Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

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

Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

Publication details
https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315881089.ch211
Lars Penke
Published online on: 12 Aug 2010

How to cite :- Lars Penke. 12 Aug 2010, Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory from: Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures Routledge
Accessed on: 31 Aug 2023
https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315881089.ch211

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.
For the following questions, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. Keep in mind that the definition of sex is any form of intimate physical contact involving more than kissing between you and another person (opposite or same sex).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. Sex should be unplanned, rather than planned ahead of time.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. One should always be ready for sex.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Sex can be a useful tool in some situations.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Hugging and kissing should not always lead to sex.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. I am not sexually satisfied with any behavior other than intercourse.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Orgasm is not a necessary part of sex for me.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I would not use sex to get something I wanted.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Sex should only take place between two people who are in love.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

LARS PENKE,¹ University of Edinburgh

The construct of sociosexuality or sociosexual orientation captures individual differences in the tendency to have casual, uncommitted sexual relationships. The term was introduced by Alfred Kinsey, who used it to describe the individual differences in sexual permissiveness and promiscuity that he found in his groundbreaking survey studies on sexual behavior (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953). The amount of scientific research on sociosexuality increased markedly when Simpson and Gangestad (1991) published the Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI), a 7-item self-report questionnaire that assesses sociosexual orientations along a single dimension from restricted (indicating a tendency to have sex exclusively in emotionally close and committed relationships) to unrestricted (indicating a tendency for sexual relationships with low commitment and investment, often after short periods of acquaintance and with changing partners). On average, men tend to be more unrestricted than women in their sociosexual orientations, though there are also large individual differences within both sexes (Schmitt, 2005). The SOI has been successfully applied in over 50 published studies from fields as diverse as social, personality, and evolutionary psychology, sexuality research, gender studies, biological anthropology, and cross-cultural research (Simpson, Wilson, & Winterheld, 2004).

Despite its popularity, the SOI has repeatedly been criticized (Asendorpf & Penke, 2005; Penke & Asendorpf, 2008; Townsend, Kline, & Wasserman, 1995; Voracek, 2005; Webster & Bryan, 2007). Conceptually, it has been doubted that a single unitary dimension accurately reflects individual differences in sociosexuality. Psychometrically, the SOI has received criticism for its sometimes low internal consistency, its multifactorial structure, its skewed score distribution, its open response items that invite exaggerated responses, its multiple alternative scoring methods that yield incoherent results, and the formulation of one item (number 4) that makes the SOI inappropriate for singles.

¹Address correspondence to Lars Penke, Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology, Department of Psychology, University of Edinburgh, 7 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9JZ, UK; e-mail: lars.penke@ed.ac.uk
The Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R) is a nine-item self-report questionnaire that was developed to fix all these issues (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). It assesses three facets of sociosexuality: past Behavior in terms of number of casual and changing sex partners, the explicit Attitude towards uncommitted sex, and sexual Desire for people with whom no romantic relationship exists.

Description

The SOI-R consists of nine items, three for each of the three facets. All are answered on rating scales. The first two items of the Behavior facet are taken from the original SOI. They ask for the number of sexual partners in the last 12 months and the lifetime number of “one-night-stands.” The third behavioral item assesses the number of partners with whom one had sex despite a lack of long-term relationship interest. Similarly, the first two Attitude items (asking for acceptance of sex without love and for comfort with casual sex) are identical with two items from the SOI, whereas a new item (asking for requiring the prospect of a long-term relationship before consenting to sex) replaces an SOI attitude item with overly long and complicated text. Finally, three new items assess the Desire facet, which was not very well represented in the original SOI (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). They ask for the frequency with which one experiences spontaneous sexual fantasies or sexual arousal when encountering people in everyday life with whom no committed romantic relationship exists.

In a series of studies, the SOI-R items were chosen from a pool of 47 items using exploratory factor analysis and item analysis (Penke, 2006). Confirmatory factor analysis supported that they represent distinctive facets of sociosexuality with low to moderate positive intercorrelations (.17 to .55). The correlation between the Attitude and Behavior facets was significantly larger in women than in men, but otherwise the factorial structure is invariant between the sexes, showing that the SOI-R is equally appropriate for men and women (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008).

An analysis of 8,522 participants from an online study indicates that the SOI-R is appropriate for individuals of any normal-range educational level, including hetero-, bi- and homosexuals, singles and individuals of any relationship/marital status, and at least the age range of 18 to 60 years (Penke, 2006; data partly available on www.larspenke.eu/soi-r/). However, some facets do not work very well for sexually inexperienced and asexual individuals.

Response Mode and Timing

All items of the SOI-R use Likert-type rating scales with the same number of response alternatives, which makes the SOI-R appropriate for both paper-and-pencil and online studies. Two alternative response scale formats exist for the SOI-R, one with nine and the other with five response alternatives. Both show comparable psychometric properties. The 9-point response scale was developed to allow for combining the SOI-R with the original SOI (for details, see Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). However, for the majority of applications I recommend the 5-point response scale, because most subjects (especially nonstudents) find it easier to discriminate between five than between nine response alternatives. The SOI-R takes 1 to 2 minutes to complete.

Scoring

For Items 1 to 3, values of 1 to 5 (5-point response scale) or values of 1 to 9 (9-point response scale) should be assigned to the responses. Thus, all nine items have values from 1 to 5 (5-point scale) or 1 to 9 (9-point scale). Item 6 should be reverse keyed. Items 1 to 3 are aggregated (summed or averaged) to form the Behavior facet. Items 4 to 6 form the Attitude facet, and Items 7 to 9 form the Desire facet. Finally, all nine items can be aggregated to form a full-scale score that represents the global sociosexual orientation, similar to the full score of the original SOI. Because most SOI-R scores (except Behavior) usually show marked sex differences, results should be analyzed separately for men and women, or alternatively sex should be statistically controlled in all analyses. Descriptive statistics for average facet and full-scale scores for both response formats can be found in Table 1.

Reliability

As can be seen in Table 1, the SOI-R facet and total scores show good internal consistencies for both response formats. Additionally, all scores except the Desire facet show good 1-year retest stability, at least when the 9-point scale is used. The lower retest stability of the Desire facet appears to relate to its transactions with romantic relationship status, with women in particular showing more restrictive desires when starting a new relationship and less restrictive desires when separating (see Penke & Asendorpf, 2008).

Validity

In two large studies, Penke and Asendorpf (2008) showed that the SOI-R full-scale score and the SOI showed very similar relationships to established correlates of sociosexuality, including sex differences, past and future relationship and sexual behaviors, infidelity, mate choice preferences, sex drive, personality traits like shyness and sensation seeking, and flirting behavior towards an attractive opposite-sex stranger. Thus, there is strong evidence that the SOI-R offers the same predictive validity that has been shown for the SOI (Simpson et al., 2004).

However, more detailed analyses revealed a highly distinctive pattern of relationships for the three SOI-R facets, supporting their discriminant validity. For example, sex differences were pronounced for Desire, mediocre for Attitude, and nonexistent for Behavior (Table 1). Only Desire made unique contributions to the prediction of past sexual and relationship behaviors, observer-rated
TABLE 1  Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, and Effect Sizes for Sex Differences for Both SOI-R Response Scale Formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
<th>rtt (1 year)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-point scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R male</td>
<td>2728</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior male</td>
<td>5821</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R female</td>
<td>2706</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude male</td>
<td>5794</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R male</td>
<td>2687</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire female</td>
<td>5748</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R male</td>
<td>2647</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>5632</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-point scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R male</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior female</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R male</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude female</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R male</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire female</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOI-R male</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. rtt = test-retest correlation. The results for the 5-point response scale are from an unpublished online study (Penke, 2006). The results for the 9-point response scale are from Study 1 in Penke and Asendorpf (2008). More detailed results, split by subsamples, can be found on www.larspenke.eu/soi-r/.

attractiveness, self-perceived mate value, and female flirting behavior, whereas Attitude appeared responsible for the effects of sociosexuality on mate preferences, assortative mating, and a romantic partner’s flirtatiousness outside the relationship, and Desire had strong independent effects on relationships with sex drive, relationship quality, and male flirting behavior. Furthermore, Behavior and Desire, but not Attitude, predicted the number of sexual partners and changes in romantic relationship status over the next 12 month. Thus, Behavior, Attitude, and Desire apparently reflect rather unique components of sociosexuality that should be studied separately in order to understand the dynamics that underlie sociosexual orientations.

Other Information

The SOI-R can freely be used for research purposes. The items of 10 different language versions (Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Icelandic, Italian, Malaysian, Spanish, and Swedish) can be downloaded from www.larspenke.eu/soi-r/.

References


Exhibit

Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

Please respond honestly to all of the following questions. Your responses will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

1. With how many different partners have you had sex within the past 12 months?
   - [ ] 0
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2 to 3
   - [ ] 4 to 7
   - [ ] 8 or More

2. With how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse on one and only one occasion?
   - [ ] 0
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5–6
   - [ ] 7–9
   - [ ] 10–19
   - [ ] 20 or More

3. With how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse without having an interest in a long-term committed relationship with this person?
Sociosexual Orientation

4. Sex without love is OK.*

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □
Totally Disagree

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □
Strongly Disagree

5. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying "casual" sex with different partners.

6. I do not want to have sex with a person until I am sure that we will have a long-term, serious relationship.

7. How often do you have fantasies about having sex with someone you are not in a committed romantic relationship with?*

8. How often do you experience sexual arousal when you are in contact with someone you are not in a committed romantic relationship with?

9. In everyday life, how often do you have spontaneous fantasies about having sex with someone you have just met?

*Both the 5-response option and the 9-response option are shown in the exhibit that follows.

These response options are used for the first three questions.

These response options are used for the next three questions.

These response options are used for the last three questions.

Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

JEFFRY A. SIMPSON, University of Minnesota
STEVEN W. GANGESTAD, University of New Mexico

In the 1940s and 1950s, comprehensive surveys of the sexual practices of North American men (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948) and women (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953) documented that people differ dramatically on several “sociosexual” attitudes and behaviors. Although men, as a group, displayed greater sexual permissiveness than women on most sociosexual attitudes and behaviors (e.g., men have more permissive attitudes toward casual sex, and they are more likely to have sexual affairs), one of the most striking features of the Kinsey data is that much more variability in sociosexual attitudes and behaviors exists within each sex than between men and women. Some women, for example, are more sexually permissive than most men, and some men are less permissive than most women.

The Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) was developed to measure individual differences in willingness to engage in casual, uncommitted sexual relationships. The SOI assesses individuals’ past sexual behavior, anticipated (future) sexual behavior, the content of their sexual fantasies, and their attitudes toward engaging in casual sex without commitment and emotional investment. Individuals who score high on the SOI have an unrestricted sociosexual orientation. These individuals report having a larger number of different sexual partners in the past year, anticipate having more partners in the next

1Address correspondence to Jeffry A. Simpson, Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; e-mail: simps108@umn.edu or to Steven W. Gangestad, Department of Psychology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.