Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

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Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire

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14. ____ How many times have you or your partner engaged in anal penetration by a hand (“fisting”) or other object without a latex glove or condom followed by unprotected anal sex?

15. ____ How many times have you given or received analingus (oral stimulation of the anal region, “rimming”) without a dental dam or “adequate protection” (please see definition of dental dam for what is considered adequate protection)?

16. ____ How many people have you had sex with that you know but are not involved in any sort of relationship with (i.e., “friends with benefits,” “fuck buddies”)?

17. ____ How many times have you had sex with someone you don’t know well or just met?

18. ____ How many times have you or your partner used alcohol or drugs before or during sex?

19. ____ How many times have you had sex with a new partner before discussing sexual history, IV drug use, disease status and other current sexual partners?

20. ____ How many times (that you know of) have you had sex with someone who has had many sexual partners?

21. ____ How many partners (that you know of) have you had sex with who had been sexually active before you were with them but had not been tested for STIs/HIV?

22. ____ How many partners have you had sex with that you didn’t trust?

23. ____ How many times (that you know of) have you had sex with someone who was also engaging in sex with others during the same time period?

*The Glossary is available upon request from Jessica A. Turchik.

Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire

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The Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire (ATEQ) was developed by a University Task Force on Pornography. At a Midwestern university, a student was arrested for showing a sexually explicit film to raise funds for his dormitory. The arrest sparked controversy and brought the issue of pornography into sharp focus among students, faculty, and administrators. Subsequently, a task force was appointed to investigate attitudes toward sexually explicit materials by the student body.

The ATEQ includes scales measuring attitudes about harmful and positive effects of erotica, as well as attitudes toward its restriction and regulation. Because of the wide variety of sexually explicit material, the questionnaire is not designed to investigate attitudes toward erotica in general. A social scientist can adapt the questionnaire to examine attitudes about the type of erotic material most appropriate for her/his research—either a specific medium (e.g., *Playboy*) or a general form (e.g., X-rated movie).

**Description**

For each type of erotica, nine items (numbered 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 20, and 21) assess its harmful effects and form a Harmful scale; seven items (numbered 5, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, and 19) assess its positive effects and form a Positive scale; and five items (numbered 2, 3, 8, 14, and 16) assess its restriction and form a Restrict scale. In the study at the university in the Midwest, 663 students (52% female) responded to items about four types of sexually explicit materials—“magazines like *Playboy*,” “magazines like *Hustler*,” “adult bookstore magazines,” and “X-rated movies and videos like Deep Throat” (Lottes, Weinberg, & Weller, 1993). From a varimax factor analysis with an orthogonal rotation of the 84 responses (21 per erotic type) of these students, one major factor emerged. This factor accounted for 63% of the variance with all factor loadings having an absolute value greater than .71. Thus, although properties of the individual Harmful, Positive, and Restrict scales are presented here, analysis based on one large random student sample (70% response rate) suggests that attitudes toward erotica are organized along a simple binary good/bad dimension.

The response options to each item are one of the 5-point Likert-type choices: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), no opinion (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). This questionnaire is designed for a college student or general adult...
population. Obscenity law is strongly linked to “community standards” and the ATEQ is a tool to assess such standards.

**Response Mode and Timing**

Respondents write the number from 1 to 5 corresponding to their degree of agreement/disagreement with each item or if computer scoring is available, machine-scoreable answer sheets can be provided for responses. Each set of 21 items for a particular type of erotica takes 8 minutes for completion.

**Scoring**

For 11 of the items, an agree response indicates a pro-erotica attitude and for 10 items an agree response indicates an anti-erotica attitude. To decrease the probability of a response set, the 21 items of the Harmful, Positive, and Restrict scales are not grouped together but placed randomly in the questionnaire. To obtain the scale scores for the Harmful and Positive scales, the responses to the items of each respective scale are summed. For the Harmful scale, scores can range from 9 to 45 and the higher the score, the more harm has been attributed to the erotica. For the Positive scale, scores can range from 7 to 35, and the higher the score, the more positive the effect attributed to the erotica. For the Restrict scale, four of the five items (items numbered 2, 3, 8, and 16) are scored in the reverse direction. For these reverse-direction items, recoding needs to transform all 5s to 1s and 4s to 2s and vice-versa before responses to the five items are summed to give the Restrict scale score. For this scale, scores can range from 5 to 25 and the higher the score, the more restrictions on the erotica are supported.

**Reliability**

In a sample of 663 college students, Cronbach alphas for the Harmful scale associated with Playboy, Hustler, adult bookstore magazines, and X-rated movies or videos were .90, .85, .84, and .85, respectively. Cronbach alphas for these same materials for the Positive scale were .73, .76, .78, and .78, respectively, and Cronbach alphas for the Restrict scale were .85, .85, .84, and .85, respectively (Lottes, Weinberg, & Weller, 1993).

**Validity**

The construct validity of the Harmful, Positive, and Restrict scales was supported by statistically significant results for predicted correlations and group differences. As expected, Lottes, Weinberg, and Weller (1993) found that respondents who were more religious, less sexually active, and viewed erotica less often evaluated all four types of sexually explicit material as being more harmful and having fewer positive effects, and supported more restrictions on their availability than did respondents who were less religious, more sexually active, and viewed erotica more often. Also as expected, males and those who had seen a specific type of sexually explicit material reported higher scores on the Positive scale and lower scores on the Harmful and Restrict scales than did females and those who had not seen the erotic material.

**Reference**


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**Exhibit**

### Attitudes Toward Erotica Questionnaire

*Directions*: Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by writing the number corresponding to one of the five response options below in the space provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The material exploits women. ____
2. The material should be publicly sold (magazines) and publicly shown (movies). ____
3. The material should be available to adults. ____
4. The availability of the material leads to a breakdown in community morals. ____
5. The material can improve sex relations among adults. ____
6. I feel the material is offensive. ____
7. The material exploits men. ____
8. The material should be available to minors (under 18). ____
9. The material increases the probability of sexual violence. ____
10. In this material, the positioning and treatment of men is degrading to men. ____
11. The material may provide an outlet for bottled-up sexual pressures. ____
12. In this material, sex and violence are often shown together. ____
13. This material can enhance the pleasure of masturbation for women. ____
14. This material should be made illegal. ____
15. The material may teach people sexual techniques. ____
16. This material should be protected by the 1st Amendment (freedom of speech and the press). ____
17. People should be made aware of the positive effects of this material. ____
18. This material serves a more positive than negative function in society. ____
19. This material can enhance the pleasure of masturbation for men. ____
20. People should be made aware of the negative effects of this material. ____
21. In this material, the positioning and treatment of women is degrading to women. ____