

Sociosexuality and everyday social interaction

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Abstract

This study examined whether sociosexuality, a variable measuring unrestrictedness of sexual attitudes and behaviors, relates to the everyday social interactions of individuals. Sociosexuality was measured using Simpson and Gangestad's (1991a) Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI). Seventy-one participants completed daily interaction records assessing various aspects of each interaction they had over a 7-day period. The number of interactions in which they engaged, as well as the number of partners with whom they interacted, were correlated with scores on the SOI. In addition, a multilevel data analytic approach was used to examine whether sociosexuality related to perceived Closeness, Quality, Negativity, and Sexual Interest during these interactions. Results were somewhat mixed. Women higher in sociosexuality reported both more extensive social networks and greater numbers of interactions, particularly with men, than women lower in sociosexuality. A marginally significant trend indicated that individuals higher in sociosexuality reported that interactions with their romantic partners contained greater Negativity than individuals lower in sociosexuality. In addition, both men and women higher in sociosexuality reported that interactions with their best friends were of poorer quality.

Research identifying concomitants of sexual behavior has indicated that those who engage in high levels of sexual activity have markedly different relationship outcomes (i.e., quality, intimacy, stability) than those who engage in lower levels (Eysenck, 1972; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991a; Snyder, Simpson, & Gangestad, 1986). However, this research has been limited in two ways. First, it has focused almost exclusively on romantic relationships. Much less is known about the implications of sexuality level for nonromantic, yet still important, personal relationships. Theoretical models suggest that the patterns of feelings and beliefs a person has about his or her romantic relationships are similar to the patterns of feel-

ings and beliefs the person has about nonromantic, friendship relationships (Ainsworth, 1989; Belsky, Steinberg, & Draper, 1991). Thus, levels of sexuality might have implications beyond the romantic relationship domain. Second, much of the research investigating how levels of sexual activity relate to romantic relationships has focused on global evaluations of these relationships (Gangestad & Simpson, 1990; Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Simpson & Gangestad, 1992). As noted by Harvey, Hendrick, and Tucker (1988), cognitive distortion is more likely to occur in global evaluations of important relationships than in evaluations of discrete social events such as everyday social interactions. The present study extends past research by investigating the correspondence between sexuality level and daily interaction outcomes across a range of relational partners including both romantic and nonromantic peers.

Simpson and Gangestad's (1991a) development of "sociosexuality," a construct re-

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flecting the degree of one's willingness to engage in uncommitted sexual relations, has been pivotal to understanding the association between levels of sexuality and romantic relationship outcomes. Sociosexuality is measured through the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI), and it accounts for a large proportion of the variability underlying many facets of sexuality (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991a). For example, those scoring high on this inventory tend to require less closeness and commitment prior to having sex, to engage in sex at earlier points in their relationships, and to engage in concurrent sexual affairs than individuals who score lower. In addition, Simpson and Gangestad (1991a, 1992) found that, when choosing dating partners, individuals lower in sociosexuality tend to place more emphasis on finding partners who are loyal, faithful, compatible, and responsible; relative to individuals higher in sociosexuality, those lower may prefer characteristics in their partners that facilitate the development of stable, committed, and long-term relationships. Those higher in sociosexuality tend to focus on attributes such as physical/sexual openness and social visibility, dimensions that are less likely to foster long-term stability and commitment.

High levels of sociosexuality may be associated with poorer relationship quality, not only in romantic relationships but also in close platonic relationships with peers. Although the correspondence between sociosexuality and relationship quality with nonromantic relationship partners has not been tested directly, a large body of research has found associations between sexual activity level and problems in nonromantic relationships (Christopher & Roosa, 1991; Fisher, 1986; Inazu & Fox, 1980; Miller & Bingham, 1989; Newcomer & Udry, 1985; Thornton & Camburn, 1987). However, the majority of this literature examines nonromantic family relationships, not relationships with platonic friends.

How might sociosexuality relate to everyday social interaction? First, there may be differences in the amount of social interaction. Given the association between levels

of sexuality and measures of extroversion (Eysenck, 1976), we predicted that sociosexuality would relate to the number of interactions the subjects reported, such that those higher in sociosexuality would have more interactions. That is, socially active individuals, or extroverts, may be more socially visible and consequently may have more opportunities for sexual activity (see Simpson & Gangestad, 1992). Second, we expected to find a positive association between the individuals' unrestrictedness and the size of their social network. Specifically, those individuals higher in sociosexuality should engage in interactions with a greater number of interaction partners overall and in particular with a larger number of opposite-sex partners.

Third, we proposed that the content and quality of everyday social interactions would differ for individuals ranging in sociosexuality. Assuming that the association between sociosexuality and global ratings of romantic relationships is reflected in day-to-day social intercourse, we predicted that those who are higher in sociosexuality would report interactions with their romantic partners that were lower in intimacy and pleasantness and higher in negativity. Because little research has investigated the relationship between sociosexuality and relational outcomes in nonromantic relationships, specific predictions about interaction outcomes with nonromantic peers, such as acquaintances or close friends, were somewhat premature. However, theoretical accounts suggest that the beliefs and emotions one has concerning romantic relationships mirror those concerning platonic relationships with friends (see Ainsworth, 1989; Belsky et al., 1991). This possibility led us to anticipate that those who have nonoptimal romantic relationships (in terms of emotional variables) might also suffer such decrements in their nonromantic relationships.

Fourth, we predicted individuals' unrestrictedness to be negatively associated with their stability in romantic relationships. Based on findings described by Simpson and Gangestad (1991a, 1992), we proposed that, after a 3-month time interval,

those higher in sociosexuality are more likely to be dating partners, and those lower in sociosexuality are more likely to be single.

In the current study, we used diary methods to study the social interactions of dating partners who varied in sociosexuality. These interactions were measured as Rochester Interaction Diaries (Reis, 1986), have been used to study aspects of daily interactions, and frequency of interactions. The diaries allowed us to examine social interactions directly.

Method

Participants

The participants included 18 men ($M = 18.89, SD = 1.11$) and 30 female (age: $M = 18.89, SD = 1.11$, range = 17–28 years) psychology students from the University of Rochester who received partial credit for participating. Of these participants, 17 were sophomores, 17 were seniors, and 3 subjects were of unknown status. Data from 18 women and 10 men were used because they did not follow the instructions (i.e., they were below the 70% self-rated accuracy threshold or less than 70% of their interactions were reported).

Measurement

Sociosexuality Orientation Inventory (SOI) (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991a) assesses five components of sociosexuality. Three components assess sexual behaviors, including (1) the number of sexual partners throughout the past year, (2) the number of sexual partners they have ever had, and (3) the number of sexual partners during the next year. Two components assess attitudes, including (1) the fre-

asures of extroversion we predicted that so- relate to the number of ects reported, such that iosexuality would have hat is, socially active in- erts, may be more so- onsequently may have for sexual activity (see tad, 1992). Second, we positive association be- ls' unrestrictedness and al network. Specifically, igher in sociosexuality eractions with a greater on partners overall and larger number of oppo-

ed that the content and ay social interactions ividuals ranging in so- ing that the association lity and global ratings of ps is reflected in day-to- rse, we predicted that igher in sociosexuality ctions with their roman- e lower in intimacy and igher in negativity. Be- h has investigated the n sociosexuality and re- nonromantic relation- ctions about interaction romantic peers, such as ose friends, were some- owever, theoretical ac- he beliefs and emotions romantic relationships rning platonic relation- e Ainsworth, 1989; Bel- s possibility led us to an- who have nonoptimal tips (in terms of emo- ght also suffer such dec- romantic relationships. icted individuals' unre- negatively associated in romantic relation- ings described by Simp- (1991a, 1992), we pro- 3-month time interval,

those higher in sociosexuality would be less likely to be dating the same partners than those lower in sociosexuality.

In the current study, we utilized interaction diaries (Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977) to study the social interaction patterns of persons who varied in their levels of sociosexuality. These interaction diaries, known as Rochester Interaction Records (RIRs) (Reis, 1986), have been used to assess aspects of daily interaction (i.e., the length and frequency of interactions or the subjects' perceptions of the level of intimacy in, and satisfaction with, interactions) and allowed us to examine our research predictions directly.

Method

Participants

The participants included 41 female (age: $M = 18.89$, $SD = 1.10$, range = 17–23 years) and 30 male (age: $M = 19.87$, $SD = 2.92$, range = 17–28 years) introductory psychology students from Texas A&M University who received partial course credit for participating. Of these subjects, 43 were freshmen, 17 were sophomores, 8 were juniors or seniors, and 3 subjects' classifications were unknown. Data from an additional 4 women and 10 men were dropped because they did not follow instructions completely (i.e., they were below the scale midpoint on self-rated accuracy or failed to record at least 70% of their interactions).

Measurement

Sociosexuality Orientation Inventory (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991a). This 7-item scale assesses five components of individuals' sexuality. Three components concern overt sexual behaviors, including (1) the number of sexual partners they have had in the past year, (2) the number of one-night stands they have ever had, and (3) the estimated number of sexual partners they predict having during the next 5 years. Two additional components assess covert sexual behaviors, including (1) the frequency with which they

fantasize about having sex with someone other than their current dating partner, and (2) their attitudes toward engaging in casual sex and sex without commitment. The attitude component is computed by summing the responses on the three attitude items into a single attitude score. The subjects' responses on the five components are aggregated to form a composite value, such that higher scores indicate higher levels of sexual unrestrictedness.

Procedure

Stage 1: Introductory sessions. Introductory sessions were used to explain the week-long diary study to subjects and to recruit them for participation. In groups ranging from 13 to 23 persons, 76 female and 65 male subjects came to one of eight introductory sessions led by two female experimenters. After completing the Sociosexuality Orientation Inventory (SOI) (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991a), which was embedded in a battery of other personality measures, subjects were told that the purpose of the study was to investigate the naturally occurring daily interactions people have.

Subjects then received packets containing (1) a modified set of Wheeler and Nezlek's (1977) Rochester Interaction Records (RIRs), (2) a Partner Name/Initial list, and (3) a summarized set of written instructions. The RIRs included measures of interaction intimacy, self-disclosure and other disclosure, self-support and other support, pleasantness, conflict, and satisfaction, as well as ratings of the degree to which the subjects felt rejected, appreciated, hurt, sexually interested, accepted, imposed upon, and embarrassed. All variables were rated on 7-point scales, with higher numbers indicating stronger agreement. Detailed instructions were given on completing the RIRs (see Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977, for an example of these instructions). To ensure anonymity of partners, subjects were instructed to write only their interaction partners' initials on the RIRs. The partners' full names were kept on a separate form, the Partner/Name Initial list, which

was used during the follow-up session to assist subjects in remembering who their partners were.

The subjects were asked to delay committing to the full 7-day study until they had completed the forms during a 1-day trial period. If the subjects then decided to participate, they were instructed to meet with the experimenters. Of the 141 subjects, 60% enrolled in the complete study. A post-hoc analysis was conducted to test whether those who chose to enroll in the study differed in their average levels of sociosexuality from those who chose not to enroll, and this analysis indicated no significant differences ($p > .25$). Thus, at least on the sociosexuality variable, participants and non-participants were comparable.

Stage 2: Individual meetings. Subjects met briefly and individually with the experimenters in a session that was designed both to enhance commitment to the study and also to collect demographic information (i.e., age, year in school, ethnicity). The experimenters also examined the subjects' completed forms for the trial period, corrected any mistakes made in completing the forms, and answered any questions the subjects had. After reviewing the instructions for the subjects, the experimenters distributed sets of RIRs for the first two days of the study. The subjects also signed up for a 30-minute follow-up session scheduled to take place at the end of the data-collection period.

Stage 3: Data-collection period. The following morning, subjects began the 7-day completion of RIRs for each interaction they had lasting 10 minutes or longer. The completed forms were collected two to three times during the week in an attempt to minimize the chance that the subjects would forget to complete their forms. Those who did not turn in forms at the designated times were removed from the study. Additional interaction records were distributed as needed, and on the last collection day the subjects were reminded about the follow-up session.

Stage 4: Follow-up sessions. During the follow-up meeting, subjects handed in all remaining RIR forms and then indicated on 7-point scales (anchored by *not at all* and *very much*) the difficulty that they had in completing the RIRs, the degree to which the study interfered with their interactions, and how accurate they believed both their own and the others' interaction records were. Similarly, subjects were asked to estimate the percentage of interactions that they did not record.

Subjects identified the initials they used on the RIRs to represent their mothers, fathers, siblings, three closest same- and opposite-sex friends, best friends, and dating partners. Of the 71 participants included in the final analyses, 45 reported being currently involved in a romantic relationship. The participants rated each of these partners as well as all other interaction partners on the degree to which they perceived their partners to be physically attractive. Finally, the subjects were asked, under no obligation, if they would agree to receive a phone call at the end of the semester to answer a few questions about the study in which they just had participated. Of the 71 subjects, 53 included in the analyses agreed; of these subjects, 51 were contacted successfully (37 of whom had had a dating partner at the time of data collection).

Stage 5: Phone follow-up. Three months after the follow-up session, the experimenters phoned the subjects and asked them a series of questions about the partners with whom they had interacted during the study. The subjects who indicated having been involved in romantic relationships at the time of the data collection were asked whether they were still dating that same person.

Results

Preliminary findings

Scale scores on the SOI were computed using the weighting procedure discussed by Simpson and Gangestad (1991a); a reliability analysis of the SOI items yielded a

Cronbach's alpha of .80. Scores ranged from 6 to 112. Men's scores on the SOI ranged from 6 to 112 ($M = 39.75$), women's scores ranged from 6 to 112 ($M = 19.19$, $SD = 16.52$). A significant difference was found between men and women ($t(69) = 4.35$, $p < .01$).

The top half of Table 1 shows the distribution regarding the accuracy of interaction records. On average, the participants reported a difficulty of recording interactions on the degree to which interactions interfered with their interactions well below the scale midpoint. The accuracy with which they reported interactions to keep accurate records was high, and they reported that their records had been even more accurate than the actual fact, subjects, on average, reported less than 10% of the interactions that they did not record.

Number of interactions

Across all partners, subjects reported an average of 6.41 interactions per day during the week (6.41 of which were with dating partners; 41.45 of which were with family members (see Table 1).¹ The mean number of interactions per day reported during the study is consistent with the mean number of interactions per day reported in a diary study (DePaulo, Kashy, & Epstein, 1995; Kashy & Neuzlek, 1977). A multivariate analysis was computed treating the number of interactions within-subjects factor and the number of interactions between-subjects factor. A significant sex difference in the number of interactions was found ($F(1, 69) = 10.10$, such that women

1. Data for family members were not included in the analyses presented here. The analyses were intended to examine interactions with siblings relative to the other research participants. The mean number of interactions with family members during the study days the mean number of interactions with family members was only 3.43.

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Cronbach's alpha of .75. Scores on the SOI ranged from 6 to 112, with a mean of 27.88. Men's scores on the inventory ranged from 6 to 112 ($M = 39.75$, $SD = 23.34$), whereas women's scores ranged from 6 to 91 ($M = 19.19$, $SD = 16.52$). A significant mean difference was found between the two sexes, $t(69) = 4.35$, $p < .01$.

The top half of Table 1 presents information regarding the accuracy with which the participants reported their interactions. On average, the participants rated both the difficulty of recording their interactions and the degree to which recording such interactions interfered with their daily routines well below the scale midpoint (4.0). The accuracy with which they perceived others to keep accurate records was fairly high, and they reported feeling that they had been even more accurate than the others. In fact, subjects, on average, reported omitting less than 10% of their interactions.

Number of interactions

Across all partners, the participants reported an average of 44.90 interactions during the week (6.41 interactions per day), 41.45 of which were with nonfamily members (see Table 1).¹ Notably, the number of interactions per day reported in the present study is consistent with the number of interactions per day reported in other diary research (DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1995; Kashy, 1991; Wheeler & Nezlek, 1977). A mixed-model ANOVA was computed treating sex of partner as the within-subjects factor and subject sex as the between-subjects factor. A marginally significant sex difference in the number of interactions was found, $F(1, 66) = 3.01$, $p < .10$, such that women reported significantly

more interactions ($M = 45.88$, $SD = 22.93$) than men ($M = 35.40$, $SD = 15.19$). This main effect was qualified by a significant same- versus opposite-sex effect, $F(1, 66) = 18.72$, $p < .01$. Women had an average of 23.66 interactions with female partners and 17.48 interactions with male partners, whereas men had 10.75 interactions with female partners and 22.40 interactions with male partners.

To assess whether sociosexuality related to the frequency of social interaction, the total number of interactions and the number of interactions with male partners and with female partners were computed for each subject, and these totals were correlated with the SOI. For the female subjects, sociosexuality level did partially relate, as predicted, to the total number of interactions and number of opposite-sex interactions (all interactions: $r(41) = .29$, $p = .06$; interactions with women: $r(41) = .03$, n.s.; interactions with men: $r(40) = .44$, $p < .01$). However, for men none of the totals correlated significantly with level of sociosexuality (all interactions: $r(30) = .09$; interactions with women: $r(29) = -.21$; interactions with men: $r(30) = .14$).

Number of partners

On average, the male subjects interacted with a total of 25.77 ($SD = 11.54$) different partners during the week, 17.7 on average ($SD = 8.99$) of whom were men and 8.07 on average ($SD = 5.41$) of whom were women. The female subjects on average interacted with a total of 21.44 ($SD = 8.65$) different partners during the week, 9.80 on average ($SD = 5.87$) of whom were men and 11.63 on average ($SD = 4.85$) of whom were women. A subject-sex-by-partner-sex mixed ANOVA, with number of partners as the dependent variable, yielded a marginally significant main effect for subject sex, $F(1, 69) = 3.27$, $p = .08$, indicating that men tended to interact with more partners during the week than women. A significant main effect for partner sex, $F(1, 69) = 17.43$, $p < .01$, indicated that there were more male partners than female partners. How-

1. Data for family members were removed from all of the analyses presented in this article. We initially intended to examine interactions with parents and siblings relative to those with acquaintances, but our research participants reported relatively few interactions with family members (across the 7 days the mean number of interactions with family members was only 3.45).

Table 1. Accuracy of RIRs, number of interactions reported, and means for the RIR composites

Interaction diaries ^a	Difficulty	Accuracy	Percent omitted	Interference	Other's Accuracy
<i>M</i>	2.37	2.24	8.38	2.04	3.31
<i>SD</i>	1.44	.80	7.11	1.27	1.19
RIR Composites ^b	Number of interactions	Closeness	Quality	Negativity	Sexual Interest
<i>M</i>	41.45	3.57	5.25	1.81	1.81
<i>SD</i>	20.57	1.00	.87	.38	.76

^aDifficulty and Interference were rated from (1) *not at all* to (7) *very much*. Accuracy and Others' Accuracy were rated from (1) *very accurate* to (7) *not at all accurate*.

^bMeans were computed by averaging ratings across all interactions, where ratings were (1) *not at all/very little* and (7) *a great deal*. $N = 71$.

ever, these two effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $F(1, 69) = 37.60, p < .01$; subjects interacted with more same-sex partners than opposite-sex partners.

The question of whether sociosexuality relates to the size of same- and opposite-sex social networks was addressed by correlating the SOI with the total number of partners, the number of male partners, and the number of female partners with whom subjects interacted during the week. As predicted, a significant positive correlation between the SOI and numbers of male partners was found for female subjects, $r(41) = .45, p < .01$. The correlation between the total number of partners and the SOI was marginally positive for women, $r(41) = .26, p = .10$, and the correlation with female partners was small and negative, $r(41) = -.08, p > .25$. For men, although a positive pattern emerged, none of the three correlations attained statistical significance (female partners: $r(30) = .30, p = .11$; total partners: $r(30) = .29, p = .12$; male partners: $r(30) = .19, p > .25$).

Analysis of RIR variables

The 17 rating variables measured by the RIR were factor-analyzed in an effort to reduce the number of interaction variables into meaningful composites. The factor analysis, using principal factors with a vari-

max rotation, indicated a three-factor solution. The first factor, Closeness, was formed by averaging ratings on intimacy, I disclosed, other disclosed, I supported other, and other supported me; this factor yielded an alpha of .84. The second factor, Quality, was formed by averaging ratings of interaction pleasantness, satisfaction, and feelings of belonging/acceptance; it yielded an alpha of .84. The third factor, Negativity, was created by averaging ratings of feelings of rejection, hurt, being imposed/intruded upon, lack of being appreciated, and conflict; this factor had an alpha of .72. The variables of interaction duration, embarrassed, and sexually interested did not relate strongly to any of these factors. However, Sexual Interest was retained as a single indicator variable because of its particular relevance to the present research.

The overall means for the ratings of interaction Closeness, Quality, Negativity, and Sexual Interest are included in the bottom half of Table 1. The means of these four variables were computed for each subject across all of his or her interactions, and these subject-level means were then correlated with scores on the SOI to examine whether sociosexuality level relates to general interaction outcomes. No such relationships were found for either men or women.

The interaction data were further analyzed using a multilevel approach in which

interactions are nested partners are nested Raudenbush, 1992; Kashy, & Bolger, in subject interacts with hi ners, and with each have multiple inte analysis focuses on partners as well as cl jects, only data from single partner, 2,32 total of 3,188, are i involves a series of l gressions and is esp multiple characteristics are to be examined

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2. Dummy codes for in thers, and siblings, in romantic partner, we remove family membe mere acquaintances. I actions with family n regression results per will not be discussed.

Means for the RIR

Measure	Other's Accuracy
Accuracy	3.31
Reliability	1.19
Measure	Sexual Interest
Mean	1.81
SD	.76

Accuracy and Others' Accuracy

Reliability (1) not at all/very little

tested a three-factor solution. Closeness, was formed based on intimacy, I disapproved, I supported other, and me; this factor yielded the second factor, Quality, including ratings of interaction satisfaction, and feelings of interest; it yielded an alpha of .72. The variables of interest, embarrassed, and did not relate strongly to the factors. However, Sexual Interest was included as a single indicator due to its particular relevance to the study.

Means for the ratings of intimacy, Quality, Negativity, and Sexual Interest are included in the bottom table. The means of these four variables were computed for each subject based on their interactions, and the means were then correlated with the SOI to examine whether intimacy level relates to general SOI scores. No such relationship was found for either men or women. The data were further analyzed using a hierarchical approach in which

interactions are nested within partners and partners are nested within subjects (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; Dielman, 1983; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, in press). That is, each subject interacts with his or her own set of partners, and with each partner the subject may have multiple interactions. Because this analysis focuses on characteristics of the partners as well as characteristics of the subjects, only data from interactions involving a single partner, 2,324 interactions out of a total of 3,188, are included. This approach involves a series of hierarchically nested regressions and is especially useful when multiple characteristics of interaction partners are to be examined in a single analysis.

In the present analysis, the effects of partner sex, as well as the effects of partner role (whether the partner is the subject's best friend or romantic partner), were examined. Our analysis addressed the question of whether sociosexuality relates to interaction outcomes with "special" peers (Kashy, 1995). Note that one restriction was made in the categorization of best friends. If subjects indicated that their romantic partner was also their best friend, then those partners were categorized as romantic partners only, and such subjects were treated as if they did not identify best friends. This situation applied in 24 cases (12 women and 12 men).

In the first part of the analysis, a regression equation was computed for each subject, with partner as the unit of analysis. The average interaction outcome with each partner served as the criterion measure in a regression for which partner sex (coded women = 1, men = -1) and dummy codes—indicating whether either the best friend or romantic partner was involved in the interaction—served as the predictors.² These regressions yielded a set of four coefficients for each subject. There was an inter-

cept, estimating the subject's average rating of interactions with partners who were acquaintances (individuals other than family members, friends, or romantic partners), a partner sex coefficient indicating whether the subject rated interactions with female partners more positively than he or she rated interactions with male partners, as well as two coefficients indicating the mean difference between interactions with acquaintances and interactions involving best friends and romantic partners, respectively.

The four coefficients were then treated individually as criterion scores in a set of four second-step regressions in which subject sex (also coded women = 1, men = -1), subject's level of sociosexuality as measured by the standardized SOI score, and the interaction between these two variables were predictors. When the first-step intercepts were the outcome measure and subject sex and SOI score were predictors, the regression resulted in an intercept that was the grand mean of scores for partners who were not included as special partners (acquaintances). This regression also yielded a subject sex coefficient, testing whether men's interactions with acquaintances differed from women's interactions, an SOI coefficient testing whether SOI predicted interaction outcomes with acquaintances, and an SOI by subject sex interaction. A significant subject sex effect emerged only for Sexual Interest, such that, on average, men reported feeling more sexually interested in their interactions with acquaintances than women by about one-half of a point ($M = 2.13$ for men, and $M = 1.63$ for women; $t(33) = 3.02$, $p < .01$). Consistent with the results of the simple correlational analysis between the SOI and overall averages of the four interaction outcome measures reported earlier, no relationships between the SOI and average interaction outcomes for interactions with acquaintances emerged.

The second-step regression, in which the partner sex coefficients were the criterion scores, yielded estimates of the average partner sex and same-sex versus opposite-sex effects on the outcome measure, estimates of the differential effect of the SOI in

2. Dummy codes for interactions with mothers, fathers, and siblings, in addition to best friend and romantic partner, were included in the analysis to remove family members from comparison group of mere acquaintances. Because relatively few interactions with family members were reported, the regression results pertaining to family interactions will not be discussed.

interactions involving male and female partners, and estimates of the differential effect of the SOI in same-sex versus opposite-sex interactions. For Quality and Negativity, none of these effects attained statistical significance. For Closeness and Sexual Interest, both partner sex and same-sex versus opposite-sex effects were found, such that subjects felt more Closeness and Sexual Interest in interactions with female partners (Closeness: $M = 3.42$ for male partners, and $M = 3.64$ for female partners, $t(65) = 2.29, p = .03$; Sexual Interest: $M = 1.63$ for male partners, $M = 2.13$ for female partners, $t(33) = 3.12, p < .01$) and in their opposite-sex interactions (Closeness: $M = 3.43$ for same-sex interactions, $M = 3.63$ for opposite sex, $t(65) = 2.07, p = .04$; Sexual Interest: $M = 1.08$ for same-sex interactions, and $M = 2.68$ for opposite-sex, $t(33) = 10.05, p < .01$). No relationships between the SOI and partner sex or same-sex versus opposite-sex effects were found.

In the first of the two remaining second-step regressions, the criterion scores were the coefficients estimating the mean difference between interactions with acquaintances and interactions with best friends. In the other second-step regression, the criterion scores were the coefficients estimating the mean difference between interactions with acquaintances and romantic partners. Consider first the intercepts from these two regressions. The intercepts estimated the average difference between ratings of interactions with acquaintances and interactions with the special partner (best friend or romantic partner). Interactions with best friends were about one-half point higher in Closeness ($M = 3.53$ for acquaintances, $M = 4.04$ for best friends, $t(34) = 2.21, p = .03$) and Quality ($M = 5.12$ for acquaintances, $M = 5.68$ for best friends, $t(33) = 3.25, p < .01$). There were no mean differences in Negativity or Sexual Interest for best friends relative to acquaintances. Interactions with romantic partners were rated, on average, over 1 point higher than acquaintances in Closeness ($M = 4.67$ for romantic partners, $t(37) = 5.16, p < .01$), 3/4 point higher in Quality ($M = 5.84$ for romantic partners,

$t(37) = 3.51, p < .01$), and almost 2 points higher in Sexual Interest ($M = 1.88$ for acquaintances, $M = 3.81$ for romantic partners, $t(14) = 5.79, p < .01$).³ As was true for best friends, Negativity in interactions with romantic partners did not differ from acquaintance interactions.

Although the subject sex coefficients from both the best friend and romantic partner regressions did not show any significant mean-level sex differences, there were several significant relationships between the SOI and interaction outcomes with these two special partners. The regression coefficients for SOI alone and the interaction between SOI and subject sex are presented in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, subjects scoring higher on the SOI had interactions with their best friends that were rated as significantly lower in overall Quality. Recall that scores on the SOI were standardized, and so a b -weight of $-.33$ indicates that a subject 1 standard deviation above the mean on the SOI reported interactions with best friends that were .66 points lower in Quality than a subject 1 standard deviation below the mean on the SOI. Thus, subjects who were relatively unrestricted (i.e., had higher scores on the SOI) had interactions with their best friends that were lower in pleasantness, satisfaction, and feelings of belonging. A similar trend for Closeness appeared, but did not attain statistical significance ($p = .17$). Subjects higher on the SOI also reported feeling lower levels of Sexual Interest in interactions with their best friends. The SOI did not relate to Negativity experienced in interactions with best friends. Finally, as is apparent from the coefficients estimating the interactions between subject sex and SOI (these measure whether the effect of SOI differs for men and women), the effects of the SOI were consistent across subject sex.

3. Degrees of freedom were small for tests of Sexual Interest because, for a number of subjects, ratings of sexual interest did not vary at all from partner to partner. Results for this variable should be considered suggestive.

Table 2. *F* interaction

Closeness
Quality
Negativity
Sexual Interest

Note: Subject sex
† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$.

Table 2 also indicates that SOI relates somewhat to interaction quality with romantic partners. Subjects who were higher on the SOI had interactions with romantic partners that were rated as significantly lower in overall Quality than individuals lower on the SOI. Surprisingly, subjects who were higher on the SOI also reported feeling lower levels of Sexual Interest in interactions with their romantic partner. This effect was a significant interaction between SOI and Sex. Men higher in SOI had interactions with romantic partners that were sexually interested (i.e., $b = -1.63$). The SOI showed only a small relationship with Sexual Interest in interactions with romantic partners.

Perceptions of the partner

In the follow-up study, subjects were asked to rate their perceptions of their

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Table 2. Regression coefficients using sociosexuality (SOI) to predict interaction outcomes with best friends and romantic partners

	Best Friend		Romantic Partner	
	SOI	SOI × Subject Sex	SOI	SOI × Subject Sex
Closeness	-.22	.01	-.03	-.13
Quality	-.33**	.03	-.20	.09
Negativity	.02	.01	.28†	-.22
Sexual Interest	-.18*	-.05	-.89*	.74*

Note: Subject sex is coded women = 1; men = -1.
† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 2 also indicates that sociosexuality relates somewhat to interaction outcomes with romantic partners. Specifically, subjects who were higher in sociosexuality had interactions with romantic partners that involved marginally greater levels of Negativity than individuals lower in sociosexuality. Surprisingly, subjects higher in sociosexuality also reported feeling less sexually interested in their interactions with their romantic partner. This effect was qualified by a significant interaction with subject sex. Men higher in SOI felt particularly less sexually interested with their romantic partner ($b = -1.63$), whereas for women, SOI showed only a small negative relationship with Sexual Interest in interactions with romantic partners ($b = -.16$).

Perceptions of the partners

In the follow-up session, subjects were asked to rate their partners on the dimen-

sion of physical attractiveness, which was embedded in other partner-perception questions. Analyses revealed that the SOI correlated negatively with the subjects' perceptions of their romantic partner's physical attractiveness (Women: $r(31) = -.37$, $p = .04$; Men: $r(15) = -.41$, $p = .13$).

Longevity of the romantic relationship

Finally, a two-way ANOVA, which treated relationship status (still together/broken up) and subject sex as independent variables and level of SOI as the dependent variable, was conducted. This analysis tested whether subjects higher in SOI were more or less likely to have ended their romantic relationships after a 3-month interval. The mean SOI scores for the four cells are included in Table 3. Although the sample sizes (indicated in parentheses) were small, a significant interaction was found, $F(1, 33) = 4.68$, $p < .05$, suggesting, as pre-

Table 3. Mean SOI scores of subjects who broke up or remained together

Subject sex	Dating Status	
	Broke up	Remained together
Men	26.67 (3)	40.21 (10)
Women	35.69 (7)	16.35 (17)
Total	32.99 (10)	25.19 (27)

Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of subjects in each cell. Scores on the SOI range from 6-112, with a mean of 27.88 across the whole sample.

dicted, that women who had broken up with their romantic partners had higher levels of sociosexuality than women who were still together with their partners. However, men who had broken up with their romantic partners actually had levels of sociosexuality that were lower than those of men who were still with their partners.

Discussion

The current study is among the first relating sexual attitudes and behaviors to elements of everyday social life; taken as a whole, it suggests that sexual attitudes and behaviors are related to some aspects of daily social interaction. Our first prediction, that individuals higher in sociosexuality would be more socially active, received partial support. The number of interactions engaged in during the week related to scores on the SOI for female but not for male subjects. Specifically, women scoring higher on sociosexuality had more interactions with male partners than women lower in sociosexuality.

We also predicted that sociosexuality would relate to social network size, particularly for opposite-sex social networks. Clear support for our prediction was found with female participants. Women higher in sociosexuality interacted with a greater number of opposite-sex partners than women scoring lower on the SOI. The results for men revealed the same trends, although they did not attain statistical significance.

Predictably, interactions with close friends and romantic partners were on average rated as more intimate and pleasant than those with acquaintances. More importantly, the results indicated that interactions with best friends were significantly lower in Quality (a composite of pleasantness, satisfaction, and feelings of acceptance) for subjects scoring higher on sociosexuality. A nonsignificant trend in the same direction suggested that interactions with best friends also may involve less Closeness for individuals who are relatively high in sociosexuality.

Why are interactions with best friends of lower quality for individuals higher in sociosexuality? On the one hand, this finding may arise from the way in which best friends perceive and behave toward their friends who are high in sociosexuality. Some support for this explanation is provided by a study of the dating, friendship, and marriage desirability of a target person based on the target's sexual activity. In this study, Sprecher, McKinney, and Orbuch (1991) found that both men and women rated the friendship desirability of a target with more sexual experience lower than that of a target with less sexual experience. Therefore, it may be that individuals who are higher in sociosexuality have best friends who do not value them as highly as the best friends of individuals lower in sociosexuality. Consequently, best friends' behavior for those who are relatively unrestricted may be less positive (and perhaps more disapproving); thus, interactions with these friends might be perceived to be of lower quality.

On the other hand, those high in sociosexuality may be more directly responsible for their lack of quality in interactions with their best friends. That is, individuals higher in sociosexuality, relative to those who are lower, might not value their interactions with nonromantic partners because time and effort expended in interactions with platonic best friends may take away from time and effort expended in interactions that could lead to sexual outcomes. Given the null results for Negativity, individuals higher in sociosexuality do not seem to engage actively in more conflict with their best friends; rather, it seems that they are just more disengaged than are individuals lower in sociosexuality. Another possibility is that individuals higher in sociosexuality view their best friends as potential "competitors" in the heterosexual domain. College students might date different individuals from the same circles of friends. If this is the case, those higher in sociosexuality might be more cognizant of their friends as potential competitors. Indeed, men and women scoring high on

measures of sexual activity were found to score higher on measures of self-monitoring, competitiveness, extroversion, and sociability (Eysenck, 1976; Simpson, 1991b; Snyder et al., 1991; Bone, Neary, Mangin, & Hines, 1972), suggesting that individuals higher in sociosexuality view their best friends from a competitive perspective. Thus, individuals may be overvaluing their friends and keeping them at a distance.

Partial support was also found for our prediction concerning the relationship between sociosexuality and romantic outcomes with romantic partners. It appears that those high in sociosexuality perceived somewhat lower quality in their interactions. This may be in part because the sociosexuality focus is on sexual avenues rather than on emotional ones. Her current romantic relationship proposition is supported for individuals higher in sociosexuality reported being less satisfied with their romantic partners as less physically attractive. Simpson and Gangestad (1991) found that individuals high in sociosexuality had romantic partners who were less physically attractive. Independent observers. However, in this study, the subjects themselves rated the attractiveness of their best friends, although these partners were not necessarily more attractive, it is possible that individuals high in sociosexuality appreciate the quality of their relationships once the partners have been chosen. Certainly, if individuals high in sociosexuality are more socially visible, they may have a large number of potential partners who may hold higher competition for them in terms of physical attractiveness. As a consequence, their partners' assets may be less valued.

Finally, we proposed that individuals higher in sociosexuality would have more

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measures of sexuality level have been found to score higher on personality measures of self-monitoring, dominance, aggressiveness, extroversion, and disinhibition (Eysenck, 1976; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991b; Snyder et al., 1986; Zuckerman, Bone, Neary, Mangelsdorf, & Brustman, 1972), suggesting that individuals higher in sociosexuality view the world from a more competitive perspective. Accordingly, such individuals may be on guard with their best friends and keep them at a distance.

Partial support was also garnered for our prediction concerning the relationship between sociosexuality level and interaction outcomes with romantic partners. It appears that those higher in sociosexuality perceived somewhat greater negativity in their interactions. This negativity may result in part because the individual high in sociosexuality focuses upon finding new sexual avenues rather than focusing on his or her current romantic relationship. This proposition is supported by the finding that individuals higher in sociosexuality reported being less sexually interested in their romantic partners and rated these partners as less physically attractive. Simpson and Gangestad (1992) actually found that individuals higher in sociosexuality had romantic partners who were judged to be *more* physically attractive by independent observers. However, in the current study, the subjects themselves rated the attractiveness of their romantic partners, and although these partners may be objectively more attractive, it is possible that individuals high in sociosexuality denigrate or fail to appreciate the qualities of their partners once the partners have been acquired. Certainly, if individuals higher in sociosexuality are more socially visible and interact with a large number of potential partners, they may hold higher comparison levels for alternatives (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) both in terms of physical attractiveness and sexual interest. As a consequence, the current partners' assets may be devalued.

Finally, we proposed that individuals higher in sociosexuality relative to those lower would have more unstable relation-

ships. This prediction also received partial support. Women who broke up with their partners were on average higher in sociosexuality than those who were still together. This finding supports the contention that individuals higher in sociosexuality may be less committed and more likely to have relationships that do not withstand time and other trials. Unexpectedly, the results also indicated that men who broke up with their partners were actually lower in sociosexuality. Although the number of men who were no longer dating their romantic partners was extremely small ($n = 3$), perhaps reflecting only sampling error, an alternative interpretation for the gender difference might be derived from differences in men's and women's roles in relationships. Specifically, Hill, Rubin, and Peplau (1976) found that, in undergraduate breakups before marriage, women were more likely than men to be the precipitators of breakups. If women tend to have control over relationship dissolution, then women's levels of sociosexuality might be more influential than men's levels in predicting breakups. Our data seem to support this contention.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the present study, one of which was that random sampling was sacrificed to ensure that the subjects who participated in the study would be highly committed to the study and would contribute accurate data. This method of subject recruitment may have provided a nonrepresentative sample. We were able to test for mean differences in sociosexuality scores between participants and nonparticipants. Although there were no systematic differences on this variable, we cannot rule out the possibility that our sample was biased in some way. It is the case that the mean levels of sociosexuality found in the current study were somewhat lower, particularly for men, than those reported by Simpson and Gangestad (1991a).

A second limitation was the sample size. A number of tests conducted had low power,

particularly those tests conducted separately for men ($n = 30$) and women ($n = 41$). This problem was evident for the correlations between sociosexuality and amount of social interaction, size of social network, and attractiveness ratings of romantic partners. These correlations attained statistical significance for female subjects but not for male subjects, even though the correlations for men were sometimes larger in magnitude. A related issue is the fact that we had to exclude a number of best friends because they were also nominated as romantic partners. This procedure reduced the power of the multilevel analyses; thus, in the future, we recommend explicitly requesting subjects to list platonic best friends.

Conclusions

The present study described the daily interaction outcomes of individuals varying in their levels of sociosexuality. The results of this study show that, on the whole, women higher in sociosexuality seem to be more gregarious, particularly when interacting with male partners. At the same time, neither men nor women higher in sociosexuality experienced the same quality of interactions with their best friends as those lower in sociosexuality. Such findings contribute to our understanding of sexuality and close relationships by providing some initial evidence that the level of one's

sociosexuality has implications beyond the scope of dating relationships and, in fact, relates to the number and characteristics of the daily social interactions one has with best friends as well as with other nonromantic interaction partners. Future studies that focus on the causal mechanisms may help to clarify the precise connection between sociosexuality and everyday social interaction with both platonic close friends and romantic partners.

This study contributes one of the first examinations of sexuality using a daily interaction diary approach. Such an examination enabled us to raise and address questions regarding sexuality that are inaccessible using other research paradigms. We suggest that future research might include a revised version of the RIR that more directly measures other important variables relating to characteristics of social interactions that are particularly relevant in sexuality research (i.e., whether the individual observed or exhibited flirtatious behavior, whether the individual experienced sexual thoughts during the interaction, or whether the person physically touched or was touched by the interaction partner). Given the association we observed between sociosexuality and social interaction, we are optimistic that future studies employing such a revised interaction diary have the potential to contribute greatly to the understanding of sexuality and close relationships.

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implications beyond the relationships and, in fact, their characteristics of interactions one has with them as with other nonromantic partners. Future studies on causal mechanisms may provide a precise connection between the platonic close friendships.

Contributes one of the first examinations using a daily interaction analysis. Such an examination addresses questions that are inaccessible using traditional paradigms. We suggest that future studies might include a revised model that more directly measures variables relating to social interactions that are not at present in sexuality research. Individual observed or expected behavior, whether the individual had sexual thoughts during the interaction, or whether the person was touched by the partner. Given the association between sociosexuality and social interaction, we are optimistic that furthering such a revised interaction model has the potential to contribute to a better understanding of sexuality relationships.

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