Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

Terri D. Fisher, Clive M. Davis, William L. Yarber, Sandra L. Davis

Sexual Polarity Scale

Publication details
Donald L. Mosher, James Sullivan
Published online on: 12 Aug 2010

How to cite: Donald L. Mosher, James Sullivan. 12 Aug 2010, Sexual Polarity Scale from: Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures Routledge
Accessed on: 13 Jul 2023

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
64. Women who emphasize sexual pleasure in their lives overlook life’s more important pursuits.  
65. Self-masturbation in childhood can help a person develop a natural and healthy attitude toward sex.  
66. It is the duty of parents and NOT the schools to provide sex education for their children.  
67. Physically handicapped people should NOT have sex.  
68. Too much social approval has been given to gay men.  
69. Self-masturbation by a person who is married is NOT healthy.  
70. Sexuality courses should be provided for those who are disabled.  
71. Abortion is wrong, no matter what the circumstances are.  
72. Sex education courses in high school should help adolescents express their desire NOT to be involved sexually if they do NOT wish to be.  
73. The government should provide more financial assistance to hospitals and doctors to help cover the cost of the health care of poor people.  
74. Care takers of the aged should be educated about the sexual needs of their patients.  
75. Homosexual men are treated justly in our society.  
76. Sex education courses in high school should help adolescents use protection (condom/birth control) if they plan to have intercourse.  
77. Physicians should communicate to patients how illnesses and their treatments affect sexual response.  
78. Nursing homes have no obligation to provide privacy for residents who wish to express their sexuality, either alone or with their partner.  
79. Self-masturbation in private should be considered a normal and healthy activity for adolescents.  
80. The Supreme Court should make abortion illegal in the United States.  
81. Care takers of the disabled should be educated about the sexual needs of their patients.  
82. I believe contraceptive use is a responsibility for both men and women.  
83. Heterosexual women have more positive characteristics than lesbians.  
84. Sex education courses in high school should help adolescents deal with the negative aspects of peer pressure.  
85. Artificial insemination should be available to lesbians.  
86. Nursing homes should provide condoms for their residents.  
87. Men who emphasize sexual pleasure in their lives overlook life’s more important pursuits.  
88. Adults who self-masturbate in private should be considered normal and healthy.  
89. Adolescents in high school should be taught skills to reduce guilt and fear about sexual issues.  
90. The final decision to have an abortion should be up to the pregnant woman.  
91. Sexual relationships provide an important and fulfilling part of life for most people.  
92. Gay men should NOT be able to adopt children.  
93. Institutions for the physically disabled should provide privacy to allow residents to engage in sexual activities.  
94. The government does NOT need to provide family planning services to low-income women.

Sexual Polarity Scale

DONALD L. MOSHER AND JAMES SULLIVAN, University of Connecticut

Sexual polarity is defined as a sexual ideology (a) consisting of a more or less organized set of ideas about sexuality that orders information about the ideals and aspirations in a sexual world view; (b) polarizing into a left-wing (naturalist) and a right-wing (jehovanist) set of ideas; and (c) serving as a script, often shared by a community of believers, to interpret, to predict, to explain, to evaluate, or to control past, present, and future sexual scenes. The concepts of jehovanist and naturalist, introduced by Davis (1983), suggested the content of the items. Jehovanists believe that sex is dirty and aside from moderate intensity—marital coitus—threatens the dissolution of the individual’s self

1 Address correspondence Donald L. Mosher, 648 Ternberry Forest Drive, The Villages, FL 32162; e-mail: dmosher@aol.com
and the destruction of the social order. Naturalists are modernists who place sex into a nonsacred, biological context of natural behavior that occurs commonly in humans across cultures and in other species of animals.

The Sexual Polarity Scale (SPS), in addition, contains selected items from Tomkins’ (1965) Polarity Scale (TPS). Tomkins (1965) defined ideology as “any organized set of ideas about which humans are most passionate and for which there is no evidence and about which they are least certain” (p. 78). The left-wing of the polarity, called humanist, is rooted in the view, introduced by Protagoras, of man as the measure of all things. The right-wing of the polarity, called normative, is anchored to the Platonic conception of Ideas and Essences as the realm of reality and value. Humanists, who view people as basically good, view science as promoting human realization, government as promoting social welfare, and socialization as requiring unconditional love, sympathy, and play. Normatives, who view people as basically bad, view science as establishing truth, government as preserving law and order, and socialization as requiring conditional love to promote respect for rules and authority.

**Description**

The SPS consists of 30 forced-choice items measuring the sexual polarity of jehovanist or the naturalist ideology and 30 selected forced-choice items from the TPS measuring the polarity in world-views of the normative or humanist ideology. The 60 items are randomly mixed. Thus, the scale measures a relative preference for a left-wing world-view (humanist ideology) and a left-wing sexual ideology (naturalist) or a right-wing world-view (normative ideology) and a right-wing sexual ideology (jehovanist).

**Response Mode and Timing**

Respondents can circle the letter of the preferred alternative in each pair or respond on a machine-scoreable answer sheet. Approximately 13 minutes is required for completion.

**Scoring**

Alternatives assigned to the jehovanist ideology are scored 1, and naturalist alternatives are scored 0. The jehovanist item numbers and letters for that choice are: 1a, 4b, 8a, 9b, 10b, 11a, 14a, 15b, 16b, 17b, 19b, 20a, 22b, 23b, 25b, 27b, 28b, 29a, 30b, 35a, 36a, 37b, 39b, 40a, 41b, 43b, 44a, 46b, 51b, and 52a.

Alternatives assigned to the normative ideology are scored 1, and humanist alternatives are scored 0. The normative item numbers and letters for that choice are: 2b, 3b, 5a, 6b, 7b, 12a, 13a, 18a, 21b, 24a, 26b, 31a, 52b, 33a, 34a, 38b, 42b, 45b, 47b, 48b, 49a, 50b, 53a, 55b, 56b, 57a, 58a, 59b, and 60a. Scores for normative and jehovanist ideologies can range from 0, if only humanist and naturalist alternatives are selected, to 30, if only normative and jehovanist alternatives are selected.

**Reliability**

Internal consistency item analyses, from a sample of 140 male University of Connecticut undergraduates, were used to select 30 items from 40 items sampling the content of the sexual polarity and 30 items from the 59 items of the TPS. In the pool of 40 items measuring the sexual polarity, 37 items had discriminated the jehovanist/naturalist polarity at the .95 level of significance; for the TPS, 45 of 59 items significantly discriminated the normative/humanist polarity. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the sexual jehovanist/humanist polarity was .86. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for Tomkins’s normative/humanist polarity was .79.

**Validity**

Evidence of construct validity is limited to a study of 140 male undergraduates (Mosher & Sullivan, 1986). A pattern of significant Pearson correlations with other measures revealed a pattern that confirmed expectations. More jehovanist men, in comparison to more naturalist men, attended church more frequently, $r(138) = .23$; reported more involvement in church activities, $r(138) = .33$; scored higher on sex-guilt, $r(138) = .56$; had a normative rather than a humanist world-view, $r(138) = .36$; were more intolerant of ambiguity, $r(138) = .32$; and accepted more rape myths, $r(138) = .16$.

Tomkins (1965) summarized evidence from diverse experimental methods that supported the construct validity of the normative/humanist ideology. In addition to being more jehovanist, more normative men, in comparison to more humanist men, were more macho, $r(138) = .22$; intolerant of ambiguity, $r(138) = .20$; and had a higher proclivity to rape, $r(138) = .19$.

**References**


Exhibit

Sexual Polarity Scale

Instructions: An ideology is an organized set of ideas that offers a world view. An ideology can be concerned with theories of value, education, science, sex, or socialization. These are just a few examples. A sexual ideology is an organized set of ideas about sex reflecting the ideas and aspirations of the individual, society, and culture. In the 60 items that follow, polar or contrasting ideas are presented. Your task is to select the item in each pair which is closest to your personal point of view. If you prefer alternative (a) circle letter (a); if you prefer alternative (b) circle letter (b). Although your cooperation is appreciated, you are, of course, free not to answer any item.

1. a) Pornography is disgusting.
   b) So-called pornography can be enjoyable.
2. a) The most important aspect of science is that it enables man to realize himself by gaining understanding and control of the world around him.
   b) The most important aspect of science is that it enables man to separate the true from the false, the right from the wrong, reality from fantasy.
3. a) To assume that most people are well-meaning brings out the best in others.
   b) To assume that most people are well-meaning is asking for trouble.
4. a) Abandoning yourself to pleasure helps to produce orgasmic response.
   b) Sexual abandonment endangers the person’s ability to control his or her own body.
5. a) No government should sanction legalized gambling. Ultimately this will undermine the very foundations of authority.
   b) Legalized gambling is at worst innocuous. At best it lends spice and zest to life.
6. a) What children demand should be of little consequence to their parents.
   b) What children demand, parents should take seriously and try to satisfy.
7. a) The most important thing in the world is to know yourself and be yourself.
   b) The most important thing in the world is to try to live up to the highest standards.
8. a) The sin of fornication can be a worse crime than murder.
   b) It is better to make love than to fight.
9. a) Homosexual teachers have no necessary affect on children’s personality sexual orientation.
   b) Homosexual teachers can corrupt a young mind.
10. a) Sexual fantasy is a way for a person to increase their erotic pleasure through the use of imagination.
    b) Too much thinking about sex is a sign of an impure mind that will be easy prey to sexual temptation.
11. a) Sex undermines the distinction between humans and animals, making people more bestial.
    b) Sex affirms the essential similarity of all of nature’s creatures.
12. a) Juvenile delinquency is simply a reflection of the basic evil in human beings. It has always existed in the past and it always will.
    b) Juvenile delinquency is due to factors we do not understand. When we do understand these we will be able to prevent it in the future.
13. a) When man faces death he learns how basically insignificant he is.
    b) When man faces death he learns who he really is and how much he loved life.
14. a) Pornography pollutes the senses, the self, and the society.
    b) Erotica arouses the senses, frees the self, and purges false prudery from society.
15. a) The child molester deserves society’s help, treatment, and rehabilitation.
    b) The child molester should receive their just deserts-punishment.
16. a) Scientific knowledge provides the best guide to leading a satisfying sex life.
    b) The Bible and religious leaders provide the best guide to leading a moral sex life.
17. a) Pornography is protected by the freedom of speech clause in the First Amendment.
    b) Pornography should not be protected by the First Amendment because it creates a clear and present danger to society.
18. a) The important thing in science is to be right and make as few errors as possible.
    b) The important thing in science is to strike out into the unknown-right or wrong.
19. a) Sexually explicit materials can be used in the classroom to educate young people about the facts of human sexuality.
    b) The danger of sex education in the classroom is that it will corrupt the minds of young people who are open to immoral influences.
20. a) Nudity at public beaches endangers the well-being of the young.
    b) Nudity at public beaches can lead to an appreciation of the human body as part of nature.
21. a) Great achievements require first of all great imagination.
    b) Great achievements require first of all severe self-discipline.

22. a) Engaging in a single homosexual act does not necessarily mean the person has, or will adopt, an identity as a homosexual.
    b) Engaging in a single homosexual act identifies a person as homosexual.

23. a) Although child pornography is distasteful, its influence is overrated.
    b) If child pornography is permitted in any form, civilization, as we know it, is doomed.

24. a) If human beings were really honest with each other, there would be a lot more antipathy and enmity in the world.
    b) If human beings were really honest with each other, there would be a lot more sympathy and friendship in the world.

25. a) Leaders in the public eye have no special moral obligations—they are fallible like all humans.
    b) Sexual morality is necessary in our clergy, government officials, and teachers to uphold the standards of society.

26. a) The beauty of theorizing is that it has made it possible to invent things which otherwise never would have existed.
    b) The trouble with theorizing is that it leads people away from the facts and substitutes opinion for truth.

27. a) Sometimes abortion is the best choice available to a young, unmarried woman.
    b) Abortion is immoral because it takes a human life.

28. a) Sex education in the schools, including teaching about contraception, is the most effective way to reduce teenage pregnancies.
    b) Sex education in the schools threatens to undermine the authority of the family and the morality of the community.

29. a) People should wash their hands and genitals after engaging in sexual relations.
    b) Washing after sex destroys the relaxed mood that is created since it implies that sex is dirty.

30. a) The loss of control during sexual intercourse heightens orgasmic and interpersonal fulfillment.
    b) Sexual intercourse and orgasm resemble having an epileptic fit, lacking the gracefulness and beauty of more refined social interaction.

31. a) Imagination leads people into self-deception and delusions.
    b) Imagination frees people from the dull routines of life.

32. a) Thinking is responsible for all discovery and invention.
    b) Thinking keeps people on the straight and narrow.

33. a) Observing the world accurately enables human beings to separate reality from imagination.
    b) Observing the world accurately provides a human being with constant excitement and novelty.

34. a) Some people can only be changed by humiliating them.
    b) No one has the right to humiliate another person.

35. a) Sex is so powerful that it alters your moral character, making you more like your partner.
    b) Sex has no more power to alter personality or character than any other form of social interaction.

36. a) The wages of sexual sin is death.
    b) The wages of sexual guilt is sexual inhibition.

37. a) Marital sex can remain exciting if the couple is imaginative and uninhibited.
    b) Marriage is a good remedy for sexual temptation.

38. a) Those who err should be forgiven.
    b) Those who err should be corrected.

39. a) Consenting sex is a worthwhile moral end.
    b) Too often, sex leads people to relate to one another as means rather than as ends.

40. a) Oral and anal sex are more depraved than sexual intercourse.
    b) Oral and anal sex are as morally acceptable as intercourse as long as the couple agrees.

41. a) Any position a couple wants to use during intercourse is normal because preferences for positions vary from culture to culture.
    b) There are natural and unnatural positions for men and women to use during sexual intercourse.

42. a) Whenever a person has difficulty in deciding which of two things to do he should do that which will give him the greatest satisfaction. In the long run that will be the right choice.
    b) Whenever a person has difficulty in deciding which of two things to do he should do what he ought to do, whether it gives him satisfaction or not.

43. a) All of sex is natural, without necessarily having any cosmic or religious significance.
    b) Marital sex, and only marital sex, is sacred—to be regarded with wonder.

44. a) Human sex was set apart forever from animal sex by the divine act that created the human soul.
    b) Human sex is similar, biologically and behaviorally, to sex in primates like the apes.

45. a) Anger should be directed against the oppressors of mankind.
    b) Anger should be directed against those revolutionaries who undermine law and order.

46. a) Masturbation is a normal sexual behavior that has produced needless worries.
    b) At best, masturbation must be controlled; at worst, it is a sinful waste of human seed.
47. a) Familiarity, like absence, makes the heart grow fonder.
   b) Familiarity breeds contempt.
48. a) Reason is the chief means by which human beings make great discoveries.
   b) Reason has to be continually disciplined and corrected by reality and hard facts.
49. a) The changeableness of human feelings is a weakness in human beings.
   b) The changeableness of human feelings makes life more interesting.
50. a) There are a great many things in the world which are good for human beings and which satisfy them in different ways. This makes the world an exciting place and enriches the lives of human beings.
   b) There are a great many things which attract human beings. Some of them are proper, but many are bad for human beings, and some are degrading.
51. a) Psychology studies sexual behavior with the same scientific methods used to study other forms of experience and behavior.
   b) Psychology can only study the surface of sex, not its essence.
52. a) The Kinsey Reports are an example of poor science.
   b) The Kinsey Reports reduced irrational guilt by describing how common many sexual behaviors were.
53. a) Children should be seen and not heard.
   b) Children are entirely delightful.
54. a) For a human being to live a good life he must act like a good man, i.e., observe the rules of morality.
   b) For a human being to live a good life he must satisfy both himself and others.
55. a) Mystical experiences may be sources of insight into the nature of reality.
   b) So-called mystical experiences have most often been a source of delusion.
56. a) Man must always leave himself open to his own feelings—alien as they may sometimes seem.
   b) If sanity is to be preserved, man must guard himself against the intrusion of feelings which are alien to his nature.
57. a) There is no surer road to insanity than surrender to the feelings, particularly those which are alien to the self.
   b) There is a unique avenue to reality through the feelings, even when they seem alien.
58. a) Life sometimes smells bad.
   b) Life sometimes leaves a bad taste in the mouth.
59. a) The mind is like a lamp which illuminates whatever it shines on.
   b) The mind is like a mirror which reflects whatever strikes it.
60. a) Things are beautiful or ugly independent of what human beings think.
   b) Beauty and ugliness are in the eye of the beholder.

---

Sexually Assertive Behavior Scale

**Peter B. Anderson,** Walden University
**Maria Newton,** University of Utah

The purpose of the Sexually Assertive Behavior Scale (SABS) is to assess women’s behaviors and motives relative to initiating sexual contact with men.

**Description**

The SABS is a 19-item scale composed of six factors—Sexual Arousal, Hidden Motives, Verbal Pressure, Retaliation or Gain, Physical Force, and Exploitation. Factor 1 (Sexual Arousal) relates to mutually consenting sexual contact and attempts to arouse a partner. Factor 2 (Hidden Motives) items relate to a woman initiating a sexual relationship with a man other than her partner to make her partner jealous, to hurt him, or to terminate their relationship. Factor 3 (Verbal Pressure) items relate to verbally persuasive tactics. Factor 4 (Retaliation or Gain)