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Sexual Preferences and Relationships of College Students by Sexuality

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Sexual Preferences and Relationships of College Students by Sexuality

by

Mia Rosario Milne

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Honors Capstone Director: Dr. Richard Simon

Associate Professor of Sociology

5/2/2018

Student (signature) Date

5/2/2018

Director (signature) Date

5/2/2018

Department Chair (signature) Date

5/2/2018

Honors College Dean (signature) Date
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Mia Milne

Student Name (printed)

Mia Milne

Student Signature

5/2/2018

Date
Mia Milne
Sexual Relationship Preferences and Experiences of College Students by Sexuality
University of Alabama in Huntsville
Introduction

There is a large and growing population of people who are sexual minorities that both suffer disproportionately from many issues and are understudied in many areas of research. In the United States, 7% of women and 4% of men report identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB) while 17% of women and 6%¹ of men report having engaged in a sexual relationship with someone of the same-gender (Copen, Chandra, and Febo-Vasquez 2013). It is expected these percentages will continue to grow as young people are especially likely to report having same-gender attraction (Copen et al. 2013). Sexual minorities are also more likely to suffer from worse mental health and physical health, and to experience violence more than heterosexuals (Committee on LGBT 2011). Although the literature on sexual minorities has grown, there are still many areas where there is a lack of research on this population including research on relationship preferences and the experiences of college students.

Sexual relationship preferences and experiences are important to study because they play a major role in college students’ lives. At times they lead to companionship and physical pleasure while at other times they lead to regret, distress, or disease (Garcia, Reiber, Massey, & Merriwether 2012). Relationship preferences are a key part of understanding relationship experiences as different types of sexual relationships are associated with different levels of satisfaction, regret, and risk behaviors (Garcia et al. 2012; Mark, Garcia and Fisher 2015). The current study attempts to address a gap in research by answering the following question: what are the sexual preferences of college students with minority sexualities and how do these preferences compare to their reported relationships?

Gender Differences in Relationship Preferences

¹ Likely the number is higher among men due to a difference in how the question was asked. Women were asked to report whether they had oral or “any” sexual contact with someone of the same sex while men were asked whether they had oral or anal contact with someone of the same sex.
Research on the types of relationships preferred by individuals has largely focused on gender differences between women and men. Comparatively, men prefer short-term, sexual relationships and women prefer long-term, romantic relationships (Buss & Schmitt 1993; Eagly & Wood 1999). These findings have been found in historic societies around the world (Guttentag & Secord 1983), in a representative sample of the US (Mark et al. 2015), among college students (Garcia et al. 2012; Uecker & Regnerus 2010), and in a meta-analysis of seven, large national surveys (Peterson & Hyde 2011).

While there is broad support that gender differences in relationship preferences exist, there is still debate over why this is. One theory for the origin of these gender differences comes from evolutionary psychology and argues that each gender has different sexual strategies based off of differing levels of parental investment. Women evolved in prehistoric times to seek out long-term relationships because women have more investment in having a child due to potentially dangerous and time-consuming pregnancies (Buss & Schmitt 1993). For some women, the best strategy was to seek out a man who had resources and would help care for a child, while for a man the best strategy was to have sex with as many women as possible. These evolutionary strategies are postulated to affect present day preferences and relations for men and women. Evidence for this view comes from similar findings in animals and from the cross-cultural pattern of gender differences in sexual preferences.

Evolutionary theorists outside of psychology have criticized the notion that these preferences are hard-wired into women and men. They point out that exact gender-relations in prehistoric times are unknown and to evidence that humans may have evolved sexual preferences.

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2 Evolutionary theory more accurately refers to sex rather than gender. The term “gender” will be used here to keep the terms uniform when comparing to social role theory.
that are more immediately adaptive to differing environmental aspects (e.g. differing levels of power between the two genders) (Eagly & Wood 1999; Liesan 2012).

Other origin theories of gender differences in sexual preferences point to the cultural aspects of men’s and women’s power in different societies. These theories are referred to as social-structural theories. In the majority of societies, men hold more political and economic power than women. In such societies, women rely upon men for access to these resources while men have the option to function independently in society (Eagly & Wood 1999). Women’s sexuality also tends to be more highly controlled through sexual double standards in law or practice (Crawford & Popp 2011). As a result, women are often shamed or punished for seeking out the short-term, sexual relationships that are acceptable and even encouraged for men to seek out. Evidence supporting this view includes the finding that gender differences in sexuality are often smaller in countries with more gender equality (Eagly & Wood 1999).

One area where environmental aspects have been found to affect sexual relationships is the sex-ratio in a given community or society. This refers to whether there are more women or men in a certain area. Research examining how sex-ratios affects relationship markets has found that seeking partners works similar to a market with differing effects depending on how attractive a person is as a partner (i.e., their demand) and how many people there are to choose from (i.e., the supply) (Guttentag & Secord 1983). Whichever gender is in lower supply then has more power to find the type of relationship they prefer. Evidence supporting this includes a historical analysis of societies found that those with a higher supply of men than women show higher marriage rates and lower divorce rates than societies with more women than men (Guttentag & Secord 1983). A more recent study of sex-ratios on college campuses found similar

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3 The term “sex” will be used here because the term “sex-ratio” is more commonly used in the literature than “gender-ratio”.

results. On campuses with more women than men, women were less likely to have gone on
dates, to have had a boyfriend since starting college, or to still be a virgin compared to women on
campuses with more men (Uecker & Regnerus 2010).

**Relationship Preferences of Sexual Minorities**

Theories and research on relationship preferences have often neglected sexual minorities
and consensual non-monogamous relationships. However, the few studies that have been
conducted on sexual minorities have found some patterns that are similar to heterosexual gender
patterns and some that are unexpected, especially when considering relationship markets. For
example, one study examined 24,598 online dating profiles of people who were searching for
others of the same-gender. These researchers found that women were more likely than men to
report seeking a long-term, committed relationship as expected, but only after accounting for the
women’s higher rates of divorce (Potârcă, Mills, and Neberich 2015). Before accounting for
divorce, women were actually less likely than men to want a long-term, committed relationship.

Potârcă et al. (2015) also found that women and men were more likely to seek a long-term
relationship if their country had more pro-gay rights legislation, which is an example of a unique
environmental influence on sexual minorities.

In a large, online survey Mark et al. (2015) asked how satisfied a participant would
expect to be in both casual and committed contexts as well as if they had engaged in these
relationships. They found that gay men were the most likely to report having had a one night
stand, sex on a first date, sex with a friend, or a casual hookup. Bisexuals were the next most
likely to report these behaviors, followed by straight men, lesbians, and straight women. The
pattern shows an expected breakdown by gender with gay and straight men reporting higher
preferences and incidences of casual sex. An unexpected finding is that lesbians report more
preference for and incidences of casual sex than straight women. Relationship market theories work under the assumption that women engage in casual sex more when they have less choice in the market so the finding that lesbians prefer and engage in casual sex more indicates they either have different intrinsic preferences from heterosexual women or they are more comfortable engaging in casual sex due to cultural reasons.

Another unexpected finding in Mark et al. (2015) study is that bisexuals rank the second highest in incidence of and preference for casual sex. The study did not compare bisexual men and bisexual women, although the majority of people who reported a bisexual identity were women indicating that bisexual women likely reported results more similar to men than women. Again this difference could suggest either an inherent difference in preferences or one based off cultural ideas that differ between bisexuals and heterosexuals.

Consensual Non-Monogamy

Another relationship type that has often been neglected in research on relationship preferences and experiences is consensual non-monogamous (CNM) relationships. Also known as open or polyamorous relationships, these are relationships where the couple agrees to have some type of emotional or sexual involvement outside of a coupled relationship. It is important to study CNM relationships as they are relatively common with reports from two national samples finding that around 20% of single Americans report engaging in one at some point in their lives (Haupert, Gesselman, Moors, Fisher, & Garcia 2017b). Sexual minorities report higher incidences of engaging in CNM than do heterosexuals (Haupert et al. 2017b; Haupert, Moors, Gesselman, & Garcia 2017a).

Research has documented gender differences among heterosexuals on attitudes toward and engagement in CNM with men rating it more positively and engaging in it more often than
Among sexual minorities gender differences are only sometimes found, with slightly more studies finding equal attitudes toward and engagement in CNM. Bisexuals seem to be especially likely to have positive attitudes toward and to engage in CNM compared to heterosexuals, gays, or lesbians, but it is unclear if a gender difference exists as studies often combine bisexual men and women into one category (Haupert et al. 2017a). One study on attitudes toward monogamy did find that bisexual men were slightly more likely to say they felt monogamy was a sacrifice compared to bisexual women (Mark, Rosenkrantz, & Kerner 2014).

It is unknown exactly why CNM is more common among sexual minorities. Heaphy, Donovan, and Weeks (2004) argue that individuals whose identities lie outside of the heterosexual norm may be more likely to try out alternative relationships because they have fewer role models from media or their personal lives to base their relationship on and they feel more freedom to try out new models. Another explanation may have to do with the traits of people who publicly identify as a sexual minority. Mark et al. (2014) and Moors, Selterman, and Conley (2017) noted that people are more likely to identify as bisexual and to engage in CNM if they rank higher in the personality trait Openness to Experience.

**Relationship Markets of Sexual Minorities**

Another area that has been unexplored in the literature is how relationship markets function for sexual minorities. Presumably the issue of one gender having greater power in obtaining their preference would be less relevant for gays or lesbians who would participate in separate relationship markets from each other and mostly separate markets from heterosexuals. There is evidence from one study of college campuses that when a sex-ratio disfavored women then they were slightly more likely to date women (Kuperberg & Padgett 2015). This indicates
that some people may be more likely to participate in same-gender relationship markets depending on the sex-ratio.

Hypotheses

Little research has focused on the preferences or relationships of sexual minorities who are not lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Two proposed explanations for why CNM is more common among lesbian, gay, and bisexuals is because it is more accepted in the gay community or because already having relationships that are outside the norm lead to a higher likelihood of trying out alternative relationship styles. Both of these explanations would predict that other people who are not lesbian, gay, or bisexual would be more likely to prefer or seek an open relationship leading to the next two hypotheses.

H1a: Other sexual minorities (i.e., individuals who do not identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual) will be more likely to report a preference for an open relationship compared to heterosexuals.

H1b: Other sexual minorities (i.e., individuals who do not identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual) will be more likely to report having had an open relationship compared to heterosexuals.

Extrapolating from research on sex-ratios and heterosexual relationship markets it would be expected that:

H2a: Lesbians will be more likely than straight women to obtain a relationship of their preference.

H2b: Gay men will be more likely than straight men to obtain a relationship of their preference.

It is more difficult to hypothesize how relationship markets work for bisexuals as they likely would not participate equally in both same-gender and other-gender relationship markets.
Because they have greater choice by participating in more than one market and because they report higher preferences and incidences of engaging in CNM, I predict:

H3: Bisexuals will be more likely than heterosexuals to obtain a relationship of their preference.

How relationship markets would work for other sexual minorities is unknown. Some may participate exclusively in same-gender markets or may participate in both same and other-gender markets like bisexuals. It is also possible that they may participate in no market or in markets less used by other sexual minorities. Given the variety of potential relationship markets for other sexual minorities, my last hypothesis is:

H4: Other sexual minorities (i.e., individuals who do not identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual) will be more likely to obtain a relationship of their choice.

**Data and Methods**

*Sample* To test these hypotheses we distributed a Qualtrics survey through email called, “Romantic and Sexual Relationships.” We sent the survey in two waves to students at a mid-size, public university located in South-Eastern United States. The first wave consisted of all students at the university who had not opted out of receiving research related emails, $N = 4,571$. The response rate was 26%.

The second wave consisted of targeted and snowball sampling in order to oversample sexual minorities. We sent out the survey again through three organizational email lists: a Women and Gender Studies program, a queer student group, and a reproductive justice group. Anyone who had taken the survey before or who identified as heterosexual were excluded in this wave. Although random samples produce more generalizable samples, they are often not able to reach a large enough audience to analyze sexual minority groups separately, especially ones that are not lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This survey will attempt to find patterns in these groups that can
then be studied in larger, more representative samples. The final sample consisted of $n = 1,007$ participants. Summary statistics of participants are presented in Table 1.

**Variables**

*Gender*  A participant’s sex/gender was determined through a self-identification question. The small numbers of non-cisgender respondents led us to create a “gender minority” category to encompass all other sex/genders. Thus, respondents who indicated they were transgender, non-binary, intersexual, or choose the fill-in response category were coded as non-binary. Analyses then focused on comparing three categories: male, female and gender minority.

*Sexual Identity*  Sexual identity was measured through a self-report question with the following options: lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, pansexual, asexual, heterosexual, and a fill-in response category. Each sexual identity is analyzed separately.

| Table 1 - Summary Statistics of Demographic Variables |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| **Gender** | **Mean** | **n** | **Year in School** | **Mean** | **n** |
| Female     | 0.4563  | 459   | Freshman          | 0.029    | 29    |
| Male       | 0.5     | 503   | Sophomore         | 0.267    | 269   |
| Gender Minority | 0.0437  | 44    | Senior            | 0.247    | 248   |
| Trans      | 0.012   | 12    | Graduate Student  | 0.192    | 193   |
| Non-Binary | 0.019   | 19    |                   |          |       |
| Other      | 0.013   | 13    |                   |          |       |
| **Sexual Identity** | **Mean** | **n** | **Ethnicity** | **Mean** | **n** |
| Heterosexual| 0.756   | 760   | Hispanic          | 0.0427   | 43    |
| Bisexual   | 0.1034  | 104   | White             | 0.8008   | 813   |
| Pansexual  | 0.0328  | 33    | Black             | 0.0755   | 76    |
| Queer      | 0.009   | 10    | Mixed Race        | 0.0358   | 36    |
| Gay        | 0.0268  | 27    | Asian or Pacific Islander | 0.0487 | 49  |
| Lesbian    | 0.021   | 21    | Other Race        | 0.0318   | 32    |
| Questioning| 0.0139  | 14    |                   |          |       |
| Asexual    | 0.0209  | 21    | Wave 1            | 0.9156   | 922   |
| Other      | 0.0159  | 16    | Wave 2            | 0.0844   | 85    |

*Relationship Preferences*  To measure relationship preferences, participants ranked different relationship types in order of what they would most to least prefer. Other research has
had participants indicate their preferences by ranking relationship types separately, often using a Likert-type scale (e.g. Mark et al. 2015). This survey attempts to see if differences emerge when relationship preferences are measured relative to each other. Some relationship types may be similarly ranked when asked about independently but may be preferred more or less comparatively. Although we gathered information on romantic and sexual relationships separately in the survey, our analysis here focuses on sexual relationships. The sexual relationship options are: monogamous, polyamorous or open relationship, casual sex with strangers, casual sex with acquaintances, casual sex with friends, or I would prefer to not have sex. Each relationship type will be analyzed separately by comparing the number ranking, from one to six with one as the least preferred relationship type and six as the most preferred relationship type.

Reported Relationships  Reported relationships are measured through a question that asks students to check off the types of sexual relationships that they have had since starting college. Again, the sexual relationship options are: monogamous, polyamorous or open relationship, casual sex with strangers, casual sex with acquaintances, casual sex with friends, or I would prefer to not have sex. Table 2 displays summary statistics for the relationship variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preference Rankings</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>Reported Relationships</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monogamous Relationship</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Monogamous Relationship</td>
<td>59.74</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a Stranger</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>With a Stranger</td>
<td>14.31</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With an Acquaintance</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>With an Acquaintance</td>
<td>24.45</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a Friend</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>With a Friend</td>
<td>27.24</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open or Polyamorous</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>Open or Polyamorous</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Have Sex</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>28.73</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Match Variables  To measure whether certain groups are more likely to obtain a relationship of their choice, we created a dummy “match” variable. This is a dummy variable
that measures whether someone reported having had a relationship that was their highest relationship preference. For example, if a student reports that a monogamous relationship is their top preference and they report that they have had a monogamous relationship then they will be coded as having a match but if the same student does not report they have had a monogamous relationship then they will be coded as not having a match.

**Controls** Control variables that will be included in the regression models are: ethnicity, race, religiosity, year in school, mother’s education, and father’s education. Ethnicity measured whether someone is Hispanic or not Hispanic. Race measured whether someone is White, Black, Mixed Race, Asian/Pacific Islander, or another racial category.

Religiosity, age, year in school, and parent’s education will be coded as ordinal variables. Religiosity is determined by the importance the participant ascribes to religion in their life and how often a person attends church or other religious service. To determine importance of religion, “Is religion important in your daily life?” was asked with the answer choices “Yes, Somewhat, or No”. The higher the importance the higher the number was coded with three for yes and one for no. To determine church attendance, “How often do you attend religious services?” was asked with seven answer choices ranging from “Never” to “Several times a week”. The more someone reported going to church the higher they were coded with “Never” as one and “Several times a week” as seven.

Year in school is reported based on class rank: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, or graduate student. The longer someone had been in school the higher they were coded with freshmen as one and seniors as four while graduate students were measured separately.
Results

*Relationship Preferences*  We compared mean preference rankings by gender and sexual identity. The largest differences were found in the preference “I would prefer to not have sex”, which will further be referred to as “no sex”, and the preference “polyamorous or open relationship”, which will further be referred to as “open”. As can be seen in Figure 1, females and gender minorities were more likely to prefer “no sex” than were males. Among the sexual identity groups, asexuals were the most likely to prefer “no sex” while gay men were the least likely.

The mean rankings for the “open” preference can be seen in Figure 2. We found that gender minorities, queer, pansexual, bisexual, lesbian, and other sexual identities were especially likely to prefer open relationships.
We then conducted linear regression analyses to test whether these differences in preference were significant after control variables were added. Each relationship type was analyzed separately. Results for all the preference analyses can be found in Table 3, the more preferred the preference the higher the number. The reference categories were male, White, and heterosexual. Women preferred casual sex and open relationships less than men. Instead they were more likely to prefer no sex over these options. Gender minorities were also less likely to prefer the casual sex options, but unlike women they were more likely to prefer open or no sex.

Among sexual identities there were few differences overall except for the open preference and among asexuals who showed a unique pattern. Asexuals preferred monogamous relationships less and no sex more. All sexual minorities were more likely to prefer an open relationship than were heterosexuals with the exception of participants who were gay, questioning, or asexual. H1a was thus partially supported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 - OLS regressions predicting sexual preferences</th>
<th>*Significant at p.&lt;.05</th>
<th>**Significant at p.&lt;.01</th>
<th>***Significant at p.&lt;.001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monogamous</td>
<td>Casual w/ Strangers</td>
<td>Casual w/ Acquaintances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.194 (.068)**</td>
<td>-.438 (.079)***</td>
<td>-.187 (.065)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Minority</td>
<td>-.215 (.184)</td>
<td>-.430 (.214)*</td>
<td>-.501 (.178)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Identity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>-.142 (.107)</td>
<td>-.238 (.125)</td>
<td>-.135 (.104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pansexual</td>
<td>.274 (.191)</td>
<td>-.390 (.222)</td>
<td>-.326 (.185)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>-.759 (.340)*</td>
<td>.260 (.396)</td>
<td>-.366 (.329)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>.143 (.198)</td>
<td>-.261 (.230)</td>
<td>.028 (.191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian</td>
<td>-.270 (.227)</td>
<td>.081 (.264)</td>
<td>-.338 (.219)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer</td>
<td>-.475 (.273)</td>
<td>.053 (.318)</td>
<td>.242 (.265)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asexual</td>
<td>-.517 (.226)*</td>
<td>-.279 (.263)</td>
<td>-.618 (.219)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Not Specified</td>
<td>-.319 (.225)</td>
<td>.124 (.297)</td>
<td>.025 (.247)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>-.227 (.157)</td>
<td>.242 (.297)</td>
<td>.232 (.152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-.130 (.121)</td>
<td>-.102 (.140)</td>
<td>.064 (.117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Race</td>
<td>-.014 (.172)</td>
<td>.099 (.200)</td>
<td>-.270 (.166)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian &amp; Pacific Island</td>
<td>-.415 (.149)**</td>
<td>.866 (.174)***</td>
<td>.063 (.145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other_Race</td>
<td>-.210 (.182)</td>
<td>.106 (.212)</td>
<td>.139 (.176)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>.160 (.058)**</td>
<td>-.157 (.068)*</td>
<td>-.248 (.056)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>-.087 (.023)***</td>
<td>.027 (.027)</td>
<td>.066 (.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year in School</td>
<td>.015 (.040)</td>
<td>.025 (.046)</td>
<td>.061 (.039)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad Student</td>
<td>-.016 (.115)</td>
<td>-.183 (.134)</td>
<td>-.207 (.111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education</td>
<td>-.038 (.027)</td>
<td>-.022 (.032)</td>
<td>.003 (.026)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father’s Education</td>
<td>.032 (.024)</td>
<td>.038 (.028)</td>
<td>.015 (.024)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R Squared 0.067 0.087 0.09 0.061 0.15 0.261
Relationship Experiences

We conducted logistic regression models to measure whether there were significant differences in reported relationships among groups. Women were more likely than men to report having a monogamous sexual relationship and were less likely to have never had sex. No other gender differences were found. Bisexual, pansexual, queer, and lesbian participants were more likely than heterosexuals to report an open relationship. Asexuals were less likely than heterosexuals to have had sex. Bisexuals and gay men were more likely than heterosexuals to report engaging in all of the casual sex relationships. The longer someone had been in school the more likely they were to report engaging in all of the relationship types except for having no sex. H1b was partially supported because pansexual and queer participants were more likely to report engaging in an open relationship while questioning, asexual, and other identified students were equally as likely to report an open relationship as heterosexuals.

Preference and Experience Match

We conducted another set of logistic regression models to measure whether certain groups were more or less likely to have a “match” between their top relationship preference and their reported relationships. Females were significantly more likely than males to have reported a relationship that matched their top preference. There were no other gender or sexual identity differences which means that H2, H3, and H4 were not supported. Year in school was significant. The longer a participant had been in school the more likely they were to have reported any of the relationship options. These results can be seen in Table 5.
### Figure 4 - Logistic Regression Model for Reported Sexual Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monogamous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b$ (S.E.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Female**
  - Monogamous: $-0.068 (0.165)$, $0.592 (0.151)^{***}$
  - Sex with Stranger: $-0.048 (0.165)$, $0.933 (0.161)$
  - Sex with Acquaintance: $-0.069 (0.161)$, $1.072 (0.152)$
  - Sex with Friend: $-0.204 (0.442)$, $0.624 (0.103)$
  - Open/Polyamorous: $-0.005 (0.454)$, $0.952 (0.313)$
  - No Sexual Relationship: $-0.368 (0.164)^{***}$, $0.692 (0.113)$

- **Gender Minority**
  - Monogamous: $-0.621 (0.545)$, $0.523 (0.545)$
  - Sex with Stranger: $-0.328 (0.485)$, $0.692 (0.485)$
  - Sex with Acquaintance: $-0.615 (0.485)$, $0.448 (0.485)$
  - Sex with Friend: $-0.049 (0.501)$, $0.942 (0.501)$
  - Open/Polyamorous: $-0.012 (0.501)$, $0.986 (0.501)$
  - No Sexual Relationship: $-0.204 (0.501)$, $0.491 (0.501)$

- **Sexual Identity**
  - Bisexual: $0.586 (0.235)^*$, $1.797 (0.235)^*$
  - Pansexual: $-0.608 (0.235)^*$, $0.393 (0.235)^*$
  - Queer: $-0.608 (0.235)^*$, $0.393 (0.235)^*$
  - Gay: $-0.608 (0.235)^*$, $0.393 (0.235)^*$
  - Lesbian: $-0.608 (0.235)^*$, $0.393 (0.235)^*$
  - Questioning: $-0.608 (0.235)^*$, $0.393 (0.235)^*$
  - Asexual: $-0.608 (0.235)^*$, $0.393 (0.235)^*$
  - Other Not Specified: $-0.608 (0.235)^*$, $0.393 (0.235)^*$

- **Race/Ethnicity**
  - Hispanic: $-0.115 (0.345)$, $0.891 (0.345)$
  - Black: $-0.458 (0.234)^*$, $0.627 (0.234)^*$
  - Mixed Race: $0.485 (0.234)^*$, $1.776 (0.234)^*$
  - Asian & Pacific Islander: $-0.115 (0.345)$, $0.891 (0.345)$
  - Other Race: $0.248 (0.345)$, $1.347 (0.345)$

- **Religion**
  - Importance: $-0.039 (0.129)$, $0.961 (0.129)$
  - Church Attendance: $-0.078 (0.129)$, $0.922 (0.129)$
  - Year in School: $-0.11 (0.345)^*$, $0.891 (0.345)$
  - Grad Students: $-0.11 (0.345)^*$, $0.891 (0.345)$
  - Mother's Education: $-0.11 (0.345)^*$, $0.891 (0.345)$
  - Father's Education: $-0.11 (0.345)^*$, $0.891 (0.345)$
Discussion and Conclusion

Our first hypothesis was partially supported. Gender minorities and almost all sexual minorities who were not gay, lesbian, or bisexual were more likely to prefer as well as engage in an open relationship. This could be because open and other consensually non-monogamous (CNM) relationships are more accepted in the LGBTQ+ community as a whole or because departure from the heterosexual norm makes one more likely to engage in other relationship types (Heaphy et al. 2004). Questioning individuals may be equally likely to engage in CNM as
heterosexuals because they are in an exploratory stage and not as involved in the LGBTQ+ community. Future research could further explore this by comparing preferences and engagement in CNM to a measure of involvement in the LGBTQ+ community.

In our study gender minorities were more likely to prefer CNM relationships than were men or women. One explanation for this may have to do with the non-binary nature of gender minorities. Manley, Anders and Diamond (2015) found that polyamorous people were more likely to identify with a non-binary sexuality and that polyamorous women were more likely to report sexual fluidity in attraction over time. These finding may extend to non-binary gender identity or gender fluidity as well.

Asexuals showed a unique pattern compared to other sexual minorities. They were not more likely to prefer CNM but they were more likely to prefer and to report having no sex. These results are not surprising as asexuals tend to report little if any sexual attraction or desire (Delusio Chasin 2015). These results do indicate that asexuality should be given as an option on surveys and that asexuals should not be combined with other sexual identities in analyses, especially studies on sexual relationships.

None of the other hypotheses were supported (H2-4). Sexual and gender minorities (GSM) were not more likely to obtain a relationship of their top preference than were heterosexuals. One possible explanation is that the smaller dating markets of GSM may counteract advantages of the lowered relevance of gender relationship preferences. Another possibility could be that the age and size of our sample affected the results. Our sample consisted of college students who tend to be younger than the average population. It is possible that over time people are more likely to obtain relationships of their preference, which is supported by our finding that the longer someone had been in school the more likely they were to obtain a
relationship of their preference. Another compounding factor could have been the small sample sizes of GSM who had engaged in the different relationship types. A larger and older population may be more likely to show the patterns predicted.

Our sample did find that women were more likely than men to obtain a relationship of their preference. This could have resulted from the sex ratio of the university, which had 56% men and 43% women at the time they survey was taken. Women may have had an advantage in finding a relationship of their preference since they were the minority gender at the school, which was a pattern found by Uecker & Regnerus (2010). However, contrary to their results we found that women in our sample were less likely than men to report not having sex since entering college.

Another notable finding is that gay men and bisexuals are more likely to engage in casual sex even though they are not more likely to prefer these relationships. The lack of difference in preference could be due to asking the question through relative preference rather than by itself, such as was done by Mark et al. (2015) who found that gay men and bisexuals did rate casual sex higher. In our sample, bisexual men and women were not significantly different in their engagement in casual sex relationships.

Finally, our research has implications for people who study and interact with GSM. This group is overall more likely to engage in CNM relationships. Therapists and counselors who work at universities or specifically with GSM should learn more about CNM because many of their clients will likely engage in them. Researchers should include CNM as an option when studying relationship types because they will likely encounter people who participate or prefer these kinds of relationships. Future research should further explore the dynamics of CNM relationships among GSM.
Bibliography


