Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

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Sexual Ideology Instrument

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7. My understanding of my sexual needs coincides with my overall sense of sexual self.
8. I went through a period in my life when I was trying different forms of sexual expression.
9. My sexual values will always be open to exploration.
10. I know what my preferences are for expressing myself sexually.
11. I have a clear sense of the types of sexual activities I prefer.
12. I am actively experimenting with sexual activities that are new to me.
13. The ways I express myself sexually are consistent with all of the other aspects of my sexuality.
15. I do not know how to express myself sexually.
16. I have never clearly identified what my sexual values are.
17. The sexual activities I prefer are compatible with all of the other aspects of my sexuality.
18. I have never clearly identified what my sexual needs are.
19. I can see myself trying new ways of expressing myself sexually in the future.
20. I have a firm sense of what my sexual needs are.
21. My sexual orientation is not clear to me.
22. My sexual orientation is compatible all of the other aspects of my sexuality.

Scoring:

Exploration = 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 19
Commitment = 10, 11, 15, 16, 18, 20
Synthesis = 4, 7, 13, 17, 22
Sexual Orientation Identity Moratorium = 1, 15, 21

Reverse-scored items are listed in bold typeface. Subscale scores are obtained by averaging ratings on items receiving a response for each participant. Thus, if Item 17 is not rated by a specific respondent, only the remaining four items on the Synthesis subscale are used to obtain the average, and so on. This method ensures comparable scores when there are missing data.

*The 6-point rating scale follows each of the items.

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**Sexual Ideology Instrument**

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The original purpose of the Sexual Ideology Instrument (SII) was to test Reiss’s (1981, 1983, 1986) hypotheses about the sexual ideologies of Americans. Reiss proposed three sexual ideologies: Traditional Romantic, Modern Naturalistic, and Abstinence. A *sexual ideology* is a coherent set of beliefs regarding what is appropriate, acceptable, desirable, and innate sexual behavior. A *tenet* is a specific belief of an ideology. The SII contains scales and specific items designed to measure attitudes toward the tenets of the three ideologies and toward the four controversial topics mentioned below.

The five tenet types in the Reiss ideologies are concerned with *gender role equality*, the value of *body-centered sexuality*, the *power of sexual emotions*, the importance of *coital focus* in sexual relations, and the necessity of love for satisfactory sex or the *love need in sex*. These are described more specifically in Table 1, in conjunction with the three ideologies. Reiss also claimed that adherents of each ideology would have predictable attitudes on the following four areas of public controversy: abortion, gender genetic differences, pornography, and homosexuality. The expected views, as linked to each ideology, are also indicated in Table 1. Although the SII was originally constructed to test hypotheses about sexual ideologies, its use would also be appropriate in studies requiring assessment of a wide range of sexual attitudes. In addition, because the SII contains several small scales, the use of all or some of its scales would be appropriate in studies assessing many variables...
TABLE 1
Tenets and Attitudes of Sexual Ideologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenet Type 1. Gender Role Equality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic:</strong> Gender roles should be distinct and interdependent, with the male gender role as dominant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> Gender roles should be similar for males and females and should promote egalitarian participation in the society.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenet Type 2. Body-Centered Sexuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic:</strong> Body-centered sexuality is to be avoided by females.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> Body-centered sexuality is of less worth than person-centered sexuality, but it still has a positive value for both genders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstinence:</strong> Body-centered sexuality is to be avoided by males and females.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenet Type 3. Power of Sexual Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic:</strong> Sexuality is a very powerful emotion and one that should be particularly feared by females.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> One’s sexual emotions are strong but manageable, by both males and females, in the same way as are other basic emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstinence:</strong> Sexuality is a very powerful emotion and one that should be feared by males and females.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenet Type 4. Coital Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic:</strong> The major goal of sexuality is heterosexual coitus and that is where the man’s focus should be placed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> The major goals of sexuality are physical pleasure and psychological intimacy in a variety of sexual acts and this is so for both genders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenet Type 5. Love Need in Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic:</strong> Love redeems sexuality from its guilt, particularly for females.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> A wide range of sexuality should be accepted without guilt by both genders providing it does not involve force or fraud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstinence:</strong> Love redeems sexuality from guilt for males and females.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abortion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic</strong> and <strong>Abstinence:</strong> Laws should prohibit abortion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> Women should be allowed to make their own decisions about abortion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genetic Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic</strong> and <strong>Abstinence:</strong> Differences between men and women are due more to genetics than to social conditioning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> Differences between men and women are due more to social conditioning than to genetics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pornography</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic</strong> and <strong>Abstinence:</strong> Pornography produces harmful effects for society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> Most pornography does not produce harmful effects for society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homosexuality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional Romantic</strong> and <strong>Abstinence:</strong> Homosexuality is not acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modern Naturalistic:</strong> Homosexuality is acceptable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and where the length of the questionnaire is an important consideration.

**Description**

The SII is a 72-item questionnaire containing 15 scales. The response options to each item are *strongly agree* (1), *agree* (2), *undecided* (3), *disagree* (4), or *strongly disagree* (5). The items are ordered so that items in any one scale are not grouped together. Tenet Types 2, 3, and 5 each require a comparison of beliefs about males and females. Therefore, 15 pairs of equivalent male and female items are included. To reduce the tendency of respondents to give the same answer for pairs of equivalent items, they are placed on different pages. For the test sample, correlations between equivalent items ranged from .24 to .72, with the average equal to .56. Thus, for that sample, respondents in general did not answer these pairs of items identically.

Lottes (1983b) analyzed the psychometric properties of a preliminary version of the SII. The weakest items were eliminated. It was tested on a sample of 395 adults in the northeastern United States. This sample was composed of 259 students and 136 nonstudents, and contained 60% females and 40% males. For the students, the mean ages of both the males and females were 22. For the nonstudents, the mean ages of the males and females were 31 and 40, respectively. The SII is appropriate to administer to adults.

**Response Mode and Timing**

The SII is distributed with an answer sheet, preferably for computer scoring. Respondents indicate the number reflecting their agreement/disagreement with each item. The SII requires an average of 30 minutes for completion.

**Scoring**

To determine the score for each scale, add the responses (coded 1–5) to the individual items of the scale. The reverse-scored items are indicated by an asterisk in Table 2.
For the Gender Role Equality and Coital Focus scales, a high score indicates support for the Modern Naturalistic tenet and a low score indicates support for the Traditional Romantic tenet. For the four Body-Centered Sexuality scales, high scores on all scales indicate support for the Modern Naturalistic tenet, and low scores on all scales indicate support for the Abstinence tenet. Low scores on Body-Centered Sexuality scales 1 and 3 and a high score on scale 2 indicate support for the Traditional Romantic tenet (i.e., the view that body-centered sexuality is acceptable for men but not women). For the three Power of Sexual Emotions scales, high scores on all scales indicate support for the Modern Naturalistic tenet, and low scores on all scales indicate support for the Abstinence tenet. A high score for Power of Sexual Emotions scale 2 and a low score for scale 1 would indicate support for the Traditional Romantic tenet (i.e., the view that men’s sexual emotions are more powerful and unmanageable than women’s).

For the two Love Need in Sex scales, high scores indicate support for the Modern Naturalistic tenet and low scores indicate support for the Abstinence tenet. To determine support for the Traditional Romantic tenet, the results of items 41 and 55 need to be compared. A high score for item 41 and a low score for item 55 would indicate support for the Traditional Romantic tenet (i.e., for the view that love in sexual relations is necessary for women but not men).

For the Abortion, Gender Genetic Differences, Pornography, and Homosexuality scales, high scores indicate respectively, support for belief in (a) freedom of choice for abortion, (b) environment over heredity as the primary basis of personality difference, (c) tolerant attitudes toward pornography, and (d) acceptance of homosexuality.

### Reliability
The reliability of each scale was estimated by computing Cronbach’s alpha. Listed in Table 2 are the 15 scales used in the SII, their items, and their reliabilities.

### Validity
The construct validity of the 15 scales was generally supported by both interscale correlations and factor analysis. Exceptions were the Body-Centered Sexuality and Love Need in Sex scales. Both high interscale correlations and factor analysis suggested that these two types of scales were measuring the same construct. However, Lottes (1983a) found significant differences in response to these two types of scales for young women students.

Further information concerning the reliability and validity of the scales is reported by Lottes (1983b).

### References


Exhibit

Sexual Ideology Instrument

Directions: Put your answers on side 1, beginning with question 1. For each of the statements, indicate whether you strongly agree (SA) = 1, agree (A) = 2, are undecided (U) = 3, disagree (D) = 4, or strongly disagree (SD) = 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember:
(1) Be sure that the number of the statement you are reading corresponds to the number you are marking on the answer sheet.
(2) Mark only one response for each statement.
(3) Respond the way you really feel, which may or may not be in agreement with the majority of public opinion.

____  1. I am in favor of laws that promote gender equality.
____  2. Women who emphasize sexual pleasure in their lives overlook life’s more important pursuits.
____  3. Sexual emotions are strong but manageable by most males.
____  4. A mature man and woman should get their greatest sexual pleasure from intercourse rather than from some other sexual activity.
____  5. Having a physical attraction to someone would be sufficient for me to enjoy sex with that person.
____  6. A preschool child is likely to suffer if the mother works.
____  7. It is acceptable for a 16–17 year old unmarried male to have sexual intercourse.
____  8. Masturbation is an acceptable activity for males.
____  9. I would feel very guilty if I had sexual relations with someone I did NOT love.
____ 10. I would be very upset if my spouse had had many previous sexual relationships.
____ 11. I hope that the family, social, and career roles of men and women become more alike.
____ 12. Since many men seem to be unable to control their sex drive, it is important for women to be in control of theirs.
____ 13. I do NOT respect women who appear in pornographic films or magazines.
____ 14. Homosexuals should NOT be teaching school. It is too risky to allow the possibility of such a teacher taking advantage of or influencing the sexual orientation of even one student.
____ 15. I approve of a man having premarital sex with someone he likes but is NOT in love with.
____ 16. If a woman really loves her husband, she will want to include the vow “to obey” her husband in the marriage ceremony.
____ 17. Women degrade themselves when they show obvious sexual interest in a man they are NOT in love with.
____ 18. Men can have affairs that do NOT disrupt their life style.
____ 19. The primary goal of sexual activity between men and women should be intercourse.
____ 20. A successful and satisfying sex partnership CANNOT be established unless the sex partners are quite willing to be sexually faithful to one another.
____ 21. It would be difficult for me to enjoy sex with someone I did NOT love.
____ 22. Orgasm resulting from manual genital stimulation by the sex partner can be as satisfying as intercourse.
____ 23. Women can have affairs without significant emotional involvement.
____ 24. It is more important for a wife to help her husband’s career than to have one herself.
____ 25. I approve of a woman having extramarital sex WITH her husband’s consent.
____ 26. Pornography influences men to commit sexual crimes including rape.
____ 27. Men are generally more interested in sex than women.
____ 28. If women yield to their sexual feelings, these feelings will probably disrupt and dominate their lives in destructive ways.
____ 29. The Supreme Court ruling making abortions legal should be reversed.
____ 30. I approve of a man having premarital sex with someone he is strongly attracted to but knows only casually.
____ 31. Group sex (sex involving more than two people) is an acceptable sexual activity for men and women.
____ 32. John is married to Ann. John is strongly attracted to, but not in love with Mary. I approve of John and Mary having sexual relations.
____ 33. Extramarital sex is always wrong.
____ 34. Sexuality is a very powerful force and females should do all they can to control it in their lives.
____ 35. It is acceptable for a 16–17 year old unmarried female to have sexual intercourse.
____ 36. I approve of a man having extra-marital sex WITHOUT his wife’s consent.
37. I would NOT object to my spouse having had a couple of previous sexual relationships.
38. I can accept and do NOT condemn homosexual activities for females.
39. Sexual emotions are strong but manageable by most females.
40. I approve of a woman having premarital sex with someone she likes but is NOT in love with.
41. A man CANNOT have a satisfactory and satisfying sex life without being in love with his sex partner.
42. Sexual intercourse with someone other than the regular sex partner can bring about an improvement in the sexual relationship of the established pair.
43. It would be best for our society if there were about an equal number of men and women in all high-level positions of government, business and education.
44. To advocate an emphasis on sexual pleasure is to forget that the major purpose of sexual relations is procreation.
45. The innate differences in men and women’s strengths and weaknesses are the major source of satisfaction in male-female relationships.
46. I approve of a man having extramarital sex WITH his wife’s consent.
47. I enjoy looking at the pictures of nude men and women that appear in “Playgirl” and “Playboy” type magazines.
48. Oral or mouth-genital sex is a good substitute for intercourse.
49. Masturbation is an acceptable activity for females.
50. I approve of a woman having extramarital sex with someone she is strongly attracted to but knows only casually.
51. It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.
52. Men can have affairs without significant emotional involvement.
53. If men yield to their sexual feelings, these feelings will probably disrupt and dominate their lives in destructive ways.
54. The decision about an abortion should be left up to a woman and her doctor.
55. A woman cannot have a satisfactory and satisfying sex life without being in love with her sex partner.
56. Having intercourse is the best way to end sex.
57. Anal intercourse is a good substitute for vaginal intercourse.
58. Ann is married to John. Ann is strongly attracted to, but not in love with Jim. I approve of Ann and Jim having sexual relations.
59. Non-violent pornography is harmless to our society.
60. Sexuality is a very powerful force and males should do all they can to control it in their lives.
61. Men and women have different sexual needs that are based on differences in male and female anatomy and hormones.
62. Basically, I simply love sex and would enjoy making love to many different people.
63. It is a mistake to allow oral sex to become as important as intercourse in one’s sex life.
64. A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who is NOT employed.
65. Men who emphasize sexual pleasure in their lives overlook life’s more important pursuits.
66. Sexual intercourse does NOT have to be the major focus of positive and pleasurable sexual activity for men and women.
67. I can accept and do NOT condemn homosexual activities for males.
68. Sexual intercourse is often best when enjoyed for its own sake, rather than for the purpose of expressing love.
69. I approve of a woman having extramarital sex WITHOUT her husband’s consent.
70. Where abortions are legal, the father should have the right to veto the abortion.
71. Casual sexual intercourse with a variety of sex partners can be as satisfying and satisfactory as intercourse that is limited to an established sex partnership.
72. Women can have affairs that do NOT disrupt their lifestyle.