Let's Talk About Sex Baby: Sexual Regret and Liberal/Conservative Attitudes Towards Sex

A Senor Comprehensive Project
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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to investigate college students' sexual attitudes (liberal/conservative) and sexual regret. The research focused on the difference between males and females in the amount of sexual regret. Another primary focus was to determine if there was a correlation between sexual attitudes and sexual regret. Allegheny College undergrad students (N=113) completed three different questionnaires that asked questions about their levels of sexual regret and their attitudes towards sex. Males and females did not significantly differ in the amount of sexual regret they had. However, the correlation between sexual attitudes and sexual regret was found to be significant. Further research could determine if gender is a factor in predicting sexual regret. Also further research could bridge the gap between the variables of attitudes towards sex and sexual regret.

Let's Talk About Sex Baby: Sexual Regret and Liberal/Conservative Views Towards Sex

Shame is generally understood as a negative emotion that focuses an individual's attention on the self. Shame creates a sense of being out of tune in social interaction, and strongly felt experiences of defectiveness, inferiority, and aloneness could be present (Claesson, Bridegard, & Sohlber, 2007). Having such feelings is an experience that is unwanted and difficult to control, which involves the internalization of stigmatizing ideas and is, characterized by a concern about others judgment on the self, and the awareness of the appearing before an audience in an undersized or unapproved way (Fallon, 2012).

Regret, a negative emotion accompanied by self-blame can affect people in a variety of life domains (Eshbaugh & Gute, 2008; and Fisher, Worth, Garcia & Meredith, 2012). Feelings of regret can be described in multiple ways. Psychological literature defines regret as a negative emotion that can be experienced only when an individual remembers a past event and realizes or imagines that it would be different had one acted differently (Oswalt, Cameron & Koon, 2005).

There are two types of regret; people can either have regrets of inaction or regrets of action. Regrets of inaction can be defined as having not done something and regrets of actions can be defined as having done something (Eshbaugh et al., 2008). Although regrets of inaction last longer than regrets of action, regrets of action are more emotionally powerful (Fisher, et al. 2012). Regrets of not doing something may last longer but are not as emotionally harmful as regrets of doing an action. However, having regrets of doing an action is more emotionally harming because one cannot take back that action.

Having such feelings of regret can often rely on what types of views a person has. Staples (1978), defines liberalism as a philosophy that is characterized by a favorable attitude towards change and towards the use of the intellect in achieving change; a liberal devalues the

traditionally accepted way of doing things and places a high value on individual expression (Staples, 1978). Among conservatives the traditional way of doing things is highly valued. Although conservatives place an emphasis on individual expression: this emphasis refers more to freedom from the restraint of political and economic forces than freedom from the mores and folkways of society (Staples, 1978). Overall individuals who are socially liberal tend to develop broad-minded principles and theories not bound by traditional views; whereas conservative individuals are expected to adhere to traditional moral codes. However, when a person is described as being a liberal or a conservative in this regard, it is very important to recognize that such a characterization is strictly a relative matter. Thus one might be quite liberal in relation to another person or some specific reference group while appearing somewhat conservative in relation to others (Hudson et al., 1983).

Sexual Regret

Although regret as a general topic has been investigated, there is a lack of research on regretted sexual experiences (Oswalt, Cameron & Koob, 2005). Research regarding the experiences of regret of college students is limited; however the research that is available states that regret about romantic relationships are especially common in younger adults, who experience more relationship changes and turmoil than do older adults (Eshbaugh et al., 2008; and Oswalt et al., 2005).

Sexual regret, defined as self-mediated punishment resulting from violating or expecting to violate sexual standards, is theoretically seen as an inhibitory mechanism (Frankel et al., 1975). Sexual regret can occur for many different reasons and it is intensified when a person is aware of their sexual arousal. Sexual regret can occur in the discrete effects of interest, such as excitement and enjoyment, and in the discrete effects of shame. Due to its association with moral

cognition about sexual conduct, shame manifests in consciousness as guilt (Mosher, 1998). Sexual regret can either be regrets of action or inaction; people have experiences of sexual regret for doing a sexual act, or for not doing any sexual acts. The emotion of guilt can come to inhibit not only sexual behavior but even seeking information about sexuality and 72% of sexually active college students regretted at least one instance in which they had engaged in a sexual activity (Eshbaugh et al., 2008; and Mosher, 1979).

Given that 71.6% of college students report having at least one sexual partner within the last year and 10.4% report having 4 or more sexual partners in the last year, the opportunity for sexual regret is present (Oswalt et al. 2005). An increasing number of college students engage in multiple relational and extra-relational sexual experiences. Contemporary college students use the term hookup to refer to the casual sexual phenomena common on college campuses today (Paul & Hayes, 2002). A hookup can be defined as a range of physically intimate behaviors—anything from kissing to intercourse—with the hallmark feature of a lack of any expectation of emotional intimacy or a romantic relationship. Or it can be a sexual encounter, which may or may not involve intercourse, between two people who are brief acquaintances or strangers, usually lasting only one night without the expectation of developing a relationship (Batchel, 2013; and Paul et al., 2002).

College environments are known for encouraging sexual permissiveness among young adults including acceptance of casual sexual encounters commonly termed hookups (Batchel, 2013). Although college environments encourage sexual permissiveness, what is considered sex and what is not considered sex by most people varies. In 2013, Batchel conducted research, surveying at a small private liberal arts college, and the results suggested that as many as 81% of all college students have had at least one hookup experience (Batchel, 2013). Byers, Henderson

and Hobson in 2009 conducted a study were they surveyed people nationwide, and the vast majority of people (more than 94%) included penile-vaginal in their definition of sex, fewer people (between 70-90%) considered penile-anal intercourse to constitute having sex. Moreover, oral-genital behaviors were defined as sex by between 20 and 58% of the participants (Byers et al., 2009). The majority of college age students do not feel that oral sex counts as having sex. Sexual regret was more pronounced if there was a history of experiences involving sexual intercourse rather than oral sex (Fisher et al. 2012). College students are often more sexually adventurous, and more likely to have multiple sexual partners and use condoms inconsistently. It was found that people who experience sex guilt were more likely to practice safe sex or be less likely to have sex, and therefore at less risk than those lower in sex guilt (Wayment & Aronson, 2002).

Sex guilt has been shown to be negatively correlated with the amount of prior experience, and previous research has found sexual experiences and sexual attitudes may be important; college students who have high levels of sex guilt were less sexually experienced than those not as guilty (Frankel et al., 1975; and Hardin & Gold, 1988). There are many consequences of having sex guilt. Sexual guilt appears to inhibit sex-related behaviors and cognition in a variety of contexts. Having sex guilt inhibits people's comfort in thinking about sexual acts or even gaining knowledge about sex because a person feels guilty thinking about sex (Janda et al., 2010). Sex guilt was related to greater safer sex practices among college students; and that sexually active college women, who were high on sex-guilt were less likely to use effective contraception. High sex guilt women who reported using less effective contraception and high sex guilt women who were sexually active had more abortions than low sex guilt women who were sexually active (Janda & Bazemore, 2010; and Mosher, 1979).

Although sex differences in both sexual behavior and attitudes have declined; sexes still differ in their experience of sexual regret (Fisher et al., 2012; and Townsend, 1995). Townsend conducted a study in 1995 and found that college aged males are much more willing than females to condone and engage in coitus when dating with no particular affection; in fact it was found that no females expressed this level of permissiveness. To further that he also found that in general men are more willing than women to engage in sexual relations in the absence of emotional involvement and marital potential and are more likely to seek sexual relations with a variety of partners for the sake of variety (Townsend, 1995).

Evidence shows men are more likely to experience regrets of inaction, wishing they had engaged in a particular sexual behavior, while women are more likely to experience regrets of action, wishing they had not engaged in a particular sexual behavior (Eshbaugh et al., 2008; and Fisher et al., 2012). After engaging in a sexual behavior females are more likely than men to feel regretful or disappointed, they are also more likely to ruminate about a hookup and feel greater shame and self-doubt following the experience; in contrast men were more likely to feel satisfied. Also men express greater comfort than women about engaging in these types of relationships (Eshbaugh et al., 2008; and Fisher et al., 2012).

While increase permissiveness over the last four decades in women's sexual attitudes and sexual behavior have been documented, the sexual double standard continues to thrive for both males and females. The sexual double standard is conflated by a host of gender prescriptions, such as societal dictations for the values and behaviors of males and females that constrain men's and women's role in instigating, executing, and interpreting sexual relationships (Eshbaugh et al., 2008; Fisher et al., 2012; and Paul et al., 2002). Social expectations for gender differences

may also explain sexual regret, especially seeing that the double standard in the norms of sexual behavior afford men greater freedom to engage in casual sexual encounters.

The fact that women feel more sexual guilt and regret than men may result from failure to adhere to established societal gender norms; as such reason for regretting a sexual encounter may differ between men and women based on traditionally gendered stereotypes. Researchers have found that norms of acceptable sexual behavior vary by gender, with greater permissiveness toward sexual behavior for men and women (Eshbaugh et al., 2008; Fisher et al. 2012; and Paul et al., 2002). This double standard may influence peoples regret following a sexual encounter. Because of the continued double standard that rewards men for having more sexual partners it is reasonable to expect an increase in self-esteem in men; hooking up may also be associated with a decrease in self-esteem in women because the behavior violates a social norm (Eshbaugh et al., 2008). Research suggests that the double standard in the norms of sexual behavior afford men greater freedom to engage in casual sexual encounters, allowing men to express greater comfort than women about engaging in these types of relationships (Fisher et al., 2012).

Attitudes Towards Sex

The term culture wars is a metaphor used to suggest that the liberal versus conservative political conflict of culture values; these conflicting worldviews are expressed in strong opinion regarding a variety of issues, including attitudes towards sex. Sexual liberalism as a group of beliefs emphasizes the acceptance and/or affirmation of individual sexual freedom and respect for one's sexual autonomy. Whereas, sexual conservatism is defined as a group of beliefs that emphasize the acceptance and/or affirmation of social and normative conventions regarding sexuality, respect to traditions, and the maintenance of society (Guerra et al., 2012). Sexual expressions being described in terms of liberal or conservative orientation are considered to be

on one single continuum. At the liberal end of this continuum are those who feel that expression of human sexuality should be open, free, and unrestrained; at the other end of the same continuum are those who feel that sexual expression should be considerably constrained and closely regulated (Hudson et al., 1983). In terms of permissiveness between the groups, the more liberal one is, the greater the likelihood that social forces will maintain high levels of sexual permissiveness and the lower the traditional level of sexual permissiveness in a group, the greater the likelihood that social forces will alter individual levels of sexual permissiveness (Staples, 1978).

Since beliefs about sexuality could very well help with the choosing of a sexual partner and the course of such a relationship, one could reasonably expect there to be some consistency between love-styles and sexual attitudes. Or perhaps experiences in the relationship could affect attitudes regarding sexuality (Lacey et al., 2004). Lacey et al. conducted research in 2004, which included 330 college students taking four different questionnaires. The research focused on the six different love-styles to see where the love-styles fall on the liberal/conservative continuum in regards to sexuality. The six different love types are Eros, Ludus, Pragma, Mania-type, Agapic, and Storge.

According to Lacey et al. (2004) findings the love style Eros is described as a passionate type of love; this style involves powerful attraction to the partner, both physically and emotionally: someone who endorses the Eros love-style would be more likely to fall into more conservative sexual group. Eros love-style is considered more of a conservative love-style because these types of people follow traditions in the sense that there needs to be a relationship with affection before doing sexual acts with a partner. There are two more conservative love-styles, the first of which being Agapic. Agapic individuals tend to put their partners needs and

wishes above their own, because of this Agapic individuals are associated with conservative sexual-moral attitudes (Lacey et al., 2004). Love-style Storge is also considered to be on the conservative side of the continuum. Storge love tends to be based on friendship. It stems from the belief that romantic love grows out of a deep friendship and sometimes the parties involved do not even notice that the line has been crossed from one to another (Lacey, et al., 2004).

There are also three love-styles that fall along the liberal end of the continuum. Ludus love-style is described as the "game-playing" type of love, characterized by being noncommittal and distant; Ludus people have a more casual attitude towards relationships, they endorse liberal, recreational, sexual attitudes more so than conservative, traditional, ones (Lacey, et al. 2004). The love-style Pragma is characterized as the practical type of love in which an individual chooses a romantic partner based on how well the partner will reflect on them; and the last liberal love-type is the mania type, which is characterized as obsessive in that it is possessive and dependent (Lacey et al.,2004). At the end of this study it was found that men tend to endorse the ludus love style along with other liberal love styles, making them more sexually permissive than the women who supported more of the conservative love styles (Lacey, et al. 2004).

Besides the difference in love-styles there is also a gender difference of where males and females fall on the liberal-conservative continuum. In terms of orientation, research suggest that men tend to show a more unrestricted tendency then women, presenting positive attitudes towards casual sex, and fantasizing more about the sex act. Women of all ages in America have been presenting high levels of sexual activity; however in general men of all ages tend to show more liberalism in this area (Guerra et al., 2012). A women's attitude about sexuality may impact her sexual decision making, but the evidence is more persuasive that men have a more positive attitude towards casual sex (Campbell, 2008; and Wayment et al., 2002). Men fantasize

more than women about having sex with multiple anonymous sexual partners, desire a greater variety and numbers of sexual partners, agree to have sex after shorter time periods, and lower their threshold criteria significantly for short-term as compared to long term mates (Campbell, 2008; and Wayment et al., 2002). Men agree more strongly than women with such statements as, "in general the first time I have sex with someone is the best" and "I tend to lose sexual interest in a sex partner after a few months of regular sexual intercourse". Also, men do not want a casual sexual experience to develop into a lasting relationship more so than women (Campbell, 2008). This type of thinking illustrates how the Ludus love-style of thinking works. Men are more interested in "game-playing" type of love and these examples demonstrate how men are on the liberal end of the continuum for sexuality.

As stated earlier there are several studies looking at regret; however there are not many studies on sexual regret. The research that is on sexual regret is fairly old and most of it only looks at females. Research on males and sexual regret is limited, but there are a few studies that while they focus on females do touch upon males. Research on attitudes towards sex is more recent and has more of an even representation of both males and females. However, there has never been a study that looks at both sexual regret and attitudes towards sex, even though in a general approach one's stance on the conservative/liberal continuum relates to how a person deals with regret and what type of regret they have in a general sense (Oswalt et al., 2005; and Staples 1978).

Current Study: Hypothesis

Because of the lack of male representation in research on sexual regret, this research is trying to answer the question of is there a gender difference in the feelings of sexual regret? Also because the variables of sexual regret and attitudes towards sex have never been looked at

together; this research is trying to answer the question does a liberal/conservative view towards sex relate to the amount of sexual regret of college students? It was hypothesized that men do indeed have feelings of sexual regret, although females will show higher levels of sexual regret, and that one's attitude towards sex (liberal or conservative) correlated with the level of sexual regret they feel. The more conservative a person is the higher levels of sexual regret, and the more liberal a person is the lower the levels of sexual regret. It was hypothesized that males with liberal attitudes towards sex would have the least amount of sexual regret, and males with conservative views would have more sexual regret than liberal males but still less sexual regret amongst females. For females, it was hypothesized that females with liberal views would have the least amount of sexual regret amongst the female population, but still had higher levels of sexual regret than the male population and females with conservative views would have the most sexual regret among all of the participants.

Methods

Participants

Participants for this study were students at a small liberal arts college in Western Pennsylvania. Participants consisted of 113 undergraduate students with 22 males and 91 females. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 22. Most participants were in psychology classes and participated for some type of credit. Recruitment for participants took place on SONA.

Measures

Research was collected by using three questionnaires. The first is a general demographic questionnaire, to obtain background information about the participants (see Appendix A). The next two questionnaires used were the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory (Mosher, 1998) (see

Appendix B) and the Sexual Attitudes Scale (Hudson et al., 1993) (see Appendix C). Both are published.

The Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory measures three aspects of guilt; sex-guilt, hostility-guilt, and morality-conscience; the scale was developed from responses given to sentence completion stems (Mosher, 1960). The revised inventory was made in 1979, because before the inventory measured male/female responses separately, now they are on the same inventory. It consist of 114 items that are arranged in pairs of responses to the same sentence completion stem in a 7-point Likert-type format to measure sex guilt, hostility guilt, and guilty-conscience. To ensure discriminate validity between the subscales, 90 percent of its items had a correlation of the item with the other subscale (Mosher, 1979). Because of the length of the questionnaire and this research only being concerned with sexual guilt, the subscale for sex-guilt will only be used. To validate using a shorter version of the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory the coefficient alpha was assessed. In the full version the coefficient alpha was .90; by checking the coefficient alpha for the sex-guilt inventory subscale it will be validated. Cronbach's Alpha was performed on the subscale to the coefficient alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha for the sex-guilt subscale was .94, which validates the use of the subscale for this research. Higher scores indicate higher levels of sexual regret.

The Sexual Attitudes Scale (SAS) is a 25 item Likert-type scale, which was designed to measure the extent to which an individual adheres to a liberal or conservative orientation concerning sexual expression (Hudson et al. 1993). Higher scores indicate greater degrees of conservatism and lower scores indicate more liberal attitudes. There is a cut score of 50 such that scores above that value indicate the presence of an increasingly conservative attitude toward human sexual expression, whereas scores below that value indicate the presence of an

increasingly liberal orientation (Hudson et al., 1993). For this scale the validity coefficient is. 73 as determined by the point-biserial correlation between group status and the SAS scores, also the Cronbach's alpha is .94.

Procedure

Participants logged in to the SONA system. Upon clicking on my project, an electronic version of an informed consent form (see Appendix D) was shown and they were asked to give their virtual signature before proceeding. They began to fill out the three questionnaires: first the demographic, then the shorten Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory, and lastly the SAS. Once completing all of the surveys an electronic version of a debriefing form (see Appendix E) appeared and the participants once again gave their virtual signatures. When they completed that, they then log out on the SONA system

Results

To determine if there was a gender difference in levels of sexual regret a T-test was performed. Gender was not considered a factor because men (M=81.31, SD=30.36) and women (M=90.24, SD=35.95) did not differ significantly on levels of sexual regret, t (111) =-1.074, p=n.s.

To see if the variables of sexual regret and sexual attitudes were related a correlation was done. Figure 1 illustrates the statistically significant correlations between attitudes towards sex and levels of sexual regret.

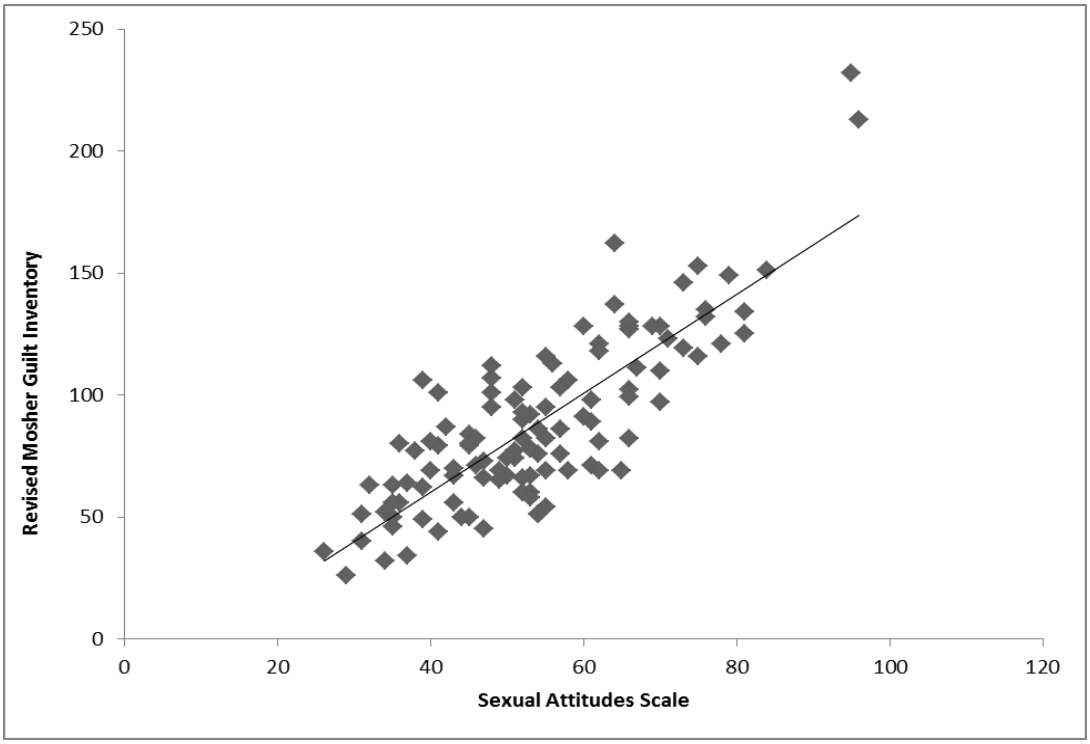


Figure1. Sexual Attitude's vs. Sexual Guilt. This figure illustrates that there is a significant positive correlation between sexual attitudes *(M*=53.94*, SD*=14.17) and sexual regret (*M*=88.50, *SD*=34.98). r (111) =.82, p<.001, two-tailed with r=.67. The more conservative attitudes (scores above 50 mean conservative attitudes and scores below 50 mean liberal attitudes) one has the higher levels of sexual guilt is present.

Discussion

The presented study proposed that males do indeed have sexual regret, although females will show higher levels. The results did not support this hypothesis because there was not a significant difference between males and females. The current study also proposed that males with liberal attitudes towards sex would have the least amount of sexual regret, and males with conservative views would have more sexual regret than liberal males but still less sexual regret than the females. In regards to females it was proposed that females with liberal views would have the least amount of sexual regret amongst the female population, but have higher levels of sexual regret than the male population, and females with conservative views would have the most sexual regret among all of the participants. These could not be tested because males and

females did not significantly differ in their levels of sexual regrets, so gender was no longer looked at and the data was collapsed together. Finally, this study proposed that one's attitude towards sex (liberal or conservative) correlates with the level of sexual regret a person has. The results supported this hypothesis and there was a strong positive correlation between one's attitude towards sex (liberal or conservative) and the level of sexual regret that one has. The more conservative a person is the higher levels of sexual regret, and the more liberal a person is the lower levels of sexual regret were present.

The fact that there was not a significant gender difference in the levels of sexual regret was surprising. Previous research suggests that societal gender norms are a reason why females have more sex guilt and regret than males (Eshbaugh et al., 2008; Fisher et al., 2012; and Paul et al., 2002). If gender norms had an effect on levels of sexual regret it would have been expected to see a significant difference between males and females. However, because the results do not reflect such difference it is important to note that gender may not be an important factor in levels of sexual regret.

The variables sexual attitudes (conservative vs. liberal) and sexual regret have never been looked at together. However the correlation between sexual regret and attitudes towards sex furthers Oswalt et al. and Staples research. In general a person's stance on the conservative/liberal continuum does correlate with the level of regrets a person has (Oswalt et. al., 2005; and Staples, 1978). The more conservative one is the more general regrets one tends to have and the more liberal one is the less general regrets they have; this supports this research finding because it the two variables relate in a broad sense, it is reasonable to expect the same type of relationship when looking at more specific aspects of liberal/conservative attitudes and regret.

Limitations

There were many limitations within this study. For one the demographic of it being conducted at a small liberal arts college made getting diverse sample hard, especially seeing only psychology students were being recruited and the majority of which were females. This explains why about five times as many females participated than males.

Another limitation was the scales themselves; in particular the demographic questionnaire and the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory. As participants were completing the questionnaires, I received many emails that discussed issues that had come up for them, the participant, while they were taking them. One of the demographic questions asked "what gender do you identify as?" "Male or female", four participants emailed me explaining their discomfort with this question in particular; in fact one participant said it was the hardest question they had to answer. It is interesting to note that when it comes to our sexual behaviors, how we identify becomes more important to us. This fact, opens up the question of what are the difference between how all of the genders view sexual regret. These emails and concerns also further proves that research needs to be done to further our understanding of the connection between gender and sexual regret.

I also received six regarding the wording of the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory and how they did not understand what was being asked because it was so out dated. The scale to measure sexual regret is from the 60's so the wording is outdated and how we talk about sex has changed considerably. It would have been interesting to see how the results would have been effected if the questionnaire was updated and didn't use phrases that people didn't know the meaning of. These concerns make it more evident that researchers need to take the time to update the scales

and begin to conduct research with phases that we use today to talk about sex. With an updated scale it would be interesting to see how the results would be affected.

The results from this research further demonstrate the need to continue to do research on these topics and bring the research up to date. These findings also demonstrate the need to include males in studies on these topics. By continuing research on these topics and including males in the research, our understanding of the gender differences in sexual regret and attitudes towards sex (liberal/conservative) but also how these two variables correlate together with the gender difference present.

Future Research

The lack of significant gender differences has many implications in regards to studying sexual regret. More research needs to be done to test if there is a gender difference in levels of sexual regret. Also more research on this topic would also further our understanding of how and if gender affects levels of sexual regret. More research could reveal that being male or female has little to no effect on the amount of sexual regret, and it is other variables that affect the amount of sexual regret a person has.

These two variables sexual attitudes (liberal/conservative) and sexual regret have always been looked at separately; the significant correlation results show the importance of continuing research on these topics. Furthering research on these topics will help to understand the relationship between conservative/liberal attitudes and regret in general, and more importantly sexual attitudes (liberal/conservative) and sexual regret. Also the more research that is conducted on the two variables, the better our understanding will be on why such relationship exists.

Conclusion

This current study was trying to determine the difference in feelings of sexual regret for males and females, and also trying to see if there was a correlation between attitudes towards sex (liberal/conservative) and sexual regret. At the end of this study it was concluded that there was not a significant difference between males and females in levels of sexual regret. However, it was confirmed that there is a strong correlation between attitudes towards sex (liberal/conservative) and sexual regret. Although this study had limitations: such as the demographics of where the study was conducted, and the scales themselves, the results of this study are valuable in expanding our knowledge on the subject. The lack of significant gender difference implicates that more research needs to be done to test if there is a gender difference in sexual regret. By furthering this research we can deepen our understanding of how and if gender affects levels of sexual regret. More research could reveal that being male or female has little to no effect on the amount of sexual regret, and it is other variables that influence the amount of sexual regret a person has. The variables of sexual attitudes and sexual regret have always been looked at separately and the results of this study found a significant correlation between the two. By furthering research on these topics, we can improve our understanding of why such a relationship exists between liberal/conservative attitudes towards sex and sexual regret.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer these questions to the best of your ability:

1. What gender do you identify as?

____Female ____Male

2. What is your age?

____18 ____19 ____20 _____21 ______22 _____older than 22

3. What year are you?

_____First year _____Sophomore _____Junior _____Senior

Appendix B

Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory

(Sex-Guilt Subscale)

Directions:

Rate each of these items from 0 to 6 as you keep in mind the value of comparing items within pairs. Please do not omit any items.

Not at all true	Mostly untrue	Slightly Untrue	Neither true or untrue	Slightly true	Mostly true	Extremely true
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

"Dirty" jokes in mixed company…

1. Do not bother me…….…..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Are something that make me very uncomfortable …….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Masturbation…

3. Is wrong and will ruin you…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Helps one feel eased and relaxed…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sex relations before marriage…

5. Should be permitted……. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Are wrong and immoral……0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sex relations before marriage…

7. Ruin many a happy couple……...……0 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Are good in my opinion……0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Unusual sexual practices…

9. Might be interesting…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Don't interest me……..... 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

When I have sexual dreams…

11. I sometimes wake up feeling excited…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. I try to forget them…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

"Dirty" jokes in mixed company…

13. are in bad taste……. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. can be funny depending on the company……0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Petting…

15. I am sorry to say is becoming an accepted practice…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. Is an expression of affection which is satisfying……..…….0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Unusual sex practice…

17. Are not so unusual ……..……..0 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. Don't interest me…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sex…

19. Is good and enjoyable…….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
20. Should be saved for wedlock and childbearing….……0 1 2 3 4 5 6

"Dirty jokes" in mixed company…

21. Are coarse to say the least……..…….0 1 2 3 4 5 6
22. Are lots of fun…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

When I have sexual desires

23. I enjoy it like all healthy human beings…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
24. I fight them for I must have complete control of my body……..0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Unusual sexual practices…

25.Are unwise and lead to trouble…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
26. Are all in how you look at it…….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Unusual sexual practices…

27. Are OK as long as they're heterosexual ……0 1 2 3 4 5 6
28. Usually aren't pleasurable because you have preconceived feelings about their being wrong…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sex relations before marriage…

29. In my opinion, should not be practiced…….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
30. Are practiced too much to be wrong…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

As a child, sex play…

31. Is immature and ridiculous…….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
32. Was indulged in…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Unusual sex practices…

33. Are dangerous to one's health and mental condition……..0 1 2 3 4 5 6
34. Are the business of those who carry them out and no one else's…….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

When I have sexual desires…

35. I attempt to repress them……0 1 2 3 4 5 6
36. They are quite strong…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Petting…

37. Is not a good practice until after marriage…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
38. Is justified with love…….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Sex relations before marriage….

39. Help people adjust……0 1 2 3 4 5 6
40. Should not be recommended…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Masturbation…

41. Is wrong and a sin…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
42. Is a normal outlet for sexual desire……0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Masturbation…

43. Is all right…….. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
44. Is a form of self-destruction……..… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Unusual sex practices…

45. Are awful and unthinkable…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
46. Are all right if both partners agree…….……0 1 2 3 4 5 6

If I had sexual relations, I would feel…

47. All right, I think……. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
48. I was being used not loved……. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Masturbation…

49. Is alright……. 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
50. Should not be practice…… 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix C

The Sexual Attitudes Scale (SAS)

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to measure the way you feel about sexual behavior. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I think there is too much sexual freedom given to adults these days _____
2. I think that the increased sexual freedom seen in the past several years has done much to undermine the American Family _____
3. I think that young people have been given too much information about sex _____
4. Sex education should be restricted to home _____
5. Older people do not need to have sex _____
6. Sex education should be given only when people are ready for marriage _____
7. Premarital sex may be a sign of decaying social order. _____
8. Extramarital sex is never excusable _____
9. I think there is too much sexual freedom given to teenagers these days _____
10. I think there is not enough sexual restraint among young people _____
11. I think people indulge in sex too much _____
12. I think the only proper way to have sex is through intercourse _____
13. I think sex should be reserved for marriage _____
14. Sex should be only for the young _____
15. Too much social approval has been given to homosexuals' _____
16. Sex should be devoted to the business of procreation _____
17. People should not masturbate _____
18. Heavy sexual petting should be discouraged _____
19. People should not masturbate _____
20. Severely handicapped (physically and mentally) people should not have sex _____
21. There should be no laws prohibiting acts between consenting adults _____
22. What two consenting adults do together sexually is their own business _____
23. There is too much sex on television _____
24. Movies today are too sexually explicit _____
25. Pornography should be totally banned from our bookstores _____

Appendix D

Research Participant Consent Form

Principal Investigator: Stephanie Bongiorno

Purpose of Research: I understand that the purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between sexual regret and college students' views towards sex.

Description/Procedure: I understand that I will be completing an online questionnaire about my view towards sex. I understand that this study will take less than 30 minutes.

Risks: There are no foreseen risks involved in this study; however, if at any time during the experiment you wish to withdraw from participation, you are permitted to do so without penalty

Benefits: I understand that the main benefit to participating in this study is an exposure to research designs at Allegheny College. Additionally, this study will help you learn about college students' view towards sex.

Compensation: I understand that I will not be compensated for participation in this research project. However, by participating in this study you will either receive extra credit or research participation credit, whichever your professor chooses.

Anonymity: I understand that there will be no connections between your identity and the results. All data is completely anonymous. The results will be analyzed in group format and the data will be destroyed after three years of time.

Results: I understand that by signing this form I will be giving permission to use survey results for research that can be used to further our understanding of the relationship between sexual regret and attitudes towards sex. I also understand that if I wish to receive a copy of the results of the experiment, I can email the student investigator at bongiornos@allegheny.edu with my box number and the results will be provided.

If I have any questions or concerns, I may contact Stephanie Bongiorno at bongiornos@allegheny.edu, or Deborah Dickey at ddickey@allegheny.edu. Also, if I have any questions, or concerns about the treatment of research participants in regards to this study, I can contact Dr. Rick Bowden, chair of the Allegheny College Institutional Review Board, at rbowden@allegheny.edu.

I understand the description of the experiment and procedures, and I have been provided a copy of this informed consent form. My questions have been answered, and I agree to participate in the study. Also, I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

Appendix E

Research Participant Debrief

Thank you for you participation in this senior comprehensive project! The purpose of this correlational study is to determine the relationship between sexual regret and attitudes towards sex. My hypothesis is that liberal males have the least amount of sexual regret, whereas conservative females have the most among the participants.

Prior research on sexual regret is old, and the few recent studies conducted on the matter have only focused on females. Research on male sexual regret is out dated and hard to find. The other relationship that is being explored is attitudes towards sex. Research suggests that there is a relationship between ones attitude towards sex and how people go about their sex lives. Thus the purpose of this study was to discover if there was a relationship between sexual regret and attitudes towards sex.

This research has the potential to further our understanding of the current hookup culture and what possible psychological implications may be present. It will also provide an overall greater understanding as to how gender, sexual regret, and attitudes towards sex all relate to one another. If you are interested in obtaining more information on this topic, here are some additional sources of information:

Guerra, V. M., gouveia, V. V., Sousa, D. M., Lima, T. J., & Freires, L. A. (2012). Sexual Liberalism-Conservatism: The Effect of Human Values, Gender, and Previous Sexual Experience. *Arch of Sex Behavior*, 1027-1039.

Lacey, R. S., Reifman, A., Scott, J. P., Harris, S. M., & Fitzpatrick, J. (2004). Sexual-Moral Attitudes, Love Styles, and Mate Selection. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 121-128.

Mosher, D. L. (1979). Sex Guilt and Sex Myths in College Men and Women. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 224-243.

Towsend, J. M. (1995). Sex Without Emotional Involvement:An Evolutionary Interpretation of Sex Differences. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 173-205.

Contact Information:
Please feel free to contact any of the following people with questions or concerns.

- If you would like to obtain further information on the study or to obtain the results once it is completed, please contact myself, Stephanie Bongiorno, at bongiornos@allegheny.edu or the faculty supervisor of this project, Professor Deborah Dickey, at ddickey@allegheny.edu.
- If any of the questions on the surveys or any other part of this study has made you feel uncomfortable of if you have any psychological concerns, please visit or call the Allegheny College Counseling Center at 814-332-4368.
- For any questions or concerns about the treatment of research participants, including yourself, please contact Dr. Rich Bowden, Chair of the Allegheny College Institutional Review Board, at rbowden@allegheny.edu.