What's in it for Me?
An Investigation of the Impact of Sexual Narcissism in Sexual Relationships

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Communication

Global Communication
• Communication in relationships ultimately leads to higher relationship satisfaction (Lehmiller, VanderDrift, & Kelly, 2014)

Sexual Communication
• Communication that comes from sharing sexually intimate or private information is regarded as sexual communication (MacNeil & Byers, 2005)
Sexual Communication

• Communication about sexuality is elemental to the development and maintenance of satisfying sexual relationships (MacNeil and Byers, 2005)

• Better sexual communication is associated with greater sexual and overall satisfaction in close relationships (Byers & Demmons, 1999; Greene & Faulkner, 2005)

• The current study focused on this specific form of communication and investigated its relationship with sexual satisfaction
Self-Esteem

Global Self-Esteem

• Self-esteem has a significant positive relationship with sexual satisfaction (Larson, Anderson, Holman, & Niemann, 1998)

Sexual Esteem

• [One’s] affective reactions to [their] subjective appraisals of [their] sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors—in the more specific domain of sexuality (Menard & Offman, 2009; Oattes & Offman, 2007)
Sexual Esteem

• Sexual esteem has a significant positive relationship with sexual satisfaction (Menard & Offman, 2009; Oattes & Offman, 2007)

• Gender differences in sexual esteem have been found: males had higher overall sexual esteem scores than females (Oattes & Offman, 2007)

• The current study focused on this specific form of esteem and investigated its relationship with sexual satisfaction
Eight Facets of Sexual Motives

Operational Definition: The drive and wanting to engage in sexual behavior and or intercourse (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2007)

- In the Mood
- Negative Consequences of Refusing
- Personal Gain
- Social Benefits
- Fear of Physical Harm
- Strengthening the Relationship
- Not Intoxicated
- Not a Virgin
Sexual Motives

- Culture, social experiences, and biological factors influence motives toward or away from sex (Hatfield, Luckhurst, Rapson, 2010)
- Women and men seek out different motives for sex (Hatfield et al., 2010; Stephenson, Ahrold, & Meston, 2011)
- Sexual motives significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction (Impett & Tolman, 2006)
- The current study investigated sex differences in sexual motives in the community college population
Narcissism

Global Narcissism
• Links have been established between narcissism and sexual behaviors (Foster, Shrira, & Campbell, 2006; Hurlbert & Apt, 1991; Hurlbert, Apt, Gasar, Wilson, & Murphy, 1994; Widman & McNulty, 2010;)

Sexual Narcissism
• An egocentric pattern of sexual behavior
  o Preoccupation with the satisfaction of one’s own needs rather than with those of their partner (Hurlbert & Apt, 1991).
• Four domains (Widman & McNulty, 2010)
Sexual Narcissism

**Sexual Exploitation**
- The willingness and ability to manipulate another for sexual gain

**Sexual Entitlement**
- The belief that the fulfillment of one’s sexual desire is a personal right

**Low Sexual Empathy**
- General lack of empathy and devaluation of another person in sexual situations

**Perceived Sexual Skill**
- A tendency to hold a grandiose sense of sexual skill or an exaggerated sense of sexual success
Sexual Narcissism

- Previous research has shown:
  - A negative relationship between sexual satisfaction and sexual exploitation, sexual entitlement, low sexual empathy (Widman & McNulty, 2010)
  - A positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and perceived sexual skill (Widman & McNulty, 2010)

- The current study focused on the differential relationships of the narcissism domains with sexual variables, sex differences in sexual narcissism, and its indirect relationship with sexual satisfaction
Hypotheses

- **H1**: Different domains of sexual narcissism will have different relationships with sexual satisfaction
- **H2**: Different domains of sexual narcissism will have different relationships with sexual esteem
- **H3**: Different domains of sexual narcissism will have different sexual motives
- **H4**: Men and women will differ in their sexual narcissism
- **H5**: Men and women will differ in their sexual motives
- **H6**: Sexual narcissism moderates the relationship between sexual communication and sexual satisfaction
- **H7**: Sexual narcissism moderates the relationship between sexual esteem and sexual satisfaction
Methodology

Participants

• 156 community college students (age 18+) in Northeast Ohio enrolled in psychology classes
• Average age 23.38, 115 females/41 males, mostly Caucasian (75.60%) and unmarried (87.8%)
• 73.1% currently in intimate relationship, 43.6% of relationships are over 18 months in duration
• 82.7% reported 1-2 sexual partners during past 6 months

Procedure

• An online survey consisting of 120 questions assessing the five studied variables and demographics
Measures

- **Sexual Narcissism Scale** (Widman & McNulty, 2010)
  - Sexual Exploitation- “I would be willing to trick a person to get them to have sex with me”; $\alpha = .76$
  - Sexual Entitlement- “I feel I deserve sexual activity when I am in the mood for it”; $\alpha = .80$
  - Low Sexual Empathy- “The feelings of my sexual partner don’t usually concern me”; $\alpha = .79$
  - Perceived Sexual Skill- “My sexual partners think I am fantastic in bed”; $\alpha = .86$
  - Full Scale $\alpha = .85$
Measures

• **Sexual Esteem Scale**  (Snell & Papini, 1989)
  - “I am a good sexual partner”; $\alpha = .92$

• **Sexual Communication Scale**  (Wheeless, Wheeless, & Baus, 1984)
  - “I tell my partner when I am especially sexually satisfied”; $\alpha = .92$

• **Sexual Satisfaction Scale**  (Stulhofer, Busko, & Brouillard, 2010)
  - “The intensity of my sexual arousal”; $\alpha = .90-.93$

• **Sexual Wanting Questionnaire for Motives**  (Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2011)
  - “I found the other person physically attractive”
  - all subscales $\alpha = .72 - .95$
Results

H1: Different domains of sexual narcissism will have different relationships with sexual satisfaction

• Low sexual empathy had a significant negative relationship with sexual satisfaction ($r(154) = -0.35, p = 0.00$)

• Perceived sexual skill had a significant positive relationship with sexual satisfaction ($r(154) = 0.51, p = 0.00$)

• Exploitation ($r(154) = -0.01, p = 0.87$) and entitlement ($r(154) = 0.15, p = 0.07$) were not significantly related to sexual satisfaction
Results

H2: Different domains of sexual narcissism will have different relationships with sexual esteem

- **Sexual exploitation** had a significant positive relationship with sexual esteem ($r(154) = .22, p = .01$)
- **Sexual entitlement** had a significant positive relationship with sexual esteem ($r(154) = .35, p = .00$)
- **Perceived sexual skill** had a significant positive relationship with sexual esteem ($r(154) = .76, p = .04$)
- **Low sexual empathy** had a significant negative relationship with sexual esteem ($r(154) = -.17, p = .00$)
## Results

**H3: Different domains of sexual narcissism will have different sexual motives**

### Table 1

**Correlations Between Sexual Narcissism and Sexual Motive**

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* *p < .05  
** **p < .01
H3: Different domains of sexual narcissism will have different sexual motives

- Narcissism due to exploitation was significantly related to all motives
- Narcissism due to entitlement was significantly related to the motives of “in the mood,” “personal gain,” and “to strengthen the relationship”
- Narcissism due to low empathy was significantly related to “negative consequences of refusing,” “personal gain,” and “to strengthen the relationship”
- Narcissism due to perceived sexual skill was significantly related to “in the mood”

(Refer to Table 1)
Results

**H4: Men and women will differ in their sexual narcissism**

Men were significantly higher than women in the sexual exploitation facet of narcissism ($t(154) = 1.99, p = .048$)

**H5: Men and women will differ in their sexual motives**

Men were significantly higher than women in three facets of motives

- Social benefit ($t(154) = 3.35, p = .00$)
- Strengthening the relationship ($t(154) = 2.25, p = .03$)
- Not a virgin ($t(154) = 2.23, p = .03$)
Results

H6: Sexual narcissism moderates the relationship between sexual communication and sexual satisfaction

H7: Sexual narcissism moderates the relationship between sexual esteem and sexual satisfaction
Results

Figure 1. There is *marginal* support that narcissism due to entitlement was a moderator of the sexual communication-sexual satisfaction relationship. Though it is clear that those higher in sexual communication tended to be more sexually satisfied, entitlement intensified the importance of communication. At high communication levels, those who felt entitled to sex were more satisfied than those who did not feel entitled because their communication was successful in obtaining what they felt that they deserved.

\( \Delta R^2 = .02, p = .07 \)
Results

Figure 2. There is *marginal* support that narcissism due to having low empathy was a moderator of the sexual esteem-satisfaction relationship. When a person could sexually empathize with another person, then regardless of sexual esteem, they were more satisfied. However, when a person was narcissistic because they do not understand and relate to others sexual needs, sexual esteem really matters. Those who have low sexual esteem coupled with low empathy have low sexual satisfaction. The sexual satisfaction for narcissists with high sexual esteem was driven by their sexual esteem.
Results

Figure 3. There is *marginal* support that narcissism due to feeling highly skilled was a moderator of the sexual esteem-satisfaction relationship. For those who are not narcissistic, the level of sexual esteem did not affect sexual satisfaction. But for those who are narcissistic due to perceived high level of skill, sexual satisfaction was higher when their sexual esteem is low.

\[ \Delta R^2 = 0.02, \ p = 0.07 \]
Different domains of sexual narcissism showed different relationships with sexual satisfaction, sexual esteem, and sexual motives.

There was marginal support that sexual narcissism moderated the relationship between sexual satisfaction and sexual communication as well as the relationship between sexual satisfaction and sexual esteem.

- Continue investigation of sexual narcissism and its relationship to other variables to more fully understand sexual satisfaction.

Men and women differed in sexual narcissism and sexual motives.
Implications

- To more fully understand sexual satisfaction by investigating specific variables (sexual esteem, sexual communication, sexual narcissism) rather than global variables.

- Understanding sexual satisfaction to improve relationship satisfaction.

- To continue to investigate gender differences in sexual motives and sexual narcissism which may help in relationship counseling.
Limitations

• Restricted range of participant ages
• Would like a stronger sample size for males
• Extra credit was offered for taking the survey so people could have been quickly trying to get through it
• People may have become embarrassed when they started reading the questions and not answered truthfully
Future Research

• Compare married and unmarried groups to determine any differences in our hypotheses
• Investigate how gender plays a role in the study of narcissism and sexual satisfaction
• Include both parties of the relationship in the study to explore how a narcissist’s partner views the relationship and resulting sexual satisfaction
References


References


References


Image References


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