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Personality and Individual Differences 40 (2006) 1299–1311

PERSONALITY AND
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

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Sexual strategies pursued and mate attraction tactics deployed

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Received 23 August 2005; accepted 1 November 2005

Available online 4 January 2006

Abstract

Two studies tested evolutionary hypotheses about the use and perceived effectiveness of specific mate attraction tactics as a function of sexual strategy pursued. Participants and a close same-sex friend of each participant reported on the participant's sexual strategy and deployment of attraction tactics. In Study 1, participants' mate attraction tactics differed predictably depending on whether they were pursuing a long-term (sexually restricted) versus short-term (sexually unrestricted) sexual strategy. In Study 2, participants' sexual strategy predicted their judgments of tactic effectiveness. In both studies, friends' perceptions of participants' sexual strategy and mate attraction tactics corroborated participants' own self-reports. Discussion highlights the unique adaptive problems of mating, such as detecting rivals and inhibiting rivalry, that arise in the context of managing same-sex friendships.

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Keywords: Sociosexuality; Sexual strategies; Mate attraction; Friendship

1. Introduction

The theory of sexual selection provides a framework for understanding human mating strategies (Darwin, 1871). Sexual selection consists of two evolutionary processes by which traits evolve

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as a consequence of mating advantage. Intrasexual selection involves the evolution of traits that facilitate successful same-sex competition. Those who best their intrasexual rivals have a mating advantage over those who lose these competitions. Intersexual selection involves the evolution of mate preferences and their effects. If members of one sex display some consensus about the qualities desired in the opposite sex, and the qualities desired have a non-zero heritable component, then those of the opposite sex who possess the desired qualities have a mating advantage.

Although researchers have devoted attention to mate preferences (e.g., Buss & Schmitt, 1993) and mate competition (e.g., Schmitt & Buss, 1996), there is a gap in our understanding of the processes of sexual selection in humans. The preferences of one sex should drive the domains in which the opposite sex will compete and the tactics they deploy in the service of intrasexual competition. No prior research has investigated whether individual differences in sexual strategy pursued are linked with the tactics of intrasexual competition used and perceived as effective.

One dimension of individual differences in sexual strategy is a continuum anchored at the ends by short-term mating and long-term mating. Some individuals pursue long-term mating marked by investment in the relationship. At the other end is short-term mating, such as brief sexual encounters. Individual differences in sexual strategy are critical to sexual selection because mate preferences shift as a function of sexual strategy pursued (Buss & Schmitt, 1993).

The Sociosexual Orientation Inventory (SOI; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) provides one measure of individual differences in sexual strategy. Individuals who are relatively “unrestricted” report more behavioral experience with casual sex, fantasize more about people other than their current partner, and hold more favorable attitudes about casual sex. Individuals who are relatively “restricted” in their sociosexuality report the reverse pattern. Across sex, unrestrictedness is associated with early sexual onset in a relationship and lower levels of commitment (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991); an emphasis on a partner’s attractiveness (Simpson & Gangestad, 1992); and a willingness to pursue extra-dyadic sexual affairs (Seal, Agostinelli, & Hannett, 1994).

1.1. Individual differences in mate attraction as a function of sexual strategy

Mate attraction has not yet been linked empirically to individual differences in sexual strategy. Researchers have developed taxonomies of tactics used for self-promotion and competitor derogation for the goal of mate attraction and have documented evolutionarily predicted sex differences in the frequency and perceived effectiveness of these acts (Buss, 1988; Buss & Dedden, 1990; Schmitt & Buss, 1996). One objective of the current research is to test the hypothesis that, within sex, sexual strategy pursued will predict actual use and perceived effectiveness of different mate attraction tactics. This research is designed to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. Because men and women who pursue an unrestricted strategy are more willing to have casual sex, they will be more likely than restricted individuals to use tactics that influence potential mates’ perception of their sexual availability. Thus, they will report more frequent use of tactics that promote their own sexual availability and more frequent use of tactics that derogate their rivals’ lack of sexual availability.

Hypothesis 2. Because women place a premium on attractiveness in the short-term mating context (Gangestad, Thornhill, & Garver, 2002), men who pursue an unrestricted strategy will be more likely than restricted men to use tactics that influence potential mates’ perception of their

physical appearance. Because men express especially strong preferences for physical attractiveness in a short-term partner (Buss & Schmitt, 1993), we hypothesize the same effect for women. Thus, both men and women who are unrestricted will report more frequent use of tactics that enhance their own appearance and more frequent use of tactics that derogate their rivals' appearance.

Hypothesis 3. Because women hold high standards for social status or dominance in a short-term partner, and because male attractiveness has been linked to dominant behavior and unrestrictedness (Simpson, Gangestad, Christensen, & Leck, 1999), men who pursue an unrestricted sexual strategy will be more likely than restricted men to use tactics that influence potential mates' perception of their dominance. Thus, unrestricted men will report more frequent use of tactics that promote their own dominance and more frequent use of tactics that derogate their rivals' dominance.

Hypothesis 4. Because men and women who pursue a restricted strategy are pursuing monogamous relationships, they will be more likely than unrestricted individuals to use tactics that influence potential mates' perception of their sexual exclusivity. We predict that restricted men and women will report more frequent use of tactics that promote perceptions of their own sexual loyalty and more frequent use of tactics that derogate their rivals' lack of sexual loyalty.

1.2. Friends' perceptions of each other's sexual strategy and mate attraction behavior

A second objective of the current research is to build on previous research indicating that same-sex friends may have a vested interest in being aware of each other's sexual strategy and attraction behaviors. For example, same-sex friends can function as cooperative collaborators in seeking mating partners, or conversely can sometimes become sexual rivals when they pursue the same mates or attempt to "poach" each other's existing mates. In one study, for example, participants rated aspects of friendship such as, "having someone to go out and meet members of the opposite sex with" as among the most important benefits of same-sex friendship (Bleske & Buss, 2000). In that same study, participants rated "competing with their friend for attention from the opposite sex" as among the most important *costly* aspects of same-sex friendship. In another study, nearly half of the participants reported competing with a same-sex friend to attract a member of the other sex (Bleske & Shackelford, 2001).

If over ancestral history, humans recurrently faced the challenge of choosing same-sex friends who would serve as mate-seeking partners but not intrasexual rivals, then selection may have forged adaptations designed to promote interest in and assessment of a friend's sexual strategy. Converging lines of evidence support this proposal. Women report less willingness to befriend a woman described as sexually promiscuous than one described as pursuing a long-term mating strategy (Bleske & Shackelford, 2001). Perhaps, women who pursue a short-term mating strategy interfere with most women's long-term mating strategy by luring existing mates away for short-term sexual encounters or rendering available men less willing to commit to long-term mating because of the availability of short-term sexual opportunities. In keeping with this logic, Hebl and Kashy (1995) reported that unrestricted women tended to have more social interactions, particularly with men, than did restricted women. Hebl and Kashy (1995) also found that, compared to

restricted individuals, both men and women who were unrestricted tended to report lower quality interactions with their best friends. Together, these findings imply that, if men and women face intrasexual rivalry from their same-sex friends, then one means of monitoring this rivalry is to attend to a friend's sexual strategy. The current research asks a close friend of each participant to report their perception of the participant's sexual strategy and use of attraction tactics. We test the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 5 and 6. Because humans may have adaptations designed to select as friends those who are mate-seeking partners and not intrasexual rivals, friends' perceptions of participants' sexual strategy will correlate positively with participants' own reports of their sexual strategy (Hypothesis 5), and friends' perceptions of participants' use of attraction tactics will correlate positively with participants' own reports of their use of these tactics (Hypothesis 6).

2. Study 1: Reported use of mate attraction tactics

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

We recruited 69 male and 100 female same-sex friendship pairs from a large Southwestern university. We omitted one homosexual participant and friend from each sex, leaving 68 male pairs (mean age = 18.93) and 99 female pairs (mean age = 18.95). Most participants were Caucasian or Hispanic. Primary subjects brought a close same-sex friend to the session, and participated as part of a psychology course research requirement.

2.1.2. Instruments and procedure

Two researchers ran each session of 6–10 same-sex pairs. Upon entry to the testing room, each primary subject and friend were assigned a pair identification number via index cards. From this point, primary subjects were not treated any differently from the friends they brought with them. Members of female pair #1 were assigned cards "1A" and "1B", and so on. Then, one of the researchers led all the "A" card-carrying participants to a second room. In each room, the researcher distributed to each participant a questionnaire with matching identification number. "A" card-carrying participants completed a survey about themselves, thus serving as "primary subjects"; "B" card-carrying participants completed a survey about the same-sex friend with whom they had attended the session, thus serving as "friends".

First, participants reported, on a seven-point scale from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Very often*), how frequently during the past six months they (or their friend) used each of 130 different acts to attract a member of the opposite sex. These acts comprise 31 tactics; each tactic consisted of the mean of all acts subsumed by it (see Schmitt & Buss, 1996). Second, participants reported, on a seven-point scale from 1 (*Never*) to 7 (*Very often*), how frequently during the past six months they (or their friend) used each of 83 different acts to derogate a member of the same sex (these acts comprise 28 tactics; see Schmitt & Buss, 1996). Third, participants reported their (or their friend's) sexual behaviors and beliefs as measured by the SOI.

Each of hypotheses 1–4 and 6 was tested by participants' reports of their use of various tactics that, following Schmitt and Buss (1996), were considered related but distinct. Table 1 displays a single act to represent each tactic relevant to the hypotheses in question; we did not analyze participants' use of other tactics that were not relevant to the current hypotheses. Split by sex and participant status (self or friend), alpha reliabilities for the relevant attraction and derogation

Table 1

Study 1: Correlations between participants' self-reported sexual strategy and use of attraction tactics

| | Men | Women |
|--|--------|--------|
| <i>Hypothesis 1: Sexual availability</i> | | |
| Make proposition (4) | .35** | .43*** |
| “He made a pass at her.” | | |
| Act seductive (3) | .36** | .41*** |
| “She talked seductively.” | | |
| Act flirtatious (5) | .16 | .14 |
| “He made subtle physical contact.” | | |
| Sexualize appearance (2) | .20 | .37*** |
| “She wore revealing clothes.” | | |
| Have sex (3) | .44*** | .45*** |
| “He had sex with her.” | | |
| Call rival sexually unavailable (3) | .14 | .33*** |
| “She said that she led men on.” | | |
| <i>Hypothesis 2: Physical attractiveness</i> | | |
| Enhance physical attractiveness (8) | .26* | .20* |
| “He made himself look good.” | | |
| Derogate rival's physical attractiveness (4) | .30* | .32** |
| “She made fun of her body size/shape.” | | |
| <i>Hypothesis 3: Dominance</i> | | |
| Display dominance (5) | .31** | .20* |
| “He was talkative and outgoing.” | | |
| Act macho (5) | .22 | .30** |
| “She acted self-assured.” | | |
| Call rival unpopular (2) | .25* | .28** |
| “He would say that none of the other guys like him.” | | |
| Derogate rival's dominance (2) | .23 | .27** |
| “She would call the other woman a wimp.” | | |
| Dominate competitor (3) | .27* | .27** |
| “He beat the other man up.” | | |
| <i>Hypothesis 4: Sexual exclusivity</i> | | |
| Display sexual exclusivity (2) | –.24* | –.23* |
| “She avoided sex with men other than him.” | | |
| Call rival promiscuous (5) | .13 | .09 |
| “He told her the other man slept around a lot.” | | |

Note. Number between parentheses represents the number of acts within that tactic. Male $N = 68$, female $N = 98$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

tactics ranged from .24 to .93, with 63% of them equal to or greater than .70; mean alpha = .72. Low reliabilities were found primarily among women's reports of use of the dominance tactics. Because acts were grouped into tactics conceptually, acts for a given tactic were retained as a tactic even if the alpha reliability coefficient was lower than .70.

2.2. Results and discussion

The SOI was scored as instructed by Simpson and Gangestad (1991); however, because most participants were not in a relationship, the item pertaining to frequency of extra-pair fantasy was omitted. Composite reliabilities for male and female self- and friend-reports ranged from .80 to .91. Higher SOI scores indicate a more unrestricted sexual strategy.

Hypothesis 1 stated that unrestricted men and women would engage in attraction tactics that manipulate a potential mate's perception of their own or a competitor's sexual availability. As displayed in Table 1, among men an unrestricted strategy was associated with more frequent use of making a proposition, acting seductive, and having sex. Among women, an unrestricted strategy predicted more frequent use of making a proposition, acting seductive, sexualizing one's appearance, having sex, and derogating rivals by indicating their sexual unavailability.

Hypothesis 2 stated that unrestricted men and women would report more frequent use of attraction tactics that either enhance their own physical attractiveness or derogate their rivals' attractiveness. As displayed in Table 1, this hypothesis was supported. For both sexes, an unrestricted strategy predicted more frequent use of enhancing one's own attractiveness and derogating a rival's attractiveness.

Hypothesis 3 stated that unrestricted men would use tactics that manipulate a potential mate's perception of their own or a competitor's dominance. As displayed in Table 1, an unrestricted strategy for men was associated with more frequent use of displaying dominance, calling rival unpopular, and dominating competitor. Although not predicted, unrestrictedness in women also was associated with more frequent reported use of tactics associated with manipulating perceptions of dominance.

Hypothesis 4 stated that restricted men and women would use tactics that manipulate a potential mate's perception of their own or a competitor's sexual exclusivity. This hypothesis was partially supported. For both sexes, restrictedness was associated with more frequent reported use of displaying sexual exclusivity. Restrictedness was not associated with more frequent reported use of calling a rival promiscuous.

Hypothesis 5 stated that friends' reports of participants' sexual strategy would agree with participants' own reports of their sexual strategy. This hypothesis was supported. Initial self- and friend-reported SOI responses were highly correlated, males: $r(68) = .64$, $p < .001$; females: $r(98) = .73$, $p < .001$. The female sample included one outlier; with it removed, the correlation remained large and significant, $r(97) = .58$, $p < .001$. Fig. 1 is a scatter plot (with outlier removed) of the correlation between participants' self-reported sexual strategy and friends' reports of participants' sexual strategy. To investigate whether the high correlations were a product of socially desirable responding or non-normally distributed data, we constructed random friendship pairs by moving each "friend" one row down from its original match. Self-friend agreement coefficients among randomly constructed friendship pairs were near zero, males: $r(68) = -.05$, $p = .67$; females (outlier removed): $r(96) = .11$, $p = .28$.

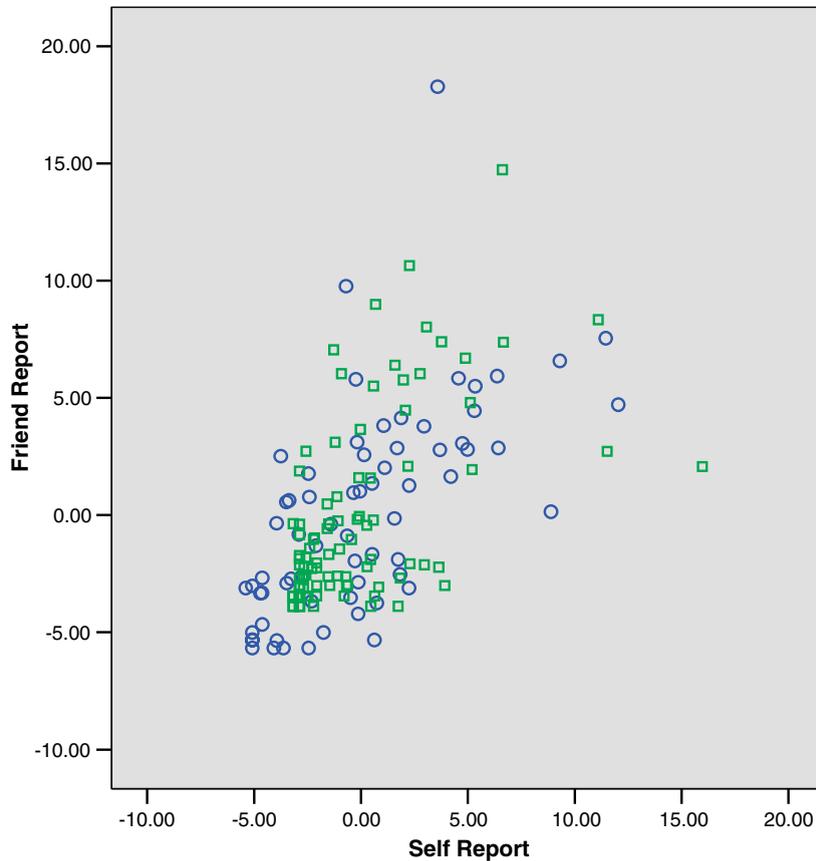


Fig. 1. Study 1: Self-friend agreement on sexual strategy. Circles represent male friendship pairs; squares represent female friendship pairs.

To investigate whether participants' self-reported sexual strategy predicted the degree of agreement between self and friend, the absolute difference between self and friend SOI scores was calculated for each pair. Among both sexes, greater disagreement between self and friend occurred as self-reported unrestrictedness increased, males: $r(68) = .30$, $p < .05$; females: $r(98) = .47$, $p < .001$ (with outlier removed, $r(97) = .65$, $p < .001$).

According to Hypothesis 6, friends' reports of participants' attraction behaviors would correlate with participants' own reports of their attraction behaviors. The results, by sex, are displayed in Table 2. In three of four attraction tactic domains (sexual availability, physical attractiveness, and sexual exclusivity), friends' reports of participants' behavior concurred with participants' self-reports.

2.2.1. Brief discussion

This study is the first to document two general findings. First, individual differences in sexual strategy predicted use of various mate attraction tactics: Unrestrictedness was associated with more frequent use of tactics that manipulate others' perceptions of one's sexual availability,

Table 2

Study 1 tests of Hypothesis 6: Correlations between participants' self-reported use of attraction tactics and friends' reports of participants' use of attraction tactics

| | Men | Women |
|--|--------|--------|
| <i>Sexual availability</i> | | |
| Make proposition | .41** | .47*** |
| Act seductive | .38** | .45*** |
| Act flirtatious | .51*** | .37*** |
| Sexualize appearance | .24 | .39*** |
| Have sex | .50*** | .65*** |
| Call rival sexually unavailable | .10 | .27** |
| <i>Physical attractiveness</i> | | |
| Enhance physical attractiveness | .47*** | .49*** |
| Derogate rival's physical attractiveness | .46*** | .08 |
| <i>Dominance</i> | | |
| Display dominance | .16 | .33** |
| Act macho | .23 | .25* |
| Call rival unpopular | .03 | .06 |
| Derogate rival's dominance | .23 | .15 |
| Dominate competitor | .18 | .15 |
| <i>Sexual exclusivity</i> | | |
| Display sexual exclusivity | .19* | .36*** |
| Call rival promiscuous | .14 | .29** |

Note. Male $N = 68$, female $N = 98$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

physical attractiveness, and dominance, whereas restrictedness was associated with more frequent use of tactics that manipulate others' perceptions of one's sexual exclusivity. Second, participants' same-sex friends' reports of their sexual strategy and mate attraction behavior corroborated participants' self-reports.

In Study 1, unrestricted women reported more frequent use of tactics that manipulate others' perceptions of either their own or a rival's level of dominance. In addition to providing a second test of the major hypotheses, Study 2 was conducted to determine whether this unexpected finding would replicate for individuals' perceptions of which mate attraction tactics are effective.

3. Study 2: Perceived effectiveness of mate attraction tactics

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

We recruited 70 male and 100 female same-sex friendship pairs from a large Southwestern university. One female participant left her questionnaire entirely blank; thus, no data were included

for her or her friend. After omitting the data from one male homosexual participant and his friend, the sample included 69 male same-sex friendship pairs (mean age = 18.96) and 99 female same-sex friendship pairs (mean age = 19.10). None had participated in Study 1. Most participants were Caucasian or Hispanic.

3.1.2. Instruments and procedure

We followed the same protocol as in Study 1, except that participants rated on seven-point scales how effective they (or their friend) perceived each mate attraction act and competitor derogation act to be in attracting a member of the opposite sex. Tactic reliabilities for the hypotheses in question ranged from .44 to .91, with 62% equal to or greater than .70; mean alpha = .72. As in Study 1, low reliabilities were most common in women's responses to acts surrounding dominance.

3.2. Results and discussion

The SOI was scored as in Study 1. Composite reliabilities ranged from .82 to .86.

Hypothesis 1 was largely supported. As displayed in Table 3, among both sexes, an unrestricted strategy was associated with greater perceived effectiveness of sexual availability advertisements.

Table 3

Study 2: Correlations between participants' self-reported sexual strategy and perceived effectiveness of attraction tactics

| | Men | Women |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Hypothesis 1: Sexual availability</i> | | |
| Make proposition | .39 ^{***} | .21 [*] |
| Act seductive | .50 ^{***} | .20 [*] |
| Act flirtatious | .11 | -.04 |
| Sexualize appearance | .38 ^{***} | .23 [*] |
| Have sex | .48 ^{***} | .29 ^{**} |
| Call rival sexually unavailable | .00 | -.01 |
| <i>Hypothesis 2: Physical attractiveness</i> | | |
| Enhance physical attractiveness | .30 ^{**} | -.05 |
| Derogate rival's physical attractiveness | .28 [*] | .10 |
| <i>Hypothesis 3: Dominance</i> | | |
| Display dominance | .23 | .14 |
| Act macho | .42 ^{***} | .08 |
| Call rival unpopular | .03 | .15 |
| Derogate rival's dominance | .26 [*] | .18 |
| Dominate competitor | .28 [*] | .07 |
| <i>Hypothesis 4: Sexual exclusivity</i> | | |
| Display sexual exclusivity | -.08 | -.31 ^{**} |
| Call rival promiscuous | -.03 | .04 |

Note. Male $N = 68$ –69, female $N = 99$.

^{*} $p < .05$.

^{**} $p < .01$.

^{***} $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 2, that unrestrictedness would correlate with perceived effectiveness of physical appearance tactics, was partially supported (see Table 3). For men but not women, an unrestricted strategy predicted greater perceived effectiveness of enhancing one's attractiveness as well as derogating a rival's attractiveness.

Hypothesis 3, that male unrestrictedness would correlate with perceived effectiveness of dominance tactics, was supported by three of five tests. As displayed in Table 3, unrestricted men perceived acting macho, derogating a rival's dominance, and dominating a competitor as more effective than did restricted men. Contrary to the findings of Study 1, but consistent with the hypothesis, an unrestricted strategy among women was not associated with greater perceived effectiveness of tactics involving dominance. Thus, unrestricted women's greater reported *use* of dominance-oriented tactics in Study 1 did not extend to unrestricted women's greater perceived *effectiveness* of dominance-oriented tactics in Study 2.

Hypothesis 4, that sexual restrictedness would correlate with judgments of portraying sexual exclusivity, was partially supported. For women but not men, sexual restrictedness was associated with greater perceived effectiveness of displaying sexual exclusivity.

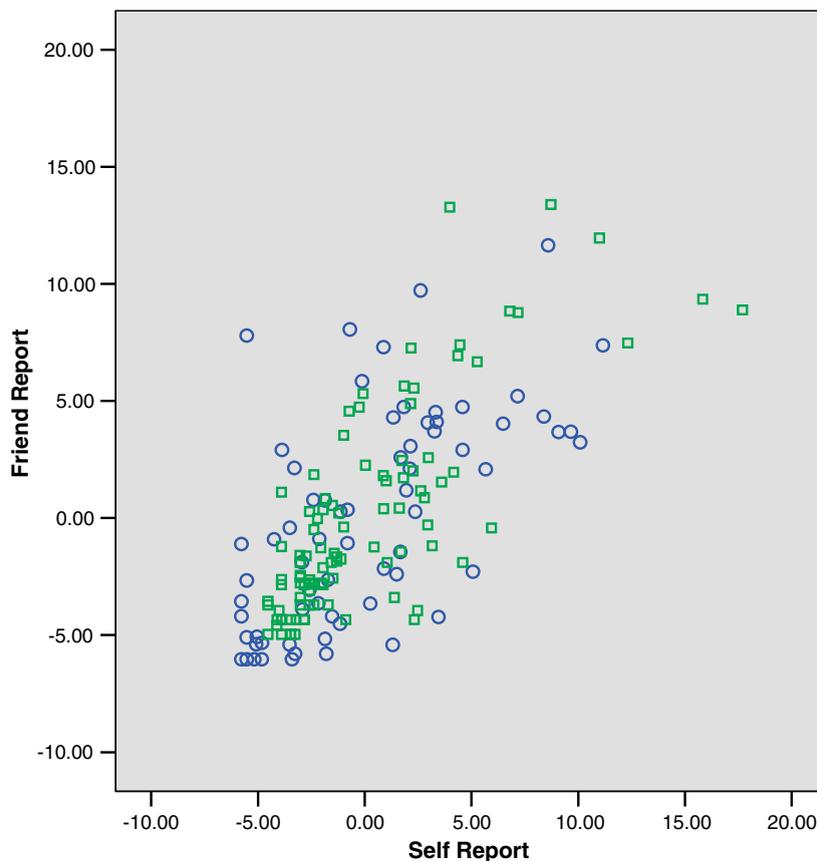


Fig. 2. Study 2: Self-friend agreement on sexual strategy. Circles represent male friendship pairs; squares represent female friendship pairs.

In support of Hypothesis 5, self- and friend-reported SOI scores were highly correlated, males: $r(68) = .63, p < .001$; females: $r(99) = .77, p < .001$ (see Fig. 2). Among randomly constructed friendship pairs, the correlation was near zero for males, $r(68) = .03, p = .81$, and considerably reduced for females, $r(99) = .24, p = .016$.

We investigated the extent to which participants' self-reported sexual strategy predicted the degree of agreement between self and friend. Among men, self-reported unrestrictedness predicted greater self-friend disagreement, but not significantly, $r(68) = .20, p = .11$. Among women, the same pattern emerged as in Study 1: Self-friend disagreement increased as self-reported unrestrictedness increased, $r(99) = .57, p < .001$.

According to Hypothesis 6, friends' perceptions of participants' attraction judgments should be correlated with participants' own attraction judgments. The results, by sex, are displayed in Table 4. Although the links were not as robust as in Study 1, in three of four mate attraction tactic domains, friends' reports of the participants' judgments concurred with participants' own judgments of which attraction tactics would be effective for them to use.

3.2.1. Brief discussion

Study 2 replicated the general pattern of findings from Study 1. First, individual differences in sexual strategy predicted perceived effectiveness of various mate attraction tactics. Among men,

Table 4

Study 2: Tests of Hypothesis 6: Correlations between participants' self-reported attraction tactic judgments and friends' reports of participants' attraction tactic judgments

| | Men | Women |
|--|--------|--------|
| <i>Sexual availability</i> | | |
| Make proposition | .10 | .24* |
| Act seductive | .21 | .27** |
| Act flirtatious | .19 | .03 |
| Sexualize appearance | .26* | .40*** |
| Have sex | .29* | .29** |
| Call rival sexually unavailable | .47*** | .13 |
| <i>Physical attractiveness</i> | | |
| Enhance physical attractiveness | .25* | .13 |
| Derogate rival's physical attractiveness | .24* | .29** |
| <i>Dominance</i> | | |
| Display dominance | -.02 | .09 |
| Act macho | -.11 | -.07 |
| Call rival unpopular | .29* | .12 |
| Derogate rival's dominance | .29* | .13 |
| Dominate competitor | .20 | .13 |
| <i>Sexual exclusivity</i> | | |
| Display sexual exclusivity | .05 | .24* |
| Call rival promiscuous | .44*** | .09 |

Note. Male $N = 67-69$, female $N = 98-99$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

unrestrictedness was associated with greater perceived effectiveness of tactics that manipulate others' perceptions of one's sexual availability, physical attractiveness, and dominance. Among women, unrestrictedness was associated with greater perceived effectiveness of tactics that manipulate others' perceptions of one's sexual availability, and restrictedness with those that manipulate perceptions of one's sexual exclusivity. After the fact, it seems sensible that unrestricted women did not perceive enhancing one's appearance as any more effective than did restricted women: Men strongly desire beauty in a mate regardless of context. Second, men's and women's close same-sex friends' perceptions of their sexual strategy corroborated men's and women's own reports. Overall, friends' beliefs about participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of attraction tactics were weakly to moderately associated with participants' own perceptions of the effectiveness of attraction tactics. It is possible that self-friend agreement for effectiveness judgments (Study 2) was lower than self-friend agreement for reported use of tactics (Study 1) because making assessments of what is going on in a friend's head is more difficult and subject to error than is making assessments of a friend's overt behavior.

4. General discussion

This research is the first to relate individuals' sexual strategy to reports of their own mate attraction behavior, and the first to relate individuals' sexual strategy and reported mate attraction behavior to *friends'* perceptions of their sexual strategy and attraction behavior. The findings suggest that men and women with different sexual strategies use different attraction tactics in evolutionarily predictable ways. The findings also suggest that men and women are aware of their close friends' sexual attitudes and behavior. Because parallel correlation coefficients among randomly constructed male and female friendship pairs were low, the correlations do not appear to have been driven by a social desirability response bias or skewed distributions. Perhaps the high correlations were driven by assortment or high self-other agreement among participant pairs who had been friends for a longer duration; unfortunately, we did not measure friendship duration. However, ongoing research in our lab documents correlation coefficients of moderate magnitude after controlling for both assortment and friendship duration (Bleske-Rechek, Preder, Wiechmann, & Wojtanowicz, in preparation).

Across both studies, the hypothesis that received the strongest support was that unrestricted individuals will use and perceive as effective those attraction tactics that manipulate others' perception of their sexual availability. Further, friends' perceptions of participants' use of these attraction tactics concurred with participants' self-reported use. Given the frequency with which young adults report that they experience sexual rivalry from their close same-sex friends, it is plausible that men and women have evolved to be sensitive to behavior from friends that may serve as cues to a promiscuous, attention-grabbing sexual strategy that could threaten the success of their own sexual strategy. Men, on average, devote more mating effort than do women to short-term mating pursuits (Schmitt, 2005); thus, promiscuous women are relatively rare and in demand—they entail the threat of tempting men's short-term desires and thus interfering with other women's long-term desires.

Given the unique threat that unrestricted women pose, it makes sense that self-friend agreement on sexual strategy decreased as women's self-reported SOI score increased. Unrestricted women

may make more of an effort than other women to conceal their sexual strategy from their friends—a proposition to be tested in future research. One past finding offers initial support: Young women are more likely than young men to report deceiving their same-sex friends about having a one-night stand or a “colorful” sexual history (Bleske & Shackelford, 2001).

The current findings add to research supporting the theory of sexual selection in explaining human mating strategies. Because the qualities that men and women want in a short-term mate differ to some extent from those they desire in a long-term mate, the tactics deployed to attract a mate should hinge in part on the temporal character of the mate one is attempting to attract. The current research provides the first evidence that they do, supporting the hypothesized link between preferential mate choice and human intrasexual competition.

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