

Sexual Subjectivity, Relationship Status and Quality, and Same-sex Sexual Experience among Emerging Adult Females

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Abstract

Sexual subjectivity (SS) includes sexual body-esteem, entitlement to self-pleasure and pleasure from a partner, sexual self-efficacy, and reflection about sexual behavior. The objectives of this study were to examine if females' SS was associated with their romantic experience, including status, length, quality, and same-sex sexual experience. Participants were 251 females with a mean age of 19.6 years. In simple group comparisons, females with steady partners were higher in sexual body esteem, self-efficacy and self-reflection, and those in longer romantic relationships (> 1.5 years) had higher sexual body-esteem and self-efficacy, but lower self-reflection. Females with a history of same-sex sexual experience were higher in sexual entitlement, self-efficacy and self-reflection. In multiple regression, females with a steady partner and who reported more positive romantic quality had greater sexual body-esteem. Females in longer relationships were higher in sexual self-efficacy but lower in self-reflection. Same-sex sexual experience was associated with greater entitlement to self-pleasure. For sexual self-efficacy and self-reflection, having a steady partner and a history of same-sex sexual experience were uniquely associated. The developmental, theoretical and clinical implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: Sexual subjectivity, Sexuality, Female development, Romantic relationships, Dating, Same-sex experience

1. Introduction

Adolescence and emerging adulthood are age periods when developing identity and life goals are prominent tasks, and new experiences and exploration of diverse interests are common. Some of the most significant new social experiences concern romantic and sexual development (Arnett, 2000; Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003). Although there has been much research in recent years that has considered either romantic relationships (Connolly, Furman, & Konarski, 2000; Florsheim, 2003) or sexual development (Boislard & Poulin, 2011; see Zimmer-Gembeck & Helfand, 2008 for a review) during adolescence and emerging adulthood, the romantic context and sexuality of adolescents and emerging adults are still rarely considered simultaneously (for exceptions, see Giordano, Manning, & Longmore, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2005; Zimmer-Gembeck, Siebenbruner, & Collins, 2004).

A new body of research, however, has recently emerged, with a focus on ways of thinking about sexuality and behavior and how such sexual self-perceptions might be associated or change depending on romantic and sexual experiences. For example, one recent study reported that girls who had steady romantic partners, compared to those without partners, reported more *sexual subjectivity*, defined as sexual body-esteem, entitlement to sexual desire and pleasure, and sexual self-reflection (Zimmer-Gembeck, Ducat, & Boislard, 2011). This finding suggests that sexual subjectivity may be fostered within the dyadic context of a romantic partnership. Yet, only

the presence or absence of a partner was examined in this past research on sexual subjectivity. Hence, no study has examined the association between relationship *quality* and sexual subjectivity among females.

Sexual behavior also has been associated with females' sexual subjectivity, with those reporting greater experience with sexual behavior, ranging from kissing to intercourse, having higher baseline levels of positive sexual self-perceptions (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2005), but increases in these perceptions over a year were greatest for those who started having sex the latest (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). This suggests that sexual experience plays an important role in the development of sexual self-perceptions. However, this previous study did not differentiate other-sex from same-sex sexual behavior. Hence, one may then ask if females with a history of same-sex sexual experiences, along with other-sex sexual experiences, have even more opportunities to develop their sexual self-perceptions, given the sexual fluidity and openness in their sexual exploration (Diamond, 2009). The current study addresses the roles of romantic relationship quality and same-sex sexual behavior in females' sexual subjectivity.

1.1 Sexual Subjectivity

In this study we refer to *sexual subjectivity* (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2005, 2006; Martin, 1996; Thompson, 1995; Tolman, 1994; 2002; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Drawing from theories of female sexual development (Brooks-Gunn & Paikoff, 1993; Bukowski, Sippola, & Brender, 1993; Burch, 1998; Haffner, 1998; Holland, Ramazonoglu, Sharpe, & Thomson, 1992; Martin, 1996; Thompson, 1995; Tolman, 2002; Tolman, Striepe, & Harmon, 2003) and a series of empirical studies that developed and validated its measurement (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2005; 2006), sexual subjectivity has been found to include five elements: sexual body-esteem, self-entitlement to sexual desire and pleasure, entitlement to sexual desire and pleasure from a partner, sexual self-efficacy and sexual self-reflection.

The first element, *sexual body-esteem*, was defined as positive feelings about one's own body. Previous research on sexual body-esteem has included self-perceptions of sexual attractiveness and desirability and shown that they form part of an individual's conceptualization of his/her sexuality (Buzwell & Rosenthal, 1996; Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001). The next two elements, *self-entitlement to desire and pleasure* and *entitlement to desire and pleasure with a partner* refer to one's perceived entitlement to have and to achieve personal desires and pleasures. These were identified as important elements of sexual subjectivity because sexuality has been described as coming to recognize desire and understanding what it means to experience pleasure from the body. *Sexual self-efficacy* is the fourth element of sexual subjectivity, which refers to the personal beliefs about one's own capacity to manage wanted- and avoid unwanted- sexual interactions. The final element, *sexual self-reflection*, is conceptualized as a cognitive component important to developing knowledge about the world and the self, with adolescents' cognitive advances making it easier and increasingly common (Cloutier, 2008; Keating, 1990; Larson, Clore, & Wood, 1999). Self-reflection enables adolescents to consider their experiences, make attributions about events, and to plan behaviors (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011). The ability to reflect critically on sexual experiences and make decisions about future sexual strategies and behaviors is an important component of healthy sexual development (Cyranowski & Andersen, 1998).

1.2 Sexual Subjectivity and Relationship Status and Quality

Giordano, Manning and Longmore (2010) have observed that subjectively experienced relationship qualities matter for understanding teens' sexual behavior. Qualitative research also tells us that girls often report their partner exploring their bodies more than they do themselves (Martin, 1996). We do not know, however, if girls involved in long-term romantic relationships are higher in sexual subjectivity than those who are not involved or involved in shorter-term romantic relationships. Furthermore, if sexual subjectivity is best expressed and acquired in the context of a romantic relationship, does the quality of the partnership enhance sexual subjectivity? Previous research has found that partners who report that they are also good friends are more satisfied with their relationship (Bay-Cheng, Robinson, & Zucker, 2010). Does that extend to greater sexual subjectivity? We hypothesize that being in a longer-term romantic relationship as well as a high-quality relationship should be associated with greater sexual subjectivity among females.

1.3 Sexual Subjectivity and Sexual Attractions

The finding that girls with more sexual experience showed higher baseline levels of sexual subjectivity suggests that these experiences, perhaps because they are linked to more sexual exploration and make girls more aware of their sexuality, may be one important factor for enhancing sexual subjectivity. Sexual development, however, has been found to be subject to changes and fluctuations, and girls attractions are not as linear and fixed in time as it was previously believed, a process referred to as *sexual fluidity* (Diamond, 2009). Although most youth have their first sexual encounters with someone of the other-sex (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006; Savin-Williams

& Diamond, 2004), a substantial minority of them report having engaged in same-sex sexual behaviors in the past. Preliminary findings on this matter suggest that girls with same-sex sexual experience report more sexual subjectivity, especially more sexual body-esteem and entitlement (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). In other words, women who live outside the constraints of compulsory heterosexuality tend to display more sexual agency by more often voicing their opinions and stating their preferences (Diamond, 2008, 2009 Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006). Therefore, we hypothesize that same-sex sexual experience would be associated with greater sexual subjectivity.

1.4 Goal of the Study

In summary, there were two aims in the current study. The first aim was to investigate whether female sexual subjectivity may be a product of coming to know a partner over a longer-term relationship and experiencing the positive features of romance, including more partner warmth and support and fewer rejecting and coercive behaviors. Hence, we expected that females in longer length romantic relationships and those who report higher quality relationships will be higher in sexual subjectivity. The second aim was to investigate whether sexual fluidity, when measured as same-sex sexual experience, is a correlate of greater sexual subjectivity even after accounting for romantic relationship status. We expected that females who had same-sex sexual experience would be higher in sexual subjectivity than other females.

2. Method

2.1 Participants and Procedures

The participants were 251 girls age 16 to 25 years ($M = 19.63$, $SD = 2.24$). Participants were recruited on two University campuses during the one week prior to the start of the first semester ("orientation week") and the first week of classes. Most participants (94%) were university students; the remaining participants were technical college students or nonstudents who were on campus to visit information booths or shop at open-air markets. In the area of Australia where this study was conducted, it is typical for first year university students to be 17 years of age in their first year, with some as young as 16 years. Each participant received a chocolate bar and prize draw entry for one of two gift vouchers. Most participants were white/Caucasian (82%) and lived with both biological parents (69%). However, there was some diversity: 22% of participants reported same-sex attraction, experience, or who were unsure about their sexual orientation. When participants with or without same-sex attractions were compared, there were no differences in their other sexual behavior history, including experience with sexual intercourse, partner status, or age.

2.2 Measures

Sexual subjectivity. The Female Sexual Subjectivity Inventory (FSSI; Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2006) was used to assess the five elements of sexual subjectivity: (a) sexual body-esteem, (b) self-entitlement to sexual desire and self-pleasure, (c) entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner, (d) self-efficacy in achieving sexual pleasure, and (e) sexual self-reflection. The FSSI included 20 items. Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) for each item. Appropriate subscale items were averaged to form composite measures with higher scores reflecting more sexual subjectivity. Sample items for the FSSI include: "I am confident that others will find me sexually desirable" (sexual body-esteem), "It is okay for me to meet my own sexual needs through self-masturbation" (self-entitlement to pleasure), "I think it is important for a sexual partner to consider my sexual pleasure" (entitlement to sexual pleasure from a partner), "I am able to ask a partner to provide the sexual stimulation I need" (sexual self-efficacy) and "I spend time thinking and reflecting about my sexual experiences" (sexual self-reflection). All subscales had high reliability. Cronbach's ranged from .74 and .86.

Relationship status. Participants indicated whether or not they were regularly going out with anyone or had a boyfriend/girlfriend. Responses ranged from 0 (*No*) to 3 (*Yes, I am in a steady monogamous relationship*). Other response options were 1 (*Yes, but we are just dating*) or 2 (*Yes, I am in a steady relationship but we are not monogamous*). Responses were dichotomized to identify participants in steady, monogamous relationship (a response of 3) or not (responses of 1, 2 or 0). One hundred twenty-two participants (49%) reported a steady, monogamous romantic partner. The average length of these relationships was 18.5 months ($SD = 17.6$).

Romantic relationship quality. The Partner Behaviors as Social Context (PBSC; Ducat & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2010) was used to measure self-perceived romantic relationship quality for participants with a steady romantic partner. The PBSC was based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The items assessed positive relationship qualities (warmth, predictability and dependability, and autonomy support; 15 items) and negative qualities (rejection, coercion, and unpredictability; 15 items). After reversing negative items, items were also averaged to form a composite measure of total romantic relationship quality. The Cronbach's was .90 for positive

qualities, .90 for negative qualities, and .92 for all 30 items.

Same-sex sexual behavior history and sexual attraction. One item asked participants to report their history of sexual experience with the same sex and sexual orientation. Responses were 1 (*heterosexual with no same sex sexual experience*), 2 (*heterosexual with same-sex sexual experience*), 3 (*bisexual*), 4 (*lesbian*), or 5 (*not sure*). Responses were dichotomized to indicate no history of same-sex sexual experience (a response of 1) or same-sex sexual experience (responses of 2, 3 or 4). Three participants responded “not sure”. To maintain them in the analyses, they are included in the group who had a history of same-sex sexual behavior. Their inclusion in this group did not change the study results. Throughout the following sections of this paper, this indicator is referred to as a *history of same-sex sexual behavior* for simplicity.

3. Results

3.1 Sexual Subjectivity, Romantic Status and Relationship Length and Quality

First, *t*-tests were conducted to compare sexual subjectivity between girls who did or did not report a steady monogamous romantic partner (see Table 1). There were three differences: girls with a steady partner were higher in sexual body esteem, sexual self-efficacy and sexual self-reflection, but there were no group differences in entitlement to self-pleasure or to desire and pleasure from the partner. Among the participants who reported steady, monogamous partners, differences in three sexual subjectivity components were found between girls in longer *versus* shorter relationships (see Table 2). Groups included those who reported a relationship length below or above the average duration (18 months) in this study. Participants who engaged in a romantic relationship for more than one and a half years had higher sexual body-esteem and self-efficacy, but lower sexual self-reflection. Again, there were no group differences in entitlement to pleasure from self- or from the partner.

Second, each element of sexual subjectivity was regressed on relationship length and quality (see Table 3). In these models, females who reported more positive relationship quality were higher in sexual body-esteem and those in longer relationships were higher in sexual self-efficacy, but lower in sexual self-reflection.

3.2 Sexual Subjectivity and Same-Sex Sexual Behavior

Third, *t*-tests were conducted to compare sexual subjectivity between girls who did or did not have a history of same-sex sexual behavior (see Table 4). There were group differences in all sexual subjectivity elements except for sexual body-esteem. Girls with a history of same-sex sexual experience were higher in entitlement to self-pleasure, entitlement to pleasure from a partner, sexual self-efficacy and sexual self-reflection.

Finally, to examine the unique associations of romantic partner status and same-sex sexual behavior history with sexual subjectivity, each element of sexual subjectivity was regressed on romantic partner status and same-sex sexual experience (see Table 5). Having a steady, monogamous partner was associated with greater sexual body-esteem, whereas having a history of sexual experience with same-sex partners was associated with more entitlement to self-pleasure. Females who had a steady, monogamous relationship reported greater sexual body-esteem, sexual self-efficacy and sexual self-reflection even after accounting for same-sex sexual experience. Females with a history of same-sex sexual behavior were higher in entitlement to self-pleasure, sexual self-efficacy and sexual self-reflection even after accounting for the effect of having a steady, monogamous romantic partner.

4. Discussion

In this study, associations were examined between all five elements of females' sexual subjectivity (body-esteem, self-entitlement to sexual desire and pleasure, entitlement to sexual desire and pleasure from a partner, sexual self-efficacy and sexual self-reflection), their romantic experiences (i.e., relationship status, length and quality) and their same-sex sexual experience. It has been suggested in previous research that females' sexual subjectivity is more likely to develop in the context of a romantic and/or sexual relationship, and that some elements, such as sexual body-esteem, may benefit from having a steady partner (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). This hypothesis was tested in the current study, which extends on three other previous studies. The first one comes from Buzwell and Rosenthal (1996) who observed that adolescents clustered in the sexually competent category (28%) were mainly older, sexually experienced and reported more sexual self-efficacy. The second study from Horne and Zimmer-Gembeck (2005) found that sexual subjectivity was higher among females with more sexual experience. The third study comes from Diamond (2010) who observed a great amount of sexual fluidity among emerging adult females.

4.1 Sexual Subjectivity and Romantic Status, Length and Quality

Firtly, we investigated whether being involved in a romantic relationship would identify girls higher in sexual

subjectivity, and whether females in longer and better quality relationships (more warmth and supportive, and less rejecting and coercive relationships) would report more sexual subjectivity. We found that sexual body-esteem was significantly higher among females who were involved in a steady monogamous relationship, and, when the analyses are limited to those participants in a steady romantic relationship, even higher in longer compared to shorter relationships. A possible explanation is the positive feedback potentially provided by the romantic partner. We suspect a partner can give feedback about desirability and attractiveness, and relationships that are maintained over longer periods of time may have more of this positive content. The quality of this feedback is also likely to be more personalized and warm in longer-term relationships. It is therefore possible that long-term romantic relationships provide a secure and confident context to develop one's sexual body-esteem because of more regular positive reinforcement. Our multivariate models supported such idea by showing that positive romantic relationship quality was also uniquely associated with greater body-esteem. This provides additional support for the idea that appreciation of the body for females may be tied to the quality of the romantic partnership, and probably linked to sexual interactions and feedback within a relationship.

As was found for body-esteem, sexual self-efficacy was higher among females in steady monogamous relationships and for those in longer-term romantic relationships. Steady and lengthy relationships could provide an ideal context to negotiate sexual needs and desires or temporary absence of such desire. This negotiation might occur more easily because less fear of rejection or relationship loss, which may be more present in earlier stages of romantic relationships or shorter romances (Metts & Mikucki, 2008). Sexual self-efficacy may be easier to express in social contexts where partners have had more opportunity to get to know each other's preferences and are more accepting of experimentation. Again, this seems to be even more prominent when the relationship lasts longer. Similarly, Impett and Tolman (2006) found that young women who reported higher rates of sexual self-concept also reported greater sexual satisfaction. Another study from Boislard and colleagues (2002) found that sexual motivation and satisfaction were higher when the partner was supportive of autonomy. To summarize, there is increasing evidence that the quality of the romantic partnership impacts on sexual self-concept as well as on satisfaction. Our study showed that some elements of sexual subjectivity are also influenced by such romantic relationship quality and length.

A third element of sexual subjectivity, sexual self-reflection, was also found to be slightly higher among females in steady, monogamous relationships compared to other females. The underlying mechanism linking sexual self-reflection with steady romantic relationships may be the presence of opportunities to discuss one's sex life with the partner. We did not predict, however, that sexual self-reflection would be lower among females in longer compared to shorter relationships. When considering this finding, we hypothesize that sexual self-reflection may be prompted when females are involved in steady relationships, but that reflection declines after a certain period of time when sexual comfort with the partner has reached a plateau and there is either more of a sexual routine or enough comfort to experience new things without having to reflect on them as much as in the first stages of the relationship.

The final two elements of sexual subjectivity, entitlement to self-pleasure and pleasure from the partner, did not differ significantly between groups based on steady romantic relationship nor length of the relationship, thus suggesting it may not be the stability of the relationship that is important to feelings of sexual entitlement. A previous study had shown that females in their late teens and early 20's with no history of intercourse showed greater increases in entitlement over a one-year period compared to females with a history of intercourse (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Hence, it may be that these dimensions of entitlement to self-pleasure and to pleasure from a partner develop normatively with maturation, or because of a history of sexual experiences that are not confined to romantic relationships with steady romantic partners.

4.2 Sexual Subjectivity and Same-Sex Sexual Behavior

Four elements of sexual subjectivity were higher among females with same-sex sexual experience compared to other females, with sexual self-reflection and self-entitlement to sexual pleasure showing the biggest differences between groups. Moreover, when having both a steady, monogamous romantic partner and a history of same-sex sexual experience are considered, a history of same-sex sexual experience uniquely and positively contributes to greater entitlement to pleasure from self, self-efficacy in sexual pleasure and sexual self-reflection. Only sexual body-esteem was not associated with same-sex sexual experience. Perhaps a history of same-sex sexual experience prompts a better understanding of personal entitlements and efficacy, and greater reflection on one's sexual preferences and attractions. However, because it is also possible that females higher in sexual subjectivity are more open to sexual experimentation than other females, these associations may reveal the opposite pathway with sexual subjectivity an antecedent rather than an outcome of same-sex sexual experience.

4.3 Limitations of the Study and Future Research

Although these findings show the relevance of romantic relationships and same-sex sexual experience for sexual subjectivity among young females, there are some limitations of this study to consider along with these results. First, because this study was cross-sectional, it is possible that sexual subjectivity may also (or instead) predict relationship status, length and quality, as well as same-sex sexual experience. For example, it may be that women higher on sexual subjectivity are more likely to be involved in romantic relationships and to maintain them over time compared to women lower in sexual subjectivity. Perhaps those who do get committed to long-term romantic relationships feel more confident and comfortable in their bodies *a priori*. The literature on sexual subjectivity informs us that the greater increases in entitlement to sexual pleasure from self and from partner are among women who have the greater increases in sexual experience (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Future research should examine whether changes in sexual subjectivity impact romantic and sexual behavior, and how romantic behavior may impact sexual subjectivity over time. It would have been also interesting to account for both the age at first romantic relationship and previous sexual experience, including with other-sex sexual partners.

Secondly, the majority of the sample was Caucasian Australian University students, which limits the generalizability of these findings to more ethnically diverse samples of emerging adult females. Thirdly, as for the majority of studies on sexual subjectivity or related concepts (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2005, 2006; Martin, 1996; O'Sullivan et al., 2006; O'Sullivan & Brooks-Gunn, 2005; Tolman, 2002; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), only females were included in our study. We know virtually nothing about males' sexual subjectivity, apart from some preliminary findings from Belgium suggesting that this concept also applies well for males (Beyers, De Meyer, & Degryse, 2008). The next step in the field is clearly to conduct some studies on sexual subjectivity that include both males and females, on males only, and to examine its development and associations with sexual experience and romantic relationships.

Fourthly, one question that remains is why our measure of romantic partner relationship quality (i.e., warmth vs. rejection by a partner) was most associated with one sexual subjectivity element only, sexual body-esteem. A better quality relationship was expected to provide a general romantic context that would promote all elements of sexual subjectivity. Our measure of romantic relationship quality may not have tapped the specific romantic interactions that promote or undermine girls' development of sexuality. Given these surprising results, we believe future research should address this further by investigating how general relationship quality may or may not be carried into sexual interactions and whether more specific processes within sexual interactions are the most significant correlates of sexuality development for both girls and boys.

Finally, there was an attempt to overcome the *heterocentric bias* found in the literature by distinguishing girls who reported other-sex attractions only from those who reported same-sex attractions, more research is needed to confirm our findings. In the last decade, there has been a paradigmatic shift from conceptualizing "homosexual adolescents" to a more nuanced and inclusive label of "sexual minority youth", a more diverse group who may at times adopt a homosexual, bisexual, or no specific identity, may be actively questioning their sexual identity and orientation, and may engage in either and/or both same-sex and other-sex sexual behaviors and/or attractions (Cohler & Hammack, 2006; Tolman & McClelland, 2011). However, our measure of sexual attractions referred to self-definition and behaviors only. Future studies should include a broader definition of sexual minority youth, and use a multidimensional measure of same-sex sexual orientation that includes all three dimensions of self-identification, sexual attractions and sexual behaviors (Diamond & Lucas, 2004; Diamond, Savin-Williams & Dube, 1999) to provide a more comprehensive view of the association between sexual orientation and sexual subjectivity.

4.4 Implications and Contribution

Previous research has found that females' sexual subjectivity increases over time in the late adolescent and emerging adult years (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), and that sexual behavior is associated with changes in sexual subjectivity over one year (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). This study adds to a growing body of recent research on the development of a sexual self-concept (O'Sullivan, Meyer-Bahlburg, & McKeague, 2006; Tolman & McClelland, 2011) and sexual subjectivity (Horne & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2005, 2006; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), by showing differences in elements of sexual subjectivity among emerging adult females based on the presence, length and quality of their romantic partnership, and on their "sexual careers" inclusive or not of same-sex sexual experiences. Overall, hypotheses were supported with each elements of sexual subjectivity associated with one or more aspects of romantic behavior or same-sex sexual experiences. Being in a longer-term romantic relationship with quality features, and having a history of sexual experience with same-sex

partners were associated with increases in most elements of sexual subjectivity.

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Table 1. Comparisons of sexual subjectivity between relationship status groups (N = 248)

	No Steady Monogamous Relationship (n = 126)	Steady Monogamous Relationship (n = 122)	
Sexual subjectivity elements	M (SD)	M (SD)	t(1,246)
Sexual body-esteem	3.13 (.75)	3.42 (.65)	3.18**
Entitled -sexual pleasure oneself	3.27 (.95)	3.39 (.97)	.99
Entitled -sexual pleasure partner	3.81 (.58)	3.88 (.59)	.95
Self-efficacy in sexual pleasure	3.41 (.75)	3.76 (.76)	3.71***
Sexual self-reflection	3.24 (.77)	3.44 (.73)	2.02*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2. Comparisons of sexual subjectivity between groups based on relationship length (N = 122)

	18 months or shorter duration (n = 75)	Longer than 18 months duration (n = 47)	
Sexual subjectivity elements	M (SD)	M (SD)	t(1,120)
Sexual body-esteem	3.33 (.62)	3.56 (.67)	1.97*
Entitled -sexual pleasure oneself	3.31 (.91)	3.52 (1.06)	1.18
Entitled -sexual pleasure partner	3.87 (.60)	3.90 (.57)	.33
Self-efficacy in sexual pleasure	3.64 (.78)	3.96 (.69)	2.37**
Sexual self-reflection	3.55 (.72)	3.25 (.71)	-2.27*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3. Results of regressing each sexual subjectivity element on dichotomised relationship length and romantic relationship quality (N = 122)

	<i>B</i> (SE <i>B</i>)	β
Sexual body-esteem, $R^2 = .09$		
Longer than average relationship (> 18 mths)	.18 (.11)	.14
Positive romantic relationship quality	.30 (.10)	.26**
Entitled -sexual pleasure oneself, $R^2 = .02$		
Longer than average relationship (> 18 mths)	.24 (.19)	.12
Positive romantic relationship quality	.10 (.17)	.06
Entitled -sexual pleasure partner, $R^2 = .00$		
Longer than average relationship (> 18 mths)	.04 (.11)	.03
Positive romantic relationship quality	.04 (.10)	.04
Self-efficacy in sexual pleasure, $R^2 = .04$		
Longer than average relationship (> 18 mths)	.30 (.14)	.19*
Positive romantic relationship quality	.06 (.13)	.04
Sexual self-reflection, $R^2 = .04$		
Longer than average relationship (> 18 mths)	-.30 (.14)	-.20*
Positive romantic relationship quality	.07 (.13)	.05

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4. Comparisons of sexual subjectivity between groups with or without a history of sexual experience with the same sex (N = 251)

	No History of Same-Sex Sexual Experience ($n = 197$)	History of Same-Sex Sexual Experience ($n = 54$)	
Sexual subjectivity elements	M (SD)	M (SD)	$t(1,249)$
Sexual body-esteem	3.30 (.72)	3.20 (.72)	.37
Entitled -sexual pleasure oneself	3.20 (.96)	3.86 (.73)	4.67***
Entitled -sexual pleasure partner	3.81 (.60)	4.00 (.50)	2.14*
Self-efficacy in sexual pleasure	3.52 (.75)	3.81 (.81)	2.44*
Sexual self-reflection	3.22 (.72)	3.77 (.72)	5.04***

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5 Results of regressing each sexual subjectivity element on partner status and history of same-sex sexual behavior (N = 248)

	<i>B</i> (SE <i>B</i>)	β
Sexual body-esteem, $R^2 = .04$		
Steady, monogamous partner	.28 (.09)	.20**
History of same-sex sexual experience	-.10 (.11)	-.06
Entitled -sexual pleasure oneself, $R^2 = .08$		
Steady, monogamous partner	.13 (.12)	.07
History of same-sex sexual experience	.66 (.14)	.28**
Entitled -sexual pleasure partner, $R^2 = .02$		
Steady, monogamous partner	.07 (.07)	.06
History of same-sex sexual experience	.17 (.09)	.12
Self-efficacy in sexual pleasure, $R^2 = .07$		
Steady, monogamous partner	.36 (.10)	.23**
History of same-sex sexual experience	.29 (.12)	.16*
Sexual self-reflection, $R^2 = .11$		
Steady, monogamous partner	.21 (.09)	.13*
History of same-sex sexual experience	.54 (.11)	.30**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.