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Self-Esteem in Relation to Casual Sex Behavior, Attitudes, and Affect

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Psychology  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Masters of Arts in Psychology

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by  
Kathryn Bieda  
August 2008

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Keywords: Casual Sex, Sociosexuality, Affect, Attitudes

## ABSTRACT

### Self-Esteem in Relation to Casual Sex Behavior, Attitudes, and Affect

by

Kathryn Bieda

Casual sex is common on college campuses and is potentially relevant to a person's self-esteem. Unfortunately, data are mixed regarding how self-esteem is influenced by casual sex. This thesis is an attempt to understand how casual sex influences women's self-esteem through a series of questionnaires. Three hypotheses were of interest. The first predicted that sociosexuality and desire would explain casual sex engagement. Second, that casual sex behaviors and attitudes would predict self-esteem. Third, looking only at those who engaged in casual sex; casual sex attitudes and affect would predict self-esteem. Using hierarchical regression, results indicated that there was a curvilinear effect for sociosexuality on number of casual sex partners. Results for the second hypothesis showed an interaction between behavior and attitudes to predict self-esteem. Finally, for hypothesis three, results showed a moderation effect for attitudes on negative affect regarding overall casual sex experience and self-esteem.

## DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my family, especially my parents. They have always been supportive and encouraging; it was truly invaluable. Also, thank you to everyone who helped and supported me along the process.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

There is contention among some researchers as to whether casual sex influences self-esteem in women and, if so, in which direction. Casual sex has been observed to influence self-esteem both positively (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Walsh, 1991) and negatively (Herold & Mewhinney, 1993; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000), in addition to showing no influence (Clark, 2006) on self-esteem. With such a mélange of results, it may be necessary to explore additional factors in order to clarify the relationship. Attitudes toward casual sex behaviors and affect regarding an individual's casual sex experiences are two such variables that may influence self-esteem in relation to casual sex. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research in this area. Indeed, with a lack of cohesive evidence, our ability to understand issues regarding sexuality's impact on psychological well-being flounders. This issue is further convoluted because most research compares women's self-esteem in relation to casual sex to that of men's self-esteem, and the fact that there is a plethora of definitions used to describe casual sex behaviors. However, it may be worthwhile to address these issues by comparing casual sex behavior among women in addition to establishing a definition within the research. To this end, it is hoped that further research on this subject will be able to clarify issues regarding casual sex and self-esteem in women.

#### Casual Sex

Casual sex has been defined in multiple ways in several different studies. For instance, Townsend (1995) referred to casual sex as being coitus devoid of an affectionate relationship, whereas Paul et al. (2000) defined casual sex as being a *hookup*, a one-time sexual event that may not involve coitus between people who just met or people who met recently but are not friends. Herold, Maticka-Tyndale, and Mewhinney (1998) proposed that casual sex is same day coitus where there is no commitment (either present or past) in any degree with a partner who

was encountered earlier that day. Although most definitions of casual sex are similar, they are not identical, and the disparities that exist between these definitions in multiple studies can lead to different results (i.e., some women may admit to engaging in casual sex when they have never engaged in casual sex due to the definition provided being too loose). Having standard, operationalized definitions across multiple studies would create cohesiveness in the field, potentially creating a better understanding of the percentages of individuals who engage in casual sex, and how casual sex affects well-being.

Throughout Western society, intimacy before marriage and sexual attitudes has been shifting since the 1960s (Tanfer & Cubbins, 1992). This has been especially observed on college campuses, although not all college students engage in casual sex or sexual behaviors; many individuals choose to abstain from these behaviors for a variety of reasons (e.g., beliefs, in a committed relationship, morals, and religion). However, Paul and Hayes (2002) stated that numerous students in college are engaging in permissive sexual behaviors, which is when students may begin exploring their sexuality (Simon, 1993). This exploration is nothing new; in 1975, Lewis and Burr looked at sexual permissiveness in college students. Results indicated that 6% of 1564 female students from a variety of universities in the US professed that they had engaged in sexual intercourse on the first date. Later, Weaver and Herold (2000) found that out of 230 female participants, 13% stated they had casual sex (involving coitus) and 36% stated they engaged in coital activity with someone whom they were casually seeing or were otherwise uninvolved with emotionally.

Meanwhile, Paul et al. (2000) found that out of 555 participants, 169 men and women engaged in *hookups* involving sexual intercourse and 266 experienced *hookups* without sexual intercourse. The authors remarked that although men represented the majority of the *hookups*

involving sex, 33.3% of women admitted to engaging in sex within the context of a *hookup*. Paul et al. suggested that one reason for these findings might have been that the women who participated in casual sex may have had sex with multiple men. However, it can also be suggested that there may be few women who report engaging in this type of behavior because they might not feel comfortable doing so, raising the question of whether an impression management bias may have been present. There is also evidence that memory may play a role in the accuracy of a participant's response. For instance, Paul et al. noticed that some participants in the study required a friend's help to recall events from the previous night, as they could not remember all the details of their experiences. It is unclear as to whether these results stemmed from alcohol or drug use.

Despite the variability in data regarding coitus outside marriage over the last 40 years, review papers (i.e., Hopkins, 1977) comment that there has been an increase in coitus outside of marriage as time has progressed (Hopkins, 1977; Tanfer & Schrool, 1992). This variability may be dependent on whether the women are reporting accurately or how casual sex is defined within the scope of the study. When the definition of casual sex varies from study to study, the responses of participants can be expected to be different in regards to whether an individual reports having engaged in casual sex. The looser the definition (i.e., sexual intercourse is not a requirement in the definition of casual sex) the more participants will likely admit to having casual sex. When the definition of casual sex is narrower, however, it is likely that fewer women will admit to having engaged in casual sex.

### Sociosexuality

The concept of sociosexuality is intimately related to that of casual sex. Sociosexuality was first mentioned by Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin (1948), and refers to a combination of

various attitudes and behaviors a person has or engages in concerning sexuality. These combinations vary between people and insinuate that there are differences in inclinations toward engaging in casual sex (Simpson & Gangestad, 1992). Examples of sociosexual attitudes and behaviors consist of the number of sex partners one has had and that one wants to have, frequency of sexual activity, and attitudes regarding one's comfort with sex without emotion. There are two types of sociosexuality: restricted sociosexuality, where individuals have conservative attitudes and behaviors toward casual sex; and unrestricted sociosexuality, where individuals have liberal attitudes and behaviors about casual sex behaviors (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Simpson and Gangestad described restricted sociosexuality as being committed in a relationship and close to your partner before engaging in sex, whereas unrestricted sociosexuality is described as being uncommitted and engaging in sex with a dearth of closeness with a partner. Therefore, restricted individuals tend to have fewer sexual partners than unrestricted individuals. Although Simpson and Gangestad did not develop the term sociosexuality, they considerably advanced the concept through research.

The Sociosexuality Orientation Inventory (SOI) (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) was developed specifically to ascertain casual sex attitudes and behaviors. Simpson and Gangestad conducted three studies that examined differences in sexual engagement between unrestricted and restricted individuals. Results indicated that those rated as unrestricted were more likely to engage in early coitus within relationships, to have sex with different people within the same span of time, and to be less committed or devoted in sexual relationships than those rated as restricted. Similarly, Gentzler and Kerns (2004) used an earlier set of questions developed by Snyder, Simpson, and Gangestad (1986) to measure attitudes toward sex in females. They noted that more liberal sexual attitudes were correlated with increased numbers of sexual partners for

women. It was also found that few of those partnerships took place in committed relationships (i.e., women had more casual sex partners than committed relationship partners).

To support the idea that people with unrestricted sociosexuality tend to have more sex partners, Ostovich and Sabini (2004) conducted a study assessing sociosexuality and lifetime number of sexual partners among individuals 18 to 54 years old ( $M = 21.8$  for females,  $M = 22.4$  for men). This study found that sociosexuality was a good predictor of the number of lifetime sexual partners based on unrestricted and restricted types. Those rated as unrestricted had more lifetime coital partners than those rated as restricted ( $r = .57, p < .001$ ). This supports the view that an unrestricted viewpoint contains attitudes and behaviors that are more positive toward casual sex.

Reinforcing the literature on the connection between sociosexuality and number of lifetime sexual partners, Mikach and Bailey (1999) studied the correlation between number of sexual partners and several other factors in 39 women. Women considered to have a high number of sexual partners had from 25 to 200 partners, whereas women considered to have a low number of sexual partners had 0 to 10 partners. The women in the high group ranked very high on sociosexuality ( $M = 184.4$ ; range 83-545), though variability within this group was quite large, ( $SD = 125.1$ ); whereas women in the low group had a lower rating of sociosexuality ( $M = 38.5$ ; range 18-85) and a lower variability ( $SD = 16.3$ ). Women in the high group also had more interest in casual sex than those in the low group. Unfortunately, there are limitations apparent within this study; the range in the number of sexual partners is particularly large for the high group, and sample size is rather small. Therefore, these results may not be indicative of a more general population.

Results indicate that individuals with unrestricted sociosexuality tend to have more permissive attitudes toward casual sex and more sexual partners than those with restricted sociosexuality. An elaboration on this increase in sexual activity and casual attitudes toward sex could be explained by examining the role of sexual desire in casual sex; as a rating of unrestricted sociosexuality potentially suggests that individuals may experience higher levels of desire than individuals who are rated as restricted.

### Sexual Desire

Sexual desire may be viewed as an “interest in sexual activity” (Spector, Carey, & Steinberg, 1996, p. 178). Regan and Berscheid (1999) elaborated upon this definition, saying desire could be “the wish to obtain a sexual object that one does not now have or to engage in a sexual activity in which one is not now engaging.” (p. 17). In addition, Spector et al. further stated that sexual desire cannot be measured by behavior alone and requires that cognition be considered the principal concept to be observed (e.g., want for sex). Thus, the desire to have sex can be comprised of cognition in addition to behavior; desire does not mean you will have sex; rather, sexual desire indicates that you want to engage in sex.

Some researchers have attempted to investigate desire’s relationship to sexual activity in order to clarify the role it plays in casual sex. Again, results have been mixed. Simpson and Gangestad (1991) conducted a study to determine whether desire and sociosexuality were related using behaviorally based questionnaires (e.g., assessing frequency of sex), concluding that there was no relation or connection between the two concepts. However, Ostovich and Sabini (2004) found the opposite results. In two studies using a predominantly behavioral measure, they assessed participants on drive, sociosexuality, and a variety of other sexuality measures and found that higher sex drives in women were related to more unrestricted sociosexuality. In fact,

Regan and Dreyer (1999) found that 29.3% (12 out of 35) of female participants who engaged in a casual sex relationship did so because they desired it. Similar to this, Sloggett and Herold (1996) found that women who felt sex was more important also claimed that they thought they had higher sexual desire than their peers.

Based on the results of the above-mentioned research, it appears that there is a relationship between sexual desire and sociosexuality, although Simpson and Gangestad (1991) reported different results. In addition, both studies used predominately behavioral measures thereby not addressing the cognitive component of drive. There is also tentative evidence that casual sex may be related to desire as well when considering Regan and Dreyer's (1999) study. As a result, further research needs to be conducted to clarify what desire's influence is on casual sex and whether sociosexuality and desire can predict casual sex behavior with a more cognitively focused desire questionnaire.

#### Attitudes' Relationship With Self-Esteem and Engagement in Casual Sex

Attitudes are considered appraisals of general or specific topics, objects, events, or actions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Rosenberg (1965) even considered self-esteem to be "a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self" (p. 30). Attitudes can influence many different variables, such as behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005) and decisions (Sanbonmatsu, Prince, Vanous, & Posavac, 2005). Additionally, there is evidence that attitudes are related to self-esteem when the attitude expressed matches the behavior engaged in (e.g., Miller, Christensen, & Olson, 1987; Tanfer & Schoorl, 1992). However, this does not mean that the evidence is not mixed. If attitudes are incongruent with behaviors, a state of dissonance can occur and this may change the way self-esteem is affected. For instance, Miller et al. (1987) found that non-virgin individuals who had negative attitudes regarding premarital coitus had low

self-esteem. Individuals who were not virgins and had positive attitudes toward premarital coitus, however, had higher self-esteem. Although not specifically mentioning casual sex (they used “premarital” instead), these results illustrate the above-mentioned concept of congruence and dissonance.

Addressing the issue of whether casual sex attitudes show similar results, Peplau et al. (1977) conducted a study examining attitudes toward sex in three groups of couples: couples engaged in abstinence; moderate couples who believed in sex with affection; and liberal couples who believed in sex with or without affection. Of note, liberal couples felt that engaging in sexual intercourse while in love was ideal; however, engaging in sex while not in love was not deviant and could be considered a normal element of relationships. In addition, liberal couples approved of sexual behaviors that were more casual, engaged in more frequent sex, and were thought to be able to enjoy casual sex (should they choose to engage in sex outside of a relationship). Peplau et al. elaborated by discussing that women who engaged in intercourse early in a relationship (often found in liberal couples) and believed sex without love to be acceptable were more likely to have higher self-esteem than those who engaged in intercourse later in a relationship and held conservative attitudes regarding sex. The study did not comment on why those with conservative attitudes reported lower self-esteem.

Furthermore, Levinson, Jaccard, and Beamer (1995) conducted a study examining adolescents’ attitudes toward casual sex and their engagement in casual sex behaviors. Evidence showed that participants who were likely to base their self-esteem on issues related to sexual attitudes and behaviors (e.g., internalizing their attitudes and behaviors regarding casual sex) held increased positive attitudes regarding casual sex. This study in particular addresses

congruence well, as participants in the above study held both strong attitudes regarding casual sex (considering it appropriate) and engaged in said behaviors.

The above studies address women's casual sex attitudes and how they are associated with self-esteem. Results indicate that having positive casual sex attitudes may increase self-esteem when the attitudes and behaviors are congruent. Evidence supports both congruence and dissonance amongst attitudes and behaviors and although congruence and dissonance are a large portion of the equation, a variety of other variables such as religion, affect regarding casual sex experiences, location of data collection (liberal or conservative area), and societal norms can also influence self-esteem in relation to casual sex. Although these are important concepts to address, it is beyond the scope of this study to address all of these factors. However, affect in particular will be examined as a potential influencer of self-esteem amongst those who have engaged in casual sex.

### Self-Esteem

As proposed by Leary and Baumeister (2000), self-esteem is an internal, personal observation of one's worth. In a comprehensive book on self-esteem, Mruk (2006) commented that self-esteem was initially discussed by William James. Since then the field of self-esteem research has continued to grow rapidly and with this growth came an increase in the understanding of self-esteem as a complex and intricate facet in psychology. There are several theories regarding self-esteem. For instance, Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow considered self-esteem to be a necessity for human well-being (as cited in Mruk). Terror Management Theory posits that self-esteem acts as a safeguard between the knowledge that one lives, yet must die in order for people to progress through life (Mruk). Mark Leary's Sociometer Theory states that self-esteem is a monitor for people's social acceptance and belonging and that everyday

behaviors are observed to ensure that a person is accepted; should self-esteem be low, behaviors are regulated to assist acceptance in the future, thereby raising self-esteem (as cited in Mruk). These theories and others are varied in their approach and understanding of self-esteem as a concept and suggest that there are several factors and dynamics that influence self-esteem. In addition, self-esteem is a multifaceted concept and can involve a variety of components (e.g., values, belongingness, success, and failure), can be in various levels (e.g., low or high), and consists of two types (e.g., state and trait; Mruk).

Self-esteem has been measured in relation to a variety of topics that range from psychiatric disorders to being rejected by peers. Within the proposed study, self-esteem can be measured relative to an individual's sexual behavior as shown by multiple studies (Ethier et al., 2006; Rehbein-Narvaez, Garcia-Vazquez, & Madson, 2006; Walsh, 1991). Although self-esteem can be examined as both a state and a trait (state self-esteem is the day-to-day shift or change in self-esteem, whereas trait self-esteem is a person's general level of self-esteem over time; Leary & Baumeister, 2000), in relation to casual sex, trait self-esteem is of primary interest in the current study.

Unfortunately, research on the relationship between self-esteem and casual sex has produced inconsistent results, similar to the research on attitudes and sexual desire mentioned previously. Several studies have shown that casual sex influences self-esteem positively. Walsh (1991) conducted a study regarding the relationship between self-esteem and sexual behavior in college students. The study showed that women who had high self-esteem had a higher number of sex partners than women with low self-esteem. However, it was noted that when divided by experience (virgins and nonvirgins), self-esteem was equal. Gentzler and Kerns (2004) reported similar results, finding that women who had more sexual partners had higher self-esteem than

women with fewer sexual partners. Finally, Perlman (1974) gathered data from men and women who claimed to have either high or low numbers of sexual partners; unfortunately, these data were only analyzed between sexes and not within. However, when examining the data, it appears that self-esteem was higher for women with more sex partners than for women with fewer sex partners. These studies indicate that women who have multiple sexual partners can experience higher self-esteem than those who have fewer sexual partners.

Indeed, as society progresses and attitudes toward sexuality relax (Tanfer & Schrool, 1992), perhaps this relaxation in attitudes will lead women to embrace intercourse to suit their desires and take control of their sexuality. Weaver and Herold (2000) noted that 25% of the 140 women who engaged in casual sex in their study claimed that they did so to increase self-esteem and that 24% of the 54 women who had not had intercourse thought that they would have better self-esteem if they did engage in casual sex. Similar results were found in a study conducted by Regan and Dreyer (1999), who found that 10 out of 41 women (24.4%) who engaged in casual sex reported feeling “attractive/desirable” (p. 12). While arguably this was not labeled as self-esteem, it can be considered a facet of self-esteem as the engagement in these behaviors increased the self-perceived worth of the individual. These women engaged in casual sex to increase self-esteem or to feel attractive. Some may conclude that these women were lonely and therefore felt a need to belong (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995). As this was not addressed in these studies, however, one cannot assume that this was indeed true. There is an alternate hypothesis that these women experienced increased self-esteem as they enjoyed the control they had in their sexual relationships. Perhaps these women desired sex more and when they engaged in sex, the result was an increase in self-esteem.

Several studies, however, have shown either a negative relationship between casual sex and self-esteem, or no relationship between these factors. Herold and Mewhinney (1993), in their survey on singles bars, commented that several women mentioned that casual sex had a negative effect on their self-esteem; however, this was not officially measured in this study and was mentioned only as a side note. Paul et al.'s (2000) study regarding *hookups* indicated that people who had not *hooked up* had higher self-esteem than those who had *hooked up*, regardless of whether those who hooked up did or did not have sex. Furthermore, Grello, Welsh, and Harper (2006) determined that women who had more sexual partners were more likely to suffer from increased depression than women who had few sexual partners or were virgins. Although self-esteem was not measured, it is understood that as depression and low self-esteem are closely related (de Man, Gutiérrez, & Sterk, 2001) low levels of self-esteem are assumed present in the women studied.

In addition to these results, some studies found no significant relationship between self-esteem and casual sex. Ethier et al. (2006) conducted a study at clinics and care centers to examine further the relationship between self-esteem and sexual behavior and found no significant relationship between having multiple partners and self-esteem. In addition, Clark (2006) concluded that, regardless of being rated as restricted or unrestricted in sociosexuality, women did not exhibit significant differences in self-esteem. Furthermore, Mikach and Bailey (1999) found similar results of the nonsignificant relationship between self-esteem and number of sexual partners in women.

The inconsistencies in results regarding the relationship between casual sex and self-esteem are problematic. One possible explanation for these discrepancies is that the relationship between casual sex and self-esteem is influenced by a multitude of variables, which can

influence self-esteem in any number of ways. With the inclusion of attitudes and affect, the goal of the proposed study is to clarify the issue or at least provide a new direction to research.

### Affect

Affect is typically not examined in relation to casual sex. However, the positive or negative emotions a woman may experience in regard to her sexual behaviors or experiences could potentially influence how she feels about herself or influence the attitudes she may have in relation to casual sex. Once again, it may be a concept that depends on congruence; if an individual has negative experiences in relation to casual sex, self-esteem may decrease.

Paul and Hayes (2002) conducted a qualitative study involving college students and *hookup* experiences (a one-time sexual event that may not involve coitus between people who just met or people who met recently but are not friends). Affect was measured in both the best and worst *hookup* experiences by asking participants how they felt during and after the *hookup*. Some of the feelings participants described were regret, happiness, satisfaction, confusion, nervousness, discomfort, pride, and feeling desirable. Overall, these initial feelings changed (i.e., increased or decreased depending on the feeling; Paul & Hayes); after the best *hookups*, there was a significant decrease in happiness, a small but nonsignificant increase in feeling desirable, an increase in confusion, an increase in security, and an increase in surprise that they had sex. Following the worst hookups there was an increase in negative affect. Unfortunately, it is unclear whether participants had felt that way during and after sex or if they were assuming that is how one might feel during and after sex. Also, the percentages of how participants felt do not add up to 100, as acknowledged by the authors, so this creates additional ambiguity. It is unknown as to how many individuals truly felt that emotion, how many were conjecturing, and how many did not answer (the prevalence of intoxication should also be considered as this may

have influenced affect regarding the outcome and the desire to engage in casual sex). Although this study assessed feeling states associated with *hookups*, as mentioned above, this term does not necessarily include sexual intercourse. Despite the confusion, the end point is that the results were mixed and unclear. Some positive feelings increased slightly but happiness decreased; thus showing that positive and negative affect can be derived from casual sexual experiences. Use of a standardized scale of emotions or feelings experienced after a casual sex experience may assist in the dispelling of obfuscated results.

Gentzler and Kerns (2004) examined the relationship between affect and individuals' perceptions of casual sex through their study on sexual experiences. Though the study focused predominately on sexual experiences in general, they did reference the number of casual sex partners individuals had and used a scale from one of Simpson and Gangestad's pre-1991 studies that was a precursor to the current SOI (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Results indicated that women who agreed to have sex but did not want to have it reported negative affect. In addition, these women were more inclined to have more sex partners. Unfortunately, the authors only assessed unwanted casual sex, not desired sex.

Evidence regarding affect has been shown to be negative in relation to unwanted casual sex experiences. When the experience is good, some instances of positive affect may be displayed as opposed to when the experience is negative. In addition, although not shown through evidence, attitudes may further influence affect after engaging in casual sex. It is hoped with additional research that these issues may be clarified to further the understanding of how casual sex influences self-esteem.

### The Current Study

The purpose of the current study is to investigate how self-esteem in female college students is influenced by casual sex. Casual sex, in this study, is defined by the author as a sexual encounter (anal, oral, vaginal sex, or a combination of these types of penetration) ranging from once to multiple times between people who are not committed to each other (either romantically or as friends). This excludes the concept of “friends with benefits” as those people may also hang out in friendly contexts as well as sexual ones and thereby have an additional relationship other than that of sex. However, this definition allows for the inclusion of having random sex with the same person on multiple occasions, which may be a possibility in a college atmosphere. Although other studies (i.e., Paul et al., 2000) allowed manual stimulation to signify engagement in casual sex in their definition of the word, a sexual event with another individual, as described above, must take place to fulfill the definition requirements of casual sex in the current study. The reason for this stricter definition is because it is thought that the engagement in sex (oral, anal, or vaginal) will be associated with stronger attitudes regarding casual sex as opposed to sexually related behaviors (i.e., kissing, masturbation, fondling). That is, it may be easier for an individual to engage in sexually related behaviors as opposed to sex without it affecting self-esteem.

In addition, some individuals may question the use of oral sex as being “sex.” Despite the finding that 40% of 599 participants considered oral sex to be sex, whereas 60% did not consider it sex, the definition of sex is ambiguous (Sanders & Reinisch, 1999). Peterson and Muehlenhard (2007) corroborated the findings that the definition of sex is mired in uncertainty amongst participants. Evidence indicated that oral sex was described both as sex and not as sex by participants; however, even when an individual ascribed it to being in one group or another,

they were uncertain whether they had defined it correctly. In addition, some felt they had categorized oral sex a specific way because it matched their goals or values (i.e., the desire to lose their virginity or remain a virgin due to religious values). Due to the ambiguous nature of the definition of sex, oral sex is included in the definition of casual sex so as not to exclude individuals who may consider that act as engagement in casual sex.

There are three hypotheses to examine in the present study. First, it is hypothesized that higher levels of sexual desire and unrestricted sociosexuality will be positively related to casual sex and will predict greater casual sex behavior. As evidenced by Simpson and Gangestad (1991), unrestricted sociosexuality is related to higher incidences of casual sex, whereas restricted is not; in addition, Ostovich and Sabini (2004) found desire to be related to sociosexuality. Therefore, the interaction between desire and sociosexuality should predict casual sex behavior.

The second hypothesis predicts that women who have positive attitudes about casual sex and engage in casual sex will have higher self-esteem than women who engage in casual sex and have negative attitudes about their behaviors. As self-esteem has been shown to both increase and decrease in association with positive or negative attitudes and engagement in casual sex, clarification is needed to help establish the potential influences of casual sex. The purpose of this step is to increase knowledge regarding what role casual sex plays in women's feelings of self-worth.

Finally, among those who engage in casual sex, it is hypothesized that those who have more positive affect in addition to having liberal attitudes will have higher self-esteem. Those who experience more negative affect and have more conservative attitudes, however, will have lower self-esteem. Those who have refrained from engaging in casual sex are unable to rate their

experience of their casual sex behaviors and will, therefore, be excluded from analysis in this final hypothesis.

The focus on women in this study is a result of a lack of research examining women's sexuality and sexual behavior within gender. Most research compares men's sexuality to women's; men have higher levels of both sexual behaviors and positive attitudes about sex than women do (Oliver & Hyde, 1993) in addition to having higher sexual desire than women (Baumeister, Catanese, & Vohs, 2001; Regan & Atkins, 2006). However, few studies report on the differences in these variables among women; sexuality is changing and the need for a better understanding of how sexuality influences the well-being of women is increasing. If there is an exiguous understanding of these issues, we cannot expect to attempt to appropriately address the myths and concerns surrounding female sexuality and enhance feminine well-being. This study is an attempt to expound upon these differences among women.

One final note - although there are several studies that have been conducted regarding casual sex behaviors (e.g. Grello et al., 2006; Herold & Mewhinney, 1993; Paul et al., 2000), there remain large gaps in the literature. There has been little research regarding casual sex when not related to disease and substance abuse, and research examining the association between self-esteem and casual sex in college students has shown mixed results. This study will not address disease or substance abuse as these issues have been addressed elsewhere (e.g., Paul et al.); instead, it will focus on the relationship between casual sex and self-esteem and other factors that may influence this relationship.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHOD

#### Measures

##### Demographics

A demographic questionnaire was used to get basic information from the participants addressing age, race, year in school, and gender. A religious questionnaire was the final set of questions asked during the study. Questions addressed what religion, if any, participants practice, whether they attend services, and how often they do. All questions were answered through multiple choice or open-ended answering. The religion questions were asked at the end as an attempt to refrain from priming participants at the beginning in regards to religion. It was thought that if asked in the beginning, participants might answer the remaining questions more conservatively than they would if not reminded of their faith.

##### Sexual History

Participants were asked several questions regarding their sexual behavior and sexual experiences. These questions assessed sexual orientation, relationship status, sexual history, and casual sex behavior through a multiple choice answer format (see Appendix A). The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain background information on the participants' sexual experience.

##### Sociosexuality

The Sociosexuality Orientation Inventory (SOI) (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991), which was designed to rate behavior and attitudes regarding casual sex, was used to measure sociosexuality in this study. It has been shown to be valid and reliable ( $\alpha = .83$ ). The SOI (see Appendix B) consisted of three questions addressing explicit behaviors (questions 1-3; open-ended rating), one question addressing implicit behavior (question 4; rated by multiple

choice), and three questions addressing attitudes (questions 5-7; rated on a 9-item Likert scale, 1=*I strongly disagree* to 9=*I strongly agree*). It was scored using a weighted formula developed by Simpson and Gangestad (1991) and participants' scores were kept in continuous form.

### Attitudes

The Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS) (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Reich, 2006) was used to measure casual sex attitudes. The BSAS was used to evaluate an individual's attitudes toward sexual permissiveness, birth control, sex as communion with another, and the instrumentality of sex. Participants used a 5-point Likert scale (1=*agree strongly* to 5=*disagree strongly*) to rate the 23-item scale (see Appendix C). Although the participants completed the entire scale, only questions from the Permissiveness category on the BSAS (the first 10 questions) were of interest in the current study. This scale has been shown to be reliable and valid ( $\alpha = .93$ ) (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Reich). The Permissiveness scale assessed individuals' attitudes toward engagement in casual sex based on their feelings regarding commitment, enjoyment of multiple partners, and acceptance of casual sex. The scale was scored by calculating the mean score for the Permissiveness scale; the higher the score, the more conservative the participants' attitudes.

### Sexual Desire

The Hurlbert Index of Sexual Desire (Apt & Hurlbert, 1992), which has been shown to be both valid and reliable ( $\alpha = .89$ ) (Apt & Hurlbert, 1994), was employed as a measure of sexual desire. This scale consisted of 25 questions assessing attitudes regarding the desire for sexual activity and fantasizing. All items were rated using a 5-point Likert scale (0=*all of the time* to 4=*never*; see Appendix D). The scale was scored by reverse scoring the reverse-worded questions then adding the scores together to achieve a total. The higher the score, the more desire individuals perceived of themselves.

### Self-Esteem

Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1979). The RSES consisted of 10-items that assessed overall feelings of trait self-esteem, and these items were rated on a 4-item Likert scale (1=*disagree strongly* to 4=*agree strongly*; see Appendix E). The RSES has a reliability coefficient of .831 (Zeller & Carmines, 1980).

### Affect

Affect regarding casual sex experiences was rated using the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) as this scale has been shown to be valid and reliable (positive affect alpha = .88, negative affect alpha = .87). Participants were asked to complete the PANAS twice. One version asked participants to think about and rate their last casual sex experience; the other version asked participants to rate their overall experience of casual sex (i.e., their history of casual sex experiences). Participants rated the emotions felt (interested, irritable, distressed, alert, excited, ashamed, upset, inspired, strong, nervous, guilty, determined, scared, attentive, afraid, hostile, jittery, enthusiastic, active, and proud) on a 5-point scale (1=*very slightly or not at all* to 5=*extremely*). The scale was scored by adding the individual ratings for each word based on a cluster of 10 positive affect words and 10 negative affect words. Each participant had two separate PANAS scores (affect after first casual sex experience and affect regarding overall casual sex experience) and within those two groups each participant had a separate score for positive and negative affect.

### Procedure

Participants completed questionnaires on-line, which were administered through Sona Systems (an online research participation software package). In order to participate in the study, participants needed to set up a Sona account and have access to the Internet. Individuals could

participate in the current study at any time and remained anonymous while completing the study through Sona. After participants read the informed consent form and agreed to participate in the study, participants were given instructions on how to complete the questionnaires and told that the study would take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. They then completed the questionnaires, and data were backed up and stored on a secure server accessible only to the principal investigator and co-investigators.

### Sample

Two hundred thirty-seven female participants from a mid-sized Southeastern university completed the study (see Table 1 for all demographic data reported). The mean age for participant was 20.89 years ( $SD = 5.57$ ) though ages ranged from 18- 50. There were 133 freshman, 49 sophomores, 27 juniors, 27 seniors, and 1 graduate student. The sample consisted of 90.7% Caucasian, 3.4% Bi-racial, 3.4% African American, 1.3% Asian, .8 % American Indian or Alaskan Native, and .4% Hispanic participants. Religion demographics found that 80.2% of the sample considered themselves religious while 19.8% did not. Of the 190 participants who stated they were religious, 68.4% (130) attended services while 31.6% did not. Finally, of the 130 participants who attended services, 27.7% stated they attended services more than once a week, with 33.1% attending once a week, while the remaining 39.2% went twice a month or less.

The SHQ established that of this composite, 53.6% were in a committed relationship, 19% were single but not dating, 10.5% were casually dating one person, 8% were married, 6.8% were dating multiple people, and 2.1% were divorced. Sexual orientation was measured with 95.8% identifying themselves as being heterosexual, 3.8% bisexual, and .4% lesbian. Vaginal sex was reported by 77.6% of the 237 participants with a mean age for first coitus of 16.36 years ( $SD = 2.03$ , range = 8-26 years; one person did not indicate her age); 22.4% denied having

engaged in vaginal sex up to that point. Additionally, 70.9% had never engaged in anal sex, but 29.1% had ( $M = 19.06$  years old,  $SD = 4.77$ , range = 14-49; one participant denied having anal sex, but said her age was 17 when she did). The mean number of sex partners in a participant's lifetime was 4.24 partners ( $SD = 6.02$ , range = 0-40 partners).

Out of 237 participants, 48.9% (116) stated they engaged in casual sex while 51.1% (121) did not. Of the 116 participants who stated they engaged in casual sex, the mean number of casual sex partners was 2.14 ( $SD = 2.6$ , range = 0-20 partners). According to the SHQ, out of 237 participants, 12.2% stated they engaged in coitus on a regular basis with someone they were not friends with and 20.7% (out of the total 237) stated they engaged in sex in someone they had just met.

Table 1.

*Summary of Demographic Data Including Means, Standard Deviations, and N's*

Variable	M	SD	N	%
Age	20.89	5.57	237	
Year in School				
Freshman			133	56.1
Sophomore			49	20.7
Junior			27	11.4
Senior			27	11.4
Graduate			1	.4
Ethnicity				
Caucasian			215	90.7
African American			8	3.4
Biracial			8	3.4
Asian			3	1.3
Amer. Indian/ AL Native			2	.8
Hispanic			1	.4
Relationship Status				
Committed Relationship			127	53.6
Single/ Not dating			45	19
Casually Dating 1 person			25	10.5
Married			19	8

Table 1. (cont.)

Variable	M	SD	N	%
Dating multiple people			16	6.8
Divorced			5	2.1
Sexual Orientation				
Straight			227	95.8
Bisexual			9	3.8
Lesbian			1	.4
Coitus				
Had sex at least once			184	77.6
Age	16.36	2.03		
Virgin			53	22.4
Anal Sex				
Yes			69	29.1
Age	19.06	4.77		
No			168	70.9
Oral Given				
Yes			182	76.8
No			55	23.2
Oral Received				
Yes			184	77.6
No			53	22.4
Sexually active in last 6 mo.				
Yes			164	69.2
No			73	30.8
Number of partners in last 6 mo.	1.10	1.19	237	
Number of lifetime partners	4.24	6.02	237	
Number of casual sex partners				
For those who had casual sex	2.14	2.6	116	
Time last engaged in sex				
Today			11	4.6
Yesterday			45	19
This week			29	12.2
Last week			31	13.1
2 weeks			19	8
Last month			12	5.1
More than a month			25	10.5
A year			4	1.7
More than a year			8	3.4
Never			53	22.4
Are you religious?				
Yes			190	80.2
Christian			144	75.8
Protestant			19	10

Table 1. (cont.)

Variable	M	SD	N	%
Catholic			13	6.8
Other			8	4.2
Pagan/ Nature			2	1.1
Muslim			1	.5
Hindu			1	.5
Buddhist			1	.5
Agnostic			1	.5
No			47	19.8
Attend services?				
Yes			130	68.4
More than once a week			36	27.7
Once a week			43	33.1
Twice a month			20	15.4
Once a month			12	9.2
Less than once a month			14	10.8
Only holidays or ceremonies			5	3.8
No			60	31.6

### Statistical Analyses

A power analysis was conducted using GPOWER, a statistical power software package (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996), using an effect size of  $f^2 = .15$ , which is considered to be a moderate effect size (Cohen, 1988). Results from the power analysis determined that data from a minimum of 77 women who have engaged in casual sex needed to be collected to achieve adequate power (.80). As a result, data from 237 female participants were collected, assuming approximately half would have engaged in casual sex.

Data were first analyzed for outliers, skewness, and kurtosis. Outliers were defined as any number three standard deviations above or below the mean, and these were transformed to three standard deviations above or below the mean. Log, square root, or inverse transformations

were conducted to balance any skewness or kurtosis that was observed. All data met linearity (except for the first regression analysis) and homoscedasticity requirements.

This study proposed the use of hierarchical multiple regression (Aiken & West, 1991) to analyze the data. Independent variables that comprised the interaction effects were centered at the mean prior to conducting the regression analyses according to Aiken and West. The first hypothesis stated that higher levels of sociosexuality (i.e., more unrestricted sociosexuality) would be related to higher sexual desire, and that sociosexuality and desire would predict casual sex behavior. A t-test was first conducted to determine whether desire scores were different by relationship status (in a committed relationship or not in a committed relationship). It was thought there might be a difference because the HISD used the word “partner” frequently in the questions. Conducting a t-test would allow the researcher to determine whether there was a discrepancy in desire scores based on relationship status. Testing the first hypothesis, in Step 1, relationship status (dummy coded into in a committed and not in a committed relationship) was entered into the regression. The dummy coded variable was included as a control for desire. In Step 2, sociosexuality (SOI score) was entered into the regression, and sexual desire (HISD score) was entered at Step 3. In Step 4, sociosexuality squared was entered into the regression as it was thought that there could be a curvilinear effect based on initial descriptive information. Finally, the interaction between sociosexuality and desire was entered into the regression at Step 5 to determine whether the effect of sociosexuality on casual sex differed by sexual desire.

The second hypothesis predicted that casual sexual behavior and casual sex attitudes would predict self-esteem. In the first step, casual sex attitudes (BSAS score) and casual sex behavior (number of casual sex partners from SOI scale) were entered into the regression in a block. In Step 2, the interaction between attitudes and behaviors was entered into the regression.

This would indicate whether congruence (i.e., engagement in casual sex with positive casual sex attitudes, no casual sex with negative casual sex attitudes) between casual sex attitudes and behaviors was related to higher self-esteem as opposed to those who experienced dissonance between attitudes and behavior. Decomposition was accomplished by following analyses discussed by Aiken and West (1991), the regression equation was calculated for the interaction effect (1 SD above and below the mean). Following this, data were plotted on a line graph and analyzed.

The third hypothesis stated that for participants who engaged in casual sex, those who had positive attitudes and positive affect regarding those experiences would have higher self-esteem than those who had negative attitudes and negative affect concerning casual sex experiences. Because this hypothesis centered on individuals who had engaged in casual sex, those who did not have casual sex were excluded. The reason for this separation was that the interest was in whether affect further predicted self-esteem in conjunction with attitudes and those who did not have casual sex could not rate affect related to their experiences. Therefore, participants who stated that they engaged in casual sex at least once (as stated in the SOI) were included in this portion. Two hierarchical regressions were conducted here to address whether the attitudes and affect regarding casual sex experience in participants who had engaged in casual sex could be predictive of self-esteem. The first looked at participants' affect after the first casual sex experience, whereas the second examined a participant's overall affect toward her casual sex experience.

The pattern of variable entry into the regression was the same for both regressions conducted. The only difference was for affect variables; one set of affect scores (positive and negative) was based on first time casual sex affect and the other set (in the second regression)

was based on overall casual sex experiences. In Step 1, casual sex attitudes (BSAS score) was entered in the regression. In Step 2, casual sex affect (both positive and negative PANAS scales) were entered into the regression in a block. In the third step, the interaction between attitudes and positive affect was entered. Finally, the interaction between attitudes and negative affect was entered into the regression at Step 4. The purpose of this was to determine whether there was an interaction between attitudes and affect in the prediction of self-esteem as it was thought that the interaction would better account for variance in self-esteem scores. Decomposition using the Aiken and West (1991) procedure has been detailed above.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

As there was a discrepancy in the number of casual sex partners reported by participants on the SOI and the SHQ, SOI question three was used for the following analyses as it has been determined to be both valid and reliable through past research. Untransformed means and standard deviations scores are reported for ease of interpretation. Reliability results were calculated for this sample: SOI alpha = .768, BSAS alpha = .906, HISD alpha = .940, PANAS (first casual sex experience) alpha = .676, and PANAS (overall experience) alpha = .808.

#### Sociosexuality and Sexual Desire

The mean SOI score was 41.27 ( $SD = 27.94$ , range = 10-160); higher scores indicate more unrestricted sociosexuality. The mean HISD score was 59.70 ( $SD = 18.08$ , range = 5-98); higher scores indicate greater desire. The mean number of casual sex partners was 1.05 for the sample ( $SD = 2.11$ , range = 0-20). A zero-order correlational analysis (see Table 2) was conducted between sociosexuality, desire, committed relationships, and number of partners.

Table 2.

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for SOI, HISD, and Casual Sex Partners*

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4
1. SOI	41.27 (27.94)	-	.418**	-.138*	.702**
2. HISD	59.7 (18.08)		-	.148*	.271**
3. Committed	- -			-	-.006
4. Casual Sex Partners	1.05 (2.11)				-

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Prior to conducting the hierarchical regression, an independent t test was conducted to determine whether level of sexual desire differed between participants in a committed relationship and those in an uncommitted relationship. Results indicate that there was a statistically significant difference between these two groups ( $t[235] = -2.30, p < .05, d = -.30$ ) as those in a committed relationship had higher levels of desire ( $M = 61.81, SD = 16.64, N = 146$ ) than those in an uncommitted relationship ( $M = 56.31, SD = 19.81, N = 91$ ). Therefore, in the subsequent analysis, I controlled for relationship commitment.

A hierarchical regression (see Table 3) was conducted to address whether sociosexuality and desire could be predictive of engagement in casual sex (as measured by item three in the SOI). Sociosexuality in Step 2 (SOI score) showed a statistically significant  $F$  change ( $\Delta R^2 = .501, F[1,234] = 235.02, p < .001$ ) accounting for 50.1% of the variance in number of casual sex partners. While conducting descriptives for the analysis, it was noted that there was a lack of linearity in this regression. As a result, sociosexuality was multiplied by itself to account for the curvilinearity of the results. In Step 4 sociosexuality squared showed a statistically significant  $F$  change ( $\Delta R^2 = .018, F[1,232] = 8.772, p < .005$ ) accounting for 1.8% of the variance in number of casual sex partners. Steps 1 (relationship status), 3 (sexual desire), and 5 (interaction between sociosexuality and desire) did not show a statistically significant  $F$  change ( $\Delta R^2 = .000, ns$ ).

Table 3.

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for SOI, HISD, and Relationship Status Predicting Casual Sex Behavior*

Variable	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1					
Committed	-.009	.105	-.006	.000	.000
Step 2					
SOI	.273	.018	.715**	.501	.501**
Step 3					
HISD	-.002	.002	-.053	.503	.002
Step 4					
SOI*SOI	.020	.007	.150*	.521	.018*
Step 5					
SOI*HISD	.000	.001	.006	.521	.000

\* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$

There was a significant effect for SOI<sup>2</sup> indicating a positive curvilinear effect ( $\beta = .150$ ,  $t[232] = 2.96$ ,  $p < .005$ ; see Figure 1) meaning that the more unrestricted sociosexuality, the greater the increase in number of casual sex partners. That is, the more unrestricted an individual's sociosexuality, the exponentially larger the increase in casual sex partners.

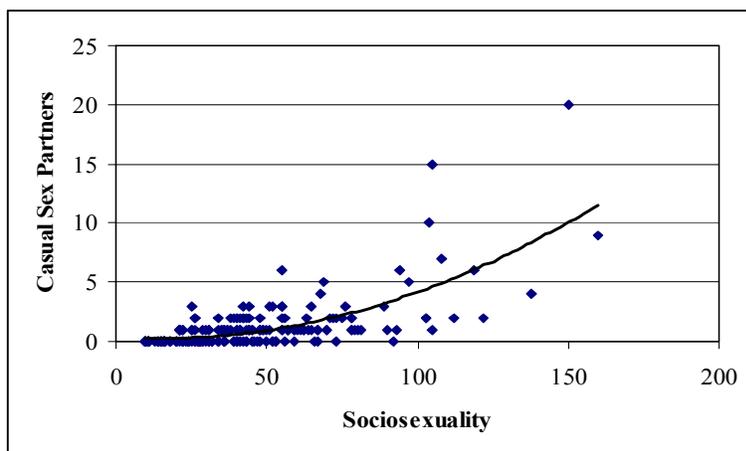


Figure 1. Curvilinear Regression Line for Sociosexuality for Number of Casual Sex Partners

### Casual Sex Attitudes and Behavior Predicting Self-Esteem

The mean BSAS score was 4.11 ( $SD = .86$ , range = 1.5-5); higher scores indicate less permissive casual sex attitudes. The mean score on the RSES was 31.62 ( $SD = 5.30$ , range = 13-40); higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. Correlational analyses were conducted between casual sex attitudes, number of casual sex partners, and self-esteem; zero-order correlations coefficients can be found in Table 4.

Table 4.

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for BSAS, Number of Casual Sex Partners, and RSES*

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3
1. BSAS	4.11 (0.86)	-	-.469**	.068
2. Casual Sex Partners	1.05 (2.11)		-	.051
3. RSES	31.62 (5.30)			-

\*\* $p < .01$

A hierarchical regression (see Table 5) was conducted to address whether casual sex attitudes and behavior could be predictive of self-esteem. In Step 1, casual sex attitudes and number of casual sex partners did not show a significant  $F$  change ( $\Delta R^2 = .013$ ,  $F[2,234] = 1.59$ ,  $ns$ ). However, Step 2 was of more interest as it assessed the main hypothesis.. In Step 2, the interaction effect between attitudes and number of casual sex partners showed significant  $F$  change ( $\Delta R^2 = .029$ ,  $F[1,233] = 7.01$ ,  $p < .01$ ) accounting for 2.9% of the variance in self-esteem. That is, there was a statistically significant moderation effect ( $\beta = -.186$ ,  $t[233] = -2.65$ ,  $p < .01$ ) between casual sex attitudes and number of partners on self-esteem. This interaction accounted

for a statistically significant amount of variance in self-esteem beyond the effects of number of casual sex partners and attitudes. Decomposition for this effect indicated that the slope of number of casual sex partners on self-esteem was significantly different from zero at liberal casual sex attitudes ( $b = 1.58, p < .05$ ) but not at conservative casual sex attitudes ( $b = -0.79, ns$ ). This interaction (see Figure 2) revealed that having more casual sex partners was associated with higher self-esteem for only those participants who reported liberal attitudes.

Table 5.

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for BSAS and Casual Sex Partners Predicting RSES*

Variable	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1					
BSAS	.723	.451	.118	.013	.013
Casual Sex Partners	.712	.495	.106		
Step 2					
BSAS*Casual Sex Partners	-1.375	.519	-.186*	.042	.029*

\* $p \leq .01$

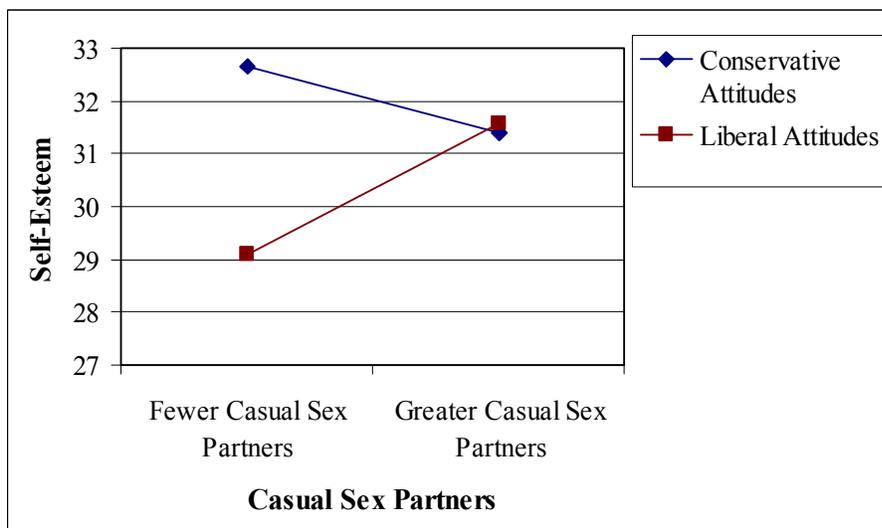


Figure 2. Interaction Between Casual Sex Attitudes and Number of Casual Sex Partners for Self-Esteem

Attitudes and Affect Predicting Self-Esteem After Engaging in Casual Sex

Next, I examined whether attitudes and affect would be predictive of self-esteem among women who engaged in casual sex. The data below pertain to 116 women who had casual sex. The mean BSAS score was 3.70 ( $SD = .91$ , range = 1.5-5); higher scores indicate less permissive attitudes. The mean RSES score was 31.53 ( $SD = 5.62$ , range = 13-40); higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. In the study, the PANAS was given twice with one scale measuring self-reported affect after the first casual sex experience and another measuring affect related to overall casual sex history. The mean PANAS first time score was 30.49 ( $SD = 9.54$ , range = 10-50) for the positive scale and 20.16 ( $SD = 9.46$ , range = 10-49) for negative. Higher scores indicated more positive and negative affect. The mean PANAS overall score was 24.21 ( $SD = 10.24$ , range = 10-50) for the positive scale and 19.06 ( $SD = 9.35$ , range = 10-49) for negative. A zero-order correlational analysis for each type of affect (first time (see Table 6) or overall (see Table 7)) were conducted between attitudes, positive and negative affect, and self-esteem.

Table 6.

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for BSAS, First Time Positive PANAS, First Time Negative PANAS, and RSES Among Participants Who Had Casual Sex*

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4
1. BSAS	3.70 (0.91)	-	-.275**	.183*	-.012
2. Positive PANAS	30.49 (9.54)		-	-.454**	.340**
3. Negative PANAS	20.16 (9.46)			-	-.369**
4. RSES	31.53 (5.62)				-

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

Table 7.

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for BSAS, Overall Positive PANAS, First Time Negative PANAS, and RSES Among Participants Who Had Casual Sex*

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4
1. BSAS	3.70 (0.91)	-	-.277**	.162	-.012
2. Positive PANAS	24.21 (10.24)		-	-.198*	.205*
3. Negative PANAS	19.06 (9.35)			-	-.451**
4. RSES	31.53 (5.62)				-

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

The first multiple linear regression (see Table 8) focused on affect felt after the first casual sex experience. In Step 2, positive and negative affect showed a significant  $F$  change ( $\Delta R^2 = .184$ ,  $F[2,112] = 12.62$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and accounted for 18.4% of the variance in self-esteem. There was a statistically significant main effect for positive affect ( $\beta = .242$ ,  $t[112] = 2.47$ ,  $p < .02$ ) meaning the more positive affect reported related to one's casual first casual sex experience, the higher one's self-esteem. Negative affect was also found to be statistically significant ( $\beta = -.279$ ,  $t[112] = -2.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ) meaning that more negative affect reported was related to lower self-esteem. Steps 1 (attitudes), 3 (interaction between attitudes and positive affect), and 4 (interaction between attitudes and negative affect) did not show any statistically significant  $F$  change.

Table 8.

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for BSAS, First Time Positive PANAS, and First Time Negative PANAS Predicting RSES*

Variable	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1					
BSAS	-.076	.577	-.012	.000	.000
Step 2					
Positive PANAS	.143	.058	.242*	.184	.184**
Negative PANAS	-1.568	.540	-.279*		
Step 3					
BSAS*Positive PANAS	-.002	.055	-.003	.184	.001
Step 4					
BSAS*Negative PANAS	.939	.564	.161	.204	.020

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$

For the second regression, (see Table 9) the focus was on affect felt regarding a participant's overall casual sex experiences. Step 2 ( $\Delta R^2 = .23$ ,  $F[2,112] = 16.35$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had a significant  $F$  change and positive and negative affect accounted for almost 23% of the variance. There was a statistically significant main effect for negative affect ( $\beta = -.438$ ,  $t[112] = -5.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ) meaning that greater negative affect related to one's overall casual sex experience was related to lower self-esteem.

Table 9.

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for BSAS, Overall Positive PANAS, and Overall Negative PANAS Predicting RSES*

Variable	B	SEB	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1					
BSAS	-.076	.577	-.012	.000	.000
Step 2					
Positive PANAS	.776	.466	.146	.226	.226**
Negative PANAS	-2.459	.480	-.438**		
Step 3					
BSAS*Positive PANAS	-.576	.501	-.096	.235	.009
Step 4					
BSAS*Negative PANAS	1.550	.496	.260*	.298	.062*

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$

Step 4 also showed a statistically significant  $F$  change ( $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ,  $F[1,110] = 9.79$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and the interaction effect between attitudes and negative affect accounted for 6% of the variance in self-esteem. This indicated a statistically significant moderation effect ( $\beta = .260$ ,  $t[110] = 3.13$ ,  $p < .01$ ) found between casual sex attitudes and negative affect on self-esteem. The interaction accounted for a statistically significant amount of variance in self-esteem beyond the effects of negative affect and attitudes. Decomposition for this effect indicated that the slope of negative affect on self-esteem was significantly different from zero at conservative casual sex attitudes ( $B = -1.25$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and at liberal casual sex attitudes ( $B = -4.08$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This interaction (see Figure 3) revealed that having higher negative affect was associated with lower self-esteem for those participants whom reported conservative or liberal attitudes. However, the slope for liberal attitudes was larger and indicated that they reported lower self-esteem in conjunction with high negative affect than individuals who reported high negative affect and

conservative attitudes. Steps 1 (attitudes) and 3 (interaction between attitudes and positive affect) did not show any statistically significant  $F$  change.

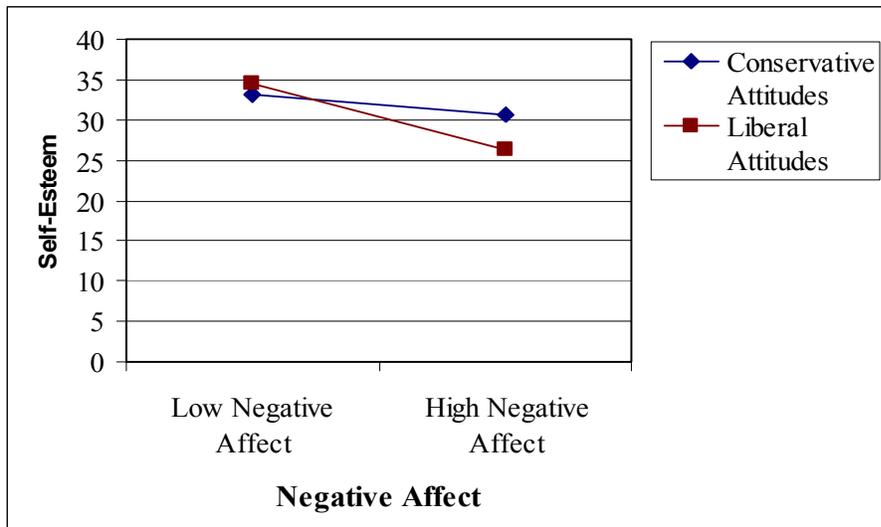


Figure 3. Interaction between Casual Sex Attitudes and Overall Negative Affect for Self-Esteem

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

#### Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis stated that higher levels of sexual desire and unrestricted sociosexuality would be positively related to casual sex and would predict greater casual sex behavior. Results indicated that desire had a moderate positive correlation with sociosexuality, meaning that the higher the unrestricted score, the higher the desire score. Desire also had a small positive correlation to number of casual sex partners indicating that individuals with higher desire scores tend to have a greater number of casual sex partners. However, sociosexuality had a large correlation with number of casual sex partners indicating that the higher the unrestricted sociosexuality the more casual sex partners were reported. Finally, there was a small negative correlation between being in a committed relationship and sociosexuality. This correlation was thought to possibly be due to the population sampled (coming from a stereotypically conservative region) where individuals may have answered conservatively if they were in a relationship. The small positive correlation between being in a committed relationship and sexual desire was thought to be related to the desire scale's use of the word "partner." This is addressed more fully in the paragraph below.

In this study, desire was not found to be predictive of casual sex behavior. This is in line with the definition provided by Regan and Berscheid (1999) which stated that desire may not lead to actual behavior. Similarly, Ostovich and Sabini (2004) also found that sex drive was not a significant predictor of total number of coital partners. A comparison can be drawn between that study and the current study as sexual desire did not predict either total number of coital partners or number of casual sex partners. However, desire levels between both individuals in

committed relationships and those not in committed relationships did show a difference in means, with those in committed relationships reporting slightly higher desire. Despite the HISD having been used in studies where relationship status was not an issue (Conaglen & Evans, 1992), it was originally used with women who were married (Apt & Hurlbert, 1992) and this may have contributed to the higher desire scores for those in a committed relationship. Another thought is that the use of the word “partner” in many of the items on the scale could have elicited different responses between those in committed relationships and those who were not. It may be that individuals in committed relationships translated “partner” as being the person with whom they were in a relationship, whereas those not in committed relationships translated “partner” to mean partners in general. If this were the case, then perhaps those in committed relationships felt more desire for their partner as opposed to partners in general. Perhaps a different desire scale should be used in future studies to avoid this potential bias. This will be elaborated on further when discussing limitations.

Interestingly, sociosexuality by sociosexuality was highly predictive of engagement in casual sex as this analysis had a positive curvilinear regression line. This means that the higher the unrestricted sociosexuality, the greater the increase in number of casual sex partners. These results provide support for past data (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Ostovich & Sabini, 2004) that found that individuals with more unrestricted sociosexuality reported more sexual partners. However, the current study elaborated on past results, showing that more unrestricted sociosexuality is related not only to a greater number of lifetime sex partners, but also to a greater number of casual sex partners, and that there is a curvilinear relationship between the two variables.

The interaction effect between sociosexuality and desire was nonsignificant. The lack of significance was thought to be influenced by participants having had a small number of casual sex partners. It may be that more casual sex partners are needed to have a significant interaction between sociosexuality and desire. Prior studies have found that individuals who have more unrestricted ratings have more sex partners (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Ostovich & Sabini, 2004). The current study found that women who have higher unrestricted sociosexuality have more casual sex partners. It is conjectured that those who have more unrestricted ratings (and therefore more casual sex partners) may have higher levels of desire. This theory is supported by Ostovich and Sabini's study in which women with higher sociosexuality ratings were found to have greater levels of desire. In addition, Regan and Dreyer's (1999) study found that 29.3% of women who had casual sex did so because they wanted to have sex. Although desire, specifically, was not measured in their study, several questions inquired as to how frequently participants wanted or thought about sex. These wants may be related to having higher numbers of casual sex partners when coupled with unrestricted sociosexuality ratings. Results from the correlational analysis provide some support for this idea, as the correlation between desire and sociosexuality was found to be small to moderately positive. In addition, the correlation between desire and number of casual sex partners was found to be positive, though small. Clearly, further research is needed between the variables of sociosexuality and desire to determine whether having more casual sex partners influences the interaction between sociosexuality and desire. In addition, research should study whether having more unrestricted sociosexuality is related to having greater reported desire among individuals and whether the number of casual sex partners is predictive of sociosexuality and desire.

## Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicted that women who had positive attitudes regarding casual sex and engaged in casual sex would have higher self-esteem as compared to women who engaged in casual sex and had negative attitudes about their behaviors. The correlational analysis, in support of the hypothesis, revealed a moderate negative relation between number of casual sex partners and casual sex attitudes. This indicated that more conservative casual sex attitudes were related to fewer reported casual sex partners. This finding may be the result of women who have conservative attitudes not having or having little casual sex or it may indicate that some women who had casual sex formed conservative attitudes based on their experiences. Either result is a possibility; ergo it may be necessary to perform more in-depth analyses to understand further this correlation. Future research should investigate the directionality (whether attitudes influence behaviors, behaviors influence attitudes, or both) of this correlation.

The number of casual sex partners was found to be a nonsignificant predictor of self-esteem. The results found in this study were similar to those found by researchers (i.e., Clark, 2006; Mikach & Bailey, 1999) who found no significant relationship between number of sexual partners and self-esteem. As in the case of hypothesis 1, these results are thought to be nonsignificant because individuals reported low numbers of casual sex partners thereby reducing the predictive variability. These results were dissimilar to those obtained by several other researchers (e.g., Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Perlman, 1974; Walsh, 1991) who found that participants who had more sex partners had higher self-esteem than participants who had fewer sex partners. The current study, however, examined the number of casual sex partners as opposed to sex partners in general (found in prior studies), as a predictor of self-esteem. Additionally, the difference in outcome variables and the significance of the interaction effect

may be reasons why results were nonsignificant. Further research is suggested to determine whether higher numbers of casual sex partners explains self-esteem.

The result of more interest, however, was the moderation effect of casual sex attitudes on the relationship between number of casual sex partners and self-esteem. Results showed that self-esteem was higher when participants who had more casual sex partners also reported liberal attitudes; thereby supporting the concept of congruence. This trend (though not statistically significant) was the same for individuals who had conservative attitudes but fewer casual sex partners. In this analysis, the significance of number of casual sex partners was shown to be dependent upon casual sex attitudes. These results provided evidence regarding the concept that a lack of congruence between attitudes and behaviors could result in lower self-esteem. These results are similar to those found by Miller et al., (1987) who noted that people who had engaged in sex and had more liberal attitudes toward premarital sex had higher self-esteem than those who engaged in sex and had more conservative attitudes. Although the Miller et al. study only examined premarital sex rather than casual sex, it was conjectured that these results would be similar for people who engaged in casual sex. However, they should be studied again, taking time to corroborate this study's results with future research and hopefully broadening the findings between attitudes and behaviors concerning casual sex.

It is intriguing that those who had liberal attitudes and lower numbers of casual sex partners had the lowest self-esteem out of all four groups (liberal attitudes, more casual sex partners; liberal attitudes, fewer partners; conservative attitudes, more partners; and conservative attitudes, fewer partners) as even though the group lacks congruence and would therefore be predicted to have low self-esteem, it was lower than expected. It is possible that the low number of reported casual sex partners or conservativeness of attitudes within this sample influenced

these results. Sampling from a more diverse population is thought to be one way to solve this issue, as it may increase the variability in number of casual sex partners and attitudes. This would hopefully create results that are more representative and generalizable for the college female population. In addition, it is possible that those who have liberal attitudes and fewer casual sex partners report lower self-esteem because those individuals may have a low self-image, thereby causing them to feel as though they could not have casual sex because no one would want to have sex with them. The effects of media on body image (Bessenoff, 2006; Trampe, Stapel, & Siero, 2007) have been studied and results indicate that the media can influence women's body perceptions. If the media can influence body image, perhaps it can also influence sexual image as well. With the advent of shows such as "Sex in the City" it appears that the media is promoting the image of women "embracing" their sexuality. Should this significantly influence women, perhaps not engaging in sex and "embracing" their sexuality, then self-esteem could be lowered as they feel they are not matching the image provided by the media. Further research is recommended on these four groups to decompose further the differences between them and why individuals with liberal attitudes and few casual sex partners reported low self-esteem.

### Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis addressed only those participants who stated they had casual sex at least once. It was hypothesized that those who had more positive affect and liberal attitudes regarding their engagement in casual sex would have higher self-esteem. Those who experienced more negative affect and conservative attitudes would have lower self-esteem. Affect was measured for two situations: one had participants recall how they felt after their first

time engaging in casual sex, and the other had them indicate how they felt regarding their overall casual sex experiences.

Focusing on the correlations for affect felt after the first casual sex experience, a small negative correlation was noted between casual sex attitudes and positive affect. This was interesting as it indicated that as conservative attitudes increased, positive affect decreased. In addition, there was a small positive correlation between casual sex attitudes and negative affect meaning that the more conservative the attitudes were, the more negative affect was noted. These results support the concept of congruence between attitudes and affect. Though the correlations were small, they were in the predicted direction, indicating that conservative attitudes were related to negative affect and liberal attitudes to positive affect.

Positive and negative affect were moderately negatively correlated indicating that the more positive affect that was experienced, the less negative affect was reported. Finally, positive affect had a moderate positive relationship to self-esteem while negative affect had a moderate negative relationship with self-esteem. This indicated that greater positive affect after the first casual sex experience was correlated to higher self-esteem, whereas more negative affect was correlated to lower self-esteem. The above correlations support the idea of congruence between affect and self-esteem. However, causation is not implied. As there is little known published research that has addressed affect and its relationship with self-esteem in a casual sex situation, few parallels can be drawn from these data.

Only main effects were found in the regression for affect following participants' first casual sex experience. Both positive and negative affect were found to have significant main effects, whereas, attitudes did not have a statistically significant effect (similar to hypothesis two). Of the two main effects, negative affect was found to have a slightly stronger effect than

positive affect (as noted by the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ )) on self-esteem. Greater negative affect following the first casual sex experience was predictive of lower self-esteem. Positive affect was also found to have a significant main effect indicating that greater reported positive affect is predictive of higher self-esteem. These results were consistent with the correlation results (see Table 5) discussed above and provided further support to the concept of congruence. It appeared that participants who had more positive and less negative affect following their first casual sex experience were more likely to have higher self-esteem. Due to the lack of research in this area, there is little to compare these results to as the Paul and Hayes (2002) study did not quantitatively measure self-esteem in relation to affect.

For overall casual sex experience, a small negative correlation was noted between casual sex attitudes and positive affect. This was similar to the correlation found when looking at affect reported after the first casual sex experience. There was also a small negative correlation between positive affect and negative affect indicating that the more positive affect reported the less negative affect reported. In addition, there was a small positive correlation between positive affect and self-esteem and a moderately negative correlation between negative affect and self-esteem. These results support the concept of congruence between affect and self-esteem. That is, the more positive affect reported, the higher self-esteem, whereas the more negative affect reported the lower self-esteem.

The regression for affect reported regarding overall casual sex experiences had a significant main effect for negative affect on self-esteem, which indicated that self-esteem was lower when more negative affect was reported. These data are similar to the data reported for affect after an individuals' first casual sex experience and provide support for the concept of congruence between affect and self-esteem. However, positive affect was not a significant

predictor of self-esteem. One thought as to why this may have happened was that perhaps participants were taking into consideration more than the sexual aspect of their casual sex experiences. It is possible that the use of the word “overall” led participants to evaluate their feelings based on the physical sex, emotional experience, and how the relationship ended. The differences in main effects between the two regressions in Hypothesis 3 warrants future research and researchers may want to define the term “overall” in the questionnaire or specify what concept they are interested in regarding affect. In addition, neither measurement of affect (first time or overall) addressed how participants rated their experiences. That is, it did not address what participants took into consideration (e.g., coitus, relationship hopes, how the casual sex experience ended) when rating their affect. This may be an interesting topic to research as further exposition could indicate what individuals look for in casual sex relationships and what they base their reported affect on.

Finally, there was a significant moderation effect between casual sex attitudes and negative affect. Upon decomposition of the interaction effect, it was noted that self-esteem was lower for participants who reported more negative affect (regardless of whether they reported conservative or liberal attitudes) than for individuals who reported less negative affect. This indicates that negative affect is a predictor of low self-esteem as those who reported less negative affect had higher self-esteem. This finding is similar to the results of a study by Gentzler and Kerns (2004), who found low self-esteem to be related to negative affect when studying sexual experiences. However, it was observed that individuals whose attitudes were more conservative reported higher self-esteem as opposed to those who had more liberal attitudes. It was thought that slightly higher self-esteem for those with more conservative attitudes and more negative affect was due to the participants’ congruence between both attitudes and affect regarding casual

sex. That is, they considered casual sex to be negative and after engaging in it reported the experience to be negative. Despite this congruence they still may have experienced some dissonance as their attitudes were not congruent with their behavior (i.e., they engaged in casual sex). Women still experienced lower self-esteem, but it was not as low as the self-esteem of those who had liberal attitudes and reported negative affect. Participants who had more liberal attitudes regarding casual sex and reported more negative affect had lower self-esteem, most likely because their reported affect was not congruent with their attitudes. Perhaps those who have liberal attitudes had higher expectations regarding casual sex and when their expectations were not met (observed by negative affect scores), they felt bad about engaging in casual sex and this may have affected their self-esteem. Future research will have to investigate this further though.

The relationship between affect, attitudes, and self-esteem concerning casual sex experiences warrants further study. The interaction between these variables is complex and would benefit from further research. Also, it is recommended that these results be replicated, as there is no known published research that addressed this concept. Additional research would provide a more firm theoretical basis for these results.

#### Limitations and Future Directions

There were several limitations in this study. A rather large limitation was the lack of validation for the SHQ. As a result, the casual sex questions were unable to be used, as they appeared to lack validity and reliability. It was noticed that the number of casual sex partners reported in the SHQ did not correspond with the number of partners reported in the SOI. It was thought that perhaps the casual sex questions in the SHQ were not adequately defined, thereby allowing more ambiguity in interpretation by the participants. Fortunately, the SOI has been

found to be both valid and reliable and was used for the duration of the study. Due to the deficiency in the SHQ, future studies should attempt to validate it after reconstructing the last two questions before further use.

In addition to this questionnaire problem, the use of the HISD should be reevaluated as results may have been affected by the fact that the scale has been used predominately with married women. This may have resulted in the different scores obtained between those in committed relationships and those not in committed relationships. It would be advisable to include another measure of desire in addition to the HISD to investigate whether those in committed relationships have higher desire scores than those not in committed relationships. Finally, upon reflection, although the use of the PANAS displayed some support for hypothesis three, some of the affect states present in the PANAS may not be experienced in relation to casual sex (e.g., inspired, determined, attentive). In order to better investigate the relationship of affect and self-esteem concerning casual sex experiences, it may be useful to review other well-validated and reliable affect scales for possible inclusion in future studies.

Another limitation to the study was the location of the questionnaire administration. The majority of the sample had conservative casual sex attitudes, and this may account for the lack of or low significance in the results. In addition to the conservativeness of the geographic region, it was observed that many of the participants stated they were in committed relationships. Some participants may not feel casual sex is an appropriate behavior because they are already in a relationship. This may lead to more conservative attitudes despite having engaged in casual sex prior to their current relationships. It may be prudent to address this in future research should there be a profusion of people in committed relationships or to see whether casual sex attitudes change depending on relationship status.

Another consideration for future research would be to expand the sample size of women who have engaged in casual sex, especially those with multiple casual sex partners. The increased number of women with casual sex partners could better address the role number of casual sex partners and affect regarding overall casual sex experiences plays in relation to self-esteem. Further research could benefit from wider geographic sampling to create a more representative sample to determine whether these results can be replicated among other women.

Something that was not measured in this study, but that should be considered for future studies, is motivation. What motivated individuals to engage in casual sex in the first place? Examining data from 140 women who engaged in casual sex, Weaver and Herold (2000) found a multitude of reasons (from “physical pleasure” to “getting to know different people”) why participants had casual sex. Regan and Dreyer (1999) also found a plethora of reasons why women engaged in casual sex. It is thought that the inclusion of motivation in future regression analyses may increase the amount of explained variance in self-esteem by accounting for what the participant was attempting to accomplish by engaging in casual sex. This may expound upon how participants rate their affect in relation to casual sex experiences.

Additionally, this study is cross-sectional meaning that directionality and causation cannot be determined. This could be remedied by conducting a longitudinal study to examine the directionality of the variables. Also, once theory has been established regarding the relationship between casual sex and self-esteem, the use of path analysis or structural equation modeling could elaborate further upon this relationship.

Finally, some questions were not fully answered by the research. These questions revolve around the role positive affect plays in relation to self-esteem. Results found in this study indicate that positive affect regarding casual sex experiences plays a small role, if any;

however, use of a different affect scale and clearly defining the word *overall* may change these results in one direction or another. The same applies to negative affect, whose role was somewhat more pronounced but still indicated only a small role. Additional common causes of self-esteem in the realm of casual sex should be identified and implemented in future research to understand the influences on self-esteem in casual sex research better. The implications of this future work may expound upon the relationship between these variables, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the role casual sex plays on self-esteem.

### Conclusion

The current study has covered multiple topics, and as some of this research is newer, it would benefit greatly from additional study and insight. It is hoped that the results found in this study will be replicated and expanded upon to help further the understanding of self-esteem related to casual sex in women. Current results indicate that women, depending on attitudes and affect, can have high or low self-esteem related to their experiences with casual sex. These results do not indicate that women should engage in casual sex to influence their self-esteem. There is no guarantee that the experience will be positive for any given individual; therefore, there is no guarantee that the relationship between attitudes and affect will be congruent. In addition, if individuals with liberal attitudes were to engage in casual sex to increase self-esteem and had a negative experience, their self-esteem may be low because they failed at their goal (to increase self-esteem through congruence). Research has found that by actively attempting to increase self-esteem, deleterious effects can be incurred (Crocker & Park, 2004); therefore, individuals who engage in casual sex to increase self-esteem and have a negative experience may sustain negative consequences such as lower self-esteem. In addition, other variables besides attitudes and affect likely influence self-esteem and need to be taken into account when

researching the relationship between casual sex and self-esteem. Finally, there are more tangible consequences such as STDs or pregnancy that could be the result of engaging in casual sex.

However, this research does indicate that the influence of casual sex on self-esteem among women varies based on individual influences. One person will react differently to an experience based on a profusion of variables. These variables should be considered when researching female sexuality and sexual health to promote as thorough of an understanding of these concepts as possible. Although not all hypotheses were fully supported here, the current study has provided a new direction for research within the field of sexuality; certainly more research needs to be conducted to further develop the theoretical foundation between casual sex and self-esteem. In conclusion, it appears that there is more depth to this relationship than has been found in prior studies and future research should strive to fully define it.

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17. Have you ever had a relationship with someone that you were not friends with that was *only* for sex (e.g. you had sex regularly with someone you knew, but would not see under any other terms)?

Yes

No

17a. If yes, how many people did you have sex with (not including those from question 16)? \_\_\_\_\_

17b. What did you do together (select ALL that apply)?

- I gave oral sex
- I received oral sex
- We had vaginal sex
- We had anal sex
- We did not have sexual intercourse

Appendix B  
SOI

Please answer all of the following questions honestly. For the questions dealing with behavior, *type* your answers in the blank spaces provided. For the questions dealing with thoughts and attitudes, *select* the appropriate number on the scales provided.

1. With how many different partners have you had sex (sexual intercourse) within the past year?
2. How many different partners do you foresee yourself having sex with during the next 5 years? (Please give a specific, *realistic* estimate.)
3. With how many different partners have you had sex on *one and only one* occasion?
4. How often do you fantasize about having sex with someone other than your current dating partner?

never  
once every 2 or 3 months  
once a month  
once every two weeks  
once a week  
a few times each week  
nearly every day  
at least once a day

5. Sex without love is OK.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

I strongly disagree

I strongly agree

6. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying “casual” sex with different partners.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

I strongly disagree

I strongly agree

7. I would have to be closely attached to someone (both emotionally and psychologically) before I could feel comfortable and fully enjoy having sex with him or her.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9

---

I strongly disagree

I strongly agree

## Appendix C BSAS

Listed below are several statements that reflect different attitudes about sex. For each statement select a number 1-5, that indicates how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Some of the items refer to a specific sexual relationship, while others refer to general attitudes and beliefs about sex. Whenever possible, answer the questions with your current partner in mind. If you are not currently dating anyone, answer the questions with your most recent partner in mind. If you have never had a sexual relationship, answer in terms of what you think your responses would most likely be.

- 1= Strongly agree
- 2=Moderately agree
- 3=Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree)
- 4=Moderately disagree
- 5=Strongly disagree

1. I do not need to be committed to a person to have sex with him or her.
2. Casual sex is acceptable.
3. I would like to have sex with many partners.
4. One-night stands are sometimes enjoyable.
5. It is okay to have ongoing sexual relationships with more than one person at a time.
6. Sex is a simple exchange of favors is okay if both people agree to it.
7. The best sex is with no strings attached.
8. Life would have fewer problems if people could have sex freely.
9. It is possibly to enjoy sex with a person and not like that person very much.
10. It is okay for sex to be just good physical release.
11. Birth control is part of responsible sexuality.
12. A woman should share responsibility for birth control.
13. A man should share responsibility for birth control.
14. Sex is the closest form of communication between two people.
15. A sexual encounter between two people deeply in love is the ultimate human interaction.
16. At its best, sex seems to be the merging of two souls.
17. Sex is a very important part of life.
18. Sex is usually an intensive, almost overwhelming experience.
19. Sex is best when you let yourself go and focus on your own pleasure.
20. Sex is primarily the taking of pleasure from another person.
21. The main purpose of sex is to enjoy oneself.
22. Sex is primarily physical.
23. Sex is primarily a bodily function, like eating.

Appendix D  
HISD

This inventory is designed to measure the degree of sexual desire you have in your sexual relationships. Please answer each item accurately and quickly.

- 0=All of the time
- 1=Most of the time
- 2=Some of the time
- 3=Rarely
- 4=Never

1. Just thinking about having sex with my partner excites me.
2. I try to avoid situations that will encourage my partner to want sex.
3. I daydream about sex.
4. It is difficult for me to get in a sexual mood.
5. I desire more sex than my partner does.
6. It is hard for me to fantasize about sexual things.
7. I look forward to having sex with my partner.
8. I have a huge appetite for sex.
9. I enjoy using sexual fantasy during sex with my partner.
10. It is easy for me to get in the mood for sex.
11. My desire for sex should be stronger.
12. I enjoy thinking about sex.
13. I desire sex.
14. It is easy for me to go weeks without having sex with my partner.
15. My motivation to engage in sex with my partner is low.
16. I feel I want sex less than most people.
17. It is easy for me to create sexual fantasies in my mind.
18. I have a strong sex drive.
19. I enjoy thinking about having sex with my partner.
20. My desire for sex with my partner is strong.
21. I feel that sex is not an important aspect of the relationship I share with my partner.
22. I think my energy level for sex with my partner is too low.
23. It is hard for me to get in the mood for sex.
24. I lack the desire necessary to pursue sex with my partner.
25. I try to avoid having sex with my partner.

Appendix E  
RSES

Instruction: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Circle SA if you Strongly Agree with the statement, A if you Agree, D if you Disagree, and SD if you Strongly Disagree with the statement.

SA = Strongly Agree	A = Agree	D = Disagree	SD = Strongly Disagree
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D SD
2. At times I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D SD
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D SD
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D SD
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D SD
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D SD
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D SD
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D SD
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D SD
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D SD

VITA

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