Whips & Chains Excite Me: BDSM, Social Acceptance and the Sexual Double Standard

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INTRODUCTION

Although awareness and popularity surrounding the BDSM community is growing, practitioners continue to experience discrimination and social stigma. This study evaluated social acceptance of both BDSM as a practice, and individuals who engage in Dominant-submissive (D/s) relationships.

Discrimination against the BDSM community

- BDSM as psychopathology (APA, 2000; 24% of participants reported that they had engaged in BDSM in the past)
- Vignettes were accompanied by a gender and normative information exposure on the social acceptance of BDSM
- The covariate (BDSM history) retained significance on both measures
- There was no evidence to support H1 that females were more accepted than men in a position of dominance.

METHOD

- Participants were randomly assigned to one of 4 conditions and were matched on the levels of social acceptance of BDSM as a healthy variation of sexuality when applied to a D/s relationship.
- Partial support found for H2 among women only, the presence of a normative interview significantly increased social acceptance of BDSM practices, when the female vignette character was in a position of dominance.

REFERENCES


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