

**The Relationship Between Sexual Self-Concept, Parent-Child Relationships and
Personality**

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Abstract

Sexual self-concept is an important aspect of our sexual health and general self-concept, sexual self-concept and that factors associated with it are understudied. Previous research has found relationships between parent-child relationships and personality and sexual self-concept. However, most studies investigated factors that relate to or are a part of sexual self-concept. Therefore, the current study aimed to explore sexual self-concept directly and potential correlations to parent-child relationships and personality. Hypothesis 1 proposed that neuroticism, agreeableness, and conscientiousness would be negatively associated with sexual self-concept. Hypothesis 2 proposed that parent-child relationships would be positively associated with sexual self-concept. And hypothesis 3 stated that personality and parent-child relationships would predict a significant level of variance in sexual self-concept. A total of 137 university students completed questionnaires relating to their perceptions of parents, personality, and sexual self-concept. It was found that higher sexual self-concept was correlated with lower neuroticism and agreeableness and higher extraversion. Correlations were not found between sexual self-concept and perceptions of parents. Personality was able to explain a statistically significant level variance in sexual self-concept. These results are discussed in the context of previous literature, the limitations of this research and directions that future research can take. This research adds to the literature on sexual self-concept and further explores some factors that might contribute to it. Future research is needed to further investigate the potential relationships between sexual self-concept and parent-child relationships.

Sexual Self-Concept, Parent-Child Relationships, and Personality

The idea of self-concept has been an area of interest in many academic disciplines, including psychology, for a long time. In the first introductory textbook in psychology, William James devoted an entire chapter to the self-concept (James, 1890). Though there are other 'self' terms describing the same or similar ideas (Burns & Dobson, 1984), Byrne (1983) defined self-concept as a person's total perception of themselves, including attitudes, skills, appearance, and social acceptability. A person's ideas about themselves and who they are in the world come from their social environment.

Shavelson et al. (1976) described self-concept as organized, multidimensional, hierarchical, developmental, evaluative, and differentiable and defined several significant self-concept features. The hierarchy had *general self-concept* at the apex. Below were academic and non-academic self-concepts, including social, emotional, and physical self-concepts, each further divided into various areas relating to each higher-order self-concept measure. In research that followed the ideas of Shavelson et al., (1976), Marsh (1990) developed a more comprehensive representation of self-concept that included 11 self-concept factors: Physical Ability, Physical Appearance, Opposite-Sex, Same-Sex, Honesty/Trustworthiness, Parent Relationships, Emotional Stability, Self-Esteem, Verbal, Math, and School. Of interest, this list of self-concept factors includes relationships with others (i.e., opposite-sex, same-sex, and parent), and self-perceptions (i.e., emotional stability, self-esteem, physical appearance, and honesty/trustworthiness). These specific factors have various implications and overlap in other research areas, such as personality, sexuality, and mental well-being.

Marsh et al., (2004) examined the relationship between self-concept and adolescent mental health. Their research showed that self-esteem, one facet of self-concept, was most

strongly correlated with school, emotional stability, appearance, and parent self-concepts. Generally, self-concept and mental health factors were almost all negatively correlated, although the correlations varied from small to extremely large (Marsh et al., 2004). Therefore, when self-concept is more positive it can result in more positive mental health. In other studies, body image (i.e., physical appearance) and self-esteem were commonly positively correlated with mental well-being (Donaghue, 2009; Kernis, 2005; Lemes et al., 2016) and negatively correlated to negative affect (Marsh et al., 2004). Positive physical and social well-being (i.e., physical, and social self-concept) have also been shown to correlate positively to mental well-being (Keyes, 1998; Ohrnberger et al., 2017). So then, it makes sense that having a positive view of oneself and understanding how we function in various areas of life, including socially, emotionally, and physically, would relate to our mental well-being, and overall life satisfaction. One specific factor not considered is sexual self-concept. Given that self-concept factors mentioned above may overlap with our sexuality (e.g., relationships with others, self-esteem, emotional stability), sexual self-concept may be an important factor within self-concept, affecting self-esteem, relationship and sexual satisfaction and mental well-being.

Sexual self-concept is conceptualized in research as a multidimensional construct that refers to an individual's positive and negative perceptions and feelings about themselves as a sexual being (Deutsch et al., 2013; Rostosky et al., 2008; Snell, 2003). When looking back to Marsh's (1990) idea of self-concept, the sexual self-concept includes aspects of social self-concepts, emotional self-concepts, and physical self-concepts as well. Sexual self-concept may not be a distinct concept within the self-concept construct, but it makes sense that factors overlap with factors within sexual self-concept. Sexual self-concept is also a component of sexuality that needs more consideration. A positive perception of oneself as a sexual being is integral to a

holistic view of sexual health (Deutsch et al., 2014). Given this research, one can assume that a positive sexual self-concept may impact an individual's mental, emotional, and social well-being, which, in turn, may impact sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction and sexual behaviours.

Snell et al., (1992) have done extensive research on sexual self-concept and have developed a comprehensive model of sexual self-concept. This model includes sexual esteem, sexual depression, sexual preoccupation, sexual consciousness, sexual monitoring, sexual assertiveness. Throughout Snell and colleagues' research, correlations were found between sexual self-concept factors and an individual's sexual behaviours and attitudes, sexual dispositions, satisfaction within sexual relationships, positive views toward condom use, and more diverse and extensive sexual experiences (Snell et al., 1991; Snell, 1994), and attachment styles and sexual equity (Snell, 1996).

Other research has demonstrated that aspects of the sexual self-concept have been correlated with sexual experience, relationship commitment, sex guilt, and global self-esteem (Hensel et al., 2011; Zeahan and Schwarz, 1996), better sexual communication in intimate relationships (Oattes & Offman, 2007). In another study, Antičević, et al. (2017) examined the moderating role of attachment style in associations between sexual self-concept and sexual satisfaction for single and coupled individuals. They found that the sexual self-concept was a significant predictor of sexual satisfaction. Those with a more positive sexual self-concept could combat some of the negatives of an insecure attachment style and experience more sexual satisfaction in and out of relationships.

Given the results of the studies mentioned above, there is evidence that supports sexual self-concept as a critical aspect of an individual. It can be speculated that with more negative

sexual self-concept, one might experience difficulties in their lives sexually, extending into the non-sexual aspects of their lives, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and general well-being.

With a lack of research linking sexual self-concept to factors that contribute to it, the current study aims to expand on links that have been found and further support connections between them. Therefore, to build a case for the current study, a review of the literature on sexual self-concept directly and areas related to sexual self-concept and their connections to parent-child relationships and personality will be conducted next.

Heinrichs et al. (2009) found evidence of several significant factors affecting sexual self-esteem including relationships with partners, relationship to one's body, damaging experiences, life stressors, sexual scripting, and sexuality and sexual engagement. Within the factors of sexuality and sexual engagement was openness and comfort about sexuality. Nearly half of participants stated that openness about sexuality from their parents facilitated their sexual self-esteem. Sex tends to be a sensitive topic for parents to discuss with their children, but when discussed openly, it can normalize sex and contribute to the sexual self-esteem of an individual (Heinrichs et al., 2009). Also, within sexuality and sexual engagement was positive modelling of relationships. Participants shared that their parents' positive handling of relationship difficulties provided an example of resolving and normalizing difficulties within relationships, which contributed to sexual self-esteem. Positive sexual self-concept has been found to be correlated to an increase in sexual communication with partners (Oattes & Offman, 2007), which could be related to positive modelling of relationships from parents found in the study by Heinrichs et al. (2009).

When parenting children facilitating a sense of choice, freedom to ask questions and learn, and a sense of security can help them establish a sense of self and positive relationships

with others (Grolnick et al., 1997). Grolnick, et al., (1997) proposed three social-contextual dimensions to parenting. The first being interpersonal involvement, defined as the extent to which the parent is interested in, has knowledge about, actively participates in the child's life and activities, and provides warmth and caring. Secondly, structure involves the clarity and consistency of rules and expectations, and limits. Finally, autonomy support is the degree to which parents value and use techniques that encourage choice, self-motivation, and participation in decision-making. An additional dimension of parenting proposed by Robbins (1994) is warmth of a parent towards their child which involves a parent accepting their child as they are and showing love and support. Perhaps, how an individual views their parents regarding their autonomy support, involvement, structure, and warmth may contribute to sexual self-concept.

Although there is little research on the sexual self-concept and parent relationships specifically, one study by Potki et al., (2017) examined the factors that might impact the development of the sexual self-concept. One of which was social factors, particularly the role of parents and peers. They discussed that parents are usually the first source of information on sexuality for children. One study in the review found that those who believe that parents and peers approve their sexual relationships are more likely to have a higher sexual self-concept (Pai et al., 2012). This finding may implicate that a closer relationship with parents is related to sexual self-concept.

Parents are an individual's first source of understanding the self and the world around them. Having a secure attachment to parents allows one to grow and develop optimally and positively internalize their social world. Sexuality development plays a significant role in growing up, especially throughout adolescence and young adulthood (Krauss et al., 2020). When parents provide autonomy support, involvement, structure, and warmth, one can feel more secure

in their sense of self and values and more easily maintain a positive view of oneself as a sexual being. Having healthier relationships with parents and positive sexual self-concept may impact romantic relationships, sexual health, sexual satisfaction, and general well-being.

Sexual self-concept may be impacted by changing aspects of an individual's life, such as sexual experiences, past and current relationships, and life stressors (Heinrichs et al., 2009). However, it is also associated with stable characteristics, such as relationships with parents and personality traits (Krauss et al., 2020).

Personality is defined as “the internal organization of affective, emotional, cognitive, and conceptual systems determining humans’ unique reactions toward the environment” (Firoozi et al., 2016 p.226). The most common conception of personality traits is the Big Five or the five-factor model (Goldberg, 1992). The Big Five personality traits include Neuroticism (sometimes called Emotional Stability), Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Intellect/Imagination (also referred to as Openness to Experience) (Goldberg, 1992). Each factor has distinct characteristics describing the trait. For example, neuroticism is characterized by low self-esteem, anxiety, irrational thinking, and pessimistic attitudes. Extraversion involves the tendency to experience positive emotions, excitement-seeking, sociability, and participation in social activities. Agreeableness includes compliance, forgiving attitudes, belief in cooperation, and reputation as a pushover. Conscientiousness is characterized by leadership skills, long-term planning, organized support network and achievement striving. Lastly, openness to experience is characterized by curiosity, imagination, esthetics, and open-mindedness (Costa & McCrae, 1999).

Several studies have examined the correlations between personality and sexuality, focusing mainly on Neuroticism and Extraversion with fewer results on Agreeableness,

Conscientiousness, and Openness to experience. Participants with higher neuroticism scores reported lower sexual satisfaction, more negative emotional experiences, hypersexual behaviour, low sexual self-esteem, higher sexual anxiety, and sexual guilt (Allen & Walter, 2018; Azmoude et al., 2016; Heaven et al., 2000; Heaven et al., 2003). Those with higher extraversion ratings were more likely to have greater desire and motivation for sexual activity, frequency of sexual activity, and more sexual partners. They took more sexual risks, rated higher on sexual attractiveness, and for women specifically, reported higher rates of sexual curiosity and sexual excitement (Allen & Walter, 2008; Azmoude et al., 2016; Bourdage et al., 2007; Heaven et al., 2000; Heaven et al., 2003; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Higher scores for openness correlated with sexual orientation, sexual attitudes, sexual attractiveness, and for men only, lower levels of sexual nervousness (Allen & Walter, 2018; Azmoude et al., 2016; Heaven et al., 2000). Participants with higher conscientiousness scores reported more sexual infidelity, lower sexual self-esteem, and for women only, low levels of sexual excitement (Allen & Walter, 2018; Azmoude et al., 2016; Heaven et al., 2000). Furthermore, for higher agreeableness scores, participants reported more sexual infidelity and lower sexual self-esteem (Allen & Walter, 2018; Azmoude et al., 2016). Research correlating personality to sexual self-concept is lacking, but it is evident that personality has several correlations to factors within sexual self-concept. The current study will examine the relationships between each personality trait within the Big Five and sexual self-concept.

Purpose of the Present Study

The current study will explore if and how personality and parent-child relationships might contribute to sexual self-concept and the relationships among these variables.

Additionally, the current study will add to the literature on sexual self-concept and help further

the understanding of the sexual self. Based on the literature reviewed above, personality and parent-child relationships are likely to correlate with sexual self-concept and explain some of its variance. Although there is little research in the area and sexual self-concept specifically, hypotheses on the relationship between parent-child relationships, personality dimensions and the sexual self-concept can be derived from the literature, and the following hypotheses can be inferred.

Given previous research it is expected that higher neuroticism, conscientiousness, and agreeableness scores will correlate with lower levels of sexual self-concept, higher extraversion and openness scores will correlate to higher levels of sexual self-concept (Allen & Walter, 2008; Azmoude et al., 2016; Bourdage et al., 2007; Heaven et al., 2000; Heaven et al., 2003; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991).

Based on the literature, it can be derived that a positive perception of parents (i.e., high levels of autonomy support, involvement, and warmth) will correlate to higher scores of sexual self-concept. Therefore, higher scores of both mother and father warmth, autonomy support, and involvement will correlate to higher levels of sexual self-concept. Given that presence of father also impacts self-esteem, when both positive views of both mothers and fathers are present, then there will also be more positive levels of sexual self-concept (Krauss et al., 2020). Specifically, autonomy support and warmth are most correlated to self-esteem and development of the self (Krauss et al., 2020; Robbins, 1994), so for the current study, it is likely to be most correlated to higher levels of sexual self-concept.

Given the above hypotheses, it is likely the current study will find correlations between all variables. Specifically, all personality traits and sexual self-concept, parent-child relationships and sexual self-concept, and personality and family environment. As a third hypothesis, it is

expected that both personality and parent-child relationships will predict a statistically significant proportion of the variance in sexual self-concept.

Methodology

Participants

A total of 137 Brandon University undergraduate students participated in this study. Participants were recruited from the Introduction to Psychology part I and II courses in the second term at Brandon University through Zoom classes. Students were given a 1% bonus incentive to participate.

The average age of participants was approximately 21 ($Mean=21.2$; $SD=4.81$). Most participants identified themselves (see Table 1) as first-year students (60.6%), female (78.8%), and Caucasian (68.6%). Additionally, most participants (83.9%) were heterosexual, and a smaller percentage (11.6%) identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual and demisexual. Finally, slightly more participants (53.3%) were in a relationship than those not (46.7%).

Measures

Because of the number of variables in the current study using self-report measures as well, the short form of the Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept (MSSCQ) (Pantin and Derringer, 2020) was used to measure participants sexual self-concept. The MSSCQ includes 4 subscales and 16 items (see Appendix A). The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1= 'not at all like me' to 5= 'very much like me'). A total score was calculated for sexual self-concept from each subscale with 'Sexual Anxiety' subscale items reverse scored. Higher scores indicated higher levels of sexual self-concept.

To retrospectively measure parent-child relationships, the Perceptions of Parents Scale (POPS) – College-Student Scale (Robbins, 1994) was used. There are three subscales each for

mothers and fathers with 21 items each, totally 6 subscales and 42 items (see Appendix B). The POPS is used to assess an individuals' perceptions of their mothers' and fathers' level of support for autonomy (nine items for each, e.g., My mother allows me to decide things for myself), warmth/relatedness (six items for each, e.g., my father makes me feel special) and involvement (six items for each, e.g., My mother finds time to talk with me). Responses were completed on a 5-point Likert scale (1= 'not at all true' to 5= 'very true'). The three subscale scores of each scale (i.e., perceptions of mother and perceptions of father) were combined as a total score for each parent. The reliability for the subscales resulted in a Cronbach alpha of .88 for maternal autonomy support, .90 for maternal relatedness, .88 for paternal autonomy support, and .89 for paternal relatedness (Niemiec et al., 2006).

The International Personality Item Pool – Johnson's Short Form (IPIP-J) is a 120-item measure developed from Goldberg's (1992) original 300-item IPIP. The IPIP-J measured five subscales, each correlating to the five-factor model of personality (see Appendix C). Each item in the scale was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1= 'not at all true' to 5= 'very true'). The neuroticism subscale includes items that measure anxiety, anger, depression, self-consciousness, immoderation, and vulnerability. The extraversion subscale includes items measuring friendliness, gregariousness, friendliness, assertiveness, activity level, excitement-seeking, and cheerfulness. The openness to experience subscale includes items involving imagination, artistic interest, emotionality, adventurousness, intellect, and liberalism. The agreeableness subscale looks at items including trust, morality, altruism, cooperation, modesty, and sympathy. Finally, the conscientiousness subscale includes items that measure self-efficacy, orderliness, dutifulness, achievement-striving, self-discipline, and cautiousness. Cronbach alpha for the IPIP-J was .82 and each facet had alphas ranging from .63 to .88, indicating good reliability for research

purposes (Johnson, 2014). The IPIP-J showed strong convergent validity in relation to the NEO-PI-R, as well as strong criterion validity for each of the five factors (Maples et al., 2014).

In addition to the three measures discussed above several demographic questions were created for this study including ethnicity, age, year of study, gender, and sexual orientation, and relationship status (see Appendix D). These demographic questions provided further insights into sexual self-concept.

Procedure

Following ethics approval by the authors' university ethics review board, students were recruited from each Introduction to Psychology Part I and II course through virtual class presentations in the beginning of the winter term. After the presentations, links to the informed consent and the questionnaire were sent to each professor and uploaded to Moodle for any students interested in participating.

Those who were interested read the Informed Consent document and provided their name to give consent and their student number and professors name for bonus credit. Once this was complete, participants could then open a link to the questionnaire portion of the study. To control for order effects, six variations of the questionnaire, with each measure appearing in different orders were created and each Introduction to Psychology course received a different URL with one variation of the questionnaire; demographics always appeared first. After participants completed all measures, they were debriefed on the true intent of the study and provided with resources to counselling and crisis counselling services if they were negatively affected by any portion of the study. Participants took approximately 28 minutes to complete the three self-report measures.

Results

When first analysing the data, subscale scores for each participant on all measures were determined. Descriptive statistics were then calculated for all variables of interest and all participants (see Table 2). Across all participants there was a tendency to report more positive perceptions of both mother and father. Sexual self-concept scores across all participants were slightly higher. As well, personality scores were all within average. Correlations were then examined to determine the nature of the relationships between Sexual Self-Concept and all other variables (see Table 3). There were several negative and positive weak and strong relationships between variables found.

The first hypothesis was partially supported and as expected, individuals who reported higher sexual self-concept scores had higher scores in extraversion, and those who reported lower sexual self-concept scores had higher scores in neuroticism and agreeableness. Correlations were not found between sexual self-concept and openness and conscientiousness.

The second hypothesis was not supported by the data as correlations were not found between perceptions of parents and sexual self-concept. However, several other correlations were found that were not predicted. Individuals who were older tended to be in a relationship, reported poorer perceptions of both their mother and father. As well, there was a weak positive correlation found between age and sexual self-concept. Because 2STLGBQ+ participants were low (11.6%), those who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and demisexual were analyzed together. For participants who reported that they were gay, lesbian, bisexual or demisexual had more negative perceptions of both their mother and father, and were higher in neuroticism, and openness, and lower in conscientiousness. For individuals in a relationship, they tended to report a more positive sexual self-concept, and a more negative perception of father. Additionally,

perception of mother had a strong positive correlation to perception of father, and conscientiousness, a weak positive correlation to extraversion, and a strong negative correlation to neuroticism (indicating a better perception of mother leads to less neuroticism). Positive perceptions of father were strongly correlated to lower levels of neuroticism, and higher levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness.

Finally, the data suggested that the third hypothesis was supported. A linear multiple regression was conducted to determine the level of variance in self-concept predicted by personality (see Table 4). Personality factors, including neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness were included and were found to predict sexual self-concept at approximately 19.8%. This analysis showed that personality significantly contributes to a more positive sexual self-concept.

Discussion

The purpose of study was to explore the relationships between sexual self-concept, personality, and parent-child relationship and learn more about how personality and parent-child relationships might contribute or explain sexual self-concept. As well, the current study aimed to add to the literature on sexual self-concept, an area with little research.

When looking at personality and sexual self-concept correlations previous studies suggested that neuroticism has been associated with lower sexual satisfaction, low sexual self-esteem, and higher sexual anxiety (Allen & Walter, 2018; Azmoude et al., 2016; Heaven et al., 2000; Heaven et al., 2003), which are factors within the sexual self-concept measure (Pantin and Derringer, 2020). It makes sense then that there would be a strong correlation between sexual self-concept and neuroticism in this study as well.

Though there has been less previous research on agreeableness and sexual self-concept, two studies have shown that higher agreeableness scores were associated with lower sexual self-esteem (Allen & Walter, 2018; Azmoude et al., 2016). This may explain the relationship between the two variables as sexual self-esteem is associated with sexual self-concept. This also adds to the literature by showing a connection between agreeableness and sexual self-concept directly.

Finally, individuals rating higher extraversion have greater desire for sexual activity (Allen & Walter, 2008; Heaven et al., 2003). Sexual desire is a factor within sexual self-concept, asking questions such as “I have a desire to be sexually active” and “I’m constantly thinking about sex” (Pantin and Derringer, 2020), this may partially explain why the two variables are correlated. As well, sexual self-concept tends to be higher in individuals with more sexual experience (Hensel et al., 2011). Extraverted individuals may have more sexual experience as well, as they tend to have a higher frequency of sexual activity and more sexual partners (Allen & Walter, 2018; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). This connection may also explain the positive correlation between age and sexual self-concept, some older adults may have more sexual experience.

Though predicted, correlations between conscientiousness and openness and sexual self-concept were not found. Some previous research suggests that conscientiousness is associated with lower levels for sexual self-esteem and sexual excitement (Firoozi et al., 2016; Heaven et al., 2000). There is little research on conscientiousness and sexual self-concept, the data suggests that there may not be a relationship between the two. Openness has been found to be associated with sexual attitudes, attractiveness, and lower levels of sexual nervousness (Allen & Walter, 2018; Azmoude et al., 2016; Heaven et al., 2000), none of which are a part of sexual self-concept facets. These correlations to openness, specifically sexual attractiveness, may explain some of

the correlation between openness and sexual orientation as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and demisexual participants had higher openness.

Despite previous research suggesting that relationships to parents plays an important role in sexual self-concept, the data did not provide support for this prediction. Much of the previous research on these variables discussed open communication, positive role modelling, and approval of sexual relationships as important contributing factors to sexual self-concept (Heinrichs et al., 2009; Oattes & Offman, 2007; Pai et al., 2012). The measure used in this study may not have accurately captured these aspects as it primarily asked about perceptions of parents' warmth, autonomy support and involvement (Robbins, 1994). Though these may be important factors in personality and self-concept (e.g., opposite-sex, same-sex, and self-esteem; Marsh, Parada, & Ayotte, 2004) the data did not find that there was an association between perceptions of parents and sexual self-concept.

When looking at the data on parent-child relationships, there were correlations that were not predicted. One of which was with age where there was a strong negative correlation between age and perception of mother, and a weak negative correlation with age and perception of father. So, older participants had negative perceptions of their parents. The Perceptions of Parents (POPS) measure used in this study was designed to retroactively measure perceptions of parents (Robbins, 1994). Given that the average age of students was around 21, answering questions in the POPS measure may have been more accurate because participants may be closer with parents or still living with them while in university. The POPS measure may also not accurately capture the relationships that older participants have with their parents as the questions ask about warmth, autonomy support, and involvement – factors that may be more important with younger participants. Perceptions of parents and sexual orientation also had a strong negative correlation.

Participants who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual and demisexual tended to have negative perceptions of parents. Given that the sexual orientation sample was low, the outcome was somewhat surprising. Although, one study suggested that lesbian and bisexual women reported lower levels of parent support than heterosexual women (Needham & Austin 2010), which is consistent with the results of this study.

Limitations

As with any study, this one is not without its' limitations. One limitation may have been the small number of 2STLGB+ participants, a larger sample may have provided more connections between variables as the small sample size resulted in significant correlations on its' own. Another limitation is the large number of female participants, perhaps a larger sample of male participants may have provided additional insights between variables. This research was also limited by time and sample selection that undergraduate thesis research is restricted to. The subjectively largest limitation of the study was the use of the Perceptions of Parents Scale to assess parent-child relationships in relation to sexual self-concept. Because the scale looks at parental warmth, autonomy support and involvement, it may not have been the correct measure for assessing one's sexual self-concept. Sexual self-concept may be affected more so by parents' positive role modelling of relationships, open communication, and approval of sexual relationships.

Future Directions

Overall, this study extends the findings of previous research and provides additional data on sexual self-concept. Future research investigating the relationship between sexual self-concept and parent-child relationships may wish to use a measure that looks at parent-child communication, parent acceptance of their child's sexual relationships, and the romantic

relationships that parents have. Research investigating attachment may also provide a different perspective on the potentially relationships between parent-child relationships and sexual self-concept. As well, future research involving a specific or larger sample of 2STLGBQ+ individuals might provide addition support and interesting results for relationships to personality and perceptions of parents. Given that participants were limited to undergraduate students in Introduction to Psychology courses, a larger sample from a variety of areas within the population would be beneficial and allow the research to be more applicable to the real world.

In conclusion, this research study adds to the literature in areas that have been previously researched and provides direction that future studies can take to continue investigating the potential relationships between parent-child relationships and sexual self-concept. The implications for this research indicate a growth in understanding how our personality, age and relationship status may interact with sexual self-concept. Alternatively, if we are secure in ourselves as sexual beings, sexual self-concept may contribute to personality, relationship satisfaction, and perhaps our general well-being.

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Table 1*Demographic variables (n=137)*

Demographic Variable		Total number of participants (n)	Percentage of total participants (%)
Ethnicity	Caucasian	94	68.6
	African	11	8.0
	Asian	8	5.8
	Indian	3	2.2
	Indigenous/Metis	10	7.3
	Latin America	2	1.5
	Hispanic	3	2.2
	Filipino	6	4.4
Age	18 - 24	115	83.9
	25 - 31	13	9.5
	32 - 41	9	6.6
Year of Study	First year	83	60.6
	Second year	31	22.6
	Third year	15	10.9
	Fourth year	6	4.4
	Fifth year	2	1.5
Gender	Female	108	78.8
	Male	27	19.7
	Genderqueer	1	.7

	Non-binary	1	.7
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual	115	83.9
	Bisexual	12	8.8
	Demisexual	2	1.5
	Gay	1	.7
	Lesbian	1	.7
	Prefer not to say	6	4.4
	Relationship status	In a relationship	73
	Single	64	46.7

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics for All Variables of Interest for All Participants (n=137)*

Variable	Mean (SD)	Range
Age	21.2 (4.80)	18.00 – 41.00
Sexual Self-Concept	3.4 (0.50)	1.00 – 5.00
Perceptions of Mother	4.0 (0.85)	1.00 – 5.00
Perceptions of Father	3.9 (0.92)	1.00 – 5.00
Neuroticism	3.1 (0.68)	1.00 – 5.00
Extraversion	3.3 (0.57)	1.00 – 5.00
Openness	3.3 (0.57)	1.00 – 5.00
Agreeableness	3.9 (0.44)	1.00 – 5.00
Conscientiousness	3.7 (0.52)	1.00 – 5.00

Table 3*Correlations between All Variables of Interest (n=137)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	–										
2. Sexual Orientation ¹	.132	–									
3. Relationship Status ²	.269**	.051	–								
4. Sexual Self-Concept	.171*	.069	.314**	–							
5. Perception of Mother	-.229**	-.255**	-.114	-.031	–						
6. Perception of Father	-.171*	-.208**	-.173*	-.051	.429**	–					
7. Neuroticism ³	-.097	.188*	-.011	-.282**	-.299**	-.258**	–				
8. Extraversion ⁴	-.148	.066	.033	.272**	.174*	.078	-.434**	–			
9. Openness ³	.089	.408**	-.078	.096	-.099	-.112	.023	.277**	–		
10. Agreeableness ³	.020	.053	-.034	-.220**	.147	.263**	-.165	.048	.297**	–	
11. Conscientiousness ³	-.020	-.349**	.105	-.061	.307**	.267**	-.422**	.211	-.077	.395**	–

Note. ¹0=heterosexual, 1=gay, lesbian, bisexual & demisexual. ²0=single, 1=in a relationship. ³n=113, ⁴n=136. *0.05 significance level (2-tailed). ** 0.01 significance level (2-tailed).

Table 4*Linear multiple regression analysis predicting Sexual Self-Concept*

Model	Variable(s) entered	Cumul R^2	R^2 Change	Beta
1	Neuroticism	0.198**	0.198**	-.307**
	Extraversion			.100
	Openness			.172
	Agreeableness			-.315**
	Conscientiousness			.028

Note. *.05 significance level (2-tailed). **.01 significance level (2-tailed)

Appendix A – Short-Form Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire

Listed below are several statements that concern the topic of sexual relationships and your sexual self. Please read each item carefully and decide to what extent it is characteristic of you. Some of the items refer to a specific sexual relationship. Whenever possible, answer these 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. For each statement below, please indicate whether the statement is like you or unlike you. For example, if the statement is not at all like you or what you believe to be like yourself (Not at all like you), select “1 – Not at all like me”. If the statement is very much like you or what you believe to be true about yourself (Very much like you), select “5 – Very much like me” on the line next to the statement. Then, for each statement fill in the response on the answer sheet that indicates how much it applies to you by using the following scale:

- 1 – Not at all characteristic of me
- 2 – Slightly characteristic of me
- 3 – Somewhat characteristic of me
- 4 – Moderately characteristics of me
- 5 – Very characteristic of me

The follow includes each statement for this portion of the questionnaire:

1. I do not hesitate to ask for what I want in a sexual relationship.
2. I believe that in the future the sexual aspects of my life will be healthy and positive.
3. I have positive feelings about the way that I approach my own sexual needs and desires.
4. I am satisfied with the sexual aspects of my life.

5. I am very aware of my sexual motivations and desires.
6. I am constantly thinking about having sex.
7. I have a desire to be sexually active.
8. Not only would I be a skilled sexual partner, but it's very important to me that I be a skilled sexual partner.
9. If I were to develop a sexual problem, then it would be my own fault for letting it happen.
10. If I developed a sexual disorder, my recovery would depend on how I myself dealt with the problem.
11. I will be able to avoid any sexual problems if I just take care of myself.
12. The main thing which affects the sexual aspects of my life is what I myself do.
13. I'm concerned about how the sexual aspects of my life appear to others.
14. I feel nervous when I think about the sexual aspects of my life.
15. My sexual behaviour is mostly determined by people who have influence and control.
16. I have a fear of sexual relationships.

(Short-form MSSCQ, Pantin & Derringer, 2020, adapted from original MSSCQ, Snell et al., 1993)

Appendix B – Perceptions of Parents Scale

Please answer the following questions about your mother and your father. If you do not have any contact with one of your parents (for example, your father), but there is another adult of the same gender living with your house (for example, a stepfather, or male guardian) then please answer the questions about that other adult. If you have no contact with one of your parents, and there is not another adult of that same gender with whom you live, then leave the questions about that parent blank. For example, if the statement is not at all true of your relationship with your parent(s), or how you perceive your relationship with your parent, then select “1 – Not at all true” on the line next to the statement. If the statement is very true of your relationship with your parent(s), or how you perceive your relationship with your parent, then select “7 – Very true” on the line next to the statement. You should use the following scale below as a guide for rating each of the statements:

- 1 – Not at all true
- 2 – Slightly true
- 3 – Somewhat true
- 4 – Moderately true
- 5 – Very true

The following statements ask about how you perceive your mother (or stepmother/female guardian):

1. My mother seems to know how I feel about things.
2. My mother tries to tell me how to run my life.
3. My mother finds time to talk with me.

4. My mother accepts me and likes me as I am.
5. My mother, whenever possible, allows me to choose what to do.
6. My mother doesn't seem to think of me often.
7. My mother clearly conveys her love for me.
8. My mother listens to my opinion or perspective when I've got a problem.
9. My mother spends a lot of time with me.
10. My mother makes me feel very special.
11. My mother allows me to decide things for myself.
12. My mother often seems too busy to attend to me.
13. My mother is often disapproving and unaccepting of me.
14. My mother insists upon my doing things her way.
15. My mother is not very involved with my concerns.
16. My mother is typically happy to see me.
17. My mother is usually willing to consider things from my point of view.
18. My mother puts time and energy into helping me.
19. My mother seems to be disappointed in me a lot.
20. My mother isn't very sensitive to many of my needs.

The following statements ask about how you perceive your father (or stepfather/male guardian):

1. My father seems to know how I feel about things.
2. My father tries to tell me how to run my life.
3. My father finds time to talk with me.
4. My father accepts me and likes me as I am.

5. My father, whenever possible, allows me to choose what to do.
6. My father doesn't seem to think of me often.
7. My father clearly conveys his love for me.
8. My father listens to my opinion or perspective when I've got a problem.
9. My father spends a lot of time with me.
10. My father makes me feel very special.
11. My father allows me to decide things for myself.
12. My father often seems too busy to attend to me.
13. My father is often disapproving and unaccepting of me.
14. My father insists upon my doing things his way.
15. My father is not very involved with my concerns.
16. My father is typically happy to see me.
17. My father is usually willing to consider things from my point of view.
18. My father puts time and energy into helping me.
19. My father helps me to choose my own direction.
20. My father isn't very sensitive to many of my needs.

(Perceptions of Parents Scale – The College-Student Scale; Robbins, 1994)

Appendix C – Johnson Short-Form - International Personality Item Pool

The following survey contains phrases describing people's behaviors. Please use the rating scale next to each phrase to describe how accurately each statement describes you. Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. For example, if the statement does not describe you accurately at all, select "1 – Very inaccurate". If the statement describes you very accurately, select "5 – Very accurate". So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. You should use the following scale below as a guide for rating each of the statements:

- 1 – Very inaccurate
- 2 – Somewhat accurate
- 3 – Neither accurate nor inaccurate
- 4 – Moderately accurate
- 5 – Very accurate

Please read each statement carefully, and then click the circle that corresponds to the accuracy of the statement:

1. Worry about things.
2. Make friends easily.
3. Have a vivid imagination.
4. Trust others.
5. Complete tasks successfully.
6. Get angry easily.

7. Love large parties.
8. Believe in the importance of art.
9. Use others for my own ends.
10. Like to tidy up.
11. Often feel blue.
12. Take charge.
13. Experience my emotions intensely.
14. Love to help others.
15. Keep my promises.
16. Find it difficult to approach others.
17. Am always busy.
18. Prefer variety to routine.
19. Love a good fight.
20. Work hard.
21. Go on binges.
22. Love excitement.
23. Love to read challenging material.
24. Believe that I am better than others.
25. Am always prepared.
26. Panic easily.
27. Radiate joy.
28. Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.
29. Sympathize with the homeless.

30. Jump into things without thinking.
31. Fear for the worst.
32. Feel comfortable around people.
33. Enjoy wild flights of fantasy.
34. Believe that others have good intentions.
35. Excel in what I do.
36. Get irritated easily.
37. Talk to a lot of different people at parties.
38. See beauty in things that others might not notice.
39. Cheat to get ahead.
40. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
41. Dislike myself.
42. Try to lead others.
43. Feel others' emotions.
44. Am concerned about others.
45. Tell the truth.
46. Am afraid to draw attention to myself.
47. Am always on the go.
48. Prefer to stick with things that I know.
49. Yell at people.
50. Do more than what's expected of me.
51. Rarely overindulge.
52. Seek adventure.

53. Avoid philosophical discussions.
54. Think highly of myself.
55. Carry out my plans.
56. Become overwhelmed by events.
57. Have a lot of fun.
58. Believe that there is no absolute right or wrong.
59. Feel sympathy for those who are worse off than myself.
60. Make rash decisions.
61. Handle tasks smoothly.
62. Avoid contacts with others.
63. Lose my temper.
64. Love to daydream.
65. Trust what people say.
66. Take advantage of others.
67. Prefer to be alone.
68. Do not like poetry.
69. Am afraid of many things.
70. Do a lot in my spare time.
71. Leave a mess in my room.
72. Only feel comfortable with friends.
73. Take control of things.
74. Do just enough work to get by.
75. Break rules.

76. Insult people.
77. Am often down in the dumps.
78. Am indifferent to the feelings of others.
79. Rarely notice my emotional reactions.
80. Dislike changes.
81. Easily resist temptations.
82. Enjoy being reckless.
83. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.
84. Have a high opinion of myself.
85. Waste my time.
86. Feel that I'm unable to deal with things.
87. Love life.
88. Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.
89. Am not interested in other people's problems.
90. Rush into things.
91. Get stressed out easily.
92. Keep others at a distance.
93. Like to get lost in thought.
94. Distrust people.
95. Know how to get things done.
96. Am not easily annoyed.
97. Avoid crowds.
98. Do not enjoy going to art museums.

99. Obstruct others' plans.
100. Leave my belongings around.
101. Feel comfortable with myself.
102. Wait for others to lead the way.
103. Don't understand people who get emotional.
104. Take no time for others.
105. Break my promises.
106. Am not bothered by difficult social situations.
107. Like to take it easy.
108. Am attached to conventional ways.
109. Get back at others.
110. Put little time and effort into my work.
111. Am able to control my cravings.
112. Act wild and crazy.
113. Am not interested in theoretical discussions.
114. Boast about my virtues.
115. Have difficulty starting tasks.
116. Remain calm under pressure.
117. Look at the bright side of life.
118. Believe that we should be tough on crime.
119. Try not to think about the needy.
120. Act without thinking.

(IPIP-NEO-120 items; Johnson, 2014)

Appendix D – Demographics

The following questions ask about demographics. These items are not used to identify you, but to gather information on demographics that may help explain the results of this study. Please answer each of the following to the best of your ability, based on yourself.

Age:

1. 18 - 24 years
2. 25 – 34 years
3. 35 – 44 years
4. 45 – 54 years
5. 55 years and older

Year of study:

1. First year
2. Second year
3. Third year
4. Fourth year
5. Fifth year and above

Gender:

1. Male
2. Female
3. Transman
4. Transwoman
5. Non-binary
6. Prefer not to say

7. Other

Sexual Orientation:

1. Heterosexual or Straight
2. Lesbian
3. Gay
4. Bisexual or Pansexual
5. Asexual
6. Prefer not to say
7. Other

Relationship Status:

1. Single
2. In a relationship