

MANIPULATING EXPERIMENTALLY WITH SEXUAL DESIRE – THE IMPACT OF INNER SEXUAL FANTASIES

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Abstract

Objective. Recent models of sexual response have challenged the traditional view of spontaneity of sexual desire and argue that desire is context specific and not so obviously spontaneous. However, the Inner responsive desire has been theorized mainly with regard to women's sexuality.

Design and method. For measurement of sexual desire, I distinguished state and trait levels of desire and applied Imagined Social Situation Exercise (ISSE) measures.

Results. The trait level of sex desire was significantly different for men and women and state sex desire before the experiment was equal. The sex manipulation changed sex desire level compared with the controls and it worked equally for both men and women.

Conclusions. Based on my results I can conclude that state and trait desire levels are similar for men and women and applying ISSE really increases state level of sexual desire. No sex differences were found and it seems that trait and state levels of sexual desire work relatively independently from each other.

Keywords: *Trait and state sexual desire, inner manipulation, fantasies.*

1. Objective

There is the traditional view, that sexual desire is rather spontaneous and automatic, but some recent models of sexual response have challenged the traditional view by arguing that desire is context specific and not so obviously spontaneous. Incentive Motivation Models applied to sexuality, propose that encountering sexual stimuli triggers arousal, which then results in sexual desire. Speaking about sexual stimuli, there are two types of sexual stimuli, sexual stimuli may take the form of either a) sensory cues (e.g., from a partner or erotica) or b) inner thoughts, and that desire represents the conscious recognition of arousal to context. However, the Inner responsive desire has been theorized mainly with regard to women's sexuality.

2. Design and method

Goldey and van Anders (2011) introduced Imagined Social Situation Exercise (ISSE). In the ISSE, participants imagine a positive sexual encounter with another person and respond to open-ended questions about their imagined encounter. The ISSE has many of the benefits of fantasy: unlike stimuli such as films, pictures, and stories, which may require some individuals to view or read non-preferred stimuli - the ISSE allows participants to select the characteristics of a person and situation arousing to them personally.

In the current study, I examined and compared:

1. Effects of the ISSE, unstructured fantasy (in which participants imagine sexually arousing situations but do not write about them), and a neutral condition. Does this manipulation really increase sex desire in respondents?

2. I examined the difference between trait and state sexual desire in men and women. Do men have more sex desire than women?

3. Based on understanding that fantasy works better for women – is there any sex differences on fantasy situation?

4. Is there any connections between the base sexual desire and ISSE manipulation? May be who's high in trait sex desire can react more easily?

Trait sex desire I measured with Sexual Desire Inventory by Spector, Carey, Steinberg (1996).

Desire I measured with ISSE method with Goldey, van Anders (2011)

Participants. Participants were recruited for an online study, were mostly students and women.

Participants completed an online screening to ensure that they were over 18, comfortable with erotica, and in a private place. The final sample, which included participants who qualified for the study and completed enough of the survey to be used in analyses, consisted of 176 participants (103 women, 73 men). For comparing trait sex desire groups, I divided participants by their SDI scores higher than average and lower than average groups (mean was 60, min/max was 18-98).

3. Results and conclusions

Thus, based on my results, we can conclude:

1. State desire and trait desire is for men and women similar, there are no sex differences on the basis for sex arousal and in this specific situation, the basis was also the same.
2. Fantasy ISSE really has effect on perceived sex desire, thus could be used in therapy and in research.
3. In Fantasy condition no gender differences appeared after the manipulation, thus it is applicable for both men and women.
4. Connections between state and trait level sex desire were low and based on this we can conclude that they work rather independently from each other.

References

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