

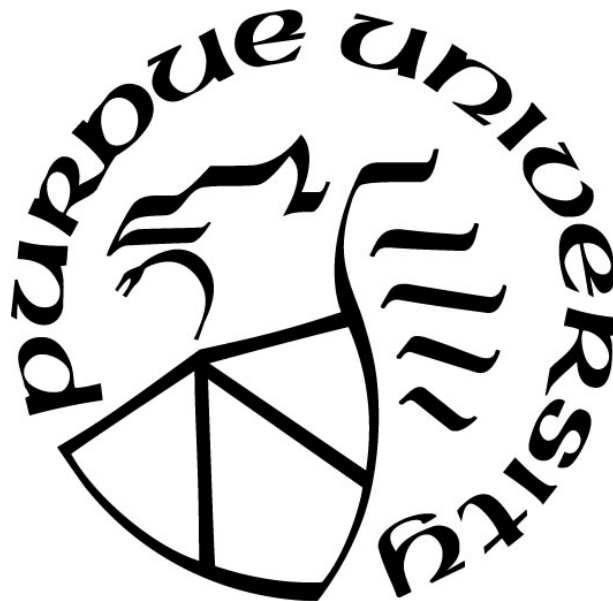
**LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX GUILT: THE IMPACT OF RELIGION ON
SEXUAL GUILT, RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION, SEXUAL
SATISFACTION, AND SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS IN
CHRISTIAN WOMEN**

by
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Dedicated to my family and my cohort, for sticking with me through it all.

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ABSTRACT

Sexual guilt can occur when one's beliefs or attitudes about sex do not match with their sexual behaviors. Sexual guilt has been studied in the context of religious individuals, but research has produced inconsistent results (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Higgins et al., 2010; Leonhardt et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2007). Through a survey placed on Mturk, this study used 156 for data analysis. Data analysis consisted of five regressions. This study found that religiosity and relationship satisfaction are positively associated, sexual guilt and relationship satisfaction are negatively associated, sexual guilt moderated the relationship of religiosity and relationship satisfaction, conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors was associated with lower relationship satisfaction, religiosity and sexual satisfaction had a positive association, sexual guilt and sexual satisfaction had a negative association, sexual guilt had a moderating effect on religiosity and sexual satisfaction, conflict between attitudes and behaviors was associated with more sexual guilt, and religiosity was found to be positively associated with sexual guilt. This study relates these findings to past research and posits future directions for this field of study.

Keywords: Sexual guilt, sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, religious women, sexual behaviors, sexual attitudes, Christianity

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Thoughts and desires that seem to be incongruent with one's beliefs can result in feelings of guilt (Festinger, 1957). For a Christian woman, the desire to be a "good" religious woman, as well as the desire to be a "good" partner and to discover what one wants for themselves can result in an incongruence between thoughts, beliefs, desires, and actions in romantic and sexual relationships. Most denominations of Christianity have rules and limitations around sexual behavior (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2018). Most people in Christian denominations believe that sexual behavior should only be had within marriage. With negative messages about engaging in sexual behaviors outside of marriage, individuals may feel guilt if they are sexually active before they get married (Ashdown et al., 2011) and may potentially feel guilt about sex within a marriage (Leonhardt et al., 2019; Runkel, 1998). While sexual guilt has been studied in the context of religion, the relationship between sexual guilt and religiosity is still unclear (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Leonhardt et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2007), as well as the relationship between sexual guilt and sexual satisfaction (Emmers-Somer et al., 2018; Hackathorn et al., 2016; Higgins et al., 2010; Leonhardt et al., 2019), relationship satisfaction, sexual behaviors (Rosenbaum & Weathersbee, 2013), and relationship type (Hernandez et al., 2014; Higgins et al., 2010; Leonhardt et al., 2019; Runkel, 1998; Waite & Joyner, 2001).

There is research that supports a positive connection between sexual guilt and religiosity for married and unmarried individuals (Hackathorn et al., 2016), while others find that there is no connection (Leonhardt et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2007). Similarly, studies examining how relationship type is related to sexual guilt has elicited inconsistent results. Some research finds that married individuals do not experience sex guilt (Hernandez et al., 2014), while others find it

to be possible for married individuals to experience sex guilt (Leonhardt et al., 2019; Runkel, 1998). Little research has focused on whether specific sexual acts illicit more sexual guilt than others, and if that, in turn, hinders couple's sexual satisfaction.

Due to the inconsistencies in research findings about sexual guilt relating to religion and the lack of research exploring contributing factors to sexual guilt, further research is needed on this topic. A better understanding of sexual guilt could greatly improve clinicians' abilities to treat sexual guilt, and research can bring awareness to this subject that is not often discussed. Sexual guilt can also be related to other negative consequences, such as not using contraceptives, less knowledge of sexual health, and lower levels of sexual arousal (Emmers-Somer et al., 2018). Sexual guilt has been found to be associated with lower levels of sexual satisfaction (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Leonhardt et al., 2019). Sexual satisfaction has been found to be related to increased intimacy (Birnie-Porter & Hunt, 2015), as well as general life satisfaction and mental health (Brody & Costa, 2009). If sexual guilt is related to lower levels of sexual satisfaction, it may influence other aspects of life such as general life satisfaction and mental health. Conversely, religion has been found to be related to high marital satisfaction (Olson, et al., 2015), higher relationship satisfaction (Ellison et al., 2010; Perry & Whitehead, 2016; Perry, 2016), higher commitment in relationships (Fincham & Beach, 2014), and higher sexual satisfaction (Cranney, 2020).

Continued research is necessary on this subject because clinicians, researchers, and religious individuals need a better understanding of how sexual guilt is related to the multiple facets of religion, as well as how it affects those who have sexual guilt. With a more thorough understanding, better treatments can be developed. The purpose of this study is to bring a better understanding of the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt and more attention to the

subject clinically and in terms of research, as well look at possible related variables, such as sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and sexual attitudes and behaviors.

CHAPTER 2: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Religion is a large part of many people's lives, and can give them a great deal of comfort. Unfortunately, negative emotions can be tied to religion when an individual's actions do not follow their beliefs or when an individual's beliefs or desire conflict with the dogma of the religious organization to which the person belongs. To better help and bring awareness to the topic of sexual guilt, a better understanding from researchers and clinicians is needed. This literature review will examine previous research on sexual guilt with Christianity as well as sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and sexual behavior.

Religiosity

Pargament (1997) defined religion as "a process, a search for significance in ways related to the sacred" (p. 32). Religiosity is not often so well-defined (Ellison, 2011; Peet, 2005). Ashdown et al. (2011) defined religiosity as "how religious an individual is" (p. 42). Religiosity is often measured by church attendance and the importance of religion in one's life (Abbott et al., 2016; Ashdown et al., 2011). Religiosity and spirituality are at times used interchangeably. Senreich (2013) defines spirituality as "a human being's subjective relationship (cognitive, emotional, and intuitive) to what is unknowable about existence, and how a person integrates that relationship into a perspective about the universe, the world, others, self, moral values, and one's sense of meaning" (p. 553), however the definition of spirituality is also disagreed upon. It is fairly well accepted to say that spirituality can be something that everyone can identify with, whether or not they are religious. One can be spiritual and religious but one does not necessarily have to be religious to be spiritual, so for the purpose of this study, religiosity is examined in terms of organized religion and the importance that religion has in one's life. Christianity will be

the focus of the organized religions discussed. Christians make up 76% of North America's population (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Research has found differing results for the relationship between religion and sexual guilt. One possibility for the inconsistent findings of the relationship between religion and sexual guilt, such as some researchers finding a negative relationship between the two (Higgins et al., 2010) while others found no relationship (Leonhardt et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2007), and even some finding a positive relationship (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2018; Hackathorn et al., 2016), may be the different definitions of religion and the differing scales to measure religiosity used in the various studies (Ashdown et al., 2011). Many researchers do not explicitly state how they are defining religion, which could be because religion is difficult to define while being precise, as well as encompassing everything religion includes. Peet (2005) stated that accepting "any definition as definitive will prove to reduce religion to something lesser" (p. 106). This makes it difficult to define "religion" or "religiosity" for the purpose of research and subsequently causes researchers to disagree or have different definitions for them.

With as many definitions "religiosity" has, it also has many ways to be measured. Religiosity is often measured by religious service attendance. It has been suggested that this may not be the best measurement of religiosity, as religiosity is a multifaceted concept (Ashdown et al., 2011). This may mean that those facets of religion that could impact sexual beliefs and behaviors would not be captured by only measuring service attendance. Social desirability bias may also influence individuals to over-report their religious service attendance (Rosenbaum & Weathersbee, 2013). Social desirability bias occurs when individuals answer questions for a survey in a way that they believe is socially desirable instead of what truly reflects their feelings or life (Nunally, 1978). This may result in exaggerated or understated responses or responses that

are not true. Hackathorn et al. (2016) posited that research that uses religious service attendance as a measurement for religiosity does not always support a relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. For example, one study that measures religiosity in other ways has found a relationship between the two variables (McFarland et al., 2011).

For this study, the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012) will be used to measure religiosity. Instead of simply measuring how often one goes to religious services, the CRS measures five dimensions related to religiosity, which are: intellectual, ideology, public practice, private practice, and the religious experience dimensions. Further explanation on these dimensions can be found in the Methodology section. The five dimensions examined through the CRS may give a better perspective of how different facets of religion may interact with sexual guilt.

Religiosity and Sexual Behavior

Christianity largely believes that sex should be only experienced within a marriage (Exodus 22: 16-17; 1 Corinthians 7:2). However, Elias et al. (2015) found that an increase in permissive attitudes towards premarital sex have occurred since the 1970's, which was attributed to decreased religious service attendance and an increase in higher education attainment. Society's view on religion has gone through transformations over time. Americans who were adolescents or emerging adults in the 2010s were less religious than the "Boomer" and "Generation X" cohorts when they were at the same age (Twenge et al., 2015). Twenge et al. (2015) found that the groups with the largest differences between cohorts' religious orientations were in the demographics of females, Whites, and lower-SES individuals, with the "Generation X" cohort having fewer individuals identifying as religious. With a general decrease in religious

attendance and an increase in permissive attitudes towards premarital sex, it is time for an updated approach on the relationship between religion and sexual behavior.

Research on the relationship between religiosity and sexual behavior seems to come from two distinct points of view: 1) religion can have negative effects on an individual's sexual behavior and self-concept; and 2) religion can have positive effects on an individual's sexual behavior and self-concept. Individuals who have high religiosity tend to have fewer sexual partners (Murray, 2007) and have lower levels of sexual activity (Murray-Swank et al., 2005). Hardy et al. (2017) found that religious individuals who had stronger chastity values (i.e. belief that one should not engage in premarital sex) had sex more frequently when married than those with less chastity values, and those who believed that marital sex was to be a bonding experience were found to be more sexually satisfied. Hardy et al. (2017) explained this to be because people with stronger chastity values are happy with their belief system, and therefore experience positive consequences in their married life. However, Hardy et al. (2017) also found that strong chastity values did not predict sexual satisfaction in married couples, which they hypothesized could be due to the potentially difficult transition from believing that sex is bad before marriage to believing that sex is good after marriage.

Patton (1988) was of the mindset that religion, particularly beliefs espoused by the Catholic religion, was to blame for anger, depression, rage, shame, guilt, fear, and anxiety when it came to sex. Patton (1988) described a possible consequence of this type of religious environment to be *sexphobia*. He defined sexphobia as a phenomenon that would occur when taught to distrust one's "sexual feelings and all erotic behavior" (p. 139). At the time that this was written, Patton (1988) claimed that this sexphobia has ruined many women's religious lives and personal lives, as well as creating "irreparable" problems that sex therapists see fairly often

(p. 140). However, views of sex (Elias et al., 2015) and religion have changed in America (Twenge et al., 2015) and may make this less applicable to American women today.

Attitudes of Sexual Behavior within Relationship Types

The majority of denominations who belong to Christianity emphasize the importance of abstaining from sex before marriage (Exodus 22: 16-17, New International Version; 1 Corinthians 7:2, New International Version). A married couple can acceptably engage in sexual behavior, but should not engage in any sexual behavior until they are married.

Relationship type (casual hookup, dating, cohabiting, engaged, married, etc.) tends to influence various parts of romantic relationships (Waite & Joyner, 2001; Murray et al., 2007; Birnie-Porter & Hunt, 2015). It has been supported that certain satisfactions in relationships, such as sexual satisfaction (Birnie-Porter & Hunt, 2015) and emotional satisfaction (Waite & Joyner, 2001), differ based on the type of relationship. Birnie-Porter and Hunt (2015) found that engaged individuals reported significantly higher sexual satisfaction, over friends with benefits, casual dating, and married relationships. However, sexual satisfaction in engaged relationships were not significantly higher than exclusive dating relationships. Women in married or long-term committed relationships report higher emotional and physical satisfaction within sex than those in relationships that they expect to end (Waite & Joyner, 2001). Meaning, women have lower sexual satisfaction if they believe the relationship is not going to last. This suggests that relationship type may influence sexual satisfaction between more committed versus less committed relationships. A theory for this is that women desire an emotional connection that can be developed in a longer-term relationship (Waite & Joyner, 2001). Murray et al. (2007) found that the more religious an individual is, the less likely they are to accept the belief that casual sex is acceptable.

“Acceptable” sexual activities also seem to be different for women compared to men. Society seems to value the virginities of women more than men, “with men typically encouraged to ‘get it over with’ and women urged to ‘save themselves’” (Carpenter, 2010, p. 159). This becomes part of one’s sexual scripts, believing that one should wait to have sex until marriage. *Scripts* are “people’s cognitive representations of events that guide their expectations for similar events, and thus shape them” (Morrison et al., 2015, p. 656). Thus, a sexual script helps guide expectations of sexual behavior. When individuals follow their sexual scripts, such as having sex only in marriage, they generally believe that their script is correct, and become satisfied with their choice. However, if one has a script which they behaviorally stray from, such as having sex premaritally, they may become very upset with themselves and feel unsatisfied (Carpenter, 2010). Feeling unsatisfied and as if they did something wrong may illicit feelings of guilt. Results from a metanalysis suggest that women feel more sexual guilt and negative feelings when presented with sexual stimuli than men do and typically feel more sexual guilt in general (Emmers-Sommer, 2018).

Although studies have explored how many religious individuals have sex before marriage, it is unclear what percentage of religious individuals do, in fact, wait to have sex with their partner until they are married. It is argued that this could be due to social desirability bias. Religious individuals may not want to admit that they have had sex when their religion would disapprove. However, Adamczyk and Hayes (2012) examined the premarital sex patterns of 31 countries, after testing for a possible social desirability bias, and found that Christians were significantly more likely than Muslims were to have premarital sex, but less likely than Jews to have premarital sex. These three religions are a part of the Abrahamic religions. The Abrahamic

religions have distinct beliefs but do share similar characteristics, such as generally disapproving of premarital sex (Exodus 22:16-17; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Quran 17. 32; Quran 25. 68-71).

Higgins et al. (2010) studied the relationships of guilt, religion, and satisfaction for women who had sexual intercourse for the first time. They found that Black and White women who had sex for the first time were significantly more satisfied psychologically if they were in a steady dating relationship or “in love” rather than those who had sex with a casual acquaintance. Higgins et al. (2010) reported that women being “in love” were also more able to “justify” their decision to have sex for the first time.

Sexual Behaviors

Different sexual activities may elicit varying amounts of guilt. Although no recent known studies have explored this possibility, Hackathorn et al. (2016) suggest that future studies examining the relationship between different sexual activities and sexual guilt could be helpful in further exploration of the relationship between sexual satisfaction and religiosity. There are few studies that look at specific sexual acts and how those behaviors might correlate with sexual guilt, and the few that exist are outdated (Karen, 1959; Mosher & Cross, 1971). Societal sexual beliefs, such as an increase in sexual permissiveness since the 1970's (Elias et al., 2015), and societal attitude of sexual behaviors have changed even in just the past couple of decades (Wells & Twenge, 2005) so the generalizability of studies from several decades ago would not be applicable to today's society.

Religious individuals may have different views of sexual activity than the general population. Rosenbaum and Weathersbee (2013) found that religious individuals tend to delay their first time having vaginal intercourse, whether it be before or after marriage. In Rosenbaum and Weathersbee's (2013) study, they found that 70% of participants who identified as Baptist

had had premarital vaginal or oral sex, with 80% of those participants regretted having premarital sex. They found that it was more likely for the participants in the study to have had oral sex, possibly as a substitute to having vaginal sex. Those participants who were married earlier reported substituting vaginal sex for having strictly oral sex, while individuals who married later in life reported having vaginal sex before they married. Rosenbaum and Weathersbee (2013) suggested that this was due to having more time to have more sexual partners or more time to stop substituting oral sex for vaginal sex. This may support that religious individuals perceive different sexual acts, such as oral sex, more acceptable than other forms, like vaginal sex.

Sexual Guilt

Mosher and Cross (1971) defined sexual guilt as “a generalized expectancy for self-mediated punishment for violating or for anticipating violating standards of proper sexual conduct” (p. 27). Sexual guilt can emerge when an individual’s desires or actions do not match with their beliefs or what they have been taught. Some researchers have suggested that a sense of guilt comes from sex when sex is from an intention of pleasure, versus procreation (Jantzen, 2005; Jung 2005). Others posit that it may be because of the messages repeated in religious communities that refer to abstaining from sex outside of marriage (Runkel, 1998).

There has been a large amount of research on sexual guilt in relation to religion (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Leonhardt et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2007). However, mixed results (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Murray et al., 2007) leave us wondering, what is the relationship between sex guilt and religion? Some research supports a positive connection between sexual guilt and religion (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2018; Hackathorn et al., 2016), while others find that there is no connection (Leonhardt et al., 2019, Murray et al., 2007). The messages individuals

receive from religion as a whole, and from society and families can greatly impact how individuals view those topics. With the constant emphasis that many religions and churches have on being abstinent, those who are not abstinent or may not wish to be abstinent may punish themselves for having desires that conflict with what they have been taught.

To differentiate their study from previous conflicting studies, Hackathorn et al. (2016) used a different way to measure religiosity. Instead of using religious service attendance, they examined religious identification and internalization. Another aspect that differentiated this study from previous studies was the use of sexual guilt as a mediator in the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. Hackathorn et al. (2016) found that sexual guilt does not have as much influence on sexual satisfaction in married couples as in unmarried couples. They called this the “sacred bed phenomenon,” referring to the notion that once a couple is married, their bed is now sacred, according to their religious doctrine, and it becomes more acceptable to have sex, thus decreasing sexual guilt and increasing sexual satisfaction. However, they did find a positive association between religiosity and sexual guilt.

When examining the relationships between religion, sex guilt, and sexual satisfaction, Leonhardt et al. (2019) measured religiosity by asking four questions about religious service attendance, frequency of prayer, and importance of religion and spirituality, while sexual guilt was assessed with only one item. Leonhardt et al. (2019) hypothesized and found that sexual guilt was negatively associated with sexual satisfaction. However, they found no association between sexual guilt and religion, but suggested that this could be due to the type of participants, as the relationship between sexual guilt and religion could be more likely to exist in unmarried college samples (Hackathorn et al., 2016). The measurement of religiosity and sexual guilt in this study may be inadequate in assessing the many facets of both religiosity and sexual guilt.

Murray et al. (2007) examined the relationship of shame and guilt with spiritual and religious dimensions. In this study, they measure attitudes towards sexual behaviors with the Hendrick Sexual Attitudes scale. This scale measure dimensions of permissiveness, views responsible and non-judgmental sex, communion, and instrumentality. They measured sexual activities which are considered high risk through the High Risk Sex Questionnaire. This questionnaire asks questions such as, “Have you had sex with someone you knew less than 24 hours?” and “Have you had sex after use of alcohol or drugs?”

Murray et al. (2007) found that individuals who reported that they were not living up to the expectations of God were more likely to report engaging in behaviors that they believed were shame-based. Participants who reported feeling disconnected from God were more likely to report feelings of shame and guilt. However, this study did not support a strong relationship between guilt and shame and one’s sexual attitudes or behaviors. This study also supports that measuring religiosity with just religious service attendance is inadequate, as the strength of their faith appears to be influential on shame and guilt surrounding sexual attitudes and behaviors.

Emmers-Sommer et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis on studies ranging from 1955 to 2012 that examined sexual guilt, with most taking place before 2000 (all but four studies out of thirty-eight studies). Emmers-Sommer et al. (2018) found a positive relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt. These studies measured religiosity in several ways, but mainly used Mosher’s Sexual Guilt Scale to measure sex guilt. The studies in the meta-analysis varied in publication years, many taking place between 1950 and 2000, which could influence the results, making it important for current studies to examine the possibility of a positive relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt.

Sexual guilt may still be present even when a couple is married (Leonhardt et al., 2019). However, the literature is inconsistent and scarce about the role religion plays in this guilt. Some suggest that religious individuals would not feel guilty because of their religion because sex within marriage is acceptable from a religious standpoint (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Hernandez et al., 2014). Others suggest that religious individuals still may feel sexual guilt within marriage (Leonhardt et al., 2019) and that this may be because the anxiety and guilt learned around the topic of sex is not easily forgotten and may still exist (Runkel, 1998).

Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction was defined by Rusbult et al. (1998) as “the positive versus negative affect experienced in a relationship. Satisfaction is influenced by the extent to which a partner fulfills the individual’s most important needs” (p. 359). Relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction have been found to be very intertwined (Fallis et al., 2016; McNulty et al., 2016). A metaanalysis of longitudinal studies found the association between marital and sexual satisfaction to be positively bidirectionally related (McNulty et al., 2016), meaning that higher levels of marital satisfaction during one wave of assessments done in the study predicted more positive change in the sexual satisfaction assessments in the second wave of assessments, also higher levels of sexual satisfaction during the first wave of assessments predicted more positive changes in marital satisfaction from that assessment to the second wave. Another longitudinal study found one’s sexual satisfaction predicted later relationship satisfaction (Fallis et al., 2016).

Religion and relationship satisfaction have been researched extensively and has consistently found that higher religiosity is positively associated with relationship stability and quality (Ellison et al., 2010; Perry & Whitehead, 2016; Perry, 2016). Perry and Whitehead (2016) suggest several reasons for this consistent finding is potentially linked to the positive

relationship of religiosity and relationship satisfaction, such as internalized pro-relationship values, social support, accountability, and internalized views on the sanctification of marriage.

Instead of being studied with relationship satisfaction, sexual guilt is oftentimes studied in connection to sexual satisfaction. The presence of sexual guilt in an individual could influence other aspects of the individual's attitudes or behaviors within sex, which could affect relationship satisfaction. Aumer (2014) found that men who perceive their partner as being shy or embarrassed when it came to sex, had significantly lower reported levels of relationship satisfaction. Sexual guilt may be related to feelings of shyness or embarrassment, which would also be related to lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Sexual guilt is also related to less favorable attitudes towards sex and sexual behavior (Emmers-Sommer et al., 2018). This can effect relationship satisfaction as sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction are oftentimes intertwined.

Sexual Satisfaction

Sexual satisfaction can be defined as “the affective response arising from one's evaluation of his or her sexual relationship, including the perception that one's sexual needs are being met, fulfilling one's own and one's partner's expectations, and a positive evaluation of the overall sexual relationship” (Offman & Mattheson, 2005, p. 32). Cranney (2020) found that married and unmarried individuals with high levels of religiosity and spirituality reported higher sex life satisfaction. However, Cranney (2020) pointed out that a limitation of their study may be that their results may have been skewed by a young population of participants. Cranney (2020) posited that older adults may have had more experience with negative beliefs about sex and that may have negative consequences on sexual satisfaction. With unmarried participants, Cranney (2020) found them to have less sex than their non-married, non-

religious counterparts. This study also found that current religiosity had a larger effect on sexual satisfaction than religiosity as a child; religiosity as a child did not seem to be related to sexual satisfaction later in life.

Contrary to Cranney's (2020) findings, Hackathorn et al. (2016) found that unmarried participants who had higher levels of internalized religiosity reported lower levels of sexual satisfaction. An interesting finding from this study was that higher religious introjection, which is "how much a person internalizes religion based on guilt, self-approval and need for esteem," (p. 160), predicted higher levels of sexual guilt which, in turn, predicted higher levels of sexual satisfaction. Hackathorn et al. (2016) suggested that another mediating variable may be involved to create such a connection.

Leonhardt et al. (2019) found conflicting results about sexual satisfaction and religiosity within their own study. When analyzing sexual satisfaction and religiosity, they found no association. However, when the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction was analyzed through sexual sanctification, religiosity accounted for a small positive, yet indirect effect on sexual satisfaction. Yet, on the other hand, when sexual satisfaction and sexual guilt were simultaneously accounted for, there was a small negative direct effect on sexual satisfaction. With these differing results throughout studies, it is evident that there is confusion about how and if religiosity and sexual satisfaction are related and what other variables may influence this relationship.

Religion is generally related to more conservative sexual values (McMillen et al., 2011). Borg et al. (2011) found that more conservative values and stricter sex-related moral standards are related to the development and maintenance of vaginismus, a sexual dysfunction in women that results in difficulties allowing entry of a penis or other object into the vagina. This persistent

difficulty is related to involuntary pelvic muscle contractions due to the anticipation or fear of pain (Borg et al., 2011). Though the diagnosis of vaginismus does not affect a large amount of women, this fact suggests that women with more conservative values and stricter moral standards because of religion may have increased sexual pain concerns, which in turn often results in lower levels of sexual satisfaction.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957) suggests that psychological discomfort can occur when there are inconsistencies in beliefs, values, and attitudes. This may cause individuals to avoid learning more information or avoid being in situations that may increase their dissonance. Festinger (1957) suggests three ways that individuals avoid cognitive dissonance. These are 1) changing the environment in which one feels increases the dissonance, 2) adding or avoiding new information, or 3) changing the behavior that causes the dissonance. Religious women may have distress with the cognitive dissonance caused by their beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors surrounding sex.

Women may feel a disconnect between their religious identities and identities as modern women and partners (Torgrimsson, 2019). Research has found that less than half of American women identify as “feminist” (Kwan et al., 2020), but most of those who do not identify as feminist still support feminist values (Ali et al., 2008; McCabe, 2005). Feminist values often appear to be at odds with religious teachings (e.g. wives submitting to husbands (Ephesians 5:22)) and can cause cognitive dissonance in religious women who espouse feminist values (Torgrimsson, 2019).

In the context of this study, this cognitive dissonance could look like a woman who wants to be a good partner and to sexually please him, but who also wants to be a good Christian by

waiting for marriage in order to have sex. This may also look like wanting to or actually having sex, but feeling like they are not fulfilling their role as a religious woman. The present study suggests that women affected by this cognitive dissonance between personal desires and religious views may react in a variety of ways to either adjust their view or adjust their behaviors, as suggested by Festinger (1957). Women who find a conflict in their religious beliefs and their sexual desires may attempt to find new information that confirms their desire for sex to be acceptable. Others may try to avoid information from their religion that continues to have a negative view on premarital sex, which may cause distancing between women and their religions. Similar to avoiding new information, religious women may feel the need to avoid the environments in which they feel cognitive dissonance. This may include not going to religious services or talking to people in their religious community if they feel that they will feel guilty in these environments. Women may also change their behaviors, which may look like ceasing sexual behaviors or engaging in them less frequently or more acceptably. This may affect an individual's relationship with their partner or with God.

The Present Study

Sexual guilt has been researched in the context of religion, but unanswered questions still exist. It is unclear if religiosity and sexual guilt are related, as well as what else is connected to religiosity and sexual guilt. This study aims to examine the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt, sexual attitudes and behaviors, and sexual guilt, as well as relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses are meant to be answered through this study:

RQ1: Does sexual guilt moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction?

H1.1: Religiosity is positively associated with relationship satisfaction.

H1.2: Sexual guilt is negatively related to relationship satisfaction.

H1.3: When sexual guilt is high, religiosity is negatively related to relationship satisfaction. When sex guilt is low, religiosity is positively related to relationship satisfaction.

RQ2: Does the conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction?

H2.1 Women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict have less relationship satisfaction than those without conflict.

H2.2 When there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is negative; but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is positive.

RQ3: Does sexual guilt and conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction?

H3.1: Religiosity is positively associated with sexual satisfaction.

H3.2: Sexual guilt is negatively related to sexual satisfaction.

H3.3: When sexual guilt is high, religiosity is negatively related to sexual satisfaction.
When sexual guilt is low, religiosity is positively related to sexual satisfaction.

RQ4: Does conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction?

H4.1 Women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict have less sexual satisfaction than women without conflict.

H4.2 When there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is negative; but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is positive.

RQ5: Does the conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sex guilt?

H5.1: Women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict have more sexual guilt.

H5.2: Religiosity is positively associated with sexual guilt.

H5.3: When there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is positive; but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is not significant.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Participants

In order to be eligible for this study, participants had to identify as female, age 18 and older, currently self-identify as Christian, currently be in a heterosexual relationship for at least six months, and are currently sexually active. These participants were also required to reside in the United States. Through MTurk, participants were paid \$0.90 for their participation, which is an acceptable amount for this platform and the amount of time needed to complete when compared to other surveys, as payment can range from \$0.01 to above minimum wage (Amazon Mturk, 2021).

Cohen's (1992) power of analysis suggested at least 107 participants for this study to detect a medium effect size. In total, this study used 157 participants for the analyses, which satisfies Cohen's (1992) power of analysis suggestion for this study.

Procedure

Qualtrics was used to create the survey that was then uploaded to Amazon Marketplace Turk (Mturk) for participant recruitment. Mturk is a platform for individuals to complete online tasks such as surveys and are compensated for their time. Mturk has been found to have a diverse population of individuals who complete surveys, but research suggests that the population is younger and more liberal than would be found in the general public (Shank, 2015). The results showed a diverse range of age, but liberalism versus conservatism in the sample is unknown.

Materials

The survey included indexes to measure sexual guilt, religiosity, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction: the Revised Mosher's Sex Guilt Scale (Janda & Bazemore, 2010), the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (Huber & Huber, 2012), the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (Štulhofer et al., 2010), and the Couples Satisfaction Index-16 (Funk & Rogge, 2007). Questions were created to measure conflict by assessing attitudes on what is acceptable during what relationship types and sexual behaviors within those relationship types. Demographic measures were also included, which asked participants to indicate their age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, relationship types they have been in, education, annual household income, whether participants have children and how many living in the home, and area that they live (urban, suburban, and rural).

The Revised Mosher's Sex Guilt Scale

The Revised Mosher's Sex Guilt Scale (Janda & Bazemore, 2010) was adapted from Mosher's (1966, 1968) Revised Forced-Choice Guilt Inventory and his Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory (1998). Mosher's measure of guilt is the most commonly used measure sexual guilt as it has an abundance of literature in the 1960's and 1970's supporting its construct validity (Janda & Bazemore, 2010). Janda and Bazemore (2010) adapted Mosher's scale to a ten-item scale, using a 7-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "Very Strongly Disagree" and 7 indicating "Very Strongly Agree." The scores are added after some items are reverse coded, then averaged for a final score. Examples of items are: "When I have sexual desires I enjoy them like all healthy human beings," "Sex relations before marriage should not be recommended," and "Unusual sex practices are all right if both partners agree." The higher the score, the more indicative of higher sex guilt. This scale has fairly high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .85.

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS; Huber & Huber, 2012) “is a measure of the centrality, importance or salience of religious meanings in personality” (p. 711). The CRS has been developed and adapted by Stefen Huber since 2003. As of 2012, it had been applied in more than 100 studies in various fields of study, including sociology, psychology, and religion. The Cronbach’s alpha for the full scale of 32 items is 0.84 (Huber & Huber, 2012). The CRS is targeted at the three Abrahamic (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) religions, but can be adapted to include other religions. The CRS measures five core dimensions of religiosity: public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology, and intellectual dimensions. Public practice refers to the belonging to a religious community and taking part in public religious rituals and activities. An example of a public practice item is: “How important is it to take part in religious services?” Private practice refers to taking part in individualized rituals and taking time to connect with God by themselves. An example of private practice item is: “How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situation?” Religious experience refers to individuals perceiving some kind of connection to God in a way that emotionally affects them. An example of this is: “How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?” Ideology refers to the beliefs that the individual has about God and the relationship that humans have with God. An ideology item is: “In your opinion, how probable is it that a higher power really exists?” The intellectual dimension refers to the individual knowing about their religion and being able to explain their beliefs to others. An example of this item is: “How often do you keep yourself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books?” (Huber & Huber, 2012)

Items either ask about frequency of certain religious activities (e.g. prayer, going to church) or extent of belief (e.g. “belief in something divine”) (Huber & Huber, 2012).

Frequencies are asked with a 5-point Likert scale from 1-5 including, never, rarely, occasionally, often, and very often. Extent of beliefs also uses a five level scale of: not at all, not very much, moderately, quite a bit, and very much so. Examples of items include: *How often do you pray?* *How important is it for you to be connected to a religious community?* *How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situations?*

The scores from the five dimensions are then added together and averaged by the amount of scored questions. Huber and Huber (2012) developed thresholds to identify how religious one is based on the averages of the questions. A score of 1.0 to 2.0 indicates one is not religious, 2.1-3.9 indicates religious, and 4.0-5.0 indicates highly religious. This scale for measuring religiosity takes into account all of the five dimensions chosen by Huber and Huber. This will be helpful for this study as it is unclear as to what dimensions of religiosity may influence sexual guilt.

The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale

The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS; Štulhofer et al., 2010) is a 20 item scale that looks at two dimensions of sexual behavior. These two dimensions include: focus on self, called the ego-centered dimension, and focus on the other, called the partner- and sexual activity-centered dimension. The NSSS asks for ratings of sexual satisfaction within the last six months. Ten of the items are part of the ego-centered dimension and ask for ratings on a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied) on items such as, “The intensity of my sexual arousal” and “The way I sexually react to my partner.” The other ten items are part of the partner- and sexual activity-centered dimension, rating items such as “My partner’s initiation of sexual activity” and “My partner’s ability to orgasm,” also rated on a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). The items are added together then averaged. A higher number indicates a higher

sexual satisfaction. The NSSS twenty item scale shows high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94-.96$).

Couples Satisfaction Index—16

The Couples Satisfaction Index-16 (CSI-16; Funk & Rogge, 2007) has been found by Funk and Rogge (2007) to be a more precise measurement tool for relationship satisfaction in their 2007 study than some other popular measures, such as the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). The CSI shows high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .98$). The CSI has 32 items, but can be shortened to a 4 item or a 16 item version. For the present study the 16 item version will be used, as the Cronbach's α has been found to be .98 for both the CSI-32 and the CSI-16. The first item uses a 7-point scale from 0-6 (0 = Extremely unhappy; 6 = Perfect), while the next 9 items use a 6-point scale from 0-5 (0 = Always disagree/Never; 5 = Always agree/All the time). Examples of items include, "In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?" and "How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?" The last 6 items ask the individual to rate how they feel about their relationship on a spectrum of 0 to 5. This is done by using two words which are opposite of each other, such as interesting and boring, bad and good, discouraging and hopeful. The individual would then pick a number from 0 to 5 expressing which they feel describe their relationship, with 0 identifying the negative descriptor and 5 identifying the positive descriptor (Funk & Rogge, 2007). The items are then added up for the score. Scores can range from 0 to 81, with higher scores indicating a higher level of relationship satisfaction. A score below a 51.5 indicates a significant relationship dissatisfaction (Funk & Rogge, 2007).

Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors Inventory to Measure Conflict

In order to look at sexual attitudes and behaviors, this study asked questions about what sexual behaviors are acceptable during certain relationship types (casual hook up, dating, cohabiting but not engaged, engagement, and marriage) and what sexual behaviors they have engaged in while in these relationship types. The sexual behaviors included in this survey were adapted from Santtila and colleagues (2007). Sexual behaviors included were kissing, fingering, giving a hand job, receiving oral sex, giving oral sex, vaginal intercourse, and anal intercourse. To look at sexual attitudes, participants answered what sexual behaviors they believe are acceptable during the five different relationship types (casually hooking up, dating, cohabiting but not engaged, engaged, and married). To examine sexual behaviors, participants were given the same list of sexual behaviors and answered which behaviors they have engaged in during the five different relationship types, as applicable. From these two inventories, conflict was measured. Conflict was identified when a participant reports that they do *not* believe a behavior is “okay” in any of the relationship types, but report that they have done that sexual behavior. For example, a participant may say that kissing, fingering, giving a hand job, receiving oral sex, and giving oral sex are “okay” while dating, but vaginal intercourse and anal intercourse are “not okay” while dating. If the participants engaged in vaginal and/or anal intercourse, this would measure as conflict for the sake of the study. Conflict is measured as “having conflict” or “not having conflict.” The current study chose to not measure conflict with “counts” of conflict within every relationship type. This was due to the fact that not everyone had been in every relationship type before and because if someone answered to have conflict in one area, they were more likely to report conflict in another area.

Data Analysis

In this study, the independent variables are religiosity, conflict between attitudes and behaviors, and sexual guilt. The dependent variables are sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. The control variables used will be age, education, children living at home, length of relationship, and income.

A standard regression was used to answer the first research question: Does sexual guilt moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction? The independent variable is religiosity. The dependent variable is relationship satisfaction. Sexual guilt was used as a moderator variable. The control variables used are age, education, children living at home, length of relationship, and income.

A standard regression was used to answer the second research question: Does the conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction? The independent variable is religiosity. The dependent variable is relationship satisfaction. Conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors was used as a moderator variable. The control variables used are age, education, children living at home, length of relationship, and income.

A standard regression was used to answer the third research question: Does sexual guilt and conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction? Religiosity is an independent variable. The dependent variable is sexual satisfaction. The moderating variable is sexual guilt. The control variables used are age, education, children living at home, length of relationship, and income.

A standard regression was used to answer the fourth research question: Does conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction? The independent variable is religiosity. The dependent variable is sexual

satisfaction. Conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors was used as a moderator variable.

The control variables used are age, education, children living at home, length of relationship, and income.

A standard regression was used to answer the fifth research question: Does the conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sex guilt?

Religiosity is an independent variable. The dependent variable is sexual guilt. The moderating variable is the conflict between attitudes and behaviors. The control variables used are age, education, children living at home, length of relationship, and income.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Data Screening

A total of 786 participants viewed the survey through Mturk. Of those, 784 consented and 750 participants fully completed the survey, meaning they did not exit out of the survey before answering all the questions and were not taken to the end due to not meeting criteria. Out of the 750 participants, 240 cases had the IP addresses used at least two times, with differing answers which appeared to attempt to meet the qualifications for this survey. Those 240 cases were discarded as it appeared they contained falsified answers in order to receive compensation. Of the 510 remaining, 220 participants met the following requirements: a) were in a romantic relationship lasting at least 6 months, b) currently sexually active (within the past six months), c) a US citizen, d) currently identify as Christian, e) currently identify as straight or heterosexual, f) be eighteen years old or older, and g) identify as female. Fifty-eight participants were excluded for having multiple missing answers, missing answers to essential questions, or inconsistent answers to questions. There was one outlier from the Centrality of Religiosity Scale, one outlier from the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale, and four outliers from the Couples Satisfaction Index, making a total of 6 participants who were removed because of outlying data. For the final analysis, 19.97% of the initial group who opened the survey, or 156 participants, were used.

The Centrality of Religiosity Scale has thresholds to indicate different ranges of religiosity. Huber and Huber (2012) noted that a score of 1.0 to 2.0 indicates that one is not religious. One participant had a score of one and was removed from the study. Three participants were within the range of 1.1 to 2.0 were still included in the study as religiosity is a spectrum. This study wanted to include those who identified as religious and did not simply answer the same for all questions.

Description of Sample

The participants' ages ranged from 20 to 68 years old, with the mean age of 40.08 years and the median age of 39 years old. Most participants identified as White (78.2%), while 9.6% of participants identified as Black or African-American, 3.2% identified as Asian, 4.5% identified as Hispanic, 3.8% identified as Multiracial, and 0.6% identified as Other.

Table 1: Age of Participants

Age (N=156)	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
	20	68	40.08	12.87

Table 2: Race/Ethnicity of Participants

Race/Ethnicity Identity (N=156)	Frequency	Percentage
Asian	5	3.2%
Black or African-American	15	9.6%
Hispanic	7	4.5%
Multiracial	6	3.8%
White	122	78.2%
Other	1	0.6%

Participants were asked about their highest level of education and their annual household income. The majority of participants reported that their highest level education was a 4-year degree (56.1%), while 8.9% were high school graduates, 11.5% reported attending some college, 9.6% reported earning a 2 year degree, 12.7% reported earning a Professional or Master's degree, and 1.3% reported earning a Doctorate. In reference to annual household income, 21.2% of participants earned less than \$30,000, 29.4% of participants earned between \$30,000 to \$59,999, 30.1% reported that they earned between \$60,000 to \$89,999, and 19.3% of participants reported that they earned more than \$90,000 annually.

Table 3: Highest Level of Education Completed

Highest Level of Education Completed (N=156)	Frequency	Percentage
High School	14	9.0%
Some college	18	11.5%
2 year degree	15	9.6%
4 year degree	87	55.8%
Professional/Master's degree	20	12.8%
Doctorate	2	1.3%

Table 4: Annual Household Income

Annual Income (N=156)	Frequency	Percentage
Less than \$10,000	6	3.8%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	7	4.5%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	20	12.8%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	13	8.3%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	13	8.3%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	20	12.8%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	14	9.0%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	21	13.5%
\$80,000 to \$89,999	12	7.7%
\$90,000 to \$99,999	9	5.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	16	10.3%
More than \$150,000	5	3.2%

Participants were asked questions about having children, if they had been sexually assaulted, and the type of area that they live in. There were 98 participants who reported having children (62.8%) and 58 who reported having no children (37.2%). Of the 98 participants who reported having children, 8 participants reported to have no children living at home, 28 reported to have one child living at home, 41 participants reported having two children in the home, 15 reported having three children in the home, 4 participants reported having four children in the home, and 2 participants reported having five or more children in the home. There were 70 participants (44.9%) who reported that they had been sexually assaulted and 86 (55.1%)

participants reported to have not been sexually assaulted. When asked what type of area that they live in (rural, urban, or suburban), 32 participants reported to live in a rural area, 63 reported to live in an urban area, and 61 participants reported to live in a suburban area.

Table 5: Parenthood Status, Number of Children in the Home, and Sexual Assault

Do you have children? (N=156)	Frequency	Percent
Yes	98	62.8%
No	58	37.2%
Number of Children in the Home (N=98)	Frequency	Percent
None	8	5.1%
1	28	17.9%
2	41	26.3%
3	15	9.6%
4	4	2.6%
5+	2	1.3%
Sexual Assault (N=156)	Frequency	Percent
Yes	70	44.9%
No	86	55.1%

Table 6: Suburban, Urban, or Rural Area

Type of Area (N=156)	Frequency	Percent
Suburban	61	39.1%
Urban	63	40.4%
Rural	32	20.5%

There were 57 participants who reported to have ever been in a casually hooking up relationship, 108 reported to have been in a dating relationship, 58 reported to have been in a cohabiting relationship, 72 reported to have been in an engaged relationship, and 102 participants reported to have been in a married relationship. There were 34 participants who reported to be currently in a dating relationship, 18 reported to be in a cohabiting relationship, 11 in an engaged relationship, and 93 participants reported to be in a married relationship. Current relationship

length in months ranged from 6 months to 540 months, or 45 years. The mean was 78.96 months, or 6.58 years.

Table 7: Current Relationship Status and Relationship Types Ever Had

Current Relationship Status (N=156)	Frequency	Percent
Dating	34	21.8%
Cohabiting, but not engaged	18	11.5%
Engaged	11	7.1%
Married	93	59.6%
Relationship Types Ever (N=156)	Frequency*	Percent**
Casually hooking up	57	36.5%
Dating	108	69.2%
Cohabiting, but not engaged	58	37.2%
Engaged	72	46.2%
Married	102	65.4%

* Participants can endorse more than one category

**Percentage can add up to over 100%

Table 8: Relationship Length

Relationship Length (N=156)	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Length in Months	6	540	78.96	106.348

Conflict was measured by the presence of conflict ever. Out of the 156 participants in this study, 65 (41.7%) reported a presence of conflict ever between their sexual attitudes and behaviors, while 91 (58.3%) did not report any conflict. Of the 156 participants in this study, 57 participants (36.5%) reported having ever been in a hookup relationship. Of the 57 participants who had ever been in a hookup relationship, 49 of them (86.1%) reported some kind of conflict between their attitudes and behaviors in a hooking up relationship. Of the total 156 participants, 108 reported having dated before, 58 reported having been cohabiting, 72 reported having been engaged, and 102 reported having been married. Of those 108 that reported having dated before,

36 (33.3%) reported having some conflict between their attitudes and behaviors of a dating relationship. Of the 58 who had cohabited before, 13 participants (22.4%) reported some kind of conflict in that relationship type. Of the 72 participants who had been engaged, 20 participants (27.8%) reported some kind of conflict in that relationship type. Of the 102 participants who reported having been married, 22 participants (21.6%) reported having some kind of conflict in that relationship type. By percentage, hooking up relationships had the most counts of conflict, with those married and cohabiting having the least counts of conflict by percentage.

Table 9: Presence of Conflict

Presence of Conflict (N=156)	Frequency	Percent
Yes	65	41.7%
No	91	58.3%

Table 10: Conflict by Relationship Type

Relationship Type (N=157)	Frequency	Percent	Conflict Frequency	Percent of those with conflict within each relationship type
Casually hooking up	57	36.5%	39	68.4%
Dating	108	69.2%	36	33.3%
Cohabiting, but not engaged	58	37.2%	13	22.4%
Engaged	72	46.2%	20	27.8%
Married	102	65.4%	22	21.6%

Of the conflict within the hooking up relationship type, there were 86 counts of conflict across all sexual behaviors. There were 73 counts of conflict across all sexual behaviors in the dating relationship type. There were 29 counts of conflict across all sexual behaviors in the cohabiting relationship type. There were 45 counts of conflict across all sexual behaviors in the

engaged relationship type. There were 43 counts of conflict across all sexual behavior in the married relationship type.

Table 11: Counts of Conflict by Relationship Type

Relationship Type	Count of Conflict
Casually Hooking Up	86
Dating	73
Cohabiting	29
Engaged	45
Married	43

Of the sexual behaviors, kissing had 14 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. Fingering had 37 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. Masturbation had 30 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. Giving a hand job had 31 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. Receiving oral sex received 37 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. Giving oral sex received 41 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. Vaginal sex received 50 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. Anal sex had 36 counts of conflict across the different relationship types. From these results, vaginal sex received the most counts of conflict (reporting that vaginal sex is not okay during a certain relationship type, but did so during that certain relationship type), followed by giving oral sex, receiving oral sex and fingering, anal sex, giving a hand job, masturbation, and lastly kissing.

Table 12: Conflict by Sexual Behaviors

Sexual Behaviors	Total Counts of Conflict
Kissing	14
Fingering	37
Masturbation	30
Hand job	31
Receiving oral sex	37
Giving oral sex	41
Vaginal Sex	50
Anal Sex	36

Correlations

Pearson correlation analyses were conducted on continuous or dichotomous variables to assess for possible relationships (N=157). Sexual guilt and religiosity were significantly correlated ($r = .429, p < 0.01$). Sexual guilt and conflict between sexual attitudes and sexual behaviors were significantly correlated ($r = .266, p < 0.01$). Sexual guilt and the number of children currently living at home were significantly correlated ($r = -.199, p < 0.05$). Sexual guilt and age were significantly correlated ($r = .174, p < 0.05$). Religiosity and sexual satisfaction were significantly correlated ($r = .319, p < 0.01$). Religiosity and relationship satisfaction were significantly correlated ($r = .204, p < 0.05$). Religiosity and age were significantly correlated ($r = .240, p < 0.01$). Relationship satisfaction and conflict between sexual attitudes and sexual behaviors were significantly correlated ($r = -.222, p < 0.01$). Relationship satisfaction and household annual income were significantly correlated ($r = .233, p < 0.01$). Relationship satisfaction and sexual guilt were significantly correlated ($r = -.189, p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction were significantly correlated ($r = .572, p < 0.01$). Sexual satisfaction and length of relationship were significantly correlated ($r = -.186, p < 0.05$).

Table 13: Correlations

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Age		.274**	.251**	-.159*	.063	.165*	.245**	.268**	-.077	.039
2. Length of Relationship	.274**		.241**	-.113	.223**	-.190*	-.045	.133	-.039	-.117
3. Number of Children in the Home	.251**	.241**		-.031	.178*	.042	.080	.174*	-.086	.047
4. Education	.159*	-.113	-.031		.331**	.132	.146	-.001	.136	-.004
5. Income	.063	.223**	.178*	.331**		-.068	.045	.009	.233**	-.134
6. Sexual Satisfaction	.165*	-.190*	.042	.132	-.068		.305**	-.104	.572**	-.029
7. Religiosity	.245**	-.045	.080	.146	.045	.305**		.426**	.204*	.132
8. Sexual Guilt	.268**	.133	.174*	-.001	.009	-.104	.426**		-.189*	.274**
9. Relationship Satisfaction	-.077	-.039	-.086	.136	.223**	.572**	.204*	-.189*		-.222**
10. Conflict	.039	-.117	.047	-.004	-.134	-.029	.132	.274**	-.222**	

*p < .05, **p < .001

Instrumentation

The instruments used for this study were the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS), New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS), the Couples Satisfaction Index-16 (CSI-16), and the Revised Mosher's Sex Guilt Scale. The number of items, possible range, observed range, mean, standard deviation, the Cronbach's alpha of the scale in other studies, and the Cronbach's alpha of the scale from this study are in Table 12, below.

Table 14: Instruments and Descriptive Statistics

Scales	# of Items	Possible Range	Observed Range	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Reported Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha from present study
Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)	15	15-75	19-75	156	54.85	12.89	.84	.953
New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS)	20	20-100	28-100	156	73.15	17.52	.90-.93	.970
The Couples Satisfaction Index-16 (CSI-16)	16	0-81	11-81	156	60.02	15.75	.98	.952
The Revised Mosher's Sex Guilt Scale	10	10-70	14-60	156	34.91	9.50	.85	.743

Analysis of Research Question One

The first research question of this study is: Does sexual guilt moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction? To answer this question, a regression was conducted with religiosity as the independent variable and relationship satisfaction is the

dependent variable. Sexual guilt as a moderator. Age, length of relationship, number of children in the home, highest level of education, and annual household income were control variables. SPSS was used to run the regressions with the PROCESS add-on in order to test the interactions of each moderator with religiosity.

Results indicated that the model was significant, $F(8,147) = 5.909$, $p < 0.001$. The correlation coefficient between the predictors and outcome variable was $R = .493$ with an *adjusted* R^2 value of .243. This shows that the independent, dependent, moderating, and control variables included in this analysis account for 24.3% of the variance in relationship satisfaction.

Table 15: DV – Relationship Satisfaction

Model 1	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	5.741	54.435	9.483	.000
Religiosity	1.517	.7023	4.631	.000**
Sexual Guilt	.137	-.557	-4.063	.000**
Religiosity/Sexual Guilt	.147	.435	2.968	.004*
Age	.100	-.088	-.888	.376
Relationship Length	.012	-.002	-.147	.883
Number of Children in the Home	.753	-.718	-.953	.342
Education	.921	.482	.523	.602
Income	.430	.984	2.287	.024*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 1.1

Hypothesis 1.1. stated that religiosity is positively associated with relationship satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the independent variable of religiosity ($t = 4.631$, $p < .001$). This suggests that religiosity is significantly associated with relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1.2

Hypothesis 1.2 stated that sexual guilt is negatively related to relationship satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the independent variable of sexual guilt ($t = -4.063, p < .001$). This suggests that sexual guilt is significantly negatively associated with relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1.3

Hypothesis 1.3 stated that when sexual guilt is high, religiosity is negatively related to relationship satisfaction. It also stated, when sex guilt is low, religiosity is positively related to relationship satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the interaction between religiosity and relationship satisfaction with sexual guilt ($t = 1.611, p > .05$).

Since the interaction was significant, a post-hoc analysis was conducted using PROCESS through SPSS. This tested the moderator at one standard deviation below the mean, at the mean, and one standard deviation above the mean. When sexual guilt is low, there is not a significant relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction, $b = 2.8886$, 95% CI $[-.8686, 6.6459]$, $t = 1.5194$, $p > .05$. At the mean level of sexual guilt, there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction, $b = 1.5165$, 95% CI $[4.0260, 10.0199]$, $t = 4.6311$, $p < .001$. When sexual guilt is high, there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction, $b = 11.1573$, 95% CI $[6.7985, 15.5160]$, $t = 5.0586$, $p < .001$. This suggests that the interaction is significant, but the proposed hypothesis was incorrect, as when sexual guilt was low, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction was not significant. Also, when sexual guilt is high, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction was found to be positive, while it was hypothesized that it would have a negative relationship.

Additional Findings

Five control variables were included in this study: age, relationship length, number of children in the home, education, and income. Only income was found to be statistically significantly related to relationship satisfaction ($t = 2.287, p < .05$).

Analysis of Research Question Two

The second research question asks: Does the conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction? To answer this question, a regression was conducted with religiosity as the independent variable and relationship satisfaction is the dependent variable. Sexual guilt is used as a moderator. Age, length of relationship, number of children in the home, highest level of education, and annual household income were control variables.

Results indicated that the model was significant, $F(8,147) = 5.909, p < 0.001$. The correlation coefficient between the predictors and outcome variable was $R = .4175$ with an *adjusted* R^2 value of .1743. This shows that the independent, dependent, moderating, and control variables included in this analysis account for 17.43% of the variance in relationship satisfaction.

Table 16: DV – Relationship Satisfaction

Model 2	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	6.094	61.070	10.021	.000
Religiosity	1.826	4.799	2.629	.01*
Conflict	2.452	-7.092	-2.893	.004*
Religiosity/Conflict	2.893	-.479	-.166	.869
Age	.104	-.138	-1.326	.187
Relationship Length	0.126	-.007	-.529	.600
Number of Children in the Home	.785	-.909	-1.158	.249
Education	.966	.423	.438	.662
Income	.445	1.118	2.514	.013

*p < .05, ** p < .001

Hypothesis 2.1

Hypothesis 2.1 stated that women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict will have less relationship satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the independent variable of conflict ($t = -2.893$, $p < .05$). This suggests that conflict is significantly negatively associated with relationship satisfaction as hypothesized.

Hypothesis 2.2

Hypothesis 2.2 stated that when there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is negative; but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is positive. Statistical significance was not found for the interaction between conflict and religiosity with relationship satisfaction ($t = -.166$, $p > .05$). This suggests that conflict does not significantly moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction. Since the interaction was not significant, no post-hoc analysis was conducted.

Analysis of Research Question Three

The third research question of this study asked: Does sexual guilt and conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction? For this question, a linear regression was conducted. Religiosity was the independent variable and sexual satisfaction was the dependent variable. Sexual guilt was a moderator. Age, length of relationship, number of children in the home, highest level of education, and annual household income were control variables. SPSS was used to run the regressions with the PROCESS add-on in order to test the interactions of the moderators.

The regression indicated that this model was significant, $F(8, 147) = 5.126, p < .001$. The correlation coefficient between the predictors and outcome variable was $R = .5000$ with an *adjusted* R^2 value of .2500. This shows that the independent, dependent, moderating, and control variables included in this analysis account for 25.0% of the variance in sexual satisfaction.

Table 17: DV – Sexual Satisfaction

Model 3	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	.318	3.094	9.735	.000
Religiosity	.084	.405	4.821	.000**
Sexual Guilt	.008	-.030	-3.920	.000**
Religiosity/Sexual Guilt	.008	.018	2.269	.025*
Age	.006	.013	2.267	.025*
Relationship Length	.001	-.002	-2.376	.020*
Number of Children in the Home	.042	.047	1.133	.259
Education	.051	.050	.979	.329
Income	.024	-.036	-1.501	.136

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 3.1

Hypothesis 3.1 stated that religiosity is positively associated with sexual satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the independent variable of religiosity ($t = 4.821, p < .001$). This suggests that religiosity is significantly associated with sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.2

Hypothesis 3.2 stated that sexual guilt is negatively related to sexual satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the independent variable of sexual guilt ($t = -3.920, p > .05$). This suggests that sexual guilt is significantly associated with sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.3

Hypothesis 3.3 stated that when sexual guilt is high, religiosity is negatively related to sexual satisfaction. It also stated, when sex guilt is low, religiosity is positively related to sexual satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the interaction of religiosity and sexual guilt ($t = 2.269, p < .05$). This suggests that sexual guilt does significantly moderate the relationship of religiosity and sexual satisfaction.

Since the interaction was significant, a post-hoc analysis was conducted using PROCESS through SPSS. This tested the moderator at one standard deviation below the mean, at the mean, and one standard deviation above the mean. When sexual guilt is low, there is a significant relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction, $b = .2297, 95\% \text{ CI } [.0217, .4377], t = 2.1828, p < .05$. At the mean level of sexual guilt, there is a significant relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction, $b = .4047, 95\% \text{ CI } [.2388, .5706], t = 4.8207, p < .001$. When sexual guilt is high, there is a significant relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction, $b = .5796, 95\% \text{ CI } [.3384, .8209], t = 4.7475, p < .001$. This suggests that the interaction is

significant, but the proposed hypothesis was overall incorrect, as when sexual guilt was high, the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction was positively related. However, part of the hypothesis was correct, as it was hypothesized and found that when sexual guilt is low, religiosity and sexual satisfaction is positively related.

Additional Findings

Five control variables were included in this study: age, relationship length, number of children in the home, education, and income. Age was found to be statistically significantly related to sexual satisfaction ($t = 2.267, p < .05$), as well as relationship length ($t = -2.376, p < .05$).

Analysis of Research Question Four

The fourth research question asks: Does conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction? For this question, a linear regression was conducted. Religiosity was the independent variable and sexual satisfaction was the dependent variable. Conflict was a moderator. Age, length of relationship, number of children in the home, highest level of education, and annual household income were control variables. SPSS was used to run the regressions with the PROCESS add-on in order to test the interactions of the moderators.

The regression indicated that this model was significant, $F(8, 147) = 3.7477, p < .001$. The correlation coefficient between the predictors and outcome variable was $R = .4116$ with an *adjusted* R^2 value of .1694. This shows that the independent, dependent, moderating, and control variables included in this analysis account for 16.94% of the variance in sexual satisfaction.

Table 18: DV – Sexual Satisfaction

Model 4	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	.340	3.351	9.859	.000
Religiosity	.102	.310	3.046	.003**
Conflict	.137	-.191	-1.400	.164
Religiosity/Conflict	.161	-.109	-.675	.501
Age	.006	.010	1.746	.083
Relationship Length	.007	-.002	-2.613	.010*
Number of Children in the Home	.044	.033	.752	.453
Education	.054	.045	.840	.402
Income	.025	-.027	-1.080	.282

*p < .05, ** p < .001

Hypothesis 4.1

Hypothesis 4.1 stated that women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict will have less sexual satisfaction. Statistical significance was not found for the independent variable of conflict ($t = -1.400$, $p > .05$). This suggests that conflict is not significantly associated with sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4.2

Hypothesis 4.2 stated that when there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is negative; but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is positive. Statistical significance was not found for the interaction between conflict and religiosity with sexual satisfaction ($t = -.675$, $p > .05$). This suggests that conflict does not significantly moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. Since the interaction was not significant, no post-hoc analysis was conducted.

Additional Findings

Five control variables were included in this study: age, relationship length, number of children in the home, education, and income. Relationship length was the only control variable in this regression that was significantly related to sexual satisfaction ($t = -2.613, p < .05$)

Analysis of Research Question Five

The fifth research question of this study is: Does the conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sex guilt? A third regression was conducted to answer this question. Religiosity was the independent variable, sex guilt was the dependent variable, and conflict between attitudes and behaviors was the moderator variable. Age, length of relationship, number of children in the home, highest level of education, and annual household income were control variables. SPSS was used to run the regressions with the PROCESS add-on in order to test the interactions of the moderators.

The regression indicated that this model was significant, $F(8, 89) = 4.501, p < .001$. The correlation coefficient between the predictors and outcome variable was $R = .5367$ with an *adjusted* R^2 value of .2881. This shows that the independent, dependent, moderating, and control variables included in this analysis account for 28.81% of the variance in relationship satisfaction.

Table 19: DV – Sexual Guilt

Model 5	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	3.424	29.961	8.751	.000
Religiosity	1.026	4.043	3.943	.000**
Conflict	1.377	4.411	3.203	.002**
Religiosity/Conflict	1.625	.190	.117	.907
Age	.058	.092	1.581	.116
Relationship Length	.007	.011	1.532	.128
Number of Children living in the Home	.441	.426	.965	.336
Education	.543	-.381	-.702	.484
Income	.250	-.020	-.079	.937

*p < .05, ** p < .001

Hypothesis 5.1

Hypothesis 5.1 states that women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict will have more sexual guilt. Statistical significance was found for the independent variable of conflict ($t = 3.203$, $p < .05$). This suggests that women with conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors do report more sexual guilt than women who do not report conflict.

Hypothesis 5.2

Hypothesis 5.2 states that religiosity will be positively associated with sexual guilt. Statistical significance was found for the independent variable of religiosity ($t = 3.943$, $p < .01$). This suggests that religiosity is positively associated with sexual guilt.

Hypothesis 5.3

Hypothesis 5.3 states that when there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is positive; but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is not significant. Statistical significance was not

found for the independent variable of the interaction between religiosity and conflict of attitudes and behaviors with sexual guilt ($t = .117, p > .05$). This suggests that conflict does not significantly moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt. Since the interaction was not significant, no post-hoc analysis was conducted.

Results Conclusion

Through the data analyses, it was found that hypotheses 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2 were supported. Hypotheses 1.3 and 3.3 had significant interactions but did not support the proposed hypotheses.

The analyses also included five control variables: age, education, children living at home, length of relationship, and income. In the first regression, income was found to be statistically significantly related to relationship satisfaction ($t = 2.287, p < .05$). In the third regression, Age was found to be statistically significantly related to sexual satisfaction ($t = 2.267, p < .05$), as well as relationship length ($t = -2.376, p < .05$). In the fourth regression, relationship length was the only control variable in this regression that was significantly related to sexual satisfaction ($t = -2.613, p < .05$). None of the control variables were statistically significant for regressions two and five.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to further explore the relationships of religiosity, sexual guilt, sexual attitudes and behaviors, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction. Specifically, this study was meant to explore if sex guilt and conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction, if sexual guilt and conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction, and if the conflict between attitudes and behaviors moderate the relationship between religiosity and sex guilt.

Religiosity

This study hypothesized that religiosity is positively related to relationship satisfaction, that religiosity is positively associated with sexual satisfaction, and that religiosity is positively associated with sexual guilt. Religiosity was found to be significantly positively associated with sexual guilt. However, religiosity was found to be significantly positively associated with sexual satisfaction and significantly positively related to relationship satisfaction.

Religiosity has been consistently found to be positively associated with relationship satisfaction in past research (Ellison et al., 2010; Perry & Whitehead, 2016; Perry, 2016). This study supports previous findings that religiosity is positively associated with religiosity. Perry and Whitehead (2016) suggest several reasons for the linked between religiosity and relationship satisfaction, such as internalized pro-relationship values, social support, accountability, and internalized views on the sanctification of marriage.

This study also found a significant positive association of religiosity and sexual satisfaction. This agrees with the findings of Cranney's (2020) study, and disagrees with others

(Hackathorn et al., 2016; Higgins et al., 2010; Leonhardt et al., 2019). Cranney (2020) found that married and unmarried individuals with high levels of religiosity reported high sex life satisfaction. Cranney (2020) noted that this may be because of their young population sample. However, the current study had a fairly wide range of ages (mean = 40.11; median 39; range 20-68) and replicated these results. Hackathorn et al. (2016) found results that support a negative relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. Higgins et al. (2010) found that white women with reported higher religiosity had significantly lower physiological sexual satisfaction. Leonhardt et al. (2019) found results that support no association between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. These four previous studies and the current study all used different methods to measure religiosity and sexual satisfaction, which could be a contributing factor to the difference in results. Future research should examine the various measurements of religiosity to gain a better understanding of the constructs measured.

Religiosity was found to be significantly positively related to sexual guilt as hypothesized. This finding agrees with other studies (Emmers-Sommer, et al. 2018; Hackathorn et al., 2016), but disagreed with Murray et al. (2007) . Murray et al. (2007) found no significant association between the two. Hackathorn et al. (2016) found a positive relationship between sexual guilt and religiosity in unmarried and married participants. This could be due to the way religiosity was measured in this study. Hackathorn et al. (2016) used the Christian Religious Identity Scale (CRIS; Ryan et al., 1993). The CRIS measures participant's personal value and the amount of internalized religious based on guilt, self-approval, and need for esteem. The CRS may measure characteristics of religiosity that are more related to the potential of feeling sexual guilt. Murray et al. (2007) utilized three subscales of the Brief Multidimensional Scale of Religion and Spirituality (BMSRS; Idler et al., 2003). These subscales were: spirituality,

religiosity, and alienation from God. Murray et al. (2007) did not find a significant association between sexual guilt and religiosity but found that alienation from God predicted sexual shame and guilt. This study used the CRS that has items to measure public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology, and intellectual dimensions. Between these three scales, the CRS may measure something that has more of an association to sexual guilt than the CRIS or the BMSRS.

In the meta-analysis by Emmers-Sommer et al. (2018), they examined studies on sexual guilt ranging from 1955 to 2012, with most taking place before 2000 (all but four studies out of thirty-eight). Emmers-Sommer et al. (2018) found a positive relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt. These studies measured religiosity in several ways, but mainly used Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale to measure sex guilt. The studies in the meta-analysis varied in publication years, many taking place between 1950 and 2000, which could be in effect, however, it does support the findings of the present study. Altogether, these findings suggest that more research should be done to investigate what aspects and constructs of religiosity and spirituality are associated with sexual guilt.

Sexual Guilt

This study hypothesized that sexual guilt is negatively associated with relationship satisfaction and that sexual guilt is negatively related to sexual satisfaction. Statistical significance was found for the negative association of sexual guilt and relationship satisfaction, as well as for the negative association of sexual guilt and sexual satisfaction.

Most research concerning sexual guilt focuses on sexual satisfaction (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Murray-Swank et al., 2005; Leonhardt et al., 2019), rather than relationship satisfaction. This study was not able to find a previous study that discusses the relationship of sexual guilt and

relationship satisfaction. While relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction are quite intertwined (McNulty et al., 2016), this study wanted to assess the relationship of both constructs with sexual guilt.

A critique of The Revised Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale is that it may detect sexual conservatism more than sexual guilt (Janda & Bazemore, 2011). The Revised Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale is widely accepted as the main instrument to measure sexual guilt. When looking at the questions of the Revised Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale, they appear to be quite dated, as the original creation of these questions occurred in 1965. Also, these questions do not all point towards measuring sexual guilt, but potentially sexual positivity. Questions such as "Unusual sex practices don't interest me," or "Unusual sex practices are all right if both partners agree," or "'Dirty' jokes in mixed company are in bad taste," do not necessarily mean individuals have guilt based on their answers, but may reflect their positivity on sex more accurately. One does not necessarily feel guilty about sex if they are not interested in unusual sex practices, nor if they do or do not like "dirty" jokes. When compared to items from the Sex Positivity Scale (SPS; Belous et al., 2020), items from the Revised Mosher's Guilt Scale display similarities. Examples of similar items from the SPS are "I am willing to try new things sexually, as long as it is not illegal," and "I am comfortable talking about sex with friends." While it is likely that sexual positivity, or lack thereof, would coincide with sexual guilt in many ways, there is reason to believe that Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale and the Revised Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale could be measuring something other than sexual guilt. Hackathorn et al. (2016) noted in their study that the Revised Mosher Sex-Guilt Scale may more accurately measure attitudes about sexual behaviors, but not necessarily guilt.

Aumer (2014) found that men who were in relationships with women who they perceived to be “shy” or “embarrassed” about sex were less satisfied in their relationship and less sexually satisfied. While Aumer’s (2014) study found this result in relation to men’s relationship satisfaction, it would be interesting to explore if a woman’s relationship satisfaction would be associated with a man’s lowered relationship satisfaction due to a woman’s sexual conservatism or guilt. Further, investigating the relationship satisfaction of both members of a couple while one has sexual guilt and the other does not may produce other significant associations.

Hypothesis 1.3 states that when sexual guilt is high, religiosity is negatively related to relationship satisfaction, and when sexual guilt is low, religiosity is positively related to relationship satisfaction. The interaction of religiosity and sexual guilt with relationship satisfaction was found to be significant, however, it did not support this hypothesis. The post-hoc analysis found that when sexual guilt is low, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is not significant. However, when sexual guilt is at the mean level or high, there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction. It was hypothesized that when sexual guilt is high, there would be a negative relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction. It was not hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship when sexual guilt was at the mean level. This finding was unexpected and could be attributed to several different possibilities. From a Cognitive Dissonance perspective, this could be due to feeling as if their dissonance or guilt is worth it if they are having higher relationship satisfaction. This also may suggest that religiosity plays a bigger role in relationship satisfaction than sexual guilt plays.

Hypothesis 3.2 states that sexual guilt is negatively related to sexual satisfaction. This hypothesis was found to have statistical significance. The New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (Huber

& Huber, 2012) asks for ratings on different items such as “My emotional opening up in sex,” “My focus/concentration during a sexual activity,” and “My mood after sexual activity.” These types of items may receive lower ratings, indicating less sexual satisfaction, as sexual guilt may make it difficult to be emotionally vulnerable, or to concentrate during sex, and may leave an individual feeling guilt or shame after a sexual activity. Leonhardt et al. (2019) found similar results, being that sexual guilt was directly tied to less sexual satisfaction. Hackathorn et al. (2016) found that for unmarried participants, the more internalized religious beliefs they hold, the more sexual guilt they may have, and the lower their sexual satisfaction. The results of this study appear to agree with past research on the subject of sexual guilt and sexual satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.3 states that when sexual guilt is high, religiosity is negatively related to sexual satisfaction. When sexual guilt is low, religiosity is positively related to sexual satisfaction. This interaction was found to be statistically significant but did not overall support this study’s hypothesis. The post-hoc analysis reported that when sexual guilt is low, at the mean level, and high, there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. However, when sexual guilt is high, there is a stronger relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction than what sexual guilt is at the mean level or low. This study only predicted that when sexual guilt is low, religiosity and sexual satisfaction would be positively related. The results that when sexual guilt is low, at mean level, and high, religiosity and sexual satisfaction are positively related is an interesting and unexpected finding. This may be partially explained by religiosity playing a bigger role in people in terms of sexual satisfaction than sexual guilt does. While religiosity is positively associated with sexual guilt, religiosity may be an especially important factor to explain sexual satisfaction for those who report higher levels of sexual guilt. This could also potentially be attributed to an individual feeling their dissonance

or guilt is “worth it” if they are sexually satisfied. In Hackathorn et al.’s (2016) study, a mediation model was used to look at the relationship between sexual guilt and the relationship of religious introjection and sexual satisfaction for married individuals. Their results found that religious introjection predicts sexual guilt, which in turn predicts higher levels of sexual satisfaction. They reported to also finding this result to be complicated, but suggested this may be due to an additional mediator that their study did not examine. Another possibility is the construct coined in the Hackathorn et al. (2016) study: *the sacred bed phenomenon*. This phrase describes the hypothesized influence of believing in a sacred marital bed. Future research will have to explore this possibility or an additional variable.

Conflict between Sexual Attitudes and Behaviors

This study hypothesized that women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict will have less relationship satisfaction, than when there is no conflict between attitudes and behaviors. An additional hypothesis is that the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is negative when there is a conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors, but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is positive. Next, women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict were hypothesized to have less sexual satisfaction than those with no conflict. Next, when there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors, the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is negative, but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is positive. This study also hypothesized that women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict will have more sexual guilt. Finally, that when there is conflict between attitudes and behaviors, the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is positive, but when there is no conflict present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is not significant.

Hypothesis 2.1 proposed that conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors would be related to less relationship satisfaction than those without conflict. This was hypothesized as it was thought that having conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors would negatively affect aspects of relationship satisfaction, such as sexual satisfaction or communication. For the present study, conflict was measured by using the presence of conflict ever, rather than conflict during the current relationship status. However, conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors was still related to less sexual satisfaction. It would be interesting in future studies to investigate the differences between conflict ever and conflict in current relationship status. Within this study, conflict ever may still be related to current relationship satisfaction due to variables such as communication. If an individual has conflict but does not express this to their partner, this may result in or be the result of lowered relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2.2 states that when there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is negative, but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction is positive. This was not found to be supported. Religiosity was been found to be associated with relationship satisfaction in this study, which supports past research (Ellison et al., 2010; Perry & Whitehead, 2016; Perry, 2016), so it was hypothesized that this relationship would be supported in this study when no conflict between attitudes and behaviors present. It was also thought that conflict between attitudes and behaviors would moderate the relationship between religiosity and relationship satisfaction, however, it did not prove to be significant. This could be due to how conflict was measured. A measure of current conflict would probably have more of a relationship with current religiosity and current relationship satisfaction. This study measured conflict at any point in an individual's life, while measuring current religiosity and current relationship satisfaction. Future

studies should look at the course of conflict throughout one's life and how long it may effect relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4.1 states that women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict will have less sexual satisfaction than women without conflict. This was not found to be statistically significant. Again, this could be due to the way conflict was measured. Conflict may have more of an association with sexual satisfaction if present conflict was measured, however, the measurement of conflict occurring ever does not have a statistically significant association with sexual satisfaction. As discussed with sexual guilt and sexual satisfaction, even if some level of cognitive dissonance exists between attitudes and behaviors, this may not be strongly associated with sexual satisfaction if one feels that a sexual relationship is "worth it."

Hypothesis 4.2 states when there is a conflict between attitudes and behaviors, the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is negative, but when no conflict is present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction is positive. This hypothesis was not found to be significant as conflict between attitudes and behaviors did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between religiosity and sexual satisfaction. The present study measures conflict in any relationship type, not just the current relationship status. Conflict within a current relationship status would probably have more of an association with present sexual satisfaction and present religiosity. The course of conflict throughout an individual's life may result in cognitive dissonance being resolved when one is out of the certain relationship type. However, this study did measure individual's current attitudes on sexual behaviors in relationship types, so it may not be that the conflict is resolved, but that the cognitive dissonance does not affect their present behaviors or satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5.1 states that women whose attitudes and behaviors conflict will have more sexual guilt. This was found to be significant. As the definition of sexual guilt is “a generalized expectancy for self-mediated punishment for violating or for anticipating violating standards of proper sexual conduct” (Mosher & Cross, 1971, p. 27), it is as expected that those who feel they have violated “standards of proper sexual conduct” would have higher sexual guilt. While the Revised Mosher’s Sexual Guilt Scale may more accurately measure sexual conservatism (Janda & Bazemore, 2011) than it does sexual guilt, conflict was still associated with sexual guilt as measured by the Revised Mosher’s Sexual Guilt Scale. The items in the Revised Mosher’s Sexual Guilt scale seem to assess attitudes on sexual behaviors, rather than guilt (Hackathorn et al., 2016). While attitudes on sexual behaviors, sexual conservatism, and sexual guilt may have similarities, the distinction of these three constructs and potentially other constructs should be further researched.

Hypothesis 5.3 states when there is conflict between attitudes and behaviors, the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is positive, but when there is no conflict present, the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt is not significant. This hypothesis was not found to be significant, as conflict between attitudes and behaviors did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between religiosity and sexual guilt. Without the moderating variable, religiosity and sexual guilt were found to be positively associated. Conflict between attitudes and behaviors did not amplify the association between religiosity and sexual guilt. This could be due to conflict and sexual guilt both measuring the same construct, so that when conflict is added as an interaction, it did not add to the analysis.

This is the first study to attempt to measure conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors in relation to sexual guilt. The way conflict was measured in the present study may

need to be altered in order to better measure the conflict between attitudes and behaviors, however, it is an important step in understanding the construct of conflict.

Additional Findings

Sexual behaviors and relationship types do appear to have varying levels of conflict through this study. Not every participant in the study had reported being in every relationship type, so results may not be able to be generalized to a broader population. However, this study found that in terms of percentage, casually hooking up had the most percentage of conflict in that relationship type (68.4%). This is likely due to the lack of commitment in this relationship type. Finding a sexual behavior as not acceptable, but doing so anyway in a relationship type that lacks commitment would likely create more conflict than relationships that have commitment. Participants who were married or cohabiting had the least percentage of conflict within those relationship types, with those married having 21.6% of conflict versus no conflict and cohabiting having 22.4% of conflict versus no conflict. The engaged group had 27.8% that reported conflict versus those who did not report conflict. It is interesting that the engaged group had more conflict than cohabiting or married, but it does follow that individuals who cohabit would probably not have as much conflict as there is an underlying assumption that couples that cohabit have some kind of a sexual relationship before marriage. Previous research has found that married individuals do not feel sexual guilt (Hackathorn et al., 2016; Hernandez et al., 2014), while others suggest that it is possible (Leonhardt et al., 2019; Runkel, 1998). While this study cannot make a claim on sexual guilt within marriage, this study does suggest that conflict can be had within a married relationship, though it appears to be the relationship with the lowest count of conflict.

Across all sexual behaviors (kissing, fingering, masturbation, giving a hand job, receiving oral sex, giving oral sex, vaginal sex, and anal sex), there were 86 counts of conflict in the hooking up relationship type, 73 counts of conflict in the dating relationship type, 29 counts of conflict in the cohabiting relationship, 45 counts in the engaged relationship type, and 43 counts of conflict in the married relationship type. Casually hooking up was the relationship type with the most amount of conflict across all sexual behaviors and had the fewest participants who had ever been in that relationship type. Cohabiting had the fewest counts of conflict across sexual behaviors, but had the second fewest amount of participants who had ever been in a cohabiting relationship.

Sexual behaviors also had varying counts of reported conflict across the different relationship types. The sexual behavior with the highest amount of reported conflict was vaginal sex (50 counts), followed by giving oral sex (41 counts), receiving oral sex (37 counts) and fingering (37 counts), anal sex (36 counts), giving a hand job (31 counts), masturbation (30 counts), and kissing (14 counts). This supports that different sexual behaviors illicit different amounts of conflict, and potentially differing amounts of guilt.

Together, these results support the possibility that different relationship types and sexual behaviors may illicit differing amounts of conflict and guilt. Rosenbaum and Weathersbee (2013) found that individuals in their study were more likely to have oral sex than they were to have vaginal sex before marriage. This suggests that individuals view some sexual behaviors differently than others, as they are more likely to engage in some behaviors than others. It would be intriguing to study if the part of the reason individuals view different sexual acts as different is related to guilt, and if so, the reasons for this. Relationship types may also affect individual's perceptions of what is "okay" and what is "not okay." Some relationship types may have more

counts of conflict due to lack of commitment or due to different values and expectations of oneself in those relationship types. Higgins et al. (2010) found that Black and White women who had sex for the first time were significantly more satisfied psychologically if they were in a steady dating relationship or “in love” rather than those who had sex with a casual acquaintance. Higgins et al. (2010) reported that women being “in love” were also more able to “justify” their decision to have sex for the first time. It has also been found that women in married or long-term committed relationships report higher emotional and physical satisfaction within sex than those in relationships they expect to end (Waite & Joyner, 2001). This supports the possibility that relationship type may affect levels of satisfaction and an individual’s likelihood to have sexual intercourse.

Strengths and Limitations

This study attempted to explore many different variables relating to sexual guilt and religiosity. This study has discovered some associations and has revealed even more questions to answer, due to its exploratory nature. The number of participants can be identified as a strength as Cohen’s (1992) power of analysis suggested at least 107 participants for this study to detect a medium effect. In total, this study used 156 participants in the analysis, which satisfies Cohen’s (1992) power of analysis suggestion for this study. Due to the online method of this survey, it may have made it easier for participants to answer truthfully to questions about sexual behaviors and guilt. This may have made social desirability bias less of an issue as participants may have been more willing to be truthful when answering anonymously and individually. This is the first study to attempt to quantify conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors in relation to sexual guilt. More research and analysis should be done to better quantify conflict, however, this study has made an important step in the exploration of the subject.

Due to the topic of this study, it is possible that people who are more comfortable with the topic of sex were more likely to complete this study, than those who have more conservative views on sex. People who fully completed the survey and were interested in taking the survey in the first place may have more liberal views or may just be more comfortable with the topic of sex. Potentially having this study advertised in multiple places could have drawn in a more diverse sample that would have more of a spectrum in terms of conservative and liberal views on sex. This study did end up removing quite a few participants from the analysis portion. This could be due to the topic of the survey and the payment. Participants may have been interested in the topic of sex and the \$0.90 compensation. If participants were interested by the topic of sex, but then realized that it was more about sexual guilt, they may have lost interest or not been as honest. If participants were too motivated by the \$0.90 compensation, they may have lied in order to be included. It is possible that \$0.90 is too high of compensation on the platform of Mturk.

The original goal for this study was to include members of the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Islam, and Christianity). The reason behind this is that generally the Abrahamic religions have similar views on sexual relationships before marriage (Exodus 22: 16-17; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Quran 17. 32; Quran 25. 68-71). However, there were not enough participants who identified as either Jewish or Muslim to be able to generalize results about those two religions. Participants who identified as a religion other than Christianity were removed for this reason. Another limitation to this study in terms of religion, is not asking participants to identify their denomination. Denominations within any religion can have different views which may influence participants' beliefs and values of sex.

Another limitation is related to the ability to generalize these results to multiple races. This sample largely consisted of Caucasian participants (78.3%). Having a more diverse sample would better support the ability to generalize to a broader population. It is possible that different races may receive varying messages about sex, so having a more diverse sample could better represent these varying messages.

As previously mentioned, The Revised Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale is widely accepted as the main instrument to measure sexual guilt. However, it is possible that this scale may more accurately measure sexual conservatism (Janda & Bazemore, 2011). Janda and Bazemore (2011) mentioned in their study to revise Mosher's Sexual Guilt scale, that future study should be done to explore the validity of the scale and to assess if the scale measures a construct distinct enough from another construct, like sexual conservatism. Sexual conservatism, sexual positivity, and sexual guilt may all be very closely related, but future studies will need to assess this possibility.

Future Directions

This study supports some associations through having significant hypotheses, but also has revealed even more questions. There are ways this study could have been improved and it has revealed ways this field of study could go. For the sake of this study, only the participants who noted that they did not believe a sexual behavior was acceptable during a particular relationship type but had done so were categorized as having conflict. Future studies could explore the other possible pairings of both conflict and alignment, such as believing a sexual behavior is okay but not having done it, or believing a sexual behavior is okay and having done it, or believing a sexual behavior is not okay and not having done it.

Creating a new sexual guilt scale could be a future direction in this field of study as well as developing a potentially better way to measure conflict between attitudes and behaviors.

Sexual guilt may need have a modernized scale, as the Mosher's Sexual Guilt scale was created in 1965. Research should be done to see if the Revised Mosher's Sexual Guilt Scale is distinct enough from other constructs, such as sexual conservatism or positivity.

Conflict may need to be looked at as current conflict, rather than having conflict occur ever. A future measurement of conflict could take into account how often a behavior is engaged in, if it is felt it is not okay, versus having "ever" engaged in a behavior.

In the Additional Findings section of this study, the frequencies of conflict within sexual behaviors and the conflict within relationship types are reported. It would be interesting to further explore these relationships. This study suggests that there are differences in the amount of conflict that different sexual behaviors illicit. Another route of study could be further exploring the role that relationship type and commitment play in guilt and sexual behaviors. A common way to avoid cognitive dissonance is to avoid or change the behavior that is causing cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). Change sexual behaviors could be done to accomplish this, as well as changing relationship status. It would be interesting to investigate the role of becoming engaged or married in a conscious or subconscious attempt to avoid sexual guilt and cognitive dissonance.

It would be interesting to see if individuals' definitions of sex would affect their amounts of conflict or guilt. If participants view sex as "only vaginal sex" they may have less conflict with other sexual behaviors. On the other hand, if their definition of sex includes multiple sexual behaviors, they may have more counts of conflict. For this study, participants were eligible if they had been sexually active if the past six months, so it is unclear how participants interpreted that for themselves.

Overall, this study has revealed many questions and potential associations relating to sexual guilt and religiosity. There are numerous avenues to take this field of study, such as investigating variables associated with conflict in certain sexual behaviors and relationship types, developing a new way to measure sexual guilt and conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors, and further exploring the relationship of sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction with sexual guilt, and many more possibilities.

Clinical Implications

The purpose of this study was to better understand the topic of sexual guilt in order to help clinicians to address sexual guilt in clients or patients. Sexual guilt appears to potentially affect more people than has been assumed, as sexual guilt is significantly associated to several variables in this non-clinical sample. Rosenbaum and Weathersbee (2013) found that 80% of those who had premarital sex in their study regretted having sex. While this does not necessarily mean that every one of those individuals struggles with sexual guilt, it does suggest that there is a large amount of regret which could reasonably be related to some sexual guilt. In this study, 41.7% of participants noted that they had some conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors. This study also found a significant association between conflict and sexual guilt. Therapists and mental health professionals should be aware of potential sexual guilt in Christian women, as these women may not bring it up themselves or be able to identify that they are experiencing sexual guilt. If therapists are able to be aware of the possibility of sexual guilt, they may be able to help clients work through the cognitive dissonance they are experiencing through their multiple roles and personal desires.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study found that religiosity and relationship satisfaction are positively associated, sexual guilt and relationship satisfaction are negatively associated, sexual guilt moderated the relationship of religiosity and relationship satisfaction, conflict between sexual attitudes and behaviors is associated with lower relationship satisfaction, religiosity and sexual satisfaction are positively associated, sexual guilt and sexual satisfaction have a negative association, sexual guilt has a moderating effect on religiosity and sexual satisfaction, conflict between attitudes and behaviors are associated with more sexual guilt, and religiosity was found to be positively associated with sexual guilt.

More research will need to be done in this field of study to attempt to replicate these results, as well as explore future directions and additional variables. The hope of this study and future studies is to gain understanding about the relationship between sexual guilt and religion, and the potential negative and positive effects that this relationship may have on romantic relationships. With continued research on this topic, clinicians may better understand how to help individuals understand themselves, understand their sexual desires, and address the guilt that they may feel while reconciling their beliefs and wants.

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APPENDIX A. INFORMED CONSENT – MTURK

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Study of Sexual Guilt in Religious Women
Anne B. Edwards, PhD, and Sydney Vander Tuin
Department of Behavioral Sciences
Purdue University Northwest

Key Information

Please take time to review this information carefully. This is a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary which means that you may choose not to participate at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may ask questions to the researchers about the study whenever you would like. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this form, be sure you understand what you will do and any possible risks or benefits.

What is the purpose of this study?

You are being asked to participate in a study designed by Sydney Vander Tuin BS, and Anne B. Edwards, PhD, of Purdue University Northwest. We want to understand religion and thoughts about sexual behavior. We would like to enroll 300 people in this study.

What will I do if I choose to be in this study?

If you choose to participate, you acknowledge that you are over 18 years old, live in the US, are a US citizen, and have engaged in sexual activity as a heterosexual. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire asking about your religion and experience with sex and thoughts about sexual behavior. You are free not to answer any particular questions if they make you feel uncomfortable, or to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

How long will I be in the study?

It should take approximately 20-30 minutes for you to complete the entire study.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?

Breach of confidentiality is always a risk with data, but we will take precautions to minimize this risk as described in the confidentiality section.

If applicable, include any additional resources available to assist subjects (e.g., counseling referral, etc.)

The risk level is minimal, please also state that they are no greater than the participant would encounter in daily life. You may feel some discomfort answering some of these questions. If any feelings become upsetting, you may want to talk to a counselor or therapist. A suggested website to find a therapist around your location is: <https://www.findatherapist.com>.

Are there any potential benefits?

You will not directly benefit from this study. You will have a chance to take part in research, and your participation thus may contribute to the scientific understanding of how people view social and political issues.

Will I receive payment or other incentive?

You will receive compensation of 90 cents for participating in this research project, so long as you meet the study inclusion criteria and you complete the appropriate verification question to ensure your active participation.

Are there costs to me for participation?

There are no anticipated costs to participate in this research.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

There is no personally identifying information on this questionnaire; all responses will remain anonymous, and will be used only in combination with the responses of other participants in this and related studies. In addition, you may choose not to answer particular questions, or to withdraw your participation at any time, without penalty. All data gathered in this study will be stored separately from the consent form, and will be accessed only by the researchers. The data file will be used for preparation of research reports related to this study, and kept for a period of three years after publication of any articles related to this study. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at Purdue University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

You do not have to participate in this research project. If you agree to participate, you may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Who can I contact if I have questions about the study?

If you have questions, comments or concerns about this research project, you can talk to one of the researchers. Please contact Sydney Vander Tuin at svandert@pnw.edu. To report anonymously via Purdue's Hotline see www.purdue.edu/hotline. If you have questions about your rights while taking part in the study or have concerns about the treatment of research participants, please call the Human Research Protection Program at (765) 494-5942, email (irb@purdue.edu) or write to:

Human Research Protection Program - Purdue University
Ernest C. Young Hall, Room 1032
155 S. Grant St.
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2114

Documentation of Informed Consent

I have had the opportunity to read this consent form and have the research study explained. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research study, and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research study described above. Check "Yes" if you agree to participate in this study and understand the informed consent.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

APPENDIX B. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your current age in years? _____
If under 18 years old, will be taken to end of survey
2. Are you currently in an exclusive committed relationship lasting longer than 6 months?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No*If no, will be taken to end of survey*
3. How long have you been in a committed relationship in months? _____ months
If under 6 months, will be taken to end of survey
4. What is your current relationship status?
 - a. Dating
 - b. Cohabiting, but not engaged
 - c. Engaged
 - d. Married
5. What relationship statuses have you ever been in? Select all that apply
 - a. Casually hooking up
 - b. Dating
 - c. Cohabiting but not engaged
 - d. Engaged
 - e. Married
6. Are you currently sexually active? (Having engaged in sexual behaviors within the past 6 months)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No*If no, will be taken to end of survey*
7. Are you a US citizen?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No*If no, will be taken to end of survey*
8. What religion do you identify as belonging to?
 - a. Christianity
 - b. Islam
 - c. Judaism
 - d. Hindu
 - e. Buddhism
 - f. Sikhism
 - g. Other*If other than Christianity, Islam, Judaism,, will be taken to end of survey*
9. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
 - a. Heterosexual
 - b. Lesbian
 - c. Gay
 - d. Bisexual
 - e. Pansexual

- f. Asexual
 - g. Queer
 - h. Other
- If other than heterosexual, will be taken to end of survey*
10. What gender do you identify with?
- a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Agender
 - d. Transgender
 - e. Genderqueer
 - f. Intersex
 - g. Other
- If other than female, will be taken to end of survey*
11. What racial or ethnic group(s) do you identify with?
- a. White
 - b. Black or African American
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - e. Asian
 - f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - g. Indian Subcontinent
 - h. Middle Eastern
 - i. Multiracial
 - j. Other
12. What is your highest level of education?
- a. Less than high school
 - b. High school graduate
 - c. Trade school
 - d. Some college
 - e. 2 year degree
 - f. 4 year degree
 - g. Professional/Master's degree
 - h. Doctorate
13. What is your household income?
- a. Less than \$10,000
 - b. \$10,000 - \$19,999
 - c. \$20,000 - \$29,999
 - d. \$30,000 - \$39,999
 - e. \$40,000 - \$49,999
 - f. \$50,000 - \$59,999
 - g. \$60,000 - \$69,999
 - h. \$70,000 - \$79,999
 - i. \$80,000 - \$89,999
 - j. \$90,000 - \$99,999
 - k. \$100,000 - \$149,999
 - l. \$150,000 or more

14. Have you ever been sexually assaulted?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Prefer not to answer
15. Do you have any children?
- a. Yes,
 - i. How many are currently living in your home? _____
 - ii. How old is your youngest child?
 - b. No
16. What state do you currently live in?
- a. Do you live in a rural, urban, or suburban area?
 - i. Rural
 - ii. Urban
 - iii. Suburban

APPENDIX C. SEXUAL ATTITUDES

Please read the following sexual behaviors and mark if you believe the behavior is acceptable or not during each of the following relationship types: casual hookup, dating, cohabiting but not engaged, engaged, and married.

	Casual Hookup		Dating		Cohabiting		Engaged		Married	
	OK	Not OK	OK	Not OK	OK	Not OK	OK	Not OK	OK	Not OK
1. Kissing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Being Fingered (Clitoral, vulva, or vaginal stimulation by male partner's hands)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Masturbating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Giving Hand-Job (Stimulation of penis with your hands)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Receiving Oral Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Giving Oral Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Vaginal Intercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Anal Intercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX D. SEXUAL BEHAVIORS

Please read the following sexual behaviors and mark if you have ever engaged in any behaviors during each of the following relationship types: casual hookup, dating, cohabiting but not engaged, engaged, and married. Leave blank if not applicable (e.g. never have been engaged, married, etc.)

	Casual Hookup		Dating		Cohabiting		Engaged		Married	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Kissing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Been Fingered (Clitoral, vulva, or vaginal stimulation by male partner's hands)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Solo Masturbation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Given Hand-Job (Stimulation of penis with your hands)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Received Oral Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Given Oral Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Vaginal Intercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Anal Intercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX E. REVISED MOSHER SEX-GUILT SCALE (JANDA AND BAZEMORE, 2011)

Please read the following statements and then use the 7-point scale to indicate how true each statement is when applied to you. Simply write the number that corresponds to the correct response in the line provided.

- 1 = Very strongly disagree
- 2 = Moderately disagree
- 3 = Slightly disagree
- 4 = Neither agree or disagree
- 5 = Slightly agree
- 6 = Moderately agree
- 7 = Very Strongly Agree

- 1. Masturbation helps one feel eased and relaxed. _____*
- 2. Sex relations before marriage are good, in my opinion. _____*
- 3. Unusual sex practices don't interest me. _____
- 4. When I have sexual dreams I try to forget them. _____
- 5. "Dirty" jokes in mixed company are in bad taste. _____
- 6. When I have sexual desires I enjoy them like all healthy human beings. _____*
- 7. Unusual sex practices are dangerous to one's health and mental conditions. _____
- 8. Sex relations before marriage help people adjust. _____*
- 9. Sex relations before marriage should not be recommended. _____
- 10. Unusual sex practices are all right if both partners agree. _____*

Note: Items with an (*) are reverse scored so that higher numbers indicate more guilt.

APPENDIX F. CENTRALITY OF RELIGIOSITY SCALE (HUBER & HUBER, 2012)

Please read the following statements and then use the 5-point scale to indicate the frequency or the extent of how true the statements are for you.

Frequency:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Rarely
- 3 = Occasionally
- 4 = Often
- 5 = Very often

Extent of truth

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Not very much
- 3 = Moderately
- 4 = Quite a bit
- 5 = Very much

1. How often do you think about religious issues?
2. To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?
3. How often do you take part in religious services?
4. How often do you pray?
5. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in your life?
6. How interested are you in learning more about religious topics?
7. To what extent do you believe in an afterlife—e.g. immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation?
8. How important is to take part in religious services?
9. How important is personal prayer for you?
10. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine wants to communicate or to reveal something to you?
11. How often do you keep yourself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books?
12. In your opinion, how probable is it that a higher power really exists
13. How important is it for you to be connected to a religious community?
14. How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situations?
15. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine is present?

APPENDIX G. THE NEW SEXUAL SATISFACTION SCALE (ŠTULHOFFER ET AL., 2010)

Thinking about your sex life during the last 6 months, please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects on a scale of 1-5.

- 1 = Not at all satisfied
- 2 = A little satisfied
- 3 = Moderately satisfied
- 4 = Very satisfied
- 5 = Extremely satisfied

1. The intensity of my sexual arousal
2. The quality of my orgasms
3. My “letting go” and surrender to sexual pleasure during sex
4. My focus/concentration during sexual activity
5. The way I sexually react to my partner
6. My body’s sexual functioning
7. My emotional opening up in sex
8. My mood after sexual activity
9. The frequency of my orgasms
10. The pleasure I provide to my partner
11. The balance between what I give and receive in sex
12. My partner’s emotional opening up during sex
13. My partner’s initiation of sexual activity
14. My partner’s ability to orgasm
15. My partner’s surrender to sexual pleasure (“letting go”)
16. The way my partner takes care of my sexual needs
17. My partner’s sexual creativity
18. My partner’s sexual availability
19. The variety of my sexual activities
20. The frequency of my sexual activity

APPENDIX H. COUPLES SATISFACTION INDEX – 16 ITEM (FUNK & ROGGE, 2007)

Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI-16)

Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely Unhappy 0	Fairly Unhappy 1	A Little Unhappy 2	Happy 3	Very Happy 4	Extremely Happy 5	Perfect 6
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	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa- sionally	Rarely	Never
In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	5	4	3	2	1	0

	Not at all TRUE	A little TRUE	Some- what TRUE	Mostly TRUE	Almost Completely TRUE	Completely TRUE
Our relationship is strong	0	1	2	3	4	5
My relationship with my partner makes me happy	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
I really feel like part of a team with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Not at all	A little	Some- what	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
How rewarding is your relationship with your partner?	0	1	2	3	4	5
How well does your partner meet your needs?	0	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?	0	1	2	3	4	5
In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?	0	1	2	3	4	5

For each of the following items, select the answer that best describes how you feel about your relationship. Base your responses on your first impressions and immediate feelings about the item.

INTERESTING	5	4	3	2	1	0	BORING
BAD	0	1	2	3	4	5	GOOD
FULL	5	4	3	2	1	0	EMPTY
STURDY	5	4	3	2	1	0	FRAGILE
DISCOURAGING	0	1	2	3	4	5	HOPEFUL
ENJOYABLE	5	4	3	2	1	0	MISERABLE