

Sociosexual orientation predicts trait (but not state) aggression in women

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Introduction

- Research has shown that males with a more unrestricted sociosexual orientation (SOI) display more aggression compared to men lower in SOI.
- This finding has been explained within the field of evolutionary psychology as a function of intrasexual competition, such that males seeking a short-term mating strategy must compete more vigorously with other males for varied mating opportunities.
- Although, on the whole, females are less likely than males to pursue a short-term mating strategy, it is possible that aggression would also benefit those females who do enact such a strategy.
- However, to date, no research has examined potential links between female sociosexual orientation and intrasexual aggression.
- The current study examined whether female Sociosexual Orientation predicted (1) self-reported trait aggression (2) in-vivo measured intrasexual aggression via the Point Subtraction Aggression Paradigm (PSAP).

Method

Participants. 127 undergraduate women aged 17 to 40 (M = 20.36, SD = 3.62).

Anger, Hostility, and Aggression. Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire Short-Form (BPAQ-SF; Diamond & Magaletta, 2006); 12-items (1 = Extremely uncharacteristic of me to 5 = Extremely characteristic of me). Anger, Hostility, Verbal Aggression, and Physical Aggression subscales.

Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory. The Revised Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI-R) measured sociosexual attitude, desire, and behavior (Penke & Asendorpf, 2008). The SOI-R is comprised of 9 items scored using a 9-point Likert-type scale. Individuals who score low on the inventory require greater emotional investment and lengthier courtship before engaging in sexual relations, whereas individuals who score high on the inventory are willing to engage in sexual relations in the absence of relational commitment.

Method (Continued)

Point Subtraction Aggression Paradigm. Modified Point Subtraction Aggression Paradigm (PSAP; Norman et al., 2015)—a well-validated laboratory aggression. Participants viewed a picture of a member of the same sex, and were instructed that they would be paired with this person on a task that required them to select among three response options to earn points that would be exchangeable for money at the end of the study. Pressing button A one hundred consecutive times would earn the participant one point, button B ten times would steal a point from their partner; however, participants were instructed that they were randomly assigned to the experimental condition whereby they, unlike their partner, would not keep any stolen points (thus a measure of aggression). Pressing button C ten times would protect their point counter against theft of points for a brief period of time.

Indirect Aggression. 35-item Indirect Aggression Scale – Aggressor and Victimization versions (IAS-A, IAS-V; Forrest, Eatough, & Shevlin, 2005) assesses frequency of indirect aggression within interpersonal relationships with females along a 5-point Likert scale anchored at 1 = never and 5 = always. Example items are: “talked about others behind their backs,” “excluded others from a group,” “made other people not talk to others,” “been bitchy toward others”.

Results

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. SOIR GLOBAL (α = .86)	***									
2. SOIR BEHAVIOR (α = .84)	.799**	***								
3. SOIR ATTITUDE (α = .81)	.851**	.577**	***							
4. SOIR DESIRE (α = .91)	.701**	.334**	.361**	***						
5. BPAQSF PHYSICAL AGGRESSION (α = .69)	.109	.104	-.003	.178*	***					
6. BPAQSF VERBAL AGGRESSION (α = .79)	.146	.090	.078	.184*	.574**	***				
7. BPAQSF ANGER (α = .71)	.131	.151*	.068	.100	.564**	.426**	***			
8. BPAQSF HOSTILITY (α = .63)	.176*	.177*	.071	.183*	.522**	.543**	.575**	***		
9. BPAQ TOTAL (α = .86)	.173*	.159*	.062	.203*	.843**	.796**	.766**	.817**	***	
10. SOIR INDIRECT AGGRESSION (α = .89)	.351**	.258**	.263**	.312**	.354**	.366**	.268**	.381**	.428**	***

Table 1. Correlations between SOI-R (Global and subscales), trait aggression (overall and subscales), and indirect aggression. (** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

	Global SOI-R	Behavior subscale	Attitude Subscale	Desire Subscale
1. Stealing	r = -.13 p = .159	r = -.15 p = .089	r = -.08 p = .375	r = -.073, p = .419

Table 2. Correlations between SOI-R (Global and subscales) and how often the participant showed state aggression by stealing in the PSAP, controlling for total points earned and number of times they were provoked.

Conclusion

Results suggest that like men, women who are oriented toward short-term mating are more aggressive than women who exhibit a longer-term mating orientation. However, the current results show this relationship for trait aggression, assessed through self-report measure, but not for state aggression, measured through the PSAP.

References

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