conducted comparing average 32-PDS scores between participants whose partners used interactive sexually explicit materials versus those whose partners

did not. Results revealed no significant differences between these two groups [$M_{\text{noninteractive}}=1.90$, $SD=1.17$; $M_{\text{interactive}}=1.71$, $SD=1.15$; $t(228) = 0.69$, $p > 0.05$].

Additional mean comparisons were made among the two groups (interactive versus non-interactive) for relationship satisfaction, as measured by DAS-7 total scores, and sexual satisfaction, as measured by ISS scores. Results further confirmed that the distinction did not appear to be important. The groups did not differ significantly in mean DAS-7 scores [$M_{\text{noninteractive}}=25.04$, $SD=5.72$; $M_{\text{interactive}}=24.95$, $SD=5.44$; $t(254) = 0.07$, $p > 0.05$] and ISS scores [$M_{\text{noninteractive}}=24.47$, $SD=17.71$; $M_{\text{interactive}}=19.17$, $SD=13.30$; $t(254) = 0.17$, $p > 0.05$].

Conclusion. Contrary to expectations, there was no evidence that participants whose partners used sexually explicit materials that approximated more “traditional” romantic threats to the relationship (for example, by interacting with an actual other) did not appear to be more distressed than participants whose partners used material in a more conventional manner. However, results should be considered very tentative, given the extremely small sample size of participants who reported a partner’s use of interactive SEM.

Couple Reliability in Reporting

The third specific aim sought to examine how reliable couples were at reporting one another’s SEM use. Because the use of sexually explicit material often is a solitary activity, it was hypothesized that reliabilities between partners would be moderate. Furthermore, well-functioning couples were hypothesized to show greater reliability than dissatisfied couples.

In order to examine this, a traditionally longitudinal approach to structural equation modeling was used. However, rather than testing models at Time 1 and Time 2, men's and women's reports of each other's use of sexually explicit materials were compared (Figure 10). If paths noted by the arrows were significant, then we could conclude that there was high consistency among men's and women's reports. In fact, this is precisely what was found. However, indices suggested this model did not provide a good fit to the data; χ^2 (48, N=217) = 330.60, $p < .001$, CFI=0.91, RMSEA=0.17. Nevertheless, paths between a participant's own reported use of sexually explicit material and their partner's reports of the participant's use were highly reliable ($p < 0.001$) for both men and women.

The sample was also divided into distressed and well-functioning couples, based on average DAS-7 scores. However, there were only 24 couples (11.1% of the total sample) with at least one partner who reported relationship distress. Given such a small sample size, reliability analyses were unable to be conducted in EQS to compare these two groups. Instead, *Pearson r* was computed. Results revealed that, across all couples regardless of distress level, the correlations between men's own reported use of sexually explicit material and their partner's report of their use were significant ($r = 0.69$ for frequency; $r = 0.73$ for duration; $p < 0.01$). Similarly, correlations between women's own reported use of sexually explicit material and their partner's report of the woman's use were significant ($r = 0.81$ for frequency; $r = 0.74$ for duration; $p < 0.01$).

To further explore whether well-functioning couples showed higher reliability in reporting one another's use of sexually explicit materials, the sample was divided

into two groups: the non-distressed group comprised couples where both members reported adequate relationship satisfaction (DAS-7 total scores were 17 or greater) while the distressed group comprised couples where one or both members reported relationship distress (DAS-7 total scores of 16 or less). Table 11 shows the resulting correlation coefficients for frequency of sexually explicit material use by couple distress, while Table 12 shows coefficients for duration of use.

A comparison of the sets of correlations was made using Fisher's Z transformation. Distressed and nondistressed couples were not significantly different in their report of the frequency of the woman's use of sexually explicit materials ($r_{\text{distressed}}=0.83$; $r_{\text{nondistressed}}=0.81$; $z_{\text{diff}}=0.27$, $p=0.79$) nor in their reports of the duration of her use ($r_{\text{distressed}}=0.77$; $r_{\text{nondistressed}}=0.74$; $z_{\text{diff}}=0.30$, $p=0.76$). Similarly, distressed and nondistressed couples were not significantly different in their report of the frequency of the man's use of sexually explicit materials ($r_{\text{distressed}}=0.80$; $r_{\text{nondistressed}}=0.68$; $z_{\text{diff}}=1.17$, $p=0.24$) nor in their reports of the duration of his use ($r_{\text{distressed}}=0.81$; $r_{\text{nondistressed}}=0.71$; $z_{\text{diff}}=0.92$, $p=0.36$).

Conclusion. Couples exhibited high reliability in reporting one another's use of sexually explicit material, despite the fact that this use often occurs outside of the dyad. Contrary to expectations, distressed couples were not less reliable at reported each other's behavior than well-functioning couples.

Feminism and Interpretations of a Partner's Sexually Explicit Material Use

The fourth specific aim sought to examine the role that feminist values play in interpretations of a romantic partner's use of sexually explicit materials. To determine this relationship, total scores on the FPS (Global Feminism scores) were regressed

onto 32-PDS scores using partner's SEM use as a covariate. It was hypothesized that the higher the participants scored on the FPS (indicative of stronger endorsement of liberal, radical, and cultural feminist perspectives), the more distressing they would find their partner's SEM use. However, standardized path coefficients from FPS scores to PDS scores were not significant for men ($\beta = 0.01, p > 0.05$) or women ($\beta = 0.06, p > 0.05$).

Conclusion. Contrary to the hypothesis, results suggest that higher endorsement of liberal, radical, and cultural feminist values was not predictive of greater distress regarding a partner's use of SEM.

SEM Use and Depression

Exploratory analyses were conducted to examine the role of one's own and a partner's SEM use on depression (Figure 11). Although the proposed model provided relatively adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2 (16, N=217) = 68.42, p < .001, CFI=0.96, RMSEA=0.12$, results showed no significant paths between SEM use by self or partner to levels of depression. Similarly, an examination of R squared values suggested SEM use did not account for much variance in depression levels, $R^2=.018$ for male PHQ-9 scores and $R^2=.026$ for female PHQ-9 scores.

However, additional analyses did suggest that greater distress over a partner's SEM use was associated with higher levels of depression for women (Figure 12). This model provided good fit to the data; $\chi^2 (5, N=217) = 11.29, p=.046, CFI=0.99, RMSEA=0.08$. Together, depression levels and partner SEM use accounted for a sizeable portion of the variance in 32-PDS scores for women: $R^2=.295$. For men, however, depression was not associated with distress over their partner's use of

sexually explicit material; χ^2 (7, N=217) = 29.86, $p < .001$, CFI=0.97, RMSEA=0.12 (Figure 13).

Conclusion. Increased use of sexually explicit materials was not associated with one's own or a partner's level of depression. However, in women, higher levels of depression were related to higher levels of distress over a partner's SEM use.

Sexually Explicit Material Use and Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment

Exploratory analyses were conducted to examine the impact of sexually explicit material use on intimacy, passion, and commitment. Interestingly, for female participants, there was no impact of partner's SEM use on their own reports of intimacy, passion, or commitment to their relationship; χ^2 (20, N=217) = 79.45, $p < .001$, CFI=0.96, RMSEA=0.12. However, the more sexually explicit material a woman reported using herself, the lower she rated her level of intimacy in her romantic relationship (Figure 14). Nevertheless, SEM use by both members of the couple accounted for little variance in intimacy scores for women ($R^2=.070$).

For male participants, the more SEM their partner used, the lower his reported level of intimacy in his relationship; χ^2 (20, N=217) = 75.31, $p < .001$, CFI=0.96, RMSEA=0.11. Furthermore, the more SEM he reported using, the less committed he reported being in his relationship (Figure 15). Again, however, SEM use by both members of the couple accounted for little variance in intimacy ($R^2=.030$) or commitment ($R^2=.067$) scores for men.

Conclusion. In women, a male partner's SEM use was not related to her sense of being in an intimate, passionate, committed relationship. However, the more she reported using sexually explicit materials, the less intimate she felt in her relationship

with her male partner. Similarly for men, a female partner's SEM use was associated with lower perceived intimacy in his relationship. Additionally, the more SEM he reported using, the less committed he was to his female partner. However, these effects were relatively weak and did not account for much variance in intimacy, passion, or commitment scores for men or women.

Sexual Functioning and Dyadic Satisfaction

Although not central to this investigation, a final set of exploratory analyses were conducted to examine the impact of sexual dysfunction on relationship and sexual satisfaction. Two structural models were examined. First, the relationship between sexual functioning and both dyadic and sexual satisfaction was examined (Figure 16). Not surprisingly, higher sexual functioning was associated with increased relationship and sexual satisfaction, although model fit indices were poor; χ^2 (5, N=217) = 48.85, $p < .001$, CFI=0.90, RMSEA=0.20. R squared values suggested that sexual functioning scores for both members of the couple accounted for a sizeable portion of the variance in sexual satisfaction ($R^2 = .246$) and, to a lesser extent, relationship satisfaction ($R^2 = .107$).

Second, the impact of level of sexual functioning on SEM use was examined (Figure 17). There was no significant relationship between level of sexual dysfunction and men's or women's use of sexually explicit material; χ^2 (16, N=217) = 67.27, $p < .001$, CFI=0.96, RMSEA=0.12.

Conclusion. Results from these exploratory analyses reveal that sexual functioning was not related to SEM use for men or women.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Impact of SEM Use on Dyadic Satisfaction

This dissertation concerned itself with the role of cognitions in mediating the relationship between a partner's use of SEM and relationship and sexual satisfaction. Results suggest that cognitions about, or interpretations of, what a partner's SEM use means had important implications for sexual and relationship satisfaction for women and men. The meaning women and men made of their partner's use of SEM predicted how satisfied the couple reported being with their relationship in general and their sexual relationship in particular. Specifically, and as predicted, when negative cognitions were endorsed, the couple was less satisfied than when the SEM use was viewed more positively. This relationship continued to hold for women only when three covariates (depression, sexual functioning, and endorsement of feminist values) were added to the prediction of relationship and sexual satisfaction.

However, SEM use, by oneself and one's partner, had direct impacts on relationship and sexual satisfaction as well. These direct effects were gender-specific: SEM use by the woman in these dyads was directly associated with increased relationship and sexual satisfaction for the couple as a whole. In contrast, SEM by the man in the dyad was associated with decreased couple sexual satisfaction.

Given that the relationship between SEM use and dyadic satisfaction was at least partially mediated by interpretations of the partner's SEM use, this study was additionally interested in asking what factors were related to negative and positive interpretations. A number of potential variables were examined, including the amount

of time spent using SEM, types of SEM used, the endorsement of feminist values, depression levels, and sexual functioning.

Interesting differences emerged between men and women when attempting to predict what led to negative and positive cognitions about a partner's SEM use. For women, as predicted, higher partner SEM use was associated with higher negative interpretations of his use. That is, the more sexually explicit material he used, the more negatively she felt about it. For men, in contrast, the more sexually explicit material use his female partner reported, the more likely he was to view this as *positively* impacting his relationship.

The gender differences that emerged in these findings may, in part, be explained by examining the reasons for the use of sexually explicit materials. Men were most likely to report using SEM alone as a masturbatory aid. Women were most likely to report using SEM *with* their male partners as part of lovemaking. The context in which most SEM use occurred, therefore, was very different for men and women. Said differently, women most often used it in a *relationship enhancing activity* while men most often used it in a *relationship distracting activity*. Given this difference, the disparate results may make more sense. Because female SEM use was more often a shared activity, this shared activity may have enhanced satisfaction in couples. Because male SEM use was more often reported to be a solitary activity, it may have been perceived by women as taking something away from the relationship (such as the opportunity to interact sexually or emotionally with her), thereby leading to decreased relationship and sexual satisfaction in the dyad.

A second possible explanation for differences in men's and women's interpretations of a partner's use may relate to men's greater satisfaction with women who report greater interest in sex, whether that interest is expressed through dyadic sexual activity or solitary masturbation and viewing of adult materials. There is ample, accumulated evidence that men think about sex more often than women, have a greater liking for various sexual practices, are more likely to make sacrifices for sex, and masturbate more often (Baumeister, Catanese, & Vohs, 2001). Therefore, couples where the woman shows an interest in sex that more closely approximates the man's interest may also be couples with higher relationship and sexual satisfaction, on the whole. Stated differently, the lower the discrepancy of SEM use between men and women in a dyad, the higher may be the couple's satisfaction levels. When there are differences, the more frequent user may wish for his or her partner to increase sexual interest levels; the less frequency user may wish for a decrease. Future studies may consider examining this hypothesis in greater detail.

Men and women may have difficulty understanding how they are differentially impacted by a partner's SEM use for additional reasons. For example, some people may not view sexuality in their romantic relationship as being primarily for the purpose of mutual sharing but, rather, an activity that is primarily directed at fulfilling one partner's sexual needs. If that person opts to fulfill their needs on their own through SEM and masturbation, they may perceive it as having nothing to do with their partner and, therefore, as something that ought not to be distressing.

Such explanations should be explored in future studies as they may relate to difficulties between men and women gaining understanding of how they can be

differentially impacted by SEM use. If men tend to see a partner's sexually explicit material use as relationship enhancing either because it is used as part of lovemaking or because it is seen as indicating a comparable interest in sex among the dyad members, they may logically indicate greater satisfaction in the relationship and, therefore, they may have a harder time understanding why their own use is being seen negatively by their female partner.

A second possible influence on interpretations of a partner's SEM use was that of the type of adult materials used. Specifically, materials were categorized into "interactive" and "noninteractive" forms, whereby interactive materials were considered to be those in which the sexual material was not simply passively presented to the user (such as a photograph or video clip), but actively constructed and influenced by the user (such as erotic Internet chatting or the exchange of sexually explicit photographs with others with whom one communicated). The interactive forms were considered to more closely approximate a traditional romantic threat. They were also considered to be closer to Cann and colleagues' (2001) definition of an "emotional infidelity", as the potential to form an attachment to another could exist. Contrary to expectations, more interactive forms of SEM use by a partner were not more likely to lead to higher distressing cognitions and lower satisfaction levels.

There are a few possible explanations for this lack of a difference. First, the current study contained few participants who endorsed "interactive" SEM use. The low frequency of interactive SEM use may have resulted in low power to detect differences between the two groups. Second, the researcher had assigned certain

materials as being interactive *a priori*. It would have been helpful to have validated this distinction in a prior, separate sample.

A third factor hypothesized to help explain the variance in cognitions regarding a partner's SEM use was the endorsement of feminist values. Specifically, higher endorsement of feminist attitudes was predicted to be related to more negative interpretations of a partner's SEM use, since such use presumably would relate not only to the place someone occupied in their partner's sexual world, but also to how men and women in general ought to relate to one another sexually. Furthermore, many scholars have argued that popular adult materials often depict women in a degrading fashion (e.g., Wosnitzer et al., under review; Cowan et al., 1988). Therefore, it was predicted that someone with higher endorsement of feminist values may have objected to their partner deriving personal pleasure at the expense of respecting women, and thus would have felt very distressed over their SEM use. However, the current study did not find a relationship between feminist values and distress over a partner's use of SEM.

One possible explanation for the lack of a relationship between endorsement of feminist values and cognitions regarding a partner's SEM use is that, on the whole, participants in this study did not consider the adult materials they or their partners used as being degrading or harmful. If this was the case, then upset due to the "reality" portrayed by pornography (as defined by Russell, 1993, in which women exist for the sexual pleasure of men and are objects to be insulted or harmed) would not be expected to be present. According to the vast majority of the respondents, the sexually explicit materials they used would be classified as erotic, rather than

pornographic. As prior studies have shown (Senn, 1993), erotic materials are not found to be as objectionable for women as pornographic materials.

A second explanation for why feminist awareness was not related to distress over partner SEM usage is that third-wave feminists have lauded sexually explicit materials as contributing to women's sexual liberation and expression (Berger, Searles, & Cottle, 1990; Dugan & Hunter, 1995; Strossen, 1993). In contrast, they perceive second-wave radical feminists who oppose pornography as being sexually repressed or anti-sex. The Feminist Perspectives Scale items selected for this research did not include information about whether or not participants viewed pornographic materials as liberating or oppressing to women. Therefore, participants who scored high in feminist values may also have felt that pornographic materials were not degrading to women in general and, therefore, not objectionable or distressing. A measure more specific to attitudes about objectification of women in SEM may be helpful in future studies to further clarify this relationship.

The role of depression was also examined to determine how it impacted interpretations of a partner's SEM use. It has been well-established that when people are depressed, they are more likely to report negative attitudes and see things as more bleak than when they are feeling euthymic (Ingram, 1984). Not surprisingly, therefore, female participants with higher levels of depression also reported more negative cognitions regarding their partner's SEM use. In contrast, this relationship was not found for men. This gender difference evident in the finding may have been due to psychometric limitations of the sample. Specifically, women in the coupled sample reported both significantly higher distress over a partner's SEM use and

significantly higher levels of depression when compared to men. It may be that the male sample was simply too homogenous with respect to depression and distress, making it difficult to accurately discern the relationship among these two variables. Nevertheless, and consistent with prior research (Karney & Bradbury, 1995), depression directly and negatively impacted relationship and sexual satisfaction for both men and women. In particular, higher depression was associated with significantly lower relationship satisfaction in men and lower relationship and sexual satisfaction in women.

One final factor was considered when examining differences in cognitions related to a partner's SEM use: level of sexual dysfunction. Consistent with prior studies (e.g., McCabe, 1999), women and men who reported higher sexual dysfunction also reported lower relationship and sexual satisfaction. However, sexual functioning was neither related to SEM use nor to distress over a partner's use.

Reliability of Partner Reports of SEM Use

Despite the fact that oftentimes SEM use is a solitary activity, particularly for male users, participants in this research study were very reliable reporters of one another's use. Contrary to expectations, well-functioning couples were not more accurate reporters of one another's behaviors than distressed couples. In fact, correlations among distressed couples were higher, although not significantly so, than correlations among nondistressed couples. Prior research suggests that common distressing reactions to suspected partner SEM use include looking for evidence of such use (e.g., examining internet browser "history" to view visited websites or checking electronic mail accounts; Schneider & Weiss, 2001). Therefore, although

use of adult materials may often be solitary or hidden, distressed persons may have made efforts to track their partner's use, resulting in similar levels of awareness. Therefore, future studies might consider including questions on monitoring a partner's SEM use.

Clinical Implications

Dyads who present to clinicians for couple therapy for help with SEM use are, *de facto*, distressed. Couples for whom SEM use results in higher sexual and relationship satisfaction would not be seeking treatment for this issue. Therefore, the clinical implications of this research will be geared towards those couples for whom at least one member is upset over the other's use of SEM.

The correlational nature of this research, the sample characteristics (see Limitations section below), and the scarcity of studies addressing the impact of SEM use on romantic couples highlight that results from the current study cannot be considered conclusive but may be suggestive of the following. First, clinicians might consider assessing *how* each member of the couple uses SEM (Alone? Together? When upset?), the *content* of the SEM, and the reasons *why* they think they use and/or their partner uses. Similarly, clinicians may wish to help the couple understand *what* their own use of SEM may mean to their partner. Although the couple need not agree on what the SEM use means to each of them, it may be important for marital therapists to help the couple take time to understand how each person sees the event. In particular, it may help dilute the sense that "my partner doesn't care about me and is doing this to hurt me," as was often reported by distressed women in prior studies (e.g., Bridges et al., 2003). Results from the current study suggested it was extremely

rare for men or women to report using SEM because of relationship problems. Most SEM users did not intentionally set out to hurt their partners. If the distressed dyad member can begin to see their partner's behavior as being less driven by intentions to hurt, that, in fact, the partner may be relatively ignorant of how the behavior impacts their partner, the couple will be in a much better position to make changes (Jacobson & Christensen, 1996).

Second, the current research saw a relationship between men's SEM use and sexual satisfaction. Specifically, the higher the SEM use, the lower was the couple's reported sexual satisfaction. Although the data are correlational and will need to be replicated in future studies, this finding is consistent with prior research that suggested lower rates of satisfaction with a romantic partner following repeated exposure to SEM (Zillmann & Bryant, 1988). Therefore, if a man presents to couples therapy with high SEM use, the clinician may be alerted to the potential for sexual dissatisfaction in the couple and/or distress in his female partner.

The impact of depression on cognitions and relationship satisfaction also highlights the importance of treating individuals in the dyad for depression. Because depressed clients are more likely to see situations as bleak, hopeless, and unlikely to improve (Ingram, 1984), addressing disorders of mood in each member of the couple may be important for successful therapeutic outcomes. This is consistent with findings that negative cognitions and maladaptive attributions are related to marital dissatisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Limitations and Future Directions

There were several limitations to this study that impact its generalizability. First, data were collected at one time point for each member of the dyad. Because of this, it was not possible to determine whether SEM use (and distress over or approval of a partner's use) led to changes in relationship and sexual satisfaction, or whether the reverse was true. That is, it is perfectly plausible that people in relationships with lower levels of perceived satisfaction begin to focus on what is "wrong" with the relationship and to re-interpret behaviors in a negative light. Similarly, it is possible that well-functioning dyads begin incorporating SEM into their sexual relationship in a manner that is seen as enhancing satisfaction. The only possible way to address this would be to conduct longitudinal studies that assess these variables at multiple time points.

Second, there were notable participant selection biases that may have impacted the results. All voluntary research is subject to some of these biases: more people are offered the opportunity to participate than do, and it is likely that there are systematic differences between those who choose to begin participation and those who do not. This internet-based study made it possible to conduct further analyses regarding participant bias.

Examinations of those who began the survey and those who completed it revealed systematic differences. Participants who completed the full survey were older, more likely to be male, White, of higher socioeconomic status, and married with children. Further examination was possible among this subgroup, as every participant who completed the survey was given the opportunity to recruit their partner for

participation. While data are not available on how many participants attempted to recruit their partner for participation, analyses were conducted to compare those participants whose partners did complete the survey with those whose partners did not participate. Participants whose partners also completed the survey were more likely to be older, male, married with more children, and in their relationships for longer. Therefore, there is strong evidence that these results are pertinent to a narrow population: middle and upper-middle class Caucasian married couples with children.

This population may also be relatively psychologically healthy. Prior studies have shown that psychopathology has more detrimental impacts for minorities (Satcher, 2001), people of lower socioeconomic status (Williams, Takeuchi, & Adair, 1992), and people who have not successfully formed stable relationships or marriages (Bruce & Kim, 1992; Gottman, 1994). Therefore, it is very likely that these couples were relatively high functioning. Such participant self-selection probably resulted in lower variability in scores across the measures and may have obscured important relationships among the variables. It is important that future research studies minimize this self-selection. Sampling techniques that draw more representative samples from the community, such as random-digit dialing in telephone surveys, may be helpful in reducing such disparities.

Third, the decision to use cognitions regarding a partner's SEM use as a mediator in this study may have impacted the results in important ways. Specifically, by focusing on how interpretations led to dyadic and sexual dissatisfaction, one may conclude that the problem "is all in the head." This stance has the potential pitfall of ignoring important ways in which relationships are directly affected by sexual activity

and sexual materials. It may also lead one to conclude that the only solution would be to have the distressed partner in the couple change the way he or she interprets SEM use. However, distress may also be reduced by having the using partner decrease or cease the SEM use. It is important to recognize that there are multiple factors that may lead to distress in relationships and multiple ways to resolve such distress once it arises. Future studies may consider different mediators of SEM use and relationship outcomes such as history of sexual abuse or assault, communication styles, or personality factors like extroversion/introversion.

A fourth limitation was that, due to the sensitive nature of sexuality studies, actual sexually explicit photographs were not used that would otherwise provide a means to validate the 32-PDS or to assess in greater accuracy the types of sexual material participants viewed. This may help account for the differences in perceived harm and degradation the participants reported in their SEM (fewer than 10% saw their materials as degrading or harmful, or even suggestive of such) versus the high levels that were systematically assessed in sexually explicit videos (over 80%; Wosnitzer et al., under review). Therefore, it would be helpful for future research studies to include a more systematic assessment of types of SEM.

There are ethical concerns with exposing research participants to sexually explicit materials. There are also notable limitations to using laboratory SEM exposure for research (namely, that it does not mimic "real life" usage as participants generally do not masturbate to images in laboratory studies of SEM). For these reasons, alternatives may need to be considered to more accurately answer the question of whether or not participants accurately view the aggression and degradation

in their SEM. For example, participants could provide researchers with a list of titles of SEM videos, website addresses they frequent, or magazines they purchase. The researchers could then examine these materials and systematically assess their violent and degrading content. A second possibility would be for participants to select films they would be interested in viewing from a catalogue of adult video titles, descriptors, and reviews (such as those published by Adult Video News; AVN, 2006).

A fifth limitation concerns socially desirable responding. This concern is prevalent in almost any psychological study, but particularly in those that rely on self-report measures of emotionally charged behaviors. Surveys that ask participants about their sexuality and sexual behaviors seem particularly vulnerable to socially desirable responding. This could be problematic if socially desirable responding is large enough to interfere with the validity of the research. However, an experimental study by Meston, Heiman, Trapnell, and Paulhus (1998) suggests that, generally speaking, sexuality surveys are not particularly biased by socially desirable responding if they are completed under anonymous conditions. The problem in this particular study, of course, was whether or not participants were completing the survey at a time and in a location that afforded them anonymity. One of the obvious limitations of conducting research on the Internet is that, while one can ask participants to complete surveys under certain conditions (such as when they are alone, in a quiet room), ultimately there is no control over whether or not those conditions were met. Therefore, future studies should seek to replicate these results using different methodology such as in-person interviews.

Finally, this study was limited in its ability to accurately explain the relationships among SEM use, interpretations of use, and dyadic satisfaction. Specifically, residuals in each model were higher than those that suggest good model fit (Bentler & Wu, 1993). Furthermore, the models were not very successful at explaining much of the variance in dyadic and sexual satisfaction, particularly without the inclusion of depression and sexual functioning as covariates. It may be that the PDS, developed on women for women, was not an adequate measure of cognitions regarding a partner's SEM use for men. Future studies may wish to explore this further. For example, focus groups could be conducted with men whose partners use SEM. These qualitative data could then be used to compare how men and women differ regarding their interpretations of a partner's use. Future studies might also consider additional factors that have been found to relate to sexual and relationship satisfaction such as positive behaviors in each partner, emotional expression, stress and perceived coping skills, and conflict avoidance (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). If such variables are included in future studies, the relative impact of SEM use on dyadic outcomes can be better assessed and understood.

Nevertheless, this research makes an important contribution to the understanding of how sexually explicit material use related to dyadic satisfaction. It provided evidence that understanding how each member of the dyad made sense of the other's behavior was important to understanding how it impacted the relationship. Rather than assume *a priori* that SEM use is either benign or necessarily problematic, this study highlighted the importance of clinicians assessing such meaning from their clients. It also provided important information about direct effects on the relationship,

particularly the differences between men's and women's use. Although much remains to be learned, this study can provide valuable information to guide clinical practice with couples who present with such concerns.

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT SOLICITATION MESSAGE

Title of Message Post: Couple Participation Requested: Internet Survey on Romantic Couples

Content of Message Post: We are seeking couples to participate in an Internet survey on relationship and sexual satisfaction. The researchers are affiliated with the University of Rhode Island. All data will be kept secure in accord with the standards of the University, Federal regulations, and the American Psychological Association. All answers will be pooled together; thus, no one will be able to know which are your responses. Once both you and your romantic partner complete the online survey, you will be given an opportunity to win \$100.00, \$50.00, \$25.00, or \$10.00 gift certificates to Amazon.com from a drawing among all couples (chances of winning are approximately 1 in 10). After participating in the study, you will also be given the opportunity to receive a copy of the research results.

Please feel free to email me at abri7799@postoffice.uri.edu if you have any questions about the study.

Thank you,
Ana J. Bridges

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

University of Rhode Island
Department of Psychology
10 Chafee Rd.
Kingston, RI 02881

PLEASE READ THIS DOCUMENT CAREFULLY. CLICK ON THE “CONSENT” BUTTON BELOW ONLY IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE AND YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND YOUR RIGHTS. YOUR CONSENT IS REQUIRED FOR PARTICIPATION.

You have been asked to take part in a research project described below. This form will explain your participation in detail. You should feel free to ask questions. If you have more questions later, Dr. Morokoff, the person mainly responsible for this study, [morokoff@uri.edu] [401-874-4239] will discuss them with you. You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

Description of Study

You have been asked to take part in a study that looks at the relationship between use of sexually explicit materials and satisfaction in your romantic relationship. We are interested in getting information from both partners in the relationship. We are only interested in looking at group outcomes and not one person’s responses.

What will be done:

If you decide to take part in this study, here is what will happen. You will be asked to provide your opinion regarding your romantic relationship, your sexual satisfaction in your relationship, and you and your partner’s use of sexually explicit material. Participants will be asked to fill out an online questionnaire. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Your participation should take no more than one-half hour.

Risks of this study:

This study is for research, not therapeutic, purposes. Answering questions about this material may help you; it may also be temporarily unsettling. When answering questions you may come across an item that you find unpleasant, upsetting, or otherwise objectionable. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer.

Benefits of this study:

While there are no direct benefits to you, when your participation is complete, you will be given an opportunity to learn about this research, which you may find useful. Moreover, you will have an opportunity to contribute to psychological science by participating in this research.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept anonymous. You will not be asked to provide your name or any other identifying information (e.g., social security number) on the questionnaire. If you wish to enter the drawing for a chance to a gift certificate following your participation, you will have the opportunity to provide an email address should you win. All data will be encrypted and kept secure in accord with the standards of the University, Federal regulations, and the American Psychological Association.

Opportunities to Question:

Any questions about this research may be directed to Dr. Morokoff at morokoff@uri.edu; (401) 874-4239, or Ms. Bridges at abri7799@postoffice.uri.edu; (401) 524-8732.

Decision to quit at any time:

The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in the study, you may quit at any time. Whatever you decide will in no way penalize you. You are free to skip specific questions and continue participating at no penalty.

Rights and complaints:

If you are not satisfied with the way this study is performed, you may discuss your complaints anonymously with Dr. Morkoff at morokoff@uri.edu; (401) 874-4239, or Ms. Bridges at abri7799@postoffice.uri.edu; (401) 524-8732. In addition, you may contact the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, Research and Outreach, 70 Lower College Rd, Suite 2, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI; (401) 874-4328.

I have read the statements above, had my questions answered, and agree to participate in this study.

CONSENT

APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING MESSAGE FOR FIRST RESPONDENT

Debriefing

Thank you for participating in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate factors impacting romantic relationships. We are specifically interested in how these factors relate to sexual and relationship satisfaction.

Because we want to look at both partners of a romantic couple, we ask that you create a special code. This special code is for you and your partner, so we know which two sets of answers go together. Please enter your special code in the box below:

If you would like, we can automatically send your partner an email message that tells him or her about this study, the code word, and the web address. If you would like for us to send this, please enter YOUR PARTNER'S email address in the box below:

If you prefer, you may print out this page and personally invite your partner to participate in the research project. Remember to include the special code so we can match your answers.

The web address for the survey is: <https://www.psychresearch.org/diss/consent>

When you and your partner have both sent your answers to the survey questions, you are eligible to be entered into a drawing to win Amazon.com gift certificates from \$20 up to \$200. Chances of winning are approximately 1 in 10. If you would like to be entered into the drawing, please enter YOUR email address in the box below:

The drawing will take place as soon as all the data are collected for this research project. We estimate that to be by May of 2006. Also, we will have results of this research project available in that same time period. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results of this project, please check the box below:

☐ YES, please send me a copy of the results via email.

If you have any further questions about this particular study, please contact one of the investigators.

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APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Please answer the following items as carefully and accurately as you can:

1. Age (in years)
2. Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. Ethnicity
 - a. Caucasian
 - b. African-American
 - c. Asian-American
 - d. Native American
 - e. Latino/a
 - f. Multi-ethnic
 - g. Other
4. Educational Attainment
 - a. Did not finish 8th grade
 - b. Grade 8 – 12
 - c. High school diploma or equivalent
 - d. Some college
 - e. College diploma
 - f. Graduate degree or coursework
5. Are you currently employed?
 - a. If so, please indicate your occupation.
6. How much money did you make last year?
 - a. Less than \$10,000
 - b. \$10,000 - \$19,999
 - c. \$20,000 - \$34,999
 - d. \$35,000 - \$49,999
 - e. \$50,000 - \$99,999
 - f. \$100,000 or more

7. What is your religion?
 - a. Catholic
 - b. Protestant
 - c. Jewish
 - d. Muslim
 - e. Eastern
 - f. Other
 - g. None
8. Please indicate the degree to which you consider yourself a religious person
 - a. LIKERT SCALE: 1 = not at all religious, 7 = extremely religious
9. What is the status of your current romantic relationship?
 - a. Dating only
 - b. Dating and living together
 - c. Engaged
 - d. Engaged and living together
 - e. Married
10. How long have you been in your current romantic relationship?
 - a. ____ years, ____ months
11. Please indicate the level of exclusivity you and your romantic partner have in your relationship
 - a. We date or see other people regularly
 - b. We date or see other people rarely
 - c. We do not date or see other people
12. Please indicate the number of children you have.
 - a. Of these, how many are children you and your current romantic partner have had together?

APPENDIX E

ASSESSING USE OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL

1. Please indicate the type(s) of sexually explicit material you view/use.
 - a. Books, stories, or written, non-photographic material
 - b. Magazines or sexually explicit photographs/drawings of persons *other than* your romantic partner
 - c. Videotapes or sexually explicit movies of persons *other than* your romantic partner
 - d. Internet websites featuring movies, still photographs, and/or stories of people *other than* your romantic partner
 - e. Internet websites featuring interactive models (e.g. models who will perform acts requested by the viewer)
 - f. Sexually explicit internet chatting or emailing (“hot chatting” or “cybersex”) with someone you do not know in real life*
 - g. Sexually explicit chatting or emailing with someone you do know in real life *other than* your romantic partner*
 - h. 1-900 telephone conversations*
 - i. Sexually explicit telephone conversations (*not* 900 numbers) with someone you do not know in real life*
 - j. Sexually explicit telephone conversations with someone you know in real life *other than* your romantic partner*
 - k. Strip clubs*
 - l. Live, sexually explicit encounters with someone *other than* your romantic partner (e.g. affairs, one-night stands, prostitution)
 - m. Not applicable

Note: Starred items indicate interactive sexually explicit material.

2. Please estimate, on average, how often you view/ use sexually explicit materials.
 - a. Less than once per month
 - b. 1 – 2 times per month
 - c. 3 – 4 times per month
 - d. 1 – 2 times per week
 - e. 3 – 4 times per week
 - f. 5 – 6 times per week
 - g. Once per day
 - h. Multiple times per day
 - i. Not applicable

3. Please estimate, on average, the amount of time you spend viewing/ using sexually explicit materials.
- a. Less than one hour per month
 - b. 1 – 2 hours per month
 - c. 3 – 4 hours per month
 - d. 1 – 2 hours per week
 - e. 3 – 4 hours per week
 - f. 5 – 6 hours per week
 - g. 1 -2 hours per day
 - h. More than 2 hours per day
 - i. Not applicable
4. Please indicate the content of the sexually explicit material you view/ use (select all that apply).
- a. Nude women only
 - b. Nude men only
 - c. Sex acts between adult men and women
 - d. Sex acts between adult women
 - e. Sex acts between adult men
 - f. Nude female children only
 - g. Nude male children only
 - h. Sex acts with/ between female children
 - i. Sex acts with/ between male children
 - j. Sex acts where at least one person was degraded
 - k. Sex acts where degradation was suggested
 - l. Sex acts where the person(s) involved were physically harmed
 - m. Sex acts where physical harm was suggested
 - n. Any sex acts with animals
 - o. Other (specify)
 - p. Not applicable
5. Please indicate the reason(s) why you view/ use sexually explicit material (select all that apply).
- a. Private/ solo sexual stimulation
 - b. As part of my lovemaking with my partner (view together)
 - c. To get myself "in the mood" or to assist in sexual fantasizing
 - d. Boredom
 - e. Curiosity
 - f. Easily available
 - g. Loneliness (e.g. partner out of town or unavailable)
 - h. Something I do with my friends
 - i. Relaxation/ stress reduction

- j. Because partner does not want to be intimate as much as me
 - k. Physical problems with partner (e.g. lubrication, erection, premature ejaculation)
 - l. Other sexual problems with partner (e.g. lack of attraction, partner not responsive to my needs)
 - m. Relationship problems with partner (e.g. use after a fight or when mad)
 - n. I work in the industry/ part of my job
 - o. Addicted to it
 - p. Other (specify)
 - q. Not applicable
6. Of the reasons selected above, please select the *main reason* why you view/ use sexually explicit material.
7. Please indicate the type(s) of sexually explicit material your partner views/uses.
- a. Books, stories, or written, non-photographic material
 - b. Magazines or sexually explicit photographs/drawings of persons *other than you*
 - c. Videotapes or sexually explicit movies of persons *other than you*
 - d. Internet websites featuring movies, still photographs, and/or stories of people *other than you*
 - e. Internet websites featuring interactive models (e.g. models who will perform acts requested by the viewer)
 - f. Sexually explicit internet chatting or emailing (“hot chatting” or “cybersex”) with someone your partner does not know in real life*
 - g. Sexually explicit chatting or emailing with someone your partner does know in real life *other than you**
 - h. 1-900 telephone conversations*
 - i. Sexually explicit telephone conversations (*not* 900 numbers) with someone your partner does not know in real life*
 - j. Sexually explicit telephone conversations with someone your partner knows in real life *other than you**
 - k. Strip clubs*
 - l. Live, sexually explicit encounters with someone *other than you* (e.g. affairs, one-night stands, prostitution)
 - m. Not applicable

Note: Starred items indicate interactive sexually explicit material.

8. Please estimate, on average, how often your partner views/ uses sexually explicit materials.
- a. Less than once per month
 - b. 1 – 2 times per month
 - c. 3 – 4 times per month
 - d. 1 – 2 times per week
 - e. 3 – 4 times per week
 - f. 5 – 6 times per week
 - g. Once per day
 - h. Multiple times per day
 - i. Not applicable
9. Please estimate, on average, the amount of time your partner spends viewing/ using sexually explicit materials.
- a. Less than one hour per month
 - b. 1 – 2 hours per month
 - c. 3 – 4 hours per month
 - d. 1 – 2 hours per week
 - e. 3 – 4 hours per week
 - f. 5 – 6 hours per week
 - g. 1 -2 hours per day
 - h. More than 2 hours per day
 - i. Not applicable
10. Please indicate the content of the sexually explicit material your partner views/ uses (select all that apply).
- a. Nude women only
 - b. Nude men only
 - c. Sex acts between adult men and women
 - d. Sex acts between adult women
 - e. Sex acts between adult men
 - f. Nude female children only
 - g. Nude male children only
 - h. Sex acts with/ between female children
 - i. Sex acts with/ between male children
 - j. Sex acts where at least one person was degraded
 - k. Sex acts where degradation was suggested
 - l. Sex acts where the person(s) involved were physically harmed
 - m. Sex acts where physical harm was suggested
 - n. Any sex acts with animals
 - o. Other (specify)
 - p. Not applicable

11. Please indicate the reason(s) why your partner views/ uses sexually explicit material (select all that apply).

- a. Private/ solo sexual stimulation
- b. As part of lovemaking with me (view together)
- c. To get himself/herself "in the mood" or to assist in sexual fantasizing
- d. Boredom
- e. Curiosity
- f. Easily available
- g. Loneliness (e.g. I am out of town or unavailable)
- h. Something he/she does with his/her friends
- i. Relaxation/ stress reduction
- j. Because I do not want to be intimate as much as he/she does
- k. Physical problems with me (e.g. lubrication, erection, premature ejaculation)
- l. Other sexual problems with me (e.g. lack of attraction, partner not responsive to my needs)
- m. Relationship problems with me (e.g. use after a fight or when mad)
- n. He/She works in the industry/ part of his/her job
- o. Addicted to it
- p. Other (specify)
- q. Not applicable

12. Of the reasons selected above, please select the *main reason* why you view/ use sexually explicit material.

APPENDIX F

PORNOGRAPHY DISTRESS SCALE (32-PDS)

This questionnaire is designed to measure your perceptions of your romantic partner's use of sexually explicit material. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

- 1 = Agree completely
- 2 = Mostly agree
- 3 = Somewhat agree
- 4 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 5 = Somewhat disagree
- 6 = Mostly disagree
- 7 = Disagree completely
- 8 = Not Applicable

1. My partner is honest with me about his/ her use of sexually explicit material.
2. Since discovering his/ her use of sexually explicit material, I feel like my partner no longer cares about me or about our relationship as much as he/ she used to.
3. I do not mind my partner's use of sexually explicit material.
4. I feel like my partner's sexually explicit material use is really a kind of "affair." Even though I know he/ she is not in physical contact with another woman/ man, I see it as a kind of infidelity.
5. My partner's use of sexually explicit material is perfectly normal.
6. Since discovering his/ her sexually explicit material use, I have come to view my partner as more selfish than I used to think-as someone who is invested only in his/ her own pleasure at the expense of my well being and that of others.
7. Sometimes I feel like if I had done a better job as his/ her partner, my partner would not be viewing sexually explicit material.
8. My partner has not failed me in any way by using sexually explicit material.
9. I see sexually explicit material as a healthy outlet for my partner to reduce the stress he/ she may be feeling.

10. Since finding out he/ she uses sexually explicit material, I no longer feel like my partner and I are as close. I feel a loss of intimacy.
11. My partner's use of sexually explicit material does not make me feel insecure.
12. Since discovering my partner's use of sexually explicit material, I have felt like he/ she has failed in his/ her role as my intimate partner.
13. My partner's use of sexually explicit material does not affect my sense that he/ she cares about my well being.
14. Sometimes I feel like I have lost my partner to the women/ men in his/ her sexually explicit material- like I have been displaced in a way.
15. I see my partner's use of sexually explicit material as a harmless pastime.
16. My partner's use of sexually explicit material causes me to feel like my relationship is sick and unhealthy.
17. I believe that the women/ men in my partner's sexually explicit material have not replaced me in any way.
18. I view sexually explicit material myself.
19. My partner's use of sexually explicit material does not affect my sense that we are a loving couple.
20. My partner does not understand how his/ her use of sexually explicit material affects me.
21. Since discovering his/ her sexually explicit material use, I feel less like a sexual person when I am with my partner and more like a sexual object (for example, that I am being used as an object to gratify him/ her sexually but he/ she is not really making love to me).
22. My self-esteem has not been affected by my partner's use of sexually explicit material.
23. Since discovering his/ her use of sexually explicit material, I feel like my partner and I are living a lie when we pretend to the world that we are a happy, loving couple.
24. My partner's use of sexually explicit material does not seem to have any negative effects on our relationship.

25. My partner's use of sexually explicit material has not negatively affected our lovemaking.
26. Since discovering his/ her sexually explicit material use, I have come to think of my partner as a liar- as someone who is less honest and trustworthy than I used to believe.
27. My partner's use of sexually explicit material makes me feel like he/ she has a secret life from which I am completely excluded.
28. I feel like my relationship with my partner is normal and healthy.
29. I feel my self-esteem has been affected by my partner's use of sexually explicit material. I just don't feel as good about myself as I used to.
30. Sometimes I feel like if I were enough as a person, he/ she would not be viewing sexually explicit material.
31. Since discovering my partner's use of sexually explicit material, I feel less attractive and desirable than I used to.
32. My partner's use of sexually explicit material does not affect the intimacy in our relationship.

APPENDIX G

7-ITEM VERSION OF THE DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE (DAS-7)

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

- 5 = Always agree
- 4 = Almost always agree
- 3 = Occasionally disagree
- 2 = Frequently disagree
- 1 = Almost always disagree
- 0 = Always disagree

- ___ 1. Philosophy of life
- ___ 2. Aims, goals, and things believed important
- ___ 3. Amount of time spent together

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

- 0 = Never
- 1 = Less than once a month
- 2 = Once or twice a month
- 3 = Once or twice a week
- 4 = Once a day
- 5 = More often

- ___ 4. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas
- ___ 5. Calmly discuss something
- ___ 6. Work together on a project

7. The numbers on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the number that best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy	Perfect

APPENDIX H

SEXUAL SATISFACTION MEASURES

INDEX OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION (ISS)

This questionnaire is designed to measure the degree of satisfaction you have in the sexual relationship with your partner. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

- 1 = Rarely or none of the time
- 2 = A little of the time
- 3 = Some of the time
- 4 = Good part of the time
- 5 = Most or all of the time

- ___ 1. I feel that my partner enjoys our sex life.
- ___ 2. My sex life is very exciting.
- ___ 3. Sex is fun for my partner and me.
- ___ 4. I feel that my partner sees little in me except for the sex I can give.
- ___ 5. I feel that sex is dirty and disgusting.
- ___ 6. My sex life is monotonous.
- ___ 7. When we have sex it is too rushed and hurriedly completed.
- ___ 8. I feel that my sex life is lacking in quality.
- ___ 9. My partner is sexually very exciting.
- ___ 10. I enjoy the sex techniques that my partner likes or uses.
- ___ 11. I feel that my partner wants too much sex from me.
- ___ 12. I think that sex is wonderful.
- ___ 13. My partner dwells on sex too much.
- ___ 14. I feel that sex is something that has to be endured in our relationship.

- ___ 15. My partner is too rough or brutal when we have sex.
- ___ 16. My partner observes good personal hygiene.
- ___ 17. I feel that sex is a normal function of our relationship.
- ___ 18. My partner does not want sex when I do.
- ___ 19. I feel that our sex life really adds a lot to our relationship.
- ___ 20. I would like to have sexual contact with someone other than my partner.
- ___ 21. It is easy for me to get sexually excited by my partner.
- ___ 22. I feel that my partner is sexually pleased with me.
- ___ 23. My partner is very sensitive to my sexual needs and desires.
- ___ 24. I feel that I should have sex more often.
- ___ 25. I feel that my sex life is boring.

FREQUENCY OF SEXUAL ACTIVITY

Please indicate how often you have sexual relations with your partner.

- ___ (number) per ☐ Day
 ☐ Month
 ☐ Year

Please indicate how often you would like to have sexual relations with your partner.

- ___ (number) per ☐ Day
 ☐ Month
 ☐ Year

DAS ITEMS

Most people have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for the following item.

6. Sex relations

- 5 = Always agree
- 4 = Almost always agree
- 3 = Occasionally disagree
- 2 = Frequently disagree
- 1 = Almost always disagree
- 0 = Always disagree

There are some things about which couples sometimes agree or disagree. Indicate if the item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in the past few weeks.

29. Being too tired for sex

- 0 = Yes
- 1 = No

APPENDIX I

SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION QUESTIONS

Please indicate whether or not you have experienced the following problems *within the past year*:

- 1 = Always or almost always
- 2 = Some of the time
- 3 = Rarely
- 4 = Never

- 1. Pain during sex
- 2. Sex not being pleasurable
- 3. Unable to reach orgasm
- 4. Lack of interest in sex
- 5. Anxiety about sexual performance
- 6. Reaching climax too early
- 7. (MEN ONLY) Unable to keep an erection
- 8. (WOMEN ONLY) Having trouble lubricating

APPENDIX J

SELECT ITEMS FROM THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES SCALE (FPS)

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Moderately disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Undecided
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Moderately agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

**Note:* Numbers before items indicate order; numbers following items indicate item-subscale correlations.

Conservative Feminist Perspective:

- 4. A man's first responsibility is to obtain economic success, while his wife should care for the family's needs. (.48)
- 13. Homosexuals needs to be rehabilitated into normal members of society. (.53)
- 13. It is a man's right and duty to maintain order in his family by whatever means necessary. (.47)
- 18. Women should not be assertive like men because men are the natural leaders on earth. (.55)
- 19. Heterosexuality is the only natural sexual preference. (.46)

Liberal Feminist Perspective:

- 1. Whether one chooses a traditional or alternative family form should be a matter of personal choice. (.36)
- 2. People should define their marriage and family roles in ways that make them feel most comfortable. (.34)
- 6. Homosexuality is not a moral issue, but rather a question of liberty and freedom of expression. (.41)
- 15. Women should try to influence legislation in order to gain the right to make their own decisions and choices. (.28)

20. Men need to be liberated from oppressive sex role stereotypes as much as women do. (.27)

Radical Feminist Perspective:

1. Using “man” to mean both men and women is one of many ways sexist language destroys women’s existence. (.65)
14. The workplace is organized around men’s physical, economic, and sexual oppression of women. (.73)
10. Men use abortion laws and reproductive technology to control women’s lives. (.58)
12. Men prevent women from becoming political leaders through their control of economic and political institutions. (.56)
17. Marriage is a perfect example of men’s physical, economic, and sexual oppression of women. (.55)

Cultural Feminist Perspective:

- i. Prostitution grows out of the male culture of violence and male values of social control. (.43)
9. Putting women in positions of political power would bring about new systems of government that promote peace. (.47)
11. Traditional notions of romantic love should be replaced with ideas based on feminine values of kindness and concern for all people. (.42)
14. Women’s experience in life’s realities of cleaning, feeding people, caring for babies, etc., makes their vision of reality clearer than men’s. (.44)
16. Rape is best stopped by replacing the current male-oriented culture of violence with an alternative culture based on more gentle, womanly qualities. (.48)

APPENDIX K

PATIENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE (PHQ-9)

Over the *last 2 weeks*, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

- 0 = Not at all
- 1 = Several days
- 2 = More than half the days
- 3 = Nearly every day

1. Feeling little interest or pleasure in doing things.
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.
3. Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much.
4. Feeling tired or having little energy.
5. Poor appetite or overeating.
6. Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down.
7. Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television.
8. Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite—being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual.
9. Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way.

APPENDIX L

INTIMACY, PASSION, COMMITMENT SCALE

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following items.

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Mostly disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Mostly agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

Intimacy:

- 1. My partner and I share personal information with one another.
- 2. There is nothing I couldn't tell my partner.
- 3. My partner and I self-disclose private thoughts and information to each other.
- 4. There are things I could tell my partner that I can't tell anyone else.
- 5. My partner understands my feelings.
- 6. My partner and I are psychologically close to one another.

Passion:

- 7. I feel a powerful attraction for my partner.
- 8. I am often aroused by my partner's presence.
- 9. My partner and I are very passionate toward one another.
- 10. My partner and I are very affectionate toward one another.
- 11. My partner is sexually exciting.
- 12. My partner and I have a very passionate relationship.
- 13. Sex is an important part of our relationship.

Commitment:

- 14. I am committed to continuing our relationship.
- 15. I think of our relationship as a permanent one.
- 16. I am likely to pursue another relationship in the future.

17. Commitment is an important part of our relationship.
18. I think this relationship will last forever.
19. I would rather be with my partner than anyone else.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Full Sample

	<u>Men^a</u>		<u>Women^b</u>	
	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>
Age, in years***	35.69 (11.97)	18-76	32.48 (10.08)	18-76
Religiosity**	2.63 (1.10)	1-4	2.82 (0.99)	1-4
Years in relationship	8.49 (9.00)	.08-55.42	7.63 (7.37)	.08-40.33
Number of children	1.23 (1.54)	0-13	1.26 (1.41)	0-7
Monthly frequency of sexual relations	12.44 (14.29)	0-120	11.34 (12.90)	0-120
Desired monthly frequency of sexual relations***	22.79 (22.76)	0-120	17.30 (17.13)	0-120
DAS-7	24.04 (5.32)	9-36	23.86 (5.86)	3-36
ISS	25.44 (17.17)	0-80	26.54 (18.13)	0-77
32-PDS***	1.95 (1.11)	1-4.97	2.31 (1.41)	1-6.84
Frequency of SEM use***	3.09 (1.94)	1-8	2.02 (1.31)	1-8
Duration of SEM use***	2.96 (1.87)	1-8	1.96 (1.36)	1-8
Intimacy	34.66 (7.46)	6-42	34.36 (8.02)	6-42
Passion	39.69 (9.08)	7-49	38.58 (9.91)	7-49
Commitment	36.24 (7.56)	6-42	36.67 (7.35)	6-42
DAS: Agree on sex*	3.55 (1.12)	0-5	3.39 (1.23)	0-5
Sexual functioning***	22.84 (3.87)	7-28	20.70 (4.11)	9-28
FPS***	57.11 (15.13)	15-105	62.50 (14.99)	15-105
PHQ-9***	4.78 (5.73)	0-27	6.47 (6.25)	0-27
	<u>N (%)</u>		<u>N (%)</u>	
Ethnicity**				
Caucasian	418 (77.4)		645 (81.0)	
African-American	17 (3.1)		32 (4.0)	
Asian American	24 (4.4)		21 (2.6)	
Native American	0 (0.0)		5 (0.6)	
Latino/a	18 (3.3)		23 (2.9)	
Multi-ethnic	10 (1.9)		23 (2.9)	
Other	48 (8.9)		34 (4.3)	

	Men ^a N (%)	Women ^b N (%)
Relationship Status*		
Dating	148 (27.4)	191 (24.0)
Dating and cohabiting	44 (8.1)	106 (13.3)
Engaged	12 (2.2)	17 (2.1)
Engaged and cohabiting	48 (8.9)	63 (7.9)
Married	279 (51.7)	403 (50.6)
Relationship Exclusivity**		
Only date partner	447 (82.8)	699 (87.8)
Rarely date others	34 (6.3)	35 (4.4)
Regularly date others	46 (8.5)	36 (4.5)
Education**		
8 th grade or less	2 (0.4)	2 (0.3)
Some high school	38 (7.0)	28 (3.5)
HS degree or equivalent	82 (15.2)	129 (16.2)
Some college	171 (31.7)	284 (35.7)
Associates degree	48 (8.9)	99 (12.4)
Bachelors degree	113 (20.9)	139 (17.5)
Graduate degree or courses	81 (15.0)	99 (12.4)
Income***		
< \$10,000 / year	85 (15.7)	230 (28.9)
\$10,000 - \$19,999 / year	62 (11.5)	91 (11.4)
\$20,000 - \$34,999 / year	106 (19.6)	150 (18.8)
\$35,000 - \$49,999 / year	119 (22.0)	119 (14.9)
\$50,000 - \$99,999 / year	104 (19.3)	95 (11.9)
\$100,000 + / year	36 (6.7)	15 (1.9)
Type of SEM used***		
None	183 (33.9)	427 (53.6)
Non-interactive	264 (48.9)	305 (38.3)
Interactive	93 (17.2)	64 (8.0)
Type of SEM partner uses***		
None	317 (58.7)	419 (52.6)
Non-interactive	215 (39.8)	328 (41.2)
Interactive	8 (1.5)	49 (6.2)

^a N = 540.

^b N = 796.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. DAS-7 = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, 7-item version. ISS = Index of Sexual Satisfaction. 32-PDS = Pornography Distress Scale, 32-item version. FPS = Feminist Perspectives Scale. PHQ-9 = Patient Health Questionnaire, 9-item version.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Couple Sample

	<u>Men^a</u>		<u>Women^a</u>	
	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>
Age, in years**	36.93 (10.67)	19-67	34.20 (10.49)	19-76
Religiosity*	2.61 (1.05)	1-4	2.84 (0.97)	1-4
Years in relationship	9.20 (8.19)	.08-53.0	9.12 (7.86)	.25-36.42
Number of children	1.53 (1.44)	0-7	1.58 (1.41)	0-7
Monthly frequency of sexual relations	19.23 (20.60)	0-80	19.65 (24.46)	0-120
Desired monthly frequency of sexual relations**	39.15 (36.10)	0-120	30.88 (30.98)	0-120
DAS-7	24.60 (5.55)	9-36	24.69 (5.53)	8-36
ISS	23.23 (16.17)	0-80	25.96 (17.79)	0-75
32-PDS***	1.85 (1.14)	1-5	2.41 (1.39)	1-7
Frequency of SEM use	2.84 (1.77)	1-8	2.05 (1.45)	1-8
Duration of SEM use	2.73 (1.68)	1-8	2.08 (1.58)	1-8
Intimacy	35.54 (7.71)	6-42	35.49 (7.37)	6-42
Passion	40.49 (8.98)	7-49	39.00 (9.56)	7-49
Commitment	37.46 (6.79)	6-42	37.94 (6.16)	6-42
DAS: Agree on sex	3.52 (1.12)	0-5	3.36 (1.29)	0-5
Sexual functioning***	23.51 (3.53)	12-28	20.81 (3.95)	11-28
FPS***	55.32 (16.07)	15-100	61.88 (16.24)	15-105
PHQ-9***	4.00 (5.15)	0-27	6.00 (5.90)	0-27
	<u>N (%)</u>		<u>N (%)</u>	
Ethnicity				
Caucasian	186 (85.7)		189 (87.1)	
African-American	7 (3.2)		4 (1.8)	
Asian American	6 (2.8)		7 (3.2)	
Native American	0 (0.0)		1 (0.5)	
Latino/a	5 (2.3)		4 (1.8)	
Multi-ethnic	5 (2.3)		4 (1.8)	
Other	8 (3.7)		8 (3.7)	

	<u>Men^a</u>	<u>Women^a</u>
	<u>N (%)</u>	<u>N (%)</u>
Relationship Status		
Dating	33 (15.2)	33 (15.2)
Dating and cohabiting	21 (9.7)	24 (11.1)
Engaged	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)
Engaged and cohabiting	18 (8.3)	16 (7.4)
Married	142 (65.4)	143 (65.9)
Education		
8 th grade or less	2 (0.9)	1 (0.5)
Some high school	13 (6.0)	10 (4.6)
HS degree or equivalent	39 (18.0)	37 (17.1)
Some college	71 (32.7)	68 (31.3)
Associates degree	20 (9.2)	31 (14.3)
Bachelors degree	40 (18.4)	43 (19.8)
Graduate degree or courses	31 (14.3)	26 (12.0)
Income***		
< \$10,000 / year	22 (10.1)	61 (28.1)
\$10,000 - \$19,999 / year	17 (7.8)	23 (10.6)
\$20,000 - \$34,999 / year	40 (18.4)	53 (24.8)
\$35,000 - \$49,999 / year	59 (27.3)	45 (15.3)
\$50,000 - \$99,999 / year	56 (25.8)	40 (18.4)
\$100,000 + / year	17 (7.8)	7 (3.2)
Type of SEM used**		
None	64 (29.5)	93 (42.9)
Non-interactive	124 (57.1)	110 (50.7)
Interactive	29 (13.4)	14 (6.5)
Type of SEM partner uses**		
None	101 (46.5)	77 (35.5)
Non-interactive	112 (51.6)	122 (56.2)
Interactive	4 (1.8)	18 (8.3)

^a N = 217

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note. DAS-7 = Dyadic Adjustment Scale, 7-item version. ISS = Index of Sexual Satisfaction. 32-PDS = Pornography Distress Scale, 32-item version. FPS = Feminist Perspectives Scale. PHQ-9 = Patient Health Questionnaire, 9-item version.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Participants Who Completed the Survey versus Those Who Withdrew Prematurely

	<u>Successful</u> <u>Completers^a</u>		<u>Early</u> <u>Withdrawers^b</u>	
	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>
Age***	34.64 (10.84)	18-76	31.02 (11.07)	18-74
Years in relationship	8.17 (8.10)	.08-55.42	7.28 (8.08)	.08-40.58
Number of children**	1.32 (1.48)	0-13	1.01 (1.39)	0-9
	<u>N (%)</u>		<u>N (%)</u>	
Gender*				
Female	584 (58.0)		212 (64.4)	
Ethnicity***				
Caucasian	830 (82.4)		233 (70.4)	
Marital Status				
Married	546 (54.2)		136 (41.1)	
Annual Income**				
<\$10,000	224 (23.9)		91 (33.0)	
\$10,000 - \$19,999	111 (11.9)		42 (15.2)	
\$20,000 - \$34,999	200 (21.4)		56 (20.3)	
\$35,000 - \$49,999	200 (21.4)		38 (13.8)	
\$50,000 - \$99,999	163 (17.4)		36 (13.0)	
\$100,000 +	38 (4.1)		13 (4.7)	

^a N = 1007

^b N = 331

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4

Demographic Characteristics of Participants Who Successfully Recruited Their Partners and Those Who Did Not

	<u>Successful Recruiters^a</u>		<u>Unsuccessful Recruiters^b</u>	
	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>
Age**	36.19 (10.80)	19-66	33.78 (10.86)	18-76
Years in relationship*	8.90 (7.68)	.25-53.0	7.54 (8.17)	.08-55.42
Number of children**	1.52 (1.45)	0-7	1.17 (1.51)	0-13
Monthly frequency of sexual relations	11.14 (12.78)	0-120	12.53 (14.22)	0-120
DAS-7	24.30 (5.74)	7-36	23.53 (5.52)	7-36
ISS	24.07 (17.30)	0-80	26.50 (17.61)	0-78
32-PDS**	1.93 (1.18)	1-7	2.29 (1.36)	1-7
Intimacy*	35.51 (7.92)	6-42	33.96 (7.55)	6-42
Passion	40.21 (9.61)	7-49	38.83 (9.45)	7-49
Commitment**	37.44 (7.00)	6-42	35.80 (7.64)	6-42
FPS**	57.17 (16.72)	15-105	61.09 (13.92)	15-105
PHQ-9***	4.09 (5.17)	0-27	6.25 (6.33)	0-27
	<u>N (%)</u>		<u>N (%)</u>	
Gender***				
Female	69 (29.9)		347 (63.7)	
Marital Status				
Married	146 (81.1)		253 (62.5)	
Partner Uses SEM				
Yes	135 (58.4)		326 (59.8)	

^a N = 231

^b N = 545

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 5

32-PDS Principal Components Loadings

PDS Item	Interpretations:	Negative	Positive
My partner is honest with me about his/her use of SEM ^a			0.641
I do not mind my partner's use of SEM			0.789
My partner's use of SEM is perfectly normal			0.838
My partner has not failed me by using SEM			0.792
SEM is a healthy outlet for my partner to reduce stress			0.800
My partner's SEM use does not make me feel insecure			0.844
My partner's SEM use does not affect my sense that he/she cares about my well-being			0.820
My partner's SEM use is a harmless pastime			0.861
The women/men in my partner's SEM have not replaced me in any way			0.851
I view SEM myself			0.629
We are a loving couple			0.885
My self-esteem has not been affected by my partner's SEM use			0.822
My partner's SEM use does not have any negative effects in our relationship			0.914
My partner's SEM use does not negatively affect our lovemaking			0.868
Our relationship is normal and healthy			0.735
My partner's SEM use does not affect the intimacy in our relationship			0.880
I feel like my partner no longer cares about me or our relationship		0.873	
I feel like my partner's SEM use is really a kind of "affair"		0.871	
I have come to view my partner as more selfish than before		0.930	
If I had done a better job as his/her partner, he/she would not be viewing SEM		0.910	
I feel a loss of intimacy with my partner		0.927	
He/She has failed in his role as my intimate partner		0.938	
I have been displaced by the women/men in my partner's SEM		0.948	
My relationship is sick and unhealthy		0.934	
My partner does not understand how his/her use of SEM affects me		0.843	
I feel less like a sexual person and more like a sexual object		0.934	
We are living a lie by pretending we are a happy, loving couple		0.931	
My partner is a liar		0.944	
He/She has a secret life from which I am excluded		0.935	
My self-esteem has been negatively affected by my partner's SEM use		0.937	
If I were enough, he/she would not be viewing SEM		0.946	
I feel less attractive and desirable than I used to		0.941	

Note: Only orthogonal component loadings above .30 are shown for ease of interpretation

^a SEM = sexually explicit material

Table 6

Feminist Perspectives Scale Principal Components Loadings

FPS Item	Radical Feminist	Liberal Feminist	Conservative Feminist
CON ^a : Man works, woman home			0.663
CON: Men maintain control of family			0.760
CON: Men natural leaders			0.692
CON: Heterosexuality is natural		-0.485	0.564
CON: Gays rehabilitate		-0.327	0.515
LF: Family a choice		0.887	
LF: You define family roles		0.874	
LF: Gay is free expression		0.619	-0.357
LF: Women influence legislation	0.525		-0.389
LF: Men need liberation too	0.303		
RF: Men stop women leaders	0.740		
RF: Abortion controls women	0.723		
RF: Work oppresses women	0.719		
RF: Man sexist language	0.574		
RF: Marriage is oppression	0.594		0.343
CF: Change culture of rape	0.684		
CF: Women leaders bring peace	0.676		
CF: Change romantic love ideas	0.617		
CF: Prostitution from male culture	0.552		
CF: Women clearer vision	0.486		0.302

Note: Only orthogonal component loadings above .30 are shown for ease of interpretation

^a LF = Liberal feminism subscale; RF = Radical feminism subscale; CF = Cultural feminism subscale; CON = Conservative feminism subscale

Table 7

Index of Sexual Satisfaction Principal Components Loadings

ISS Item	High Sat.	Low Sat./ Low Desire	Low Sat./ High Desire
Partner enjoys our sex	0.718		
My sex life is exciting	0.851		
Sex is fun	0.876		
My partner is exciting	0.817		
Enjoy sex techniques	0.814		
Sex is wonderful	0.816		0.384
Partner has good hygiene	0.441		
Sex a normal function	0.794		
Sex adds to our relationship	0.830		
Easy to get excited by partner	0.881		
Partner pleased with me	0.808		
Partner sensitive to me	0.741		
I am only good for sex		0.710	
Sex dirty and disgusting		0.641	
Partner wants too much sex		0.825	
Partner dwells on sex		0.840	
Sex has to be endured		0.528	
Partner is rough		0.608	
Want sex with someone else			0.466
Sex life monotonous			0.397
Sex is too rushed			0.490
Sex lacks quality			0.524
Partner doesn't want sex			0.773
Should have sex more			0.789
Sex life is boring	-0.371		0.540

Note: Only oblique component loadings above .30 are shown for ease of interpretation

Table 8

Triangular Love Theory Principal Components Loadings

Items	Intimacy	Passion	Commitment
Share personal information	0.804		
Confide in partner	0.807		
Self-disclosure to partner	0.959		
Tell things only to partner	0.845		
Partner understands me	0.837		
We are close	0.805		
Affectionate	0.346	0.598	
Attraction		0.666	
Aroused		0.840	
Passionate		0.893	
Sexually exciting		0.965	
Passionate relationship		0.961	
Sex important		0.954	
Continue relationship			0.815
Relationship permanent			0.950
Pursue another			-0.877
Commitment important			0.829
Last forever			0.857
Rather be with partner			0.731

Note: Only oblique component loadings above .30 are shown for ease of interpretation

Table 9

Correlation Matrix

	M: Age	M: Religiosity	M: Education	M: Income	M: Years in relationship
M: Religiosity	-.018	1.00			
M: Education	.019	.067	1.00		
M: Income	.260***	.017	.222**	1.00	
M: Years in relationship	.512***	.129	-.029	.164*	1.00
M: Children	.305***	.151*	-.169*	.118	.362***
M: Frequency of SEM use	.032	.130	.072	.078	.076
M: Duration of SEM use	.042	.146*	.059	.066	.102
M: Partner Freq. of SEM use	.036	.111	-.045	.009	.075
M: Partner Dur. of SEM use	.032	.115	-.036	.004	.075
M: DAS Agree on sex	-.158*	.089	-.026	-.013	-.171*
M: DAS Too tired for sex	-.034	-.043	-.024	-.009	.053
M: Intimacy	-.143*	-.003	-.119	.021	-.157*
M: Passion	-.164*	.027	-.117	-.028	-.231**
M: Commit	.011	.039	-.121	.074	.062
M: 32-PDS	.041	.058	.113	.032	.103
M: Frequency sex/month	-.172*	.013	-.051	-.042	-.262***
M: Desired sex/month	-.121	-.061	.024	-.012	-.133
M: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.027	-.082	.063	.015	.020
M: SEM type	-.019	-.169*	.111	-.038	-.141*
M: DAS-7	-.112	.102	-.070	.064	-.106
M: ISS	.002	-.074	.120	.002	.163
M: Sexual Functioning	-.112	.062	-.233**	-.013	-.052
M: FPQ	.007	-.126	.109	.053	-.198**
M: FPQ Conservative	-.067	.252***	-.175*	-.057	.032
M: PHQ-9	-.092	-.103	.086	-.088	-.075

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: Age	M: Religiosity	M: Education	M: Income	M: Years in relationship
F: Age	.869***	.079	.050	.218**	.608***
F: Religiosity	-.007	.554***	.020	-.041	.157*
F: Education	.044	.025	.468***	.192**	-.043
F: Income	.123	.079	.060	.361***	.052
F: Years in relationship	.533***	.097	-.066	.156*	.953***
F: Children	.318***	.173*	-.112	.126	.359***
F: Frequency of SEM use	.036	.077	.024	.039	.099
F: Duration of SEM use	.004	.086	.057	.047	.103
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	.048	.199**	.119	.021	.091
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use	.091	.255***	.129	.039	.113
F: DAS Agree on sex	-.030	.029	.013	.093	-.135*
F: DAS Too tired for sex	-.054	.056	-.120	-.107	.114
F: Intimacy	-.176*	.062	.038	.025	-.222**
F: Passion	-.210**	.029	.057	.050	-.252***
F: Commit	-.038	.160*	-.027	.069	.029
F: 32-PDS	.042	.042	.063	-.068	.181*
F: Frequency sex/month	-.220**	-.063	-.051	-.003	-.251***
F: Desired sex/month	-.243***	-.126	.089	-.051	-.290***
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.094	-.103	.174*	-.066	-.124
F: SEM type	.001	-.195**	-.043	.052	-.125
F: DAS-7	-.139*	.067	-.015	.068	-.172*
F: ISS	.059	-.105	-.052	-.082	.134*
F: Sexual Functioning	-.044	-.052	.138*	.182**	-.070
F: FPQ	.069	-.218**	.135*	.004	-.096
F: FPQ Conservative	-.004	.301***	-.045	-.048	.058
F: PHQ-9	.059	-.103	-.191**	-.107	.068

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: Children	M: Frequency of SEM use	M: Duration of SEM use	M: Partner Freq. of SEM use	M: Partner Dur. of SEM use
M: Age					
M: Religiosity					
M: Education					
M: Income					
M: Years in relationship					
M: Children	1.00				
M: Frequency of SEM use	.127	1.00			
M: Duration of SEM use	.142*	.958***	1.00		
M: Partner Freq. of SEM use	.125	.566***	.577***	1.00	
M: Partner Dur. of SEM use	.128	.555***	.583***	.988***	1.00
M: DAS Agree on sex	-.173*	-.137*	-.143*	-.123	-.119
M: DAS Too tired for sex	-.018	.003	.002	.021	.012
M: Intimacy	-.057	.076	.053	-.036	-.027
M: Passion	-.090	-.023	-.038	-.058	-.041
M: Commit	.128	.094	.088	.083	.089
M: 32-PDS	-.019	.174*	.209**	.238**	.252**
M: Frequency sex/month	-.180**	-.043	-.056	-.149*	-.143*
M: Desired sex/month	-.136*	-.044	-.030	-.104	-.122
M: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.040	-.023	.002	-.023	-.048
M: SEM type	-.236***	-.324***	-.358***	-.239***	-.256***
M: DAS-7	-.004	-.040	-.075	-.084	-.071
M: ISS	.036	.072	.094	.050	.049
M: Sexual Functioning	.124	-.029	-.060	.044	.039
M: FPQ	-.043	-.118	-.129	-.069	-.060
M: FPQ Conservative	.267***	.137*	.182**	.183**	.192**
M: PHQ-9	-.202**	.020	.003	.084	.084

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: Children	M: Frequency of SEM use	M: Duration of SEM use	M: Partner Freq. of SEM use	M: Partner Dur. of SEM use
F: Age	.336***	.015	.029	.059	.058
F: Religiosity	.179**	.149*	.167*	.138*	.145*
F: Education	-.068	.000	.011	-.118	-.109
F: Income	.001	.005	-.007	.012	.014
F: Years in relationship	.363***	.053	.084	.065	.062
F: Children	.845***	.034	.038	.092	.096
F: Frequency of SEM use	.104	.464***	.490***	.704***	.700***
F: Duration of SEM use	.103	.469***	.510***	.678***	.679***
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	.093	.686***	.700***	.523***	.516***
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use	.113	.668***	.702***	.497***	.497***
F: DAS Agree on sex	-.077	-.047	-.026	-.047	-.055
F: DAS Too tired for sex	.037	-.014	-.001	.057	.040
F: Intimacy	-.165*	.035	.006	-.096	-.101
F: Passion	-.228**	-.073	-.106	-.223**	-.234**
F: Commit	.021	.063	.054	.016	-.001
F: 32-PDS	.020	.145	.239**	.315***	.323***
F: Frequency sex/month	-.161*	-.033	-.023	-.046	-.038
F: Desired sex/month	-.245***	-.026	-.028	-.086	-.104
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.159*	.001	-.013	-.067	-.100
F: SEM type	-.100	-.229**	-.288***	-.357***	-.388***
F: DAS-7	-.085	-.078	-.116	-.128	-.123
F: ISS	.064	.078	.100	.191**	.199**
F: Sexual Functioning	-.086	-.045	-.075	-.043	-.049
F: FPQ	.035	-.031	-.058	-.096	-.086
F: FPQ Conservative	.145*	.149*	.163*	.180**	.189**
F: PHQ-9	.114	-.076	-.065	.092	.086

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: DAS Agree on sex	M: DAS Too tired for sex	M: Intimacy	M: Passion	M: Commit
M: Age					
M: Religiosity					
M: Education					
M: Income					
M: Years in Relationship					
M: Children					
M: Frequency of SEM use					
M: Duration of SEM use					
M: Partner Freq. of SEM use					
M: Partner Dur. of SEM use					
M: DAS Agree on sex	1.00				
M: DAS Too tired for sex	-.181**	1.00			
M: Intimacy	.306***	-.012	1.00		
M: Passion	.500***	-.118	.823***	1.00	
M: Commit	.127	.098	.709***	.658***	1.00
M: 32-PDS	-.271***	-.022	-.302***	-.291***	-.302***
M: Frequency sex/month	.128	-.213**	.190**	.362***	.038
M: Desired sex/month	.003	-.111	.071	.150*	.009
M: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.083	.012	-.045	-.060	-.016
M: SEM type	.019	-.073	-.138*	-.078	-.260***
M: DAS-7	.381***	-.101	.475***	.516***	.260***
M: ISS	-.556***	.152*	-.444***	-.641***	-.430***
M: Sexual Functioning	.197**	-.154*	.197**	.312***	.205**
M: FPQ	.058	-.031	.001	.020	-.053
M: FPQ Conservative	-.055	-.072	-.080	-.068	-.087
M: PHQ-9	-.224**	.076	-.193**	-.282***	-.261***

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: DAS Agree on sex	M: DAS Too tired for sex	M: Intimacy	M: Passion	M: Commit
F: Age	-.174*	.010	-.179**	-.187**	.047
F: Religiosity	-.022	.024	-.070	-.067	-.021
F: Education	-.039	.039	-.129	-.139*	-.112
F: Income	.093	-.121	.137	.071	.043
F: Years in Relationship	-.193**	.062	-.173*	-.227**	.060
F: Children	-.082	-.008	-.068	-.061	.130
F: Frequency of SEM use	-.160*	.137*	.067	-.051	.163*
F: Duration of SEM use	-.128	.134	.077	-.039	.161*
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	-.125	.022	.111	.029	.112
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use	-.154*	.025	.077	.012	.132
F: DAS Agree on sex	.570***	-.146*	.253***	.373***	.132
F: DAS Too tired for sex	-.281***	.462***	.061	-.035	.099
F: Intimacy	.346***	-.022	.441***	.440***	.163*
F: Passion	.481***	-.103	.359***	.502***	.059
F: Commit	.168*	.055	.228**	.224***	.340***
F: 32-PDS	-.286***	.087	-.333***	-.301***	-.178*
F: Frequency sex/month	.068	-.151*	.151*	.247***	-.014
F: Desired sex/month	.129	-.110	.085	.174*	-.087
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	.102	.012	-.045	-.032	-.103
F: SEM type	.149*	-.083	-.138*	-.031	-.193**
F: DAS-7	.319***	-.049	.371***	.421***	.197**
F: ISS	-.470***	.115	-.338***	-.421***	-.197**
F: Sexual Functioning	.337***	-.169*	.139*	.170*	.059
F: FPQ	-.028	-.020	-.025	.000	-.066
F: FPQ Conservative	-.150*	-.025	-.178**	-.130	-.138*
F: PHQ-9	-.251***	.120	-.248***	-.218**	-.078

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: 32-PDS	M: Frequency sex/month	M: Desired sex/month	M: Discrepancy sex/mo. Score	M: SEM type
M: Age					
M: Religiosity					
M: Education					
M: Income					
M: Years in Relationship					
M: Children					
M: Frequency of SEM use					
M: Duration of SEM use					
M: Partner Freq. of SEM use					
M: Partner Dur. of SEM use					
M: DAS Agree on sex					
M: DAS Too tired for sex					
M: Intimacy					
M: Passion					
M: Commit					
M: 32-PDS	1.00				
M: Frequency sex/month	-.071	1.00			
M: Desired sex/month	-.058	.551***	1.00		
M: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.021	-.023	.821***	1.00	
M: SEM type	-.046	.115	.149*	.100	1.00
M: DAS-7	-.289***	.328***	.103	-.111	-.073
M: ISS	.572***	-.340***	-.106	.106	.123
M: Sexual Functioning	-.302***	.220**	.242***	.139*	-.058
M: FPQ	.063	.022	-.020	-.039	.206**
M: FPQ Conservative	.197*	-.007	-.065	-.074	-.070
M: PHQ-9	.327***	-.160*	-.010	.098	.153*

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: 32-PDS	M: Frequency sex/month	M: Desired sex/month	M: Discrepancy sex/mo. Score	M: SEM type
F: Age	.089	-.258***	-.158*	-.013	-.045
F: Religiosity	.059	-.080	-.033	.015	-.180**
F: Education	-.035	-.007	-.030	-.031	.001
F: Income	.049	.067	.046	.009	.112
F: Years in Relationship	.091	-.271***	-.123	.037	-.141*
F: Children	-.046	-.183**	-.129	-.029	-.197**
F: Frequency of SEM use	.125	-.158*	-.085	.006	-.282***
F: Duration of SEM use	.089	-.148*	-.015	.082	-.259***
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	.155*	-.026	-.021	-.007	-.245***
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use	.179*	-.033	-.024	-.006	-.249***
F: DAS Agree on sex	-.109	.086	.086	.044	-.009
F: DAS Too tired for sex	-.040	-.151*	-.048	.046	-.052
F: Intimacy	-.225**	.149*	.137*	.061	-.030
F: Passion	-.161*	.357***	.243***	.047	.067
F: Commit	-.279***	.086	.113	.077	-.167*
F: 32-PDS	.435***	-.110	-.129	-.080	.011
F: Frequency sex/month	.023	.773***	.381***	-.072	.129
F: Desired sex/month	-.014	.522***	.459***	.192**	.191**
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.051	-.120	.213**	.337***	.120
F: SEM type	.026	.216**	.148*	.030	.391***
F: DAS-7	-.218**	.204**	.092	-.029	-.046
F: ISS	.395***	-.245***	-.111	.035	.035
F: Sexual Functioning	-.126	.182**	.061	-.051	.037
F: FPQ	.116	-.041	.068	.109	.126
F: FPQ Conservative	.286***	-.123	-.196**	-.151*	-.045
F: PHQ-9	.252**	-.148*	.026	.132	-.039

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: DAS-7	M: ISS	M: Sexual Functioning	M: FPQ	M: FPQ Conservative	M: PHQ-9
M: Age						
M: Religiosity						
M: Education						
M: Income						
M: Years in Relationship						
M: Children						
M: Frequency of SEM use						
M: Duration of SEM use						
M: Partner Freq. of SEM use						
M: Partner Dur. of SEM use						
M: DAS Agree on sex						
M: DAS Too tired for sex						
M: Intimacy						
M: Passion						
M: Commit						
M: 32-PDS						
M: Frequency sex/month						
M: Desired sex/month						
M: Discrepancy sex/mo. score						
M: SEM type						
M: DAS-7	1.00					
M: ISS	-.452***	1.00				
M: Sexual Functioning	.265***	-.403***	1.00			
M: FPQ	.089	.086	-.068	1.00		
M: FPQ Conservative	.061	.122	.036	-.008	1.00	
M: PHQ-9	-.339***	.328***	-.350***	.006	-.013	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	M: DAS-7	M: ISS	M: Sexual Functioning	M: FPQ	M: FPQ Conservative	M: PHQ-9
F: Age	-.107	.059	-.124	-.029	-.046	-.068
F: Religiosity	.108	-.014	.051	-.116	.183**	-.046
F: Education	-.019	.064	-.165*	.109	-.065	-.001
F: Income	.190**	-.052	.006	.116	-.004	-.075
F: Years in Relationship	-.108	.167*	-.026	-.187**	.039	-.075
F: Children	-.016	-.033	.104	-.106	.221**	-.156*
F: Frequency of SEM use	-.075	.088	.010	-.111	.103	.047
F: Duration of SEM use	-.103	.089	.011	-.121	.117	.035
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	-.033	.002	-.055	-.070	.099	.003
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use	-.081	.007	-.050	-.076	.088	-.031
F: DAS Agree on sex	.385***	-.349***	.096	.141*	-.036	-.088
F: DAS Too tired for sex	-.009	.150*	.008	-.025	.020	-.002
F: Intimacy	.565***	-.378***	.139*	.059	-.048	-.040
F: Passion	.498***	-.511***	.155*	.062	-.097	-.099
F: Commit	.313***	-.385***	.162*	-.116	-.040	-.091
F: 32-PDS	-.333***	.418***	-.275***	-.044	.185*	.272***
F: Frequency sex/month	.320***	-.192**	.096	.104	.119	.043
F: Desired sex/month	.220**	-.085	-.049	.140*	-.015	.036
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.052	.090	-.170*	.079	-.146*	.004
F: SEM type	.090	-.071	.033	.191**	-.141*	-.079
F: DAS-7	.685***	-.396***	.203**	.082	-.038	-.230**
F: ISS	-.374***	.686***	-.245***	.062	.175**	.158*
F: Sexual Functioning	.210**	-.288***	.281***	-.054	-.153*	-.103
F: FPQ	-.013	.164*	-.008	.617***	-.017	.055
F: FPQ Conservative	-.058	.272***	-.043	-.023	.647***	.066
F: PHQ-9	-.338***	.251***	-.043	-.037	.075	.240***

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	F: Age	F: Religiosity	F: Education	F: Income	F: Years in relationship
F: Age	1.00				
F: Religiosity	.111	1.00			
F: Education	.006	.042	1.00		
F: Income	.120	.059	.200**	1.00	
F: Years in relationship	.613***	.172*	-.065	.066	1.00
F: Children	.424***	.169*	-.126	.054	.378***
F: Frequency of SEM use	.092	.105	-.031	-.003	.106
F: Duration of SEM use	.046	.128	.013	.025	.111
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	.048	.201**	.153*	.080	.085
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use	.082	.203**	.163*	.084	.110
F: DAS Agree on sex	-.033	.043	.008	.182*	-.146*
F: DAS Too tired for sex	.004	.114	-.027	-.028	.107
F: Intimacy	-.149*	.046	-.042	.134	-.210**
F: Passion	-.216**	.047	-.013	.128	-.252***
F: Commit	.021	.085	-.073	.062	.033
F: 32-PDS	.094	.090	.040	-.130	.200**
F: Frequency sex/month	-.250***	-.013	.007	.061	-.257***
F: Desired sex/month	-.262***	-.003	.000	.066	-.291***
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.087	.010	-.008	.025	-.119
F: SEM type	-.081	-.170*	.026	.138	-.122
F: DAS-7	-.121	-.016	-.059	.139*	-.187**
F: ISS	.074	-.112	-.023	-.049	.139*
F: Sexual Functioning	-.099	-.105	.063	.071	-.056
F: FPQ	.079	-.130	.113	.025	-.084
F: FPQ Conservative	.052	.205**	-.101	-.005	.075
F: PHQ-9	.059	-.066	-.166*	-.165*	.068

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	F: Children	F: Frequency of SEM use	F: Duration of SEM use	F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	F: Partner Dur. of SEM use
F: Age					
F: Religiosity					
F: Education					
F: Income					
F: Years in relationship					
F: Children	1.00				
F: Frequency of SEM use	.080	1.00			
F: Duration of SEM use	.085	.951***	1.00		
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use	.015	.584***	.588***	1.00	
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use	.026	.572***	.589***	.958***	1.00
F: DAS Agree on sex	.007	-.109	-.081	-.014	-.045
F: DAS Too tired for sex	.059	.041	.023	.005	-.020
F: Intimacy	-.098	-.040	-.027	.066	.026
F: Passion	-.139*	-.178*	-.151*	.000	-.049
F: Commit	.096	.056	.052	.089	.101
F: 32-PDS	-.004	.280***	.297***	.247**	.311***
F: Frequency sex/month	-.160*	-.035	-.033	.022	-.058
F: Desired sex/month	-.203**	-.069	-.048	.021	-.058
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.104	-.056	-.029	.005	-.019
F: SEM type	-.102	-.517***	-.503***	-.347***	-.334***
F: DAS-7	-.028	-.101	-.120	-.002	-.041
F: ISS	-.009	.133	.137*	-.020	.012
F: Sexual Functioning	-.100	-.009	-.014	.009	-.018
F: FPQ	-.003	-.156*	-.172*	-.099	-.089
F: FPQ Conservative	.158*	.133	.123	.078	.079
F: PHQ-9	.086	-.048	-.056	-.163*	-.096

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	F: DAS Agree on sex	F: DAS Too tired for sex	F: Intimacy	F: Passion	F: Commit
F: Age					
F: Religiosity					
F: Education					
F: Income					
F: Years in Relationship					
F: Children					
F: Frequency of SEM use					
F: Duration of SEM use					
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use					
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use					
F: DAS Agree on sex	1.00				
F: DAS Too tired for sex	-.140*	1.00			
F: Intimacy	.493***	-.016	1.00		
F: Passion	.552***	-.149*	.750***	1.00	
F: Commit	.334***	.128	.618***	.469***	1.00
F: 32-PDS	-.215**	.084	-.338***	-.384***	-.252**
F: Frequency sex/month	.146*	-.055	.130	.309***	.025
F: Desired sex/month	.188**	-.050	.208**	.315***	.062
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	.098	-.009	.140*	.096	.058
F: SEM type	.060	-.170*	.000	.195**	-.128
F: DAS-7	.388***	-.048	.670***	.572***	.447***
F: ISS	-.459***	.220**	-.554***	-.737***	-.445***
F: Sexual Functioning	.196**	-.267***	.216**	.270***	.110
F: FPQ	.066	-.030	-.025	-.040	-.176*
F: FPQ Conservative	-.106	.056	-.082	-.155*	-.105
F: PHQ-9	-.188**	.229**	-.306***	-.388***	-.196**

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	F: 32-PDS	F: Frequency sex/month	F: Desired sex/month	F: Discrepancy sex/mo. Score	F: SEM type
F: Age					
F: Religiosity					
F: Education					
F: Income					
F: Years in Relationship					
F: Children					
F: Frequency of SEM use					
F: Duration of SEM use					
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use					
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use					
F: DAS Agree on sex					
F: DAS Too tired for sex					
F: Intimacy					
F: Passion					
F: Commit					
F: 32-PDS	1.00				
F: Frequency sex/month	-.021	1.00			
F: Desired sex/month	-.088	.682***	1.00		
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score	-.094	-.145*	.624***	1.00	
F: SEM type	-.244**	.135*	.159*	.072	1.00
F: DAS-7	-.403***	.142*	.127	.021	.045
F: ISS	.521***	-.146*	-.125	-.014	-.060
F: Sexual Functioning	-.269***	.063	.054	.005	.111
F: FPQ	-.017	.014	.027	.022	.092
F: FPQ Conservative	.295***	-.081	-.111	-.064	-.223**
F: PHQ-9	.316***	-.154*	-.166*	-.061	.074

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

	F: DAS-7	F: ISS	F: Sexual Functioning	F: FPQ	F: FPQ Conservative	F: PHQ-9
F: Age						
F: Religiosity						
F: Education						
F: Income						
F: Years in Relationship						
F: Children						
F: Frequency of SEM use						
F: Duration of SEM use						
F: Partner Freq. of SEM use						
F: Partner Dur. of SEM use						
F: DAS Agree on sex						
F: DAS Too tired for sex						
F: Intimacy						
F: Passion						
F: Commit						
F: 32-PDS						
F: Frequency sex/month						
F: Desired sex/month						
F: Discrepancy sex/mo. score						
F: SEM type						
F: DAS-7	1.00					
F: ISS	-.537***	1.00				
F: Sexual Functioning	.247***	-.416***	1.00			
F: FPQ	.010	.141*	-.068	1.00		
F: FPQ Conservative	-.074	.221**	-.093	-.033	1.00	
F: PHQ-9	-.370***	.443***	-.291***	.118	.100	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 10

Summary of Model Fit Indices for Men and Women

	χ^2 (df)	<i>p</i> value	CFI	RMSEA	AIC
Females					
Direct effects model	208.89 (39)	<.001	0.90	0.14	130.89
Mediational model	140.99 (39)	<.001	0.94	0.11	62.98
Full model	129.46 (35)	<.001	0.95	0.11	59.46
Full and covariates model	229.33 (65)	<.001	0.91	0.11	99.33
Males					
Direct effects model	298.90 (48)	<.001	0.87	0.16	202.90
Mediational model	196.79 (48)	<.001	0.92	0.12	100.79
Full model	188.20 (44)	<.001	0.92	0.12	100.20
Full and covariates model	278.87 (77)	<.001	0.90	0.11	124.87

Note: N = 217. CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; AIC = Akaike Information Criterion.

Table 11

Reliability of Partner Reports for Frequency of Sexually Explicit Material Use as a Function of Couple Distress

	His Self- Reported Use	Her Report of His Use	Her Self- Reported Use	His Report of Her Use
Overall ^a				
His Self-Reported Use	1.00	--		
Her Report of His Use	0.69	1.00		
Her Self-Reported Use			1.00	--
His Report of Her Use			0.81	1.00
Non-Distressed Couples ^b				
His Self-Reported Use	1.00	--		
Her Report of His Use	0.68	1.00		
Her Self-Reported Use			1.00	--
His Report of Her Use			0.81	1.00
Distressed Couples ^c				
His Self-Reported Use	1.00	--		
Her Report of His Use	0.80	1.00		
Her Self-Reported Use			1.00	--
His Report of Her Use			0.83	1.00

^a N = 217

^b N = 193

^c N = 24

Table 12

Reliability of Partner Reports for Duration of Sexually Explicit Material Use as a Function of Couple Distress

	His Self- Reported Use	Her Report of His Use	Her Self- Reported Use	His Report of Her Use
Overall ^a				
His Self-Reported Use	1.00	--		
Her Report of His Use	0.73	1.00		
Her Self-Reported Use			1.00	--
His Report of Her Use			0.74	1.00
Non-Distressed Couples ^b				
His Self-Reported Use	1.00	--		
Her Report of His Use	0.71	1.00		
Her Self-Reported Use			1.00	--
His Report of Her Use			0.74	1.00
Distressed Couples ^c				
His Self-Reported Use	1.00	--		
Her Report of His Use	0.81	1.00		
Her Self-Reported Use			1.00	--
His Report of Her Use			0.77	1.00

^a N = 217

^b N = 193

^c N = 24

FIGURE 1
MEASUREMENT MODEL

FIGURE 2

FEMALE DIRECT EFFECTS MODEL

FIGURE 3

FEMALE MEDIATIONAL MODEL

FIGURE 4

FEMALE FULL MODEL

FIGURE 5

FEMALE FULL MODEL WITH COVARIATES

FIGURE 6

MALE DIRECT EFFECTS MODEL

FIGURE 7

MALE MEDIATIONAL MODEL

FIGURE 8

MALE FULL MODEL

FIGURE 9

MALE FULL MODEL WITH COVARIATES

FIGURE 10

STRUCTURAL MODEL FOR COUPLES' CONSISTENCY

USE OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS AND LEVELS OF DEPRESSION

FIGURE 12

FEMALE DEPRESSION AND INTERPRETATIONS OF PARTNER'S USE OF
SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS

FIGURE 13

MALE DEPRESSION AND INTERPRETATIONS OF PARTNER'S USE OF
SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIALS

FIGURE 14

FEMALE MODEL OF IMPACT OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL USE ON
INTIMACY, PASSION, AND COMMITMENT

FIGURE 15

MALE MODEL OF IMPACT OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL USE ON
INTIMACY, PASSION, AND COMMITMENT

FIGURE 16

IMPACT OF SEXUAL FUNCTIONING ON DYADIC SATISFACTION

IMPACT OF SEXUAL FUNCTIONING ON USE OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL

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